



## LATE REPORT:

### LABOR OFFICIAL STABS NTU!!



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At the Board of Education meeting on April 7th, Board member Charles Bell cast the crucial vote (5-4) against ratification of a strike settlement which would have provided little more than maintenance of the Teachers' Union intact! To the ranks of labor Bell is a traitor and an enemy! While holding a cushy job in a trade union himself, he has just executed his decisive chop in the attempted butchery of the Newark Teachers' Union. Having plunged a knife into the back of the NTU (and the entire labor movement) by organizing against last year's NTU strike and continuing in the same vein during the current strike, this fink has now turned the blade.

Though attempting to distort the issues with a smokescreen of Black Nationalist phrasemongering, Bell's intentions are clear: to serve the ruling class by gutting the NTU and impaling the entire labor movement! Every worker and trade unionist must take action and deal with Bell and his ilk—as a first step we must demand that he be fired from his job and expelled from every labor organization. Bell is not a "representative of labor," on the Board, but a servant of labor's enemies! ALL WORKERS UNITE TO OUST LABOR TRAITORS! MOBILIZE AGAINST THE BOSSES AND THEIR POLITICAL PUPPETS! GENERAL STRIKE IN SUPPORT OF NTU STRIKERS!

## DESPITE UNION LEADERSHIP

# NEWARK TEACHERS HOLD THE LINE

Since January 1 the teachers of Newark, New Jersey, have been on strike. Forced by the attitude of the Board of Education and Mayor Gibson to break a permanent no-strike injunction, the union is in a bitter battle to preserve and build on the gains won in last year's brutal battle.

The Newark Board of Education has tried its best to recreate the situation of the NYC teachers' strike of '68—mobilizing community and press against the strike, portrayed as an attack on the children of Newark—so far unsuccessfully. Gibson and the Board, aided by "community" strikebreakers such as LeRoi Jones, have done their best to turn the strike into a racial issue. They have not convinced the working people of Newark. The fact that Carol Graves, president of the Newark Teachers' Union, and 30% of the union membership is black has hampered the Board and its friends in race-baiting the union; more importantly, the trick is not new, and the level of struggle in the country is much higher than in '68.

The strikers have maintained their spirit in spite of outside attack and weak strike leadership. Anti-union hooligans beat several NTU teachers leaving the union hall on the first day of the strike; Carol Graves' car was bombed; the local right-wing black nationalists have continuously threatened the picketers and six members of the leadership now face six month jail sentences. Strike solidarity has kept up despite the weakness of the leadership. The union leadership put off the final strike vote until early in the morning of the day of the strike. It has failed to mobilize the mass of the strikers for picketing—although about 70% of

the membership of 3500 is off the job, there are only 500-700 picketers on the line each morning, so that picketing has been ineffectual with a majority of the schools uncovered.

### NTU DEMANDS

A high percentage of NTU demands center around improving conditions in the schools, including class size limitations, More Effective Schools (a program designed by the AFT for inner-city schools and proven effective by the U.S. Division of Compensatory Education) a library book budget, more counselors (including social workers, psychiatrists, drug education and community relations specialists and draft counselors) and more. The Board dismisses all these demands with one short paragraph: "The Board reserves the right to initiate and conduct such educational programs and will not be contractually bound by its employees to the setting up of specific varieties of schools or specific programs..."

A central demand of the strike, revealing the strike's basic character, is the question of binding arbitration. Indeed, the union leadership has shown itself willing to sell out over most of the demands—including wage increases—asking only an extension of the wages won in last year's contract. Nationally, binding arbitration decisions have favored the bosses in 70% of all disputes. However, in Newark, where the Board literally plays slavemaster over the teachers, arbitration favored the NTU in 18 out of 20 decisions over the last year. The extremely rotten conditions in Newark and the treacherous character of the Board make binding arbitration seem to be an improvement. Nevertheless, binding arbitration has always been a bosses' tool, which all trade unionists must fight hard against.

### FRIEND OF LABOR?

The Board of Education—whose most vicious members were hand-picked by Mayor Gibson, the "Friend of Labor" who received a standing ovation at the CP's "Rank and File" conference in Chicago (see WA #6)—is a collection of government bureaucrats, businessmen, "professionals" and one wretched union bureaucrat (Charles Bell of AFSCME-DC 37). Not one is a worker—not one is an educator. Most of them were selected for their fine performances as union-busters during the strike of '70—Jesse Jacobs, president of the Board, was the chief witness against the NTU in the

## FROM PROTEST TO POWER

# LABOR STRIKE AGAINST THE WAR

Since the invasion of Cambodia, and the Kent-Jackson State massacres, it has become fashionable for a growing number of labor bureaucrats to speak at and help organize demonstrations against the Vietnam war. For example, the upcoming April 24 anti-war march in Washington, D.C. has among its sponsors a long list of trade union officials. Also, many unions have officially taken some sort of "anti-war" position, differentiating themselves from the know-nothing chauvinism of the AFL-CIO Meany leadership.

Most of this "respectable" labor opposition to the Vietnam war is little more than just a lot of hot air. Many of these "dove" labor bureaucrats simply share the same political outlook as their anti-labor political allies, liberal capitalist politicians like McCarthy and McGovern, who oppose the means, but not the ends, of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam. A lot of the bureaucrats find it useful to project a "good guy" humanitarian image to draw attention away from their sellouts of the rank and file in negotiating contracts with the big corporations (e.g. Woodcock of the UAW, the fakers who run District 65, etc.). And all these misleaders are trying to defuse the growing militant rank-and-file opposition to the Vietnam war, triggered by a war-inspired economic crisis.

### FINANCING THE WAR

From the very start the U.S. ruling class who own the big corporations raking in billions in war profits, have tried to foist the cost of the Vietnam war on the workers. This is even more true now that the economy is in a crisis verging on a depression. Hundreds of thousands of workers are being laid off so the capitalists can cut their losses and maintain profits, and the government is preparing to emasculate the union movement to give the capitalists a free hand in cutting wages. Already the Nixon administration has repealed the act requiring contractors to pay union rates on federally funded projects. This is simply an open bid to break the construction and building trades unions; a threat to which the super-patriotic hard hat labor skates grumblingly acceded. Wage-price (read wage) controls are not far off, and

will no doubt be endorsed by all "patriotic" labor leaders, including those recent, responsible doves who murmur criticism of U.S. imperialism's tactics in Vietnam. Nixon, Agnew and Co. wish to maintain profits and stabilize the home front while pursuing their imperialist aim of making Southeast Asia safe for U.S. business.

For the Vietnam war is a brutal imperialist intervention into Vietnamese affairs, merely a continuation of the previous colonial wars conducted there by Japan and France. American workers have been forced to give their blood and money to fight a war to keep in power the Saigon government, the biggest collection of black market racketeers, gouging landlords, bloodsucking capitalists, warlords, pimps and strikebreakers assembled in one spot in many a year, the sworn enemy of Vietnamese working people and natural allies of the fat cat bosses who own and run the U.S. Clearly the U.S. working class has an interest in forcing an end to this war.

To do so, however, will require more than a weekend stroll to show Nixon "we don't like what's going on in Vietnam", which is about as "radical" an action as the anti-war labor fakers have put forward. Demonstrations will not force U.S. imperialism out of Vietnam. They are about as effective as demonstrating against the company after five. Vietnam is a bosses' war, fought in the interests of big business. WORKERS' ACTION maintains the only way to end the Vietnam war is to force an end to it by bringing our real power as workers to bear, the power to withhold our labor. We should build political strikes against the war, aiming for a general strike to shut down the war. Militant trade unionists must organize struggles in their unions to condemn the war in Vietnam and to commit their union to strike on Friday, April 23 to enforce the demand for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Vietnam.

WORKERS' ACTION groups in New York, San Francisco and Boston will be working in the union movement to raise the idea of a one-day political strike against the war on April 23. We invite all trade unionists opposed to the Vietnam war to join us in this work.

