

ON THE LINE

AN ANARCHO - SYNDICALIST NEWSLETTER

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affiliated with the Anarchist - Communist Federation
and the International Workers Association



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COMMUNICATIONS

As the case of Dave Newman (the decertified Communications Workers of America shop steward) still hangs in the courts, the Telephone Workers Defence Committee, with the backing of nine other rank-and-file workers' groups, held a meeting on November 15 to discuss what is happening to Dave in the courts.

There was a presentation of the background and current status of the case, as well as its' implications for the rank-and-file movement and a discussion about holding a fund raiser and future actions in support of Dave.

The meeting was an important one not only in the respect that all of us learned quite a bit about the legal struggle, the reaction of the union bureaucrats and rank-and-filers to the case, but this meeting also gave us a chance to meet other rank-and-filers from around the city who are active in a wide variety of workplace oriented issues.

NURSES STRIKE

More than 140 nurses went on strike at two Hudson County, N.J. public hospitals. These nurses struck not only because they are earning \$2,470 less than other nurses in neighboring hospitals, but also because working conditions are poor and the nurses are overworked because these

hospitals are understaffed.

While these 140 plus strikers (who are represented by the United Nurses Organization) represent the majority of the registered and practical nurses, other employees and volunteers are crossing the picket lines. William J. Jones, director of the county's Department of Health and Social Services, said that the strike may hurt the hospital's operations for a few days, this problem will be alleviated shortly because the hospitals are receiving "excellent cooperation" from other unions (whatever happened to the idea of striking together?), supervisors and medical and administrative staff.

The strike may continue indefinitely because contract talks have broken down and none have been rescheduled.

TRANSIT

We reported last issue that Henry Lewis, a subway motorman, and chairperson of the Coalition of Concerned Transit Workers, was suspended by the Transit Authority on a number of charges, including "insubordination." Lewis' Disciplinary Hearing began on October 10 and was heavily attended by rank-and-file transit workers, many of them members of the C.C.T.W. At the hearing, the attempt to frame Lewis because of his activities because apparent T.A. (cont)

witness became snared in their own lies, and the T.A. dropped its attempt to dismiss Lewis.

The hearings continue, as does the CCTW's militant opposition to the T.A. bureaucrats and the sell-out policies of the Transit Workers Union.

(Source: The Transit Worker, Oct. 10, 1978.
For more information, call the C.C.T.W. at
276-2889, 336-9811, 257-2632, 698-7702 or
write P.O. Box 163, Brooklyn, N.Y., 11223.

EDUCATION

The labor struggles at Columbia University and Barnard College seem to be winding down. Transport Workers Union Local 241, representing 600 maintenance workers and security guards has almost reached a settlement, while TWU Local 264, also maintenance and security, has reached a tentative 2-year contract with Barnard.

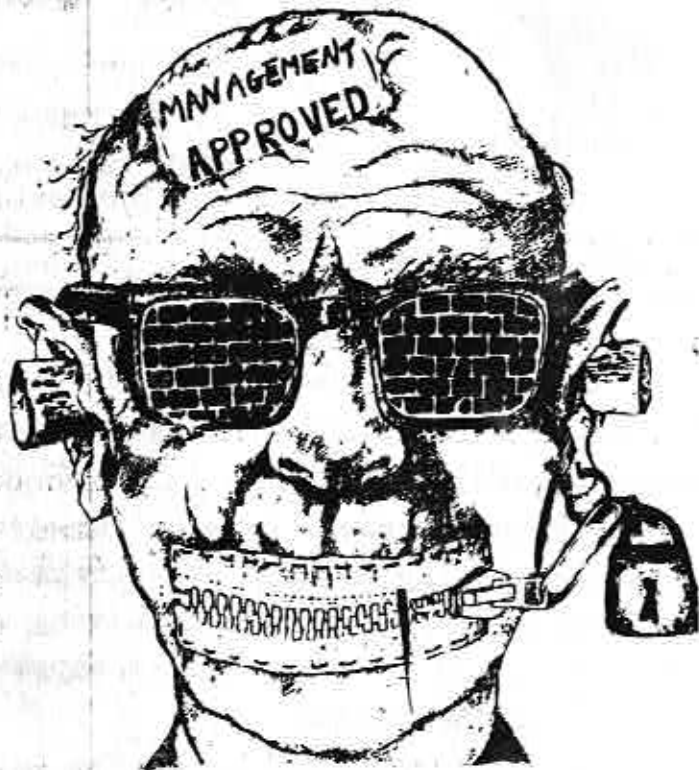
Meanwhile, District 65, representing clerical workers at Barnard, still has no contract. As far as Local 264's and District 65's supposed Oct. 15th strike deadline at Barnard goes, the decision to sign or strike together seems to have fizzled; though in the words of a 65 Negotiating Committee member, "We did not agree to sign together, we just agreed to support each other."

