



# ON THE LINE



AN ANARCHO - SYNDICALIST NEWSLETTER  
FOR WORKER - STUDENT CONTROL

PUBLISHED BY THE LIBERTARIAN WORKERS GROUP

Volume 2, Number 1

February, 1979

## GARMENT

The major issue in the unionized ~~outerwear and cutting~~ shops and in the garment trucking companies is the possibility of an industry-wide strike in May when the contracts for these shops expire. Organizers and union members who are active think that the possibility of a strike is strong while the union bureaucrats think that there is only a 10% chance of a strike.

If there is an industry-wide strike, it will be the first in many years. It will mean that whole areas of the city may be shut down and could lead to many non-union shops signing a contract. The strike would have to take place during the summer when the shops are fairly busy.

----

Many cutting shops have gone out of business lately and work has been slow due to the Christmas season. Several Chinese-owned shops on Grand St., however, have been working overtime and on holidays, in violation of the union contract.

Contract enforcement in Chinatown is a continuous problem. The union says that people cannot work overtime without permission from the union, and tries to insure that workers are paid (t. on next page)

## UNCLE SAM WANTS YOU -- AGAIN!

The draft is coming back -- or at least so says Gen. David Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who proposed a return to peacetime registration and classification of draft-age men (and perhaps later, women) from age 18 - 26.

This comes in the midst of criticism of the effectiveness of the all-volunteer armed forces (AVF). The generals feel a return to peacetime registration would be needed for a military emergency (like in Iran, the Middle East, Southern Africa, Cambodia?)

This is coupled with proposals to link up a national voluntary service program (such as ACTION, VISTA, etc.) with military service. Members of such programs could then be conscripted during war-time. All this should signal signal danger for men and women of draft age.

(source: Peggy Frantz, "The return of the Draft?", WRL News, Jan.-Feb. 1979. For more info: War Resisters League, 339 Lafayette St., N.Y., NY 10013)



## GARMENT (Cont.)

for their overtime. The bosses run the shops overtime and on holidays, and many workers stay over or go in willingly trying to make a few extra bucks. This hurts all the workers because the uptown bosses will shift work to Chinatown and the Chinatown workers will continue to be cheated out of the real pay that they should by contract be receiving.



-----

Sol Chaikin, president of the ILGWU, recently said that unions, just like the rest of society, are divided between the well off and the poor. Chaikin should know. The Cutters and embroidery workers are getting fairly high pay while the operators, pressers, floor people and shipping and receiving people get almost nothing. The Union has pretty much been under the control of people from the Local 10, Cutters, for years. Chaikin might have mentioned that the salaries of officials in the Union are higher than even the Cutter's salaries and that their jobs are usually guaranteed for life.

-----

Sid Gerstein, who comes out of the garment trucking industry and has been an official in the ILGWU, is coming up for trial on charges of attempting to bribe an independent union organizer and conspiracy in New Jersey. Gerstein's expenses are being paid by a collection taken up by the union leadership from organizers, business agents and officials. People were forced to contribute wums of money to Gerstein's defense whether they wanted to or not. Some people in the union feel that Gerstein is guilty but that he was set up because he was transferred from working in the outerwear shops to the trucking industry, which is full of corruption. No one is saying that the leadership is trying to shaft Gerstein--he shares their undemocratic and conservative politics--but that anyone in his position would have had to bribe and hustle people to look good in front of the membership and the bureaucracy.

---

## PHILANTHROPY?

Negotiations at the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, in conjunction with the Jewish Child Care Association (they form one bargaining unit) plod on.

The management of both organizations administrate on a Victorian ideology; absolute in their stance that those who perform "charitable" work are not entitled to the same standard of living as those in the "private sectors." Yet these workers face the same rise in the cost of living as other workers.

(Cont. on page 5)

## STONYBROOK: WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

A short while ago, graduate students in the History Dept. at S.U.N.Y.-Stonybrook received a memorandum notifying them that the few pieces of change (their Teaching Assistantships) they were allotted this semester might not be around next semester. The moral: fight it out amongst yourselves over the morsals that were left to be handed out.