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# WHAT WE STAND FOR

(ABRIDGED PROGRAM)

1. **END RACISM IN THE UNIONS:** Racism divides workers and supports false feelings of racial superiority, and identity with the bosses, in the minds of white workers. Whites can only maintain their privileged position over Blacks and other minorities at the expense of lowering the wages and conditions of all.

**SUPPORT BLACK SELF-DEFENSE!** Militant Blacks, like the Black Panthers are right to defend themselves against the cops. This right does not depend on agreement with any particular views held by the Panthers. If white working people sit back and allow the cops to murder and brutalize Blacks, then all workers and their organizations will be the next victims!

2. **FIGHT OPPRESSION OF WOMEN AND DISCRIMINATION IN THE UNIONS AND ON THE JOB:** The bosses use male chauvinism, as they use racism, to divide workers, create a reserve potential of scab labor and a drag on all workers' wages. Workers must become aware of the common false ideas about women as illogical and helpless beings. We must fight for the rights of women as fellow workers and unionists. Women must be guaranteed equal access to all vocational training programs for skilled jobs. Labor must unionize the job categories held by women and fight for full and equal pay for equal work, equal access to all job categories, free voluntary cafeterias in factories and elsewhere, free full-time childcare centers at bosses' expense, free pre-natal, maternity and post-natal care with time off at no loss in pay.

**END THE SOCIAL OPPRESSION OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY:** Women must be freed from the confines of the family, which limit human development and trap women in burdensome household activities. We demand: free legal voluntary abortions, free voluntary birth control for men and women, free divorce at the request of either partner, no alimony.

3. **FREEDOM FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH:** Lower the voting age and legal adulthood to 16, and provide government support for schooling and training for anyone who wishes to leave home.
4. **ORGANIZE THE SOUTH AND ALL THE UNORGANIZED:** The continued existence of the South as a bastion of non-union labor, the growth of runaway shops, the mass of unorganized white collar workers and competition from low-paid foreign labor is a threat and a hardship for all workers. It is the job of the labor movement as a whole to organize the unorganized and strengthen weakly-organized workers. The most effective way other unions can aid weakly-organized workers is through strikes against suppliers and distributors of the non-union firms. We urge the systematic use of secondary labor strikes and boycotts to organize non-union shops and generally strengthen all labor action.
5. **END UNEMPLOYMENT -- 30 HOURS WORK FOR 40 HOURS PAY OR BETTER!** While many workers are forced to work overtime and even hold down two jobs at once in order to make it, others, especially victims of racial and sexual discrimination, suffer drastic unemployment and underemployment. The real way to make more jobs available is to have everyone work less time for no loss in pay. Broaden the job base: no compulsory overtime or arbitrary night work.
6. **FOR A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING FOR ALL:** Somehow, the Federal minimum wage always seems to be about 10 years behind the times, and even now a fight is needed to extend its coverage to all workers. The minimum wage as well as all wage agreements must be kept in line with the cost of living. The Guaranteed Annual Income idea should be replaced by assuring everyone a job, so that no one has to be dependent on welfare.

**FOR AN EGALITARIAN WAGE SYSTEM:** Although some jobs require greater amounts of skilled labor or higher than average pay to encourage people to fill them, we work toward a narrowing of the wage differences between skilled and unskilled labor. No job should be treated as necessarily badly paying. Eliminate job trust unionism and the aristocracy of labor concept by raising basic job rates.

7. **IMMEDIATE and UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM INDO-CHINA!** The labor movement must take the lead in the fight against the war. Unions should launch strikes against the war—building them up into general political strikes. Since World War II the U.S. has become the world's leading imperialist power—the policeman for the propertied classes in every corner of the globe. In the Indo-Chinese War the American government is trying to keep corrupt Asian rulers from being overthrown by their own people. To wage this war the American government is forced to wage a war on its "own" people too—robbing the workers through inflation and high taxes and then breaking their strikes; using savage "law-and-order" lawlessness against the restless oppressed racial minorities; shooting down protesting students.

8. **FREE THE UNIONS FROM GOVERNMENT CONTROL:** As the U.S. economy gets worse because of the war, capitalist economists and politicians are pushing hard to shift the cost of the war more directly onto the backs of working people through government-imposed wage controls. To prepare for this the ruling class and its courts are gearing up for a counter-attack. In addition to anti-labor laws like Taft-Hartley and Landrum-Griffin, we now see: Federal injunctions against any "illegal" strike; plans to abolish membership votes on contracts; compulsory arbitration (railroad settlement); Federal troops to break the postal strike. All these measures are intended to dissolve unions as combat organizations so the bosses and the government can deal directly with the labor bureaucrats to "keep the workers in line."
9. **NO COURTS OR COPS TO SETTLE UNION AFFAIRS:** As part of this policy to legally bind the unions to the capitalist state, the bosses' government is always inventing nice-sounding excuses to step into union affairs, like "ending corruption" or "opposing discrimination." Sometimes misguided rank and file workers, frustrated by labor bureaucrats, help this process by taking their unions to court. But using the courts to settle internal union issues avoids the obligation to organize the members themselves to clean up their own house and implies that the government is a neutral agency between labor and management. This is not true; the government is the tool of the bosses and its only aim in intervening in union affairs is to weaken and destroy our unions!
10. **FOR THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE AND STRIKE BY ALL PUBLIC EMPLOYEES:** Increasing numbers of underpaid city, state and Federal workers are finding they need to organize and strike to protect their interests. They are confronting a government which consistently seeks to smash their efforts at organizing and to punish employees for striking. We struggle for the right of these public workers to organize and strike. We know that city cops, FBI agents, professional soldiers, etc. are not "public employees," but are the voluntary, conscious agents of violence against the working people.

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We are an independent group of working people and rank-and-file trade union members. We publish Workers' Action to fight for militant and democratic unions, for independent working class action, and for the building of a political party of labor, based on rank and file controlled trade unions.

## BOSTON WORKERS' ACTION GROUP FORMED

The wide response to a call for the formation of a WORKERS' ACTION group in the Boston area showed recognition of the need for organized political struggle within the labor movement during a period of economic crisis and anti-labor repression. A leaflet entitled "Build Workers' Leadership! Build WORKERS' ACTION!", distributed to thousands of workers and students, pointed out the need for a movement which would "restore the unions to militancy and rank-and-file control, and develop independent, working-class political action."

A well-attended public meeting was held on December 2 to introduce new people to the ideas and goals of WORKERS' ACTION. The meeting was addressed by Chris Kinder, a founding member of West Coast WORKERS' ACTION, who gave a brief history of WORKERS' ACTION and an explication of various points of its program. The second speaker, a long-time militant in the maritime industry, spoke about the concrete situation within his union, emphasizing the need to build rank-and-file caucuses within all the unions to fight against sellouts, undemocratic practices, Nixon's war in Indochina, racism and the entire political system which ties working people to the employers' politicians. He described from experience the actual methods and problems involved in building a caucus. The third speaker, Janet Rogers of District 65 (NCDWA) in New York City, focused on exposing "progressive" bureaucrats like District 65's president David Livingston, who pretends to work in the interests of his membership, but actually does little to better their working conditions or mobilize them for any political struggle, while suppressing any real rank-and-file militancy within the union.

Those at the meeting decided to set up a WORKERS' ACTION group in Boston. A subsequent meeting elected an organizer and a secretary-treasurer, established the requirements for membership and set up a dues structure. On January 9 members and supporters of WORKERS' ACTION participated in an "End Racist Unemployment" march in Lynn, Mass., marching under the slogan "For Workers' Power, Build a Workers' Party!" We also carried signs calling for strikes against layoffs, and for 30 hours' work for 40 hours' pay as a meaningful way to end unemployment.

WORKERS' ACTION is just getting started in Boston, but the wide interest shown in the organization makes us optimistic about its future growth and success. At present we are launching a campaign for a one-day general strike against the war to coincide with the next national anti-war action on April 24, linking up with similar campaigns led by the New York and West Coast WORKERS' ACTION groups.