At Teachers College (Columbia), District 65 clerical workers have been subjected to considerable harassment, and around 25 grievances have been filed by the union. Lay-offs and attrition have taken their toll, reducing the number of union clerical jobs at TC from 210 on March 1 to 164 on Oct. 1.

CLERICAL

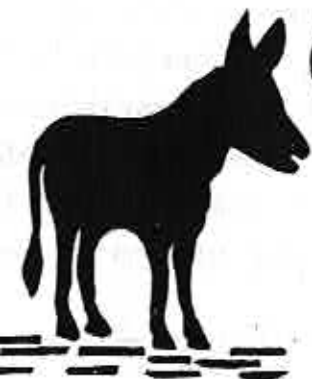
At the Hart and Hume Law office in Manhattan, last year's attempt to organize the 28 or so secretarial and staff workers has failed to get off the ground. While many voiced considerable grievances against management, hardly anyone was willing to meet with District 65, the union that was contacted by some of the militants there.

The present mood is that of hopelessness and despair, and the management's anti-worker policies have even found some receptive ears among the staff. For example; some workers have even been in favor of having secretaries take breaks on a rigid schedule instead of whenever they want, as is done now.



HOUSING

Loft tenants at 47,49, and 55 Walker St. and 71 Franklin St. in Manhattan won a major victory on Oct. 13 when Judge Leonard Cohen ruled that their dwellings were residential, not commercial, and that they would not have to pay rent to landlord Eli Lipkis for the entire period from Sept. 1977 (when their rent strike began) to May 1978. Lipkis, who has received much publicity for his attempts at intimidation (including bribery and physical assault) is appealing the case, and is seeking to evict the tenants for non-payment since May, as well as bringing suit against many of them for other charges.



The September 5th Tenants Association, which is the organization of the Franklin and Walker St. tenants (many of whom are artists), has affiliated with the Met Council on Housing in an attempt to linkup with the general tenants struggle in New York City. They are now beginning a campaign to organize all loft tenants in the city. Their first open meeting on Nov. 8 drew over 200 people. For more information, call Met Council at 725-4800.

J.P. STEVENS BOYCOTT

Northern New Jersey supporters of the international J.P. Stevens boycott campaign have again used direct action tactics to gain supporters and to drive home their point to the management of Gimbels in Paramus, that they take all linens produced by J.P. Stevens off their shelves.

It should be noted that J.P. Stevens is the second largest producer of textiles in the world and has been found guilty by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals of "flagrantly contemptuous conduct" for interfering with its workers right to organize. Stevens also holds the record for labor law violations.

The 25 North Jersey supporters of the boycott entered the linen department with a bed of nails and a sign attached to it which read "I'd rather sleep on a bed of nails than J.P. Stevens." As can be predicted, management threatened to have everyone arrested if they didn't leave the store immediately. Disregarding this threat, the supporters stayed in the department until the police finally arrived to throw the supporters out of the store. The police then escorted the demonstrators out of the store and no arrests were made.

This action is merely a continuation of prior direct actions and these actions will continue until Gimbels removes the J.P. Stevens products from their shelves.

PHILANTHROPY

Workers at the Jewish Board of Family and Childrens Services and the Jewish Child Care Association, members of District Council 1707, Community and Social Agency Employees Union, sent in their demands to management on Nov.1. The contract, which was the result of a sell-out, expires in Feb.

The strike 2 years ago began successfully with a 99% walk-out and strong picket lines, and lasted 6 weeks. The sell-out was a result of an unrepresentative group of workers who walked into negotiations and settled for a worthless contract. It was not the result of a general consensus amongst the majority of workers. Now they are paying the price of apathy and dissention among the different levels of workers, who range from social workers to clerical and maintenance workers.

NATIONAL LABOR NEWS

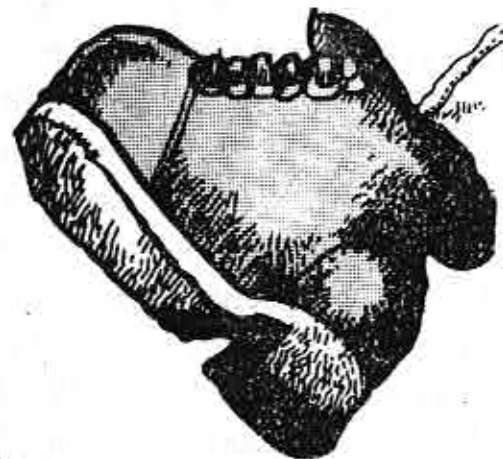
ANN ARBOR BOOKSTORE WORKERS ORGANIZE

Workers at the Charing Cross bookstore in Ann Arbor, Michigan have signed up with Industrial Workers of the World, Industrial Union 660. Shortly after signing up with the I.W.W. these workers filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board for a representation election. However, soon after they filed for the election the boss closed up shop temporarily and then fired the workers. After the boss closed up shop he then sold the store in the hopes of breaking the union. This tactic didn't work, since the I.W.W. members immediately went out on strike demanding that the new boss recognize the I.W.W. and that all fired workers be re-instated with full back pay.