This is par for the course these days in the world of higher education. Real education is being sacrificed to the gods of cut-back and cut off. The scarcity of funds initiates and sustains a war-of-one-against-all, in which individual students and the various university departments try to get over by stabbing each other in the back.

This kind of competition, however, is not just a matter of limited government funds but the result of a way of life that pits people against each other, and treats education as a commodity--to be bought and sold like a pair of pants--instead of a source of knowledge and enlightenment.

Why remain under the thumb of an Administration dedicated to maintaining a system whose priority is serving individual greed instead of social need? Why not a Student Union to demand control over the organization of our lives?

---

## COLUMBIA: WORSE AND MORE OF IT

Work-study students at Columbia University are also getting their fair share of austerity. The University has received an exemption from the U.S. Department of Labor from raising its minimum pay for work-study students to the new Federal minimum wage of \$2.90 per hour starting January 1.

Right now, according to one Columbia official who was quoted in the Daily Spectator, 100 out of 1000 work-study students will be exempted from the decreed \$2.90 by being paid \$2.65 per hour. The official, Robert Gallione, director of student employment at Columbia, gave no justification in the article for this move.

Why not just call a stiffing a stiffing?

---

## STUDENT AID: AN OVERVIEW

What's happening at Stonybrook and Columbia is only a small piece of t the national picture. Thanks to Carter's "austerity budget", students all over the U.S. may have the same things to llok forward to.

For example, Social Security benefits for 18 to 22 year old students w whose parents are disabled or deceased will be phased out under the Carter plan. As a substitute, Carter said it would be "...more appropriate for (cont. on next page)



## STUDENT AID (cont.)

needy students to receive assistance through the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG)..." However, the Chronicle of Higher Education reported that Carter's proposed budget would reduce BEOG funding by \$190 million.

A similar Carter proposal to eliminate the National Direct Student Loan (NDSL) program met with stiff opposition from educational organizations, and from some politicians who feared the wrath of their constituents. As a result, the NDSL is back in the budget, though it has been cut back.

Is there a solution? Organization; students joining together to let the Federal bureaucrats know that they will no longer be manipulated. Not only this, but ultimately students joining with working people, unemployed & welfare recipients, the elderly, tenants; to turn American society around towards a more human set of priorities, and to take direct control over all social institutions. Either that or another ride on the merry-go-round.

(source: Columbia Daily Spectator, New York Times)

---


## POSTAL WORKERS

A number of unions (District 65, United Auto Workers, and others) have joined with rank-and-file workers in demanding an amnesty for all workers fired and disciplined by the U.S. Postal Service for their participation in job actions last July. Involved are workers who stayed off the job for several days at bulk mail facilities in Jersey City, Kearney NJ, and San Francisco, starting a national movement which toppled a proposed contract loaded with 'giveback' provisions.

On management's orders, postal inspectors were sent with firing notices to the homes of union members in the hours before dawn, disturbing families in a clear campaign of intimidation.

For more information, call the Postal Workers Defense Committee at (201) 798-4555

(source; The Distributive Worker)



LET'S SEE... I  
THINK THE ONE ON  
THE LEFT IS THE  
UNION BOSS, + THE  
OTHER ONE IS THE  
OTHER BOSS...

Do you have a story for ON THE LINE? If so, then don't hesitate to send it to us at P.O. Box 692, Old Chelsea Station, N.Y., NY 10011. Articles should be typed (if possible) and should be not much longer than one typewritten page. Please also let us know how many copies of the issue you will want. And don't forget, contributions are cheerfully accepted!

## PHILANTHROPY?(Cont.)

The problems of office politics are compounded by a snobbism that dictates that the so called professionals are entitled to voice opinions to management (as long as they are not too provocative,) while the lower level clerical and maintenance workers are not entitled to voice opinions except amongst themselves. These lower level employees are constantly being pushed aside when negotiations bring somewhat healthier raises to the higher level employees. This leads to a demoralization which is difficult to combat as these lower level workers comprise only about one quarter of the bargaining unit.