# NEWARK TEACHERS HOLD THE LINE

(CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

judicial proceedings that produced the permanent anti-strike injunction; Charles Bell was notorious for verbal and physical intimidation of picketers--he's now on the Board as the representative of 'labor.'

The Board is doing its job with a passion, although just a little too blatantly for most. Even the N.Y. TIMES, which screamed for the blood of the UFT in the 1968 NYC strike, in its editorial of March 11, '71, was forced to admit that it was the Board which forced the union to strike, of course despite Mayor Gibson doing his best to arbitrate and create peace. They know whose baby binding arbitration is!

The Board's demands (published along with the NTU demands in the January issue of the Newark Teachers Union Bulletin) are much



Mayor Kenneth Gibson discussing urban financial problems with Vice President Spiro T. Agnew.

shorter than the union's demands since they consist of little more than restrictions on the NTU. The Board's demands read like a trade unionist's nightmare. They maintain that the teachers should have nothing to say about work hours, transfers, type of work, length of contract, students' private records or 'orders' they receive. This constitutes a total stripping of union power--a return to the conditions of the 1930's.

## ROLE OF STUDENTS

Most of the students are out of the schools, and of those who have continued in classes, many have expressed sympathy with the picketers. The 'official' student organization, the Newark Student Federation, however, has taken a 'neutral' position on the strike, asserting that they do not wish to be 'pawns' of either side. But the only way they can escape being pawns of the Board is by linking their demands to and allying with the teachers. The Board does not need or want an alliance with the students--all they want is to keep them out of the way. The meeting held March 1 by the students to issue a press statement on their own demands played right into the Board's hands. The meeting included no representatives from the union, and all speakers were either 'neutral' or pro-Board. This is not how to avoid being pawns! The Board will placate the students with lip service only until it is no longer threatened by the teachers.

The blame for this situation belongs in part to the 'official' student politicians, but mainly to the NTU leadership. Not understanding the broad class nature of their struggle, the NTU leaders were oblivious to the role students could play in the strike. Preparation should have been made before the strike, while the students and teachers were still in the classroom, explaining the nature of the struggle to the students and inviting them to formulate their own demands to fight for, along with the teachers, not against them. Without this preparation, the Board can easily convince the students that the strike shows the teachers' unconcern for their education (witness the student demand that any contract be for four years in order to avoid interruptions in their education). It is the job of the teachers' union to convince the students that they must be allies in the fight against the real enemy: the Board and the ruling-class interests it represents, and to raise the call for control of the schools by students, parents, teachers and non-teaching school workers.

What the Board would like to do is to use students against the teachers in order to convince the Newark community that what is in-

involved is not a class struggle of the NTU against the Board of Education, but a racial conflict between the mostly white NTU and the mostly black children of Newark.

## IMPERIALE

So far the Board's divide-and-conquer tactic has failed--but not because of the leadership of the NTU. In some of its statements the union has tried to deal with the racial oppression as part of a larger program for working-class struggle (for instance, in the leaflet 'Our Strike and the Two Sides of Black Nationalism'). But in practice the NTU leaders have worked hard to jump into the trap of Gibson and Company. The most obvious example of this is the NTU's accepting the 'support' given them by Anthony Imperiale. Imperiale is scum. He does not belong as an invited speaker at union meetings, having his hand shaken by union leaders, including self-styled 'radical' Orrie Chambers. Chambers, staff Representative of the N.J. Federation of Teachers and idol of the National Caucus of Labor Committees (who have worked hard to whitewash the union leadership) defends accepting this 'support' because the union is 'weak' and needs all the help it can get. This is an opportunist excuse! Imperiale no more



represents the white community of Newark than LeRoi Jones represents the black community. To Newark blacks, what Imperiale does represent is the incarnation of racist bigotry. His presence blurs issues and alienates blacks from the strike. In addition, Imperiale has served the NTU leadership and the Board by having his goons repeatedly intimidate radicals distributing their views in leaflets supporting the strike. What Imperiale stands for must be decisively denounced.

## COMMUNITY CONTROL

The Board has had a tough time in race-baiting, however, because they fail to see that times and conditions have changed. It is no longer 1968 and the NTU is not the UFT. There are a lot of surface reasons for the failure to turn this into a race issue: the fact that Graves and 30% of the membership is black, the absence of a physical incarnation of 'community control' as in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, the fact that Jones is even more exposed as a government agent than Rhody McCoy was (he gets money directly from the Feds instead of just the Ford Foundation). More important, however, is the changing level of struggle and consciousness. The French events of May '68 brought the class struggle into highlight again. At home, because of a seemingly endless war and the economic crisis it helped cause, people have been impelled to a higher level of militancy--and more of them are becoming receptive to the idea that class, not race, is the basic issue around which they must fight. The rising level of struggle in the labor movement makes it easier for black and white workers (the majority of both races) to see racial oppression as something which divides and blocks their struggle against their common enemy--and this higher level of struggle makes it harder for the bosses to use the reality of racism in their own interest to divide one group of workers against another.

This greater awareness of class issues is especially evident on the left. Most groups calling themselves 'revolutionary' opposed the NYC teachers strike and openly called for scabbing. However, liberal public opinion (to which 'radical' groups are extremely sensitive) has shifted, and now most radical groups have either remained silent or come out in full support of the strike. An exception is the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) which along with its youth group, the Young Socialist Alliance

(YSA), has ignored class issues in favor of 'self-determination' rhetoric for so long, and has given so much support to union-busters masquerading as 'community' leaders, that it can't bring itself to support this strike! We wonder what they will do if one of the few black political bigwigs proposes a stronger version of Taft-Hartley--probably they will keep their mouths shut.

The SWP-YSA and the National Caucus of Labor Committees have both betrayed the strikers through their opposite, but related varieties of anti-labor, pseudo-left wing politics. The SWP can't bring itself to support this strike in any form. It is so thoroughly committed to tailing after anti-labor, nationalist hustlers, that it simply wishes that the strike--a class action, however inadequate its leadership--would go away. The Labor Committee, on the other hand, relates to the class issues involved in the worst possible way--by whitewashing the union leadership which through its own limitations has helped some anti-labor forces bait the union as racist and opposed to the special demands of Blacks and other oppressed people.

Both the NTU and union-buster LeRoi Jones have proclaimed their support of "community control." The fact that people so opposed in struggle can favor the same demand indicates that the demand lacks meaning. Who is the "community," besides a geographical grouping of people together with their exploiters? Of course, the great majority of people in the black community are exploited workers. But that is also true of the population as a whole. In addition to lacking a class meaning, the community control concept is actually dangerous, because by blurring class consciousness, it opens the way for all sorts of backwardness--anybody from Mississippi knows what white "community control" is like. As far as the educational system is concerned, the demand, no matter how radical-sounding, would make it easier for the city to shrink the total funds going to teachers and students while it watches different "communities" battle over their share of the shrinking pie. Furthermore, community control would mean that decisions about job conditions, hiring and firing, etc., would be entirely up to the political and economic elites who control the "community," instead of up to the union. Ironically, the International Socialism group has used the presence of this classless demand as their excuse for supporting the Newark strike, while still defending their opposition to the '68 N.Y. teachers' strike.

The union leadership uses the cops in the same way it uses Imperiale--to keep the union membership unconscious of the real class issues involved in this strike. The cops are not neutral in the class struggle. The basic purpose of the police is to protect the property and profits of business. This includes breaking strikes either directly or indirectly. The cops will never give strikers more than token protection--more important, teachers should see the police as their active enemies. To call on the cops who daily persecute black people to 'protect' teachers reinforces every racial fear and union-busting attack. Then why does the union leadership call upon the cops for protection? Because there is only one alternative to the cops: workers defense guards. Such a step -- workers arming themselves against the city administration and its lackeys--is a threat to the union bureaucrats as well as to their cohorts in political office.