After 9 days of continuous picketing, reports the Industrial Worker, an agreement was reached with Kevin Sheets, the owner. The terms of the agreement included recognition of the union, wage and benefit increases and rehiring on the basis of seniority.

In a related story, workers at the Cellar Bookstore in Ann Arbor have also signed up with I.U. 660 and are now in the process of organizing the 180 full-time employees at the store. While there has been a standing shop committee for some time at the the Cellar Bookstore, it has only been in the last two months that these workers have organized into an I.W.W. Industrial Union.

It should be pointed out that in both cases our comrades of the Anarchist - Communist Federation have played a major role in these organizing drives.



VIRDEN BARGAINING ORDER UPHELD

9 I.W.W. members at the Mid-America Machinery Co. in Virden, Illinois continue their strike. The N.L.R.B. has upheld the Administrative Law Judge's ruling in favor of Metal and Machinery Workers Industrial Union 440 of the IWW, rejecting Mid-America's appeal. The order states the I.U. 440 of the I.W.W. has been the bargaining agent at Mid-America since July, 1977, when owner Larry Jasbusch was presented with photocopies of the union cards of the employees then working at Mid-America. The company is ordered to bargain with the union and to re-instate union member James D'Aunoy, who was fired in June 1977, with full back pay. It is not known whether the company will continue to stall by making further appeals. (Source: Industrial Worker)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

GAS STATION STRIKE IN BARCELONA

The Spanish government, the employers, the General Workers Union (U.G.T.) and the Workers Commissions (CC.OO.) are united in opposed a strike of gas station attendants in Barcelona. As they did with the Moncloa Pact, when they allied with the government to hold down wages, the U.G.T. and the CC.OO. are once again exposed in their sell-out role.

The strike started Sept. 2, when the U.G.T. and CC.OO. confronted the workers with a new contract reducing wages and giving up the annual bonus contained in the contract negotiated by the National Confederation of Labor (C.N.T.) the year before.

90% of the gas station workers in Barcelona belong to the anarcho-syndicalist C.N.T. The police broke precedent by trying to fill the jobs of the striking attendants and pumping gasoline. However, their other duties called them away. The U.G.T. and CC.OO. are trying to fill the struck jobs with scabs armed with their membership cards. The C.N.T. workers are maintaining the strike firmly.



(Source: News from Libertarian Spain, Oct. 1978. write to P.O. Box 733, Cooper Station, N.Y., NY 10003)

WHO ARE WE? WHAT DO WE WANT?

We call ourselves "anarchist-syndicalists" and we have named our group the Libertarian Workers Group. We are a committee of working people who live in the NY metropolitan area. We publish ON THE LINE because we feel that the news and experiences which comes from the many small battles between the bosses and the workers must be shared if the whole class struggle is to advance and if the workers are to someday win.

Basically, we believe that the capitalist class is unnecessary and that government (by which we mean the political state and all of its bureaus) is inherently oppressive. The state and the capitalist class, while not seeing eye-to-eye on everything, are built on exploitation. The capitalists do not produce wealth or render services unless they are forced to. They extend and keep their power because they are able call the shots in industry and government and because they steal, in a very sophisticated way, what the working person produces. By so "stealing" from the real producers--the workers--and then by selling to consumers--most of whom are also workers--the capitalist is able to make profits and keep power. Landlords and the utility companies steal from workers in a similar way. The government insures that buisness goes on as usual and even runs some industries. The decisions on what will be produced, how much will be charged as prices and how goods and services will be distributed are made in a "top-down" way in urban and political centers by bureaucrats and capitalists.

People are taught to play a passive role in society: to take uninteresting and low-paying jobs, to vote for candidates that really have nothing to offer, to experience life through television and movies and to accept racial and sexual oppression as normal. Meanwhile, thousands of people are going to jail, becoming addicts or committing suicide.

It is not enough, we think, to try to reform society. The boss-worker relationship, protected as it is by all of the governments and churches the world over, must be done away with. The capitalist system, in which one person works for another and then lives only to work in that framework, is full of contradictions and shortcomings. The decisions on what will be produced and distributed, on how housing and community problems will be solved and on how natural resources will be allocated must be made by the working class on a local level through democratic organizations controlled by the rank-and-file. Education must be available to all and must be combined with technical skills useful in the modern world. Racial and sexual barriers must be abolished. In short, the working class must emancipate itself. We think that it can only do so by building democratic organizations in which all workers can participate and from which all workers will benefit. The center of these organizations must be the workplace and the community. The tactics we think are most useful are the social and general strike--mass civil disobedience by working people--or rank-and-file control and for necessary immediate gains. Revolutionary unions must be created to fight for decentralized economic planning and real industrial democracy. Anarchist-syndicalism is the sum total of these objectives and offers the means by which to obtain them.

Subscriptions to ON THE LINE are \$1.00 for 6 issues. Send subs to:
287 Passaic Ave., Passaic, NJ 07055.