The largest problem is that for many reasons, the shops, which have been unionized for about 20 years, have atrophied and participation of members is almost non-existent. The negotiating committee does not have the power of shops determined to go out on strike if they are not satisfied.

While the end result is difficult to predict, it does not seem likely that the committee will succeed this year where they have failed every other year in their demand for an across the board raise for all levels of workers.

It appears that the task of active union members is to organize their shops to the point of unity and strength where negotiations won't take place from a position of such weakness. It appears a bit too late for this contract; but what about the next one in two years?

---

## MUSICIANS

(From a recently received letter--) We are members of a musicians discussion group that has been meeting in New York for about 5 months. We began by trying to figure out what the issues are that musicians face on the job; in other words--what are the things that bother us. We hope to work towards a point where we will have some useful answers about how to fix those things.

As a result of our discussions we are developing an analysis of what is going on and beginning to put it into practice on the job.

The groups' members are friends whom had talked about these issues before, but decided to organize weekly meetings as a focal point.

We would be glad to talk with anyone interested in doing likewise.

Call Marc Ribot 581-3153 Or leave a message at 868-3330.



## NATIONAL LABOR NEWS

### ANN ARBOR VICTORY

Workers at the Cellar Bookstore in Ann Arbor, Michigan have won a major victory. In an NLRB-supervised election on January 23, the workers voted 34-15 to be represented by the Industrial Workers of the World, Industrial Union 660 (12 workers didn't vote, 7 had their ballots contested).



Negotiations with the management of the bookstore, who are chosen by the University of Michigan assembly, have not yet begun. The key issue, according to one of the workers, is how the bookstore will be managed. Up until now the workers have had a good deal of control, over day-to-day affairs in the store, and some would like to extend that further by getting rid of the appointed managers and having the workers run the entire bookstore themselves.

Another issue is the question of a union shop -- some of the workers do not favor making union membership mandatory for all. However, recent threats by management to bring in more part-timers (presumably to replace full-time workers) has changed some peoples thinking on this.

For more information: Eric Glatz (IWW delegate), 2305 W. Jefferson, Trenton, MI 48183.

---

### MILWAUKEE: JOB CONTROL AT STAKE

The key issue in negotiations between the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission and sewer workers, members of Local 366, AFSCME, is job control; specifically, a clause in the current contract stating that management can't change job descriptions, work assignments or the way they are assigned without negotiating any proposed change with the union first.

Needless to say, the new management of the sewer district is not happy with this clause, and would like to get rid of it. One union official was quoted as saying, "They are saying: 'We don't want this anymore because we want to run the plant as we see fit. And you'll just do as you're told to do.'" Meanwhile, the executive director of the sewer district has proposed increasing the number of management personnel by 55%. For efficiency sake, of course.

(source: Impulse, published by the Syndicalist Alliance, P.O. Box 92246, Milwaukee, WI 53202)



## INTERNATIONAL LABOR NEWS

### SPANISH STRUGGLE CONTINUES

200 political prisoners, the majority of them anarchists and members of the CNT (Confederacion Nacional de Trabajo--National Confederation of Labor) are still held in Spanish prisons in spite of all government claims that political prisoners have all been amnestied and released.

They are being held on false vague charges of terrorism, robbery and murder. But they are not brought to trial where accusations must be proven. Some have been held since January, 1977.

Meanwhile, the Spanish government has engaged in some terrorism of its own. On Jan. 24, 1978, Augustin Rueda, a member of the CNT, was beaten to death in Carabanchel prison in Madrid. On May 4, 1978, Pedro Torres Martin committed suicide in Tenerife prison in the Canary Islands because of the persecution of the prison guards. Other CNT prisoners have been severely beaten and tortured. Prisoners have engaged in hunger strikes and demonstrations to protest the brutality.