It is for the same reason that the leadership keeps appealing to Gibson to intervene to 'impartially' settle the strike, in spite of the fact that Gibson's true role has been obvious throughout -- to point out the mayor's necessary partiality would be to raise the question of the state as an instrument of the bosses, and at the same time to lay bare the role of the present trade union leaders as friends of the bosses' system, the 'labor lieutenants of capital.'

## BUREAUCRATS' "SUPPORT"

The NTU has received wide verbal support from the city and state trade union leaders, including pledges of solidarity and 'action.'

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## THE STRIKEBREAKERS GO ON STRIKE . . .

# POLICE MILITANT

On the night shift of January 14, New York City patrolmen left their beats to begin a six-day work stoppage, the first such action by the police in the history of the city. The action, unauthorized by the leadership of the Policemen's Benevolent Association (PBA), was precipitated by a court ruling effectively barring payment of \$2700 in retroactive pay claimed by the PBA as part of a parity arrangement based on a 3 to 3.5 pay ratio of patrolmen to police officers. During the course of the action Police Commissioner Murphy backed up by Mayor Lindsay threatened to call in National Guard to maintain "law and order." Following their return to work, a subsequent ruling in favor of the PBA claim resulted in a total \$3300 payment in retroactive salaries, bringing the base pay of the cops up to a whopping \$12,150 per year.

The police action has resurrected some serious questions for trade union militants and, significantly, has smoked out some extremely dangerous attitudes within the trade union movement and even among a couple of ostensibly left organizations, regarding the relationship of labor militants to the police action and police in general. What was the real nature of the New York police action? What are "militant policemen"? Are police a part of the working class? How do we define class divisions in society? What are the main features of a capitalist state? Should labor have supported the police action? Is the Policemen's Benevolent Association (PBA) a "union"? The answers to these questions have assumed critical importance because of the recent intensification of struggles by public employees at all levels. In this situation an incorrect understanding of the police and their social role can have immediate disastrous consequences for the trade union movement. It also calls seriously into question the credibility of any political organization claiming to support workers' struggles that could be so wrong on such a basic question, one going to the very heart of the life and death struggle between Labor and Capital. In order to understand more clearly the reactionary and anti-labor nature of the recent police action, we should examine two partly parallel developments: the attempts by the Lindsay Administration to seek out a confrontation with the municipal unions in the current collective bargaining and a bit of recent history of the dangerous politicalization of the cops in New York City, and elsewhere.

### CITY ANTI-LABOR OFFENSIVE

Lindsay, like a number of other big city mayors, has gone over to the offensive in order to resolve the city's financial crisis by increasing the tax burden and cutting the living conditions of the working people of New York. A major element of this offensive has been a virtual declaration of war on city employees and their unions with threats of pay cuts, payless paydays, "furloughs," and layoffs, since wages are the single biggest item on the City's budget. These threats became a reality in November when 500 "provisional" city employees were laid off, the first such layoffs in 35 years, since Mayor LaGuardia fired thousands of city workers during the depression of the 'Thirties. After a series of empty threats and much blustering by Victor Gotbaum, Executive Director of District Council 37 (DC 37) which supposedly represented the workers concerned, no action was taken and the handwriting was on the wall for all city employees. Around the same time as bargaining began with the firemen, sanitation workers, social services workers and others, the City declared that there would be no increase in basic wages, except for minimal cost-of-living increases. Most recently, the layoff of 10,000 substitute and 7,000 regular teachers was narrowly averted, when the City Comptroller "borrowed" \$35 million from next year's budget.

### ECONOMIC CRISIS

Behind all this is more than the usual bargaining period dramatics. A deep economic and social crisis, consisting of increasing widespread unemployment and general eco-



COPS HARD AT WORK—BRONXVILLE, N. Y. HOSPITAL STRIKE, 1965.

omic recession plus the war-based inflation, is affecting the country as a whole and local governments in particular. What this boils down to for New York City is a sharp reduction in revenues from income tax, sales tax, stock transfer tax, etc. As transportation, housing and other living conditions worsen thousands of middle class people and hundreds of businesses are leaving the city, further reducing the tax base. Compounding this are increased costs as thousands of low income workers are driven to welfare because of high unemployment and slashes in Medicaid eligibility, while hundreds of thousands more have their last wage increases eaten up by inflation and increased cost of living. When Lindsay threatened to "cut off" welfare payments to thousands of families, this was a direct attack on poor working people.

Lindsay's solution to this is simple: cut the wages and jobs of City employees, increase productivity, and tax the hell out of everyone else. But in order to accomplish this, Lindsay must either defeat the unionized city employees or at least neutralize the unions' responses by persuading the sellout leaders of the unions covering some 360,000 City employees to "cooperate for the common good," which means joining forces to keep the rank and file under control. But if the carrot (for the labor fakers) doesn't work the stick is ready too, in the form of a recently enlarged and high-paid police force, as well as troops to be used as announced in "contingency plans" in case of big strikes by city labor. Hanging over the heads of all city workers is the vicious Taylor Law which prohibits strikes by public employees with penalties of unlimited fines and loss of dues checkoff as well as double loss of pay for every day on strike for individual workers.

### BUREAUCRATS' BETRAYAL

The union bureaucrats, instead of organizing a general strike against the Taylor Law, hide behind it to counsel moderation. In a recent issue of DC37's Public Employee Press (Jan. 29, 1971), Victor Gotbaum complained that the worst feature of the Taylor Law is that it doesn't really stop strikes and therefore puts sellout leaders like himself on the spot with "dissident members" when bureaucrats opposed such strikes, causing them to be called "coward" and "chicken." But his alternative, however, along with Albert Shanker of the UFT and Theodore Kheel, is a local version of the Taft-Hartley Law, which while nominally permitting public employee strikes, would provide for a mandatory 60-day "cooling off" period, as well as binding arbitration for grievances. In fact these same provisions

are contained in a bill now before Congress, HR 17383, drafted by DC37's parent organization, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and endorsed by its president Jerry Wurf, which is intended to cover all state and public employees if passed!

It is obvious that despite the attempts at betrayal and compromise by fakers like Gotbaum, there can be no compromise for the thousands of city workers who face these proposed cuts. The City also knows this and has already launched the attack. In the battles that are certain to follow not only does the question of militant leadership assume critical importance, but also the question of who are allies and who are enemies—which brings us back to the question of the police.

### STRIKE WAVE INTENSIFIES

It has been a long time in this country since we have seen large scale clashes between organized labor and capital such as the strike wave that has been building force over the last four years. During the 1950's, following the strike waves after World War II, whole layers of rank and file leaders and militants were purged from the unions along with the "reds," in the name of patriotism and anti-communism and as a result there was a sharp break in the continuity of tradition and class consciousness in the working class movement. Under these conditions, and during long periods with very little strike activity the real social role of the police sometimes becomes obscured. Add to this, temporary antagonisms between various strata of the population—white vs. black, workers vs. students, one ethnic group against another or any combination of these—and you have a fairly widespread (and often racist) attitude among many workers that the police are their "friends." A couple of violent strikes tends to sort this out, but in the meantime many workers are content to see the cops get the other "real troublemakers." For instance, the unity between patriotic New York construction workers and the police against "long-haired" anti-war students witnessed last spring will come to an end when the same construction workers go on strike to protect their wages from Nixon's attack and their "friends" the police come along to beat their heads and break their strike. But the present pro-police attitudes are also reflected in the opportunist positions of many trade union bureaucrats, especially those in municipal employee unions. Outstanding among these are Victor Gotbaum of New York's DC 37 and Jerry Wurf of AFSCME.

In the issue of Public Employee Press referred to above, Gotbaum referred to the PBA as a "union," the police action as a "strike"



# ENCY vs. LABOR

and a "police labor-management crisis," as well as congratulating Ed(!) Kiernan as a fellow bureaucrat who "kept cool" in the face of "dissident... members." Much worse than this, however, was an outrageous editorial by Jerry Wurf in the Jan.-Feb. 1971 issue of AFSCME's Public Employee entitled "Police-men as Public Employees." It would be bad enough if Wurf had only lumped cops in with other public employees, but he actually tries to evoke sympathy for the "oppressed" police and sheds a tear for them: "Boiling underneath the surface was a deep-seated, long-held anger—anger about working conditions, anger about what the patrolmen see as a lack of public appreciation for the role they play and the work they do, anger about a society that has burdened the policeman with responsibilities he has neither the tools nor the experience to handle," Wurf weeps on, "It is even more dreadful and reflective of the reasons police in America carry a burning anger that the following kind of situation was repeated..." He then goes on to describe an account of six New York cops being attacked by 40 persons when they attempted to make an arrest. Wurf's analysis of recent police "militancy" is that it reflects "the frustration of today's under-30 youth who comprise about 40% of the patrol force in New York City." The editorial then quotes one of these misunderstood youths, "Being a policeman has nothing to do with it. I'm a working man." What Wurf's editorial doesn't mention is that AFSCME presently has some 10,000 cops, including the guards at Tennessee State Penitentiary, as members, whose substantial dues undoubtedly are no small factor in his sympathetic attitude. We wonder if it will be some of Wurf's cops that will enforce the 60-day cooling off period called for in his bill? By any standards of labor tradition this man should be denounced as a class traitor and expelled from his lucrative post.

## NOT ONLY UNION BUREAUCRATS

This catering to and reinforcing of the present backward class consciousness of sections of organized workers is not confined to cynical, dues-collecting union bureaucrats, however. Two "socialist" organizations who are supposed to understand the role of the police in the present social system have recently carried accounts of the New York police action in their papers that agree with Jerry Wurf and the young cop quoted above that "police are workers too." The Communist party has long been isolated in the trade union movement for its treacherous support of "progressive" bureaucrats like Reuther and Woodcock against the rank and file, its bootlicking support to liberal capitalist politicians, and its groveling apologies for a bureaucratic, Stalinist perversion of socialism. With these dubious credentials it editorializes in the Jan. 16 issue of the Daily World for a "fighting unity of the working class" to defend the police right to strike for "justified wage demands" as municipal workers. Another article in the same issue stated that "New Yorkers were left with about one-fourth the regular police protection as thousands of cops today began a wildcat job action." In New York, being "protected" by the police usually means a beating and subsequent charge of assault. Nonetheless they felt obliged to offer a few criticisms which makes their support even more grotesque, referring to the cops' "racist currents" and "brutality," their "beating up of strikers," support of "hardhat" beatings of students, and "John Birch cells in the Police Department," as a few bad features that prevent the police from "winning allies among the people." Their answer to it all is "community control" of the police, which used to include demands for more black cops until the Red Squad fulfilled their demand and sent black cop informers into the Black Panthers. You can't "control" the police. The ruling class and the state the police work for has to be dismantled. But more of that later.

## THE "WORKERS" LEAGUE

The other organization that thinks the cops are workers is a small allegedly revolutionary group called the Workers' League that fortunately has no influence in the trade unions (except for supporting "lesser-evil" candidates for union office) and very few workers. Nevertheless, their position on the police strike is so incredible it affords us the opportunity to argue some important points.

Their paper, the Bulletin, generally consists of labor articles from the N.Y. Times re-written by their "labor correspondents." This fake workers' paper is apparently printed by non-union labor at scab wages, since a union bug is conspicuously absent. Their history on the police question actually pre-dates the recent police action by about eighteen months. At that time a spokesman for the "Committee for New Leadership" (CNL), a small group in the welfare workers' Local 371 in New York which is supported in the pages of the Bulletin, attempted to get that union to support the demands of the welfare police for "peace officer" status on the grounds that it was a "labor issue." The welfare cops, however, had been trying for several years to be allowed to wear guns like the rest of the police. Peace Officer status, while bringing higher pay, would also authorize them to wear guns, which is what they were primarily after. The then president Morgenstern argued against the motion on the grounds that the only people the welfare cops could shoot would be social service staff and welfare recipients and the motion was defeated. The Workers League has now resurrected this position in two articles in the Jan. 25 and Feb. 15 issues of the Bulletin. The first article is entitled, "New York Labor Begins Showdown" and is accompanied by a picture of marching cops described in the caption as "militant policemen." The general gist of the article is that the action by the police had "triggered a whole fight on the part of the city labor movement" creating a situation "which can only be



COPS clench fists for walkout—1971.

described as on the verge of civil war." This presumably refers to the threatened use of National Guards to replace the police if their action continued. (This actually happened in the 1863 draft riots when New York police refused to stop rioting pro-Confederate, pro-slavery Irish immigrants from burning down black orphanages in protest to being drafted in the Union army. The entire police force was fired and replaced by Federal troops. That was another action by "militant" police.) The article describes a meeting where "rank and file patrolmen, raising the clenched fist salute, shouted 'Kill Kiernan'..." A veteran cop is quoted as referring to them as "nothing but hoodlums." We agree, and would observe that the Nazis also copied their salute from the German communists. Since the cops were carrying their guns and do often kill people, including each other, this was not a hollow threat, although frankly, we would not grieve the loss of Patrolman Kiernan. This "defiance of their leadership symbolizes a change which is occurring in the labor movement as well" the author claims. The article concludes with a call for a general strike to support the police action: "When the patrolmen went out, DeLury (sanitationmen), Maye (firemen) and

Gotbaum refused to call out their ranks." Clearly this article, the first enthusiastic response of the WL to the police action, characterizes the police as abandoning their role as the repressive armed force of the capitalist state, ready to take on the National Guard in pursuit of their alleged working class interests, dragging the rest of city labor behind them. What else does the author mean by "Lindsay and the entire capitalist class must very well be asking themselves what they face if those they pay to break strikes are themselves striking, if those who advocate and defend 'law and order' now defy it."

## ERSATZ REVOLUTIONARIES

The second article, called, incredibly, "In Defense of the Working Class," is intended as an authoritative statement of position, written by the General Secretary of the Workers League, Timothy Wohlforth. While more cautious in tone it more systematically lays bare the theoretical bankruptcy of this group of ersatz "revolutionaries." The key section of Wohlforth's hypothesis draws a parallel with the general strikes of 1919 where the Boston police also went on "strike" and is worth quoting: "The significance of all this is the importance of placing the recent New York police strike within the framework of the general movement of the working class and at the same time seeking to understand what underlies this movement of the class. When the repressive arm of the ruling class itself goes on strike, this is not an isolated phenomenon, but a reflection of a very general, deep and profound movement of the working class." (our emphasis). A key premise to this conclusion is the same as that stated by our youthful cop and Jerry Wurf above, that cops are workers too: "Are we to see only the side of the police as the repressive arm of the state but at the same time not understand that the police are also employees of that state?" and, when this repressive arm goes on strike it immediately does express the deepest crisis in capitalism and when the question of bringing another repressive arm of the state to smash the police comes up, then the question of civil war is in the air." Later he compares the police "strike" to "the growing insurrectionary situation in the Army. 'We are being asked to believe nothing less than what we are witnessing now is the beginning of a civil war between the working class and the capitalists rapidly escalating to a classic situation of dual power, where the workers are ready to challenge the government for state power, but with the police being cast in the role of a conscript army, insurrecting and coming over ('for the moment,' says the author) as the vanguard to the side of the working class! This is such a misreading of the current situation and ignoring of the historical experience of the workers' movement, it is grotesque! Major metropolitan police have never played such a role. In a general strike or a revolutionary situation the police are always the first to clear out because they know what bastards they are.