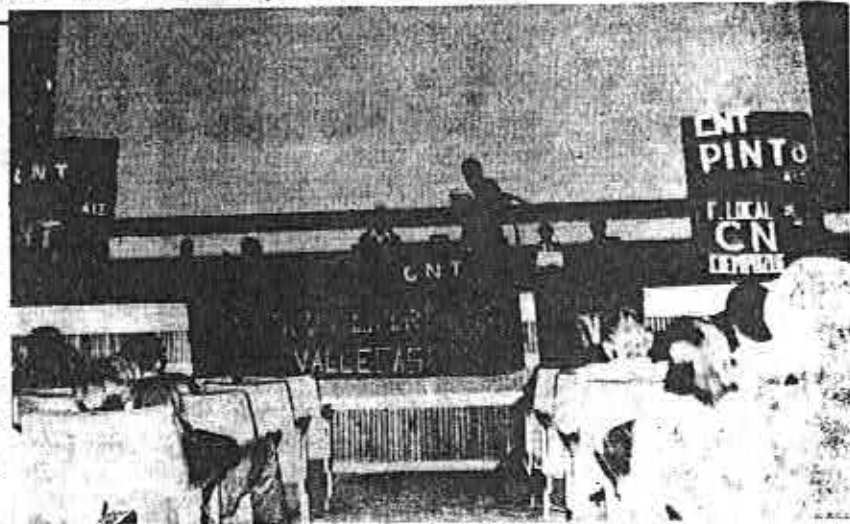
Still, the CNT continues its fight, and has achieved some important victories recently against the sell-out policies of Spain's "socialist" and "communist" unions.

(source: News from Libertarian Spain, Box 733, Cooper Station, N.Y., NY 10003)

### INTERNATIONAL CONPERENCE

The International Workers Association (to which our group is affiliated) is holding its next congress in Paris, France on April 13-17, 1979. Present will be delegates from all over Europe (including the Spanish CNT) and from South America will be present. The pupose of the congress will be to promote cooperation and solidarity on the international level among libertarian working class organizations.

Our group, the Libertarian Workers Group, is presently trying to raise funds to send a delegate to Paris in April. If we can do so, this will be the first time an American group has been represented at an IWA Congress in many years. If you are interested in helping, or can contribute, please contact us at P.O. Box 692, Old Chelsea Station, N.Y., NY 10011.



## 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 and students who live in the New York metropolitan area. We publish ON THE LINE because we feel that the news and experiences which come from the many small battles between exploiters and exploited, powerful and powerless, must be shared if the whole class struggle is to advance and if the workers are some-day to win.

Basically, we believe that the capitalist class is unnecessary and that government (by which we mean the political state and all its bureaus) is inherently oppressive. The state and the capitalist class, while not seeing eye-to-eye on everything, are built on exploitation and domination. By "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 business goes on as usual and even runs some industries. Education is bought and sold like a commodity and students are trained for further exploitation in factories and offices. 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 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 exploiter-exploited relationship, protected as it is the world over by all of the governments and social institutions (churches, philanthropies, schools, etc.), must be done away with. The capitalist system, in which one person works for another's profit 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 democratic and non-hierarchical and must be available to all. 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 and students can participate, and from which all will benefit. The center of the organizations must be the workplace, the school, and the community. The tactics we think are most useful are the general strike and the takeover of workplaces, schools and communities for rank-and-file control and for necessary immediate gains. Revolutionary unions and councils must be created to fight for decentralized economic planning and generalized self-management. Anarchist-syndicalism is the sum total of these objectives and offers the means by which to obtain them.

Subscription to ON THE LINE are \$1.00 for 6 issues. Send subs to:  
On The Line, P.O. Box 692, Old Chelsea Station, N.Y., NY 10011.

The Libertarian Workers Group is affiliated with the Anarchist-Communist Federation of North America and with the International Workers Association.