## ANTI-LABOR ACTION

The truth is just the opposite of the conclusions of the Workers League, the Communist Party, Jerry Wurf and Victor Gotbaum. The police work stoppage was fundamentally an anti-labor action. It was a political strike by a police force that has become dangerously conscious of its social role as the armed defenders of the social system of big business and the "law and order" that protects and maintains the power and privilege of this ruling class. It reflects the general motion of the working class only in a negative sense, for the motion of the police is the symmetrical, polar opposite of that in the working class and in fact more resembles the recent re-emergence of fascist organizations attacking striking workers in France and Italy, or vigilante bands of police terrorists in Guatemala and other Latin American countries that have been assassinating labor leaders and

(continued on page 6)



## BOSSSES and UNION BUREAUCRATS

# JOB TRAP FOR WAITERS

As an old member of the Walters Union Local 1 here in New York City and as a member of an active though numerically small opposition faction, I am painfully aware that our union is a good example of the woeful state of the organized labor movement in America today.

Our monthly membership meetings attract

about 80 to 100 members out of 10,000 or so and our officials lost all militancy years ago. They foist sweetheart contracts on the rank and file by resorting to chicanery and undemocratic methods. The bureaucrats pay no heed to our needs. Controlling the Executive Board and appointing rubber stamp members to the negotiating committee, they brook no opposition to their repressive policies.

In the shops the bosses, assured of a capitulatory position on the part of the officials, extend our hours, chisel on our food and in every way attempt to revert to open shop conditions. Shop chairmen and outspoken crew members are harassed and threatened with dismissal.

To illustrate -- Recently the management of Sardi's, a popular theatrical district restaurant, called a meeting of its dining-room crew at which the Restaurant League lawyer was present in an attempt to harangue us and break

down the militant spirit of the rank and file in new contract negotiations. Seeing the real purpose for which the meeting was called, the entire crew walked out in refusal to allow the Restaurant League to succeed in bulldozing us. In reprisal they are now attempting to fire our shop chairman and another worker.

Furthermore, our long-term contracts provide for minimal raises in wages which continually fail to catch up with the galloping inflation, provide no dental plan, no severance pay and a pitifully small pension plan (\$105 per month to a 65 year old retiree after 30 years of work). Even this ridiculously low scale finally evolved after 14 years without an adjustment.

We look forward to continuing the task of raising the level of class-consciousness of our members until Local 1 will truly be an honest, member-controlled and democratic union.

--A Waiter



KIERNAN

# POLICE MILITANCY . . .

(CONT. FROM PAGE 5)



members of revolutionary workers groups. The New York police are sick and tired of "having one arm tied behind their back" in dealing with militant blacks and Puerto Ricans, anti-war activists, trade union militants, and Lindsay himself, whom they regard as some kind of "communist." In short, they and their "employers" are anticipating and preparing for a counter attack against organized labor. The Bulletin article unwittingly admits this very phenomenon when it casually notes, "It should be pointed out that the strike wave of 1919 was shortly followed by a severe witch-hunt..." There are indeed lessons to be learned from 1919 and other turbulent periods of the working class movement, but not the lessons drawn for us by the Workers League. They had better go back to their textbooks on the labor movement, because they have missed the whole point. The police are our enemies, and they are dangerous.

## THE PBA'S PAST

The New York cops began to organize in 1963 when the PBA went over from being a paper organization to the "bargaining agent" for all city cops with parallel organizations among transit cops and others. The PBA is not a union—it is basically a right-wing paramilitary political organization with a number of reported overlaps in the John Birch Society and Minutemen-type organizations, with an annual income of \$10 million a year from dues and pension contributions. In the last years of the Wagner administration the cops were given an "open season" on Blacks and Puerto Ricans. The phony "Blood Brothers" panic, the 1964 Harlem police riots, the series of "accidental" killings by the cops in 1964-65 (paralleling the current rash of "suicides" in City jails) were all a part of this. During this period the cops acquired a new consciousness as the City's armed enforcers of racism—and they liked it! When Lindsay became mayor in 1966 and broke up the old police hierarchy, known as the "Irish mafia," that controlled the Police Department and later attempted to set up a token Civilian Review Board to play "soft cop" the police organized politically, joining forces with the Conservative Party, the John Birch Society and an assortment of racist and right-wing groups and defeated that timid proposal. Was that picket line of 10,000 armed, off-duty police around City Hall chanting "Lindsay is a commie" and "No Civilian Review Board" a "militant action" also? The same John J. Cassese that was a key figure in organizing the New York PBA (until he left under the cloud of an alleged embezzling scandal in 1969) is now attempting to form a national organization of police called the Brotherhood of Police Officers (BPO), a move we

regard as extremely dangerous, posing the spectre of a centrally directed political organization. Is that a "union" that these champions of police "militancy" would have the trade unions support when it tries a national strike to protest the refusal of the AFL-CIO to charter it? (The BPO's first attempt at such a charter was recently scuttled by Jerry Wurf who regarded it simply as an attempted "raid" on AFSCME's cop members.)

## EVEN GEORGE MEANY...

Are cops then workers and a part of the labor movement? Even George Meany said "no" to that some years back when the New York PBA first applied for AFL-CIO recognition. Since then he's moved so far right he sees eye to eye with the cops on most questions. But he has a lot of company these days, and some pretty strange bedfellows at that. Well, how do we figure out who are workers and who aren't? In a class society like ours the main social divisions are based upon the difference in the relationship of persons to the process of production. The way in which people enter into economic relations with each other for the purpose of production decide the social relations between them, that is, decides which class each person belongs to and the ensuing class relations. This division gives us one class, the capitalists, composed of those who own all the means of production and exchange—factories, mines, mills, railroads, banks—and a class of workers composed of those who own only their mental and physical ability to work, and who must sell that ability to the capitalists by the hour or week in order to live. This includes public employees who sell their labor power to local, state, or federal governments as postal workers, motor-men, clerks, sanitation workers, teachers, welfare workers, etc. There are also a variety of middle classes—small merchants and farmers, professional people, etc.—but the main decisive classes in society are workers and capitalists. Despite Wurf's and the Workers League's protests that the police are workers simply because they are salaried employees, ignoring entirely their very special social function, it is obvious that based on the above criteria, cops, as professional strikebreakers, fall entirely outside the social relations of the process of production, regardless of their social origins, and so are neither workers, nor part of the working class. While most policemen are generally of working class social origins, they are specifically hired and trained to function as class traitors, and bear a greater resemblance to a mercenary army, de-classed socially and economically. This was easier to see in the company towns of the late 19th century where the police were often hired by the coal mine or

factory owners. As late as the early 1940's, old Henry Ford had his own goonsquad to keep the workers in line and breakup unionizing attempts. The mere fact that these scum were paid for their dirty work obviously didn't make them "workers," in any scientific class sense of the word. The same goes for Pinkertons, FBI agents, labor spies, informers, etc.

## ROLE OF THE POLICE

The police, then, are special bodies of armed men separated entirely from the rest of the population. These police, and also the Army and National Guard, etc., backed up by a system of prisons, are the backbone, the very essence, of the capitalist state, whose basic function is to maintain through force or threat of force the rule of that class in order to economically exploit the working class. In every important and decisive conflict, the cops are the instrument of that state apparatus and stand on the side of private property and big business, backed up by pro-capitalist laws, judges, courts, and prisons.

In no sense are these bodies of armed men "neutral" in the class struggle, although great efforts are made to convince people that they are. It isn't often that one sees the class character of the state power of big business operating in its naked form. Where the government is an outright capitalist dictatorship, which ruthlessly suppresses all trade unions, and workers political organizations, wiping out representative government and all democratic rights and institutions, as was the case in Nazi Germany, the class character of the system is easily recognizable and unmistakable. But this causes a great deal of trouble for the capitalists and they only resort to naked military rule when the working people are no longer fooled by the sugar coating of "law and order" and "peaceful, legal means" and decide to struggle to run their own society in their own name, directly threatening therefore the social rule of big business. Every strike has all the elements of this life and death struggle with the company having the pickets arrested, hauled into court by the police, charged by the judge with violating some right of private property, and sent off to prison for daring to challenge the rule of the company.

This is why the question of the role of the police, as raised by the New York police action, is of such fundamental importance. It goes to the very heart of the struggle of the working class and does not allow for any mistakes. Labor bureaucrats understand this and constantly strive to obscure the real nature of the system, since it is their job to keep the workers under control. But for us there's only one conclusion to draw from this issue: the cops are our enemies, and they are dangerous!



# NEWARK TEACHERS HOLD THE LINE

(CONT. FROM PAGE 3)

Not included, of course, is any mobilization of union ranks. The Sunday rallies held by the NTU have been abundant with 'labor leaders' pledging 'solidarity,' money and testimony before courts, all nice safe, legal means of support. But, as the strikers have learned, this means little: the schools have remained open, though crippled; the non-NTU employees are still working; while the Teamsters are not crossing picket lines, most schools still get regular deliveries since few schools are adequately covered by pickets.

On Thursday, March 4, Carol Graves was arrested with two other union officials at the beginning of a labor rally called by the New Jersey AFL-CIO, Teamsters, UAW and other unions to support the strike. After the arrest, the assembled bureaucrats thought it sufficient to continue with the same old line. However, they soon learned different. As Charles Marciante, president of the N.J. AFL-CIO began pledging support the cry "call a general strike!" went up and spread quickly through the room. The clamor continued until Joseph Uzzolino of the Teamsters took the floor to say we should "shut down the industry next Monday or Tuesday" -- a call that was obscure enough to appease all.

## GENERAL STRIKE?

On Sunday, March 7, Charles Marciante said that plans were being made for a general strike in Newark. But, as it turned out, they called a token 3-hour work stoppage for Wednesday, March 17. The actual stoppage was less than token--it was called off.

Some things should be made clear to the rank and file that are already clear to its leadership. The bureaucrats only called the work stoppage which didn't happen as an out for themselves. They moved only in an attempt to thwart any real danger to the status quo from their own memberships as well as from the NTU members. From the beginning of the strike the bureaucrats have blocked any attempts by NTU members to reach the memberships of other unions--so that the small amount of propaganda that has gotten out has had to be through leaflets at the factories. The token turnout at the labor support rally showed how unwilling the bureaucrats are to mobilize their ranks.

A general strike is definitely required in this situation, but it must be a real general strike of the rank and file, not an empty show staged by a gang of bureaucrats. NTU members must mobilize to reach all unionists with the issues of the strike and its importance to them as workers, calling upon them to build rank-and-file NTU support committees in their unions. Otherwise we might very well see a work stoppage called with a turnout similar to that of the labor support rally and the bureaucrats standing at the side saying "we did our best."

But this action requires leadership--a leadership which the present NTU incumbents have shown themselves unwilling to fulfill. WORKERS' ACTION urges NTU members, who are aware of the need for direct, militant union leadership, to organize a rank-and-file caucus within the NTU on a program of class struggle, taking clear positions on the issues of this strike -- social and political as well as narrower union issues.

## A LABOR PARTY

It becomes clear that unionism is directly connected with politics. City employees see that the politicians who are their bosses are closely tied to big business. The police force is only one example. Gibson's "interim" city administration was another. All workers must understand that the politicians--Democrats, Republicans, Liberals, Conservatives -- are controlled by big business. Labor needs a political party of its own. Every union victory is worn down by the bosses and their government -- by taxes, inflation, anti-union laws, unemployment, etc. We need a workers' political party to fight for our needs and run society for our interests. The NTU strike



Shown is Charles Bell, Assistant Education Director of DC37 (NYC) harrassing NTU picket lines. Appointed by Mayor Gibson as "labor representative" to Newark's Board of Education, Bell has been one of the most vicious opponents of the NTU strike in the name of "the community." Left, photo by NTU photographer from picket line Feb. 19, 1970, before Bell's appointment, where 26 union members were arrested. Right, Bell with police friends (Feb. 1971) during current strike. DC37's Victor Gotbaum expressed "outrage" at jailing of NTU leadership in last year's strike.

# PHONE WORKERS ORGANIZE CAUCUS

A group of rank-and-filers in the Communications Workers of America, called the Militant Action Caucus of CWA, has been formed in the San Francisco Bay Area. The following is a reprint of portions of their statement of program and objectives, including their contract demands. The full program also includes positions on Union Democracy and "Social and Political Needs," as well as economic demands. (See further coverage of the Militant Action Caucus on next page).

## WHO WE ARE

The Militant Action Caucus has been formed because we feel that CWA is going in the wrong direction. CWA is not yet a company union, even though Joe Beirne is trying to get special AT&T stock purchasing options for union members (how much AT&T stock does he own?) The possibility still exists for the membership to kickout the present leadership and their puppets and start CWA on a new course. We feel it is the responsibility of union militants to take up this struggle and not try to split out, which would leave the rest of the membership in Beirne's clutches. The problem is not simply that Beirne is dishonest, for his dishonesty is caused by his distorted perception of what AT&T is. The problem isn't just that he's power hungry either. Beirne wants to have iron control over us because he apparently really believes that our best protection lies in protecting the interests of AT&T. And in fact no one, not even the AT&T Board of Directors, knows better how to do that than Beirne does. He thinks our problems with Ma Bell are caused by "lack of communication," and can be solved by "being reasonable." That's why, even though it's hard to believe that anyone could have any respect for the lying cheating greedy management of Ma Bell, he pushed for the "Union-Management Relations Clause," which says, in part, "The Company and the Union recognize that it is in the best interests of both parties, the employees, and the public that all dealings between them continue to be characterized by mutual responsibility and respect."

We think that AT&T became the richest corporation in the world (43.9 Billion in capital assets at the end of 1969) for a good reason: it is the slickest, most dishonest, cut-throat corporation around. It pillages the public and ravages its employees with a gall and skill none of the other notorious industry giants can even come close to. We believe that the interest of union members and the public (the vast majority of whom are working people) are identical, and are in complete contradiction to the profit making interests of AT&T. Unions in this country have been kept on an endless treadmill of bread and butter demands for the past thirty years--get more money, and inflation eats it up--work lots of overtime to feed and clothe your family, and your sons get sent to die in Vietnam (a war in which AT&T makes huge profits)--get a better pension plan and get fired before you can use it--get a dental plan, and get laid off because of automation--go on strike, and injunctions and fines are levied against you--etc. CWA has got to get out of the squirrel cage and start a far seeing struggle on all fronts. It will be long and hard, but without it we'll never even be able to get the bread and butter.

makes this clear as the Democratic 'friend of labor' mayor hides behind the vicious Board of Education he appointed. Militants in every trade union must begin to organize a workers' party -- through fighting for militant, class-struggle demands like real support to the NTU strike.

Here are the main things we need to base our struggle on:

## CONTRACT DEMANDS

End Management Prerogatives--The present contracts between CWA and the AT&T network allow management to give us privileges, but don't give us any rights whatsoever. Even filling grievances is a privilege according to them. Ma Bell's system of making sure her "girls and boys" behave by granting (or withholding) privileges must be abolished and replaced by unequivocal rights for all employees. All restrictions on striking must be abolished so that we can enforce our demands during the life of a contract. The "do it now and grieve it later" system is no good.

One Nationwide Contract Covering All Departments -- The Company is strongly united under the direction of AT&T, yet the Union allows itself to be divided not only by different contracts for different areas of the country, but by a different contract for each department as well. This serves to pit area against area and department against department. The International leadership has not struggled against this, but has even encouraged it to the extreme of forming separate departmental locals in the same locality. Along with the same contract nationwide, we need one payscale nationwide. AT&T makes its money nationwide and there's no reason why one employee should make less than another who works on the other side of the state line or on the other side of the street. Town classifications and area wage differences are a way of keeping all our wages low.

Cost of Living Adjustment Clause -- The Company, not us, should bear the burden of the rising cost of living.

30 Hour Work Week with Limitations on Overtime -- We need to protect our job security and counter unemployment by forcing the Company to hire more employees, through fighting for a shorter workweek at a living wage. Even the 40 hour work week has disappeared in the AT&T network, where people are forced to work 60 and 70 hours a week because they can't live on what they make in 40. This, coupled with automation, allows the Company to drastically reduce the number of employees in relation to the amount of production. This undermines our job security. The original purpose of extra pay for overtime was to force companies to hire more people and to make the 40 hour work week 40 hours long. Overtime should cost the Company so much that it is cheaper for them to hire more people than to pay overtime.

A More Equalized Wage System--The low wages of the "unskilled" workers serve to make the "skilled" workers accept their higher but still low wages more easily. Raising the wages of the lower paid workers would raise all our wages.

SEE CWA ARTICLE ON PAGE 8



# JOE BEIRNE PREPARES US FOR BARGAINING

The newsletter, "Militant Action Report", from which this article is reprinted, was distributed recently at a union meeting of the Communications Workers in Oakland, California, by the newly-formed Militant Action Caucus of CWA. (See "WHO WE ARE" on page 7).

A few days ago we received a letter printed in large type (does he think we don't know how to read,) from our CWA International President, Joe Beirne. The first impression of reading it is that old Joe must be losing his marbles. He starts out saying that "In 1971 we may have trouble with the Bell System." He lists some bargaining demands and asks, "Will they (Bell) do the right thing?... Will the management agree?... Will the management respond favorably?" And to all these questions he answers, "We don't know." Well, if Joe Beirne and his cronies don't know how Ma Bell will respond to requests for more money and improved benefits, they should hand in their resignations today! Those of us who work day in and day out for the rotten scheming greedy Ma Bell know very well how she will respond—with all the defenses she can muster. She will issue lies to the employees and the public, (remember the "Two Cable Cuttings Per Day During the Strike! \$10,000 Reward!" press release in 1968); she will use dishonest Public Relations gimmicks, (in 1968, by an odd coincidence, a lot of Bell companies simultaneously discovered they had made too much money the previous year and gave subscribers a credit refund—just before the strike); she will get injunctions, fines and cops to harass and beat up strikers, just as she has done before. There is absolutely no reason whatsoever to think things will be any different this time. The reason Beirne gives for not knowing whether Bell will act as usual is, "We did not get a timely response." This looks like pure idiocy! When you go into the enemy's camp and yell for someone to come out and talk to you but you get no answer, you know it's because they're busy priming their guns. And here we get down to the real purpose of Joe's letter—to prevent us from "priming our guns," to steer us away from thinking about struggling against Ma Bell for the things we need. Our best contribution, according to him, is to sit back and rely on our leaders, who don't know the most elementary precepts of unionism, and then we can simply vote on what they do.

Beirne says, "The System's FINAL proposal will be submitted for ratification or rejection."

"Rejection authorizes a strike."

"The decision on our course of action will be yours."

These statements are nothing but trickery and deception! CWA members of the entire bargaining unit of Michigan turned down the final contract offer in 1968, and stayed out because they believed that "Rejection authorizes a strike" and "The decision on our course of action will be yours." They found out that for CWA members that is not true. The International Executive Board ruled the vote invalid, and contrary to the provisions of the CWA Constitution, conducted a mail ballot, by which they claimed (they did the counting) the contract passed. Then they supported the Company when it cut off the dues deductions of the strongest Michigan locals. Their lawyers stood beside the Company's lawyers in court and argued that rejection of the contract by the members does not authorize a strike.

But the International bureaucrats weren't content to let the matter rest there. When the locals made arrangements to have dues deducted through the credit union, Beirne went to court and got injunctions to stop it. Then he had a card distributed around the plant department of the Detroit local (4000) that asked if people were interested in forming "an independent union." Lots of people signed it because they thought it would get them out of CWA. Their signatures were used by the International Executive Board as the basis for splitting the Detroit local and making the plant department a separate CWA local. Later the Executive Board changed their story and said the signatures had nothing to do with it; they simply split local 4000 so that at least some of the members would have their dues deducted. The Royal Oak Local (4016) one day received a letter saying that the accounting department was no longer in its jurisdiction. The

International claimed the women there "wanted their own local." Both of the new locals formed were under the trusteeship of an international rep. At no time did the members vote to split. In the fall Marty Hughes, assistant to CWA V.P. Walter Schaar, tried to conduct some secret meetings to further split local 4016, and International rep Hansen sent members of 4001 (on Union paid time) to get lists of Bell employees in local 4016 and talk to them about splitting. When these efforts failed, Schaar informed local 4016 that the Company would not even talk about restoring dues deduction unless the International took the local into receivership, which would make the local officers (who had been overwhelmingly returned to office a month before) completely powerless. Eventually Local 4016 went completely broke and was forced to give in.

And after atrocities like these Beirne has the gall to write, "Rejection authorizes a strike. The decision on our course of action will be yours." And he goes on to say, "We belong to what is recognized as the best and most democratic union in the world," and "...you, and every other Member, make the final decision on the acceptance of a contract or on a strike—by vote." Contrary to Beirne's accusations, nobody needs to throw mud on those statements. As they stand, they are filthy stinking lies.

As long as Beirne heads CWA we know we'll be sold out, but the solution isn't, as some people think, not to strike. We must strike and support the union no matter how rotten the leadership is. If we don't, the little power that we have managed to get will be lost and we will be left completely at the mercy of AT&T. It may be bad now, but that would be even worse. What we really need to do is get rid of Beirne and the rest of the rotten bureaucrats and get rank and file control of the union so we will be free to fight the Company for the things we need. A strike, even if we're sold out in the end, can be a very effective way of organizing and pulling ourselves together for the struggle within the union. Beirne knows this very well. It is one reason why he says, "We don't want a strike." He knows the membership is getting sick and tired of his sellouts and he has good reason to be afraid that if they strike they'll realize the strength they have in unity and kick him out.

## WHAT WE STAND FOR (CONT. FROM PAGE 2)

11. BUILD FACTORY AND SHOP STEWARDS' COMMITTEES! Constantly deteriorating conditions of work must above all be fought on the factory floor. Only rank and file job action can really fight the incessant speed-ups, inadequate rest periods, dangerous conditions and the like. Moreover every serious strike fully reveals the desperate impotence of bought-off trade union leaders. Unity and organization within each plant immediately challenge the bosses' job control and lay the basis for getting rid of sellout official union leaders.
12. FOR RANK AND FILE CONTROL OF THE UNIONS! Democratic, militant unions can only be ensured by membership participation and control. Most unions today are controlled by corrupt bureaucrats who make deals with the bosses and act to defend their own special privileges rather than the interests of the rank and file. They are the agents of the bosses within the labor movement. They are traitors! Inevitably any struggle to improve the workers' lot at the expense of the bosses upsets the trade union bureaucracy and arouses their bitter-end opposition. They must be fought. We should attend our union meetings and form militant, fighting caucuses aimed at destroying the power of these bureaucrats and replacing them in leadership under a militant and democratic program. This struggle needs a political basis.
13. ORGANIZE FOR WORKERS' SELF-DEFENSE: Workers must protect themselves from the attacks of the bosses and the traitors within the labor movement. Workers' defense guards should be organized wherever workers' organizations or meetings are threatened by hoodlum violence.
14. FOR A WORKERS PARTY to fight on all levels for all these demands. The Democratic and Republican parties are both owned by and run in the interests of the bosses. They are capitalist parties. Democratic "friends of labor" are really our enemies; they always sell out the real interests of workers in exchange for a few cheap reforms that change nothing—crumbs from the table.

We need a party of our own—controlled by us and based on our unions—to fight for the serious demands in this program. The workers of every other country have recognized this need. Unions alone aren't enough; political struggle uniting all working people, poor and minority groups is necessary if we are to win. Break the capitalist two-party system!

15. FOR WORKERS' POWER! In the end, only the working class can solve its own problems and the problems of society. Armed with their own party and program for power, the workers can and will take over and run society themselves. Workers can run the economy and society for the benefit of mankind and eliminate the racism, wars and exploitation which come from the bosses' selfish profit system. This must be our final goal: to achieve socialism through WORKERS' POWER!

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