

Wildcats Kick Off P.O. Battle

Dump the Pact, Amnesty for all Fired Strikers

New York--At midnight, July 20, the 1975 postal contract expired. At the negotiations in Washington D.C. the clock was stopped while US Postal Service (USPS) officials and union big shots hammered out the final details of a settlement. Over 5½ hours later they announced to the waiting press that there would be no strike. All that remained was to push the new pact through.

But in front of the Bulk and Foreign Mail Center in Jersey City, NJ, a group of Tour 2 workers stood outside at shift change. They were angry and not at all ready to go back inside and start three years under a new contract which first reports suggested was a sellout. They were met by workers leaving the night tour, who added their anger at the stopped clock and at being made to work without a pact all night. The crowd grew, arguing and talking. Members of the NY-NJ Good Contract Committee took the lead in denouncing the sellout.

Tour 2 did not go into work. Tour 3 stayed out, too. The wildcat was on!

Three thousand miles away the Postal Workers and Mailhandlers locals at the San Francisco bulk in Richmond voted to strike. They were joined by the Meadows Facility near the Jersey Bulk. At each, the walkout was at least 75% effective.

Although the three wildcats were all over by the night of Tuesday, July 25, with both union hacks and Postal Service inspectors on the rampage against strikers, the walkouts had broken the situation wide open. Instead of the relatively smooth sellout those on top were hoping for, talk in stations from coast to coast was of the contract's shortcomings, the possibility of a national strike, and amnesty.

THE BATTLE LINES ARE DRAWN

From early on, the Postal Service made no secret of what it wanted out of the 1978 contract. There were two main points of attack, wages and something called "management rights."

The USPS was carrying the ball for President Carter's program of holding down union wage increases in the name of "fighting inflation." The government plans to keep pay increases to a 5.5% a year limit,

even though prices are rising almost twice as fast.

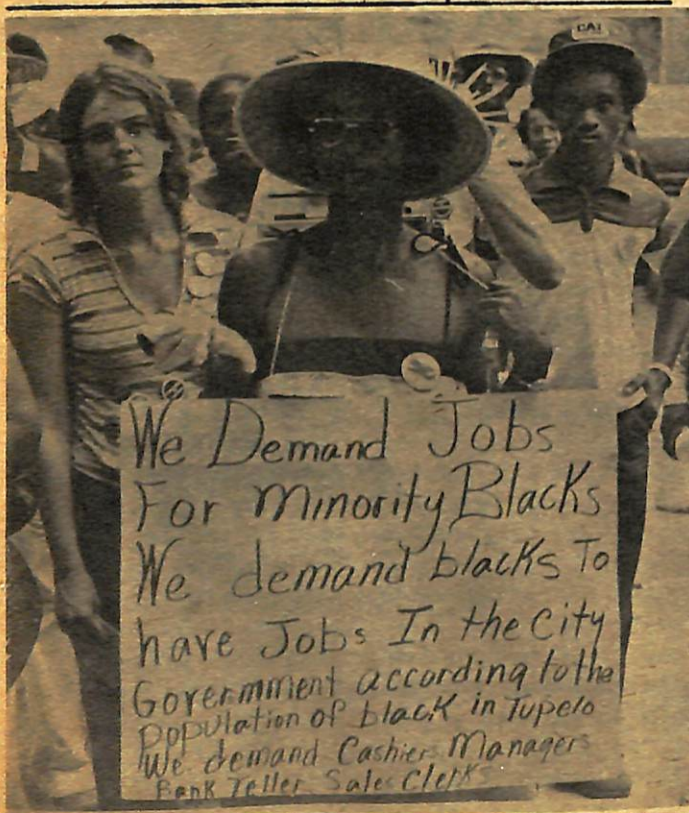
The postal contract was very important to this program. The miners' strike had won them wage and cost of living increases totalling almost 40% over the next 3 years. To avoid a strike and sugarcoat some attacks, the railroad bosses gave up 37% over a 3 year contract. The government was desperate to

continued on page 6



New York postal workers prepare to strike. Later over 100 were fired for picketing.

Storm of Black Struggle Sweeps N. Mississippi



Tupelo Blacks rally for jobs, against terror.

Tension hung over Tupelo, Mississippi like the calm before a Mississippi storm. Hooded Klansmen predicted bloodshed if Blacks went ahead with their June 10th march. The United League of Northern Mississippi had scheduled the protest at the same time and place as a national rally of the Invisible Empire Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. But carloads of Black marchers arrived at the Springhill Missionary Baptist Church. It was the tenth march of a 3-month-old boycott of white businesses around Tupelo. The song, "Ain't gonna let nobody turn me round", expressed their determination.

Despite a number of cowardly cross-burnings, cooperation between the Klan and town officials, and a hundred year history of white-sheeted terror, the Black marchers carried the day. Over 1000 turned out from nearby towns and areas, many bearing arms. It was the most impressive display of unity recently seen in the movement for justice and equality for Blacks, which is once again gain-

ing momentum in Mississippi.

A half hour after the victorious march, a mere 25-30 hooded Klansmen rallied, accompanied by 50 without robes. The speech of Imperial Wizard Bill Wilkinson of Denham Springs, Louisiana was met by heckling from a white preacher in the crowd. At Wilkinson's nod, two Klansmen wrestled the man to the ground. When the police arrived they brought charges for inciting a riot--against the preacher and a news photographer!

There is a new wave of Black struggle spreading and sinking roots faster than a southern Kudzo vine. The United League, with chapters springing up throughout northern Mississippi and Tennessee, has organized effective boycotts in Tupelo and Holly Springs and held marches in a different county seat every weekend. Blacks throughout the country are starting to look to this movement as an inspiration and an indication of things to come.

The movement first began in January, when local Blacks heard about two cases of police terror. On January 26th, 25-year-old James Garrett was found dead, hanging in his Holly Springs jail cell--his hands and feet bound. Two days later, two Tupelo cops were found guilty by a Federal Court of savagely beating

continued on page 5

Editorial

Down With the Bakke Decision!

Build the Struggle Against Discrimination

After close to a year of stalling, the Supreme Court has ruled on the Bakke case. Its decision is the most severe legal attack on minority rights in decades. The High Court struck a heavy blow at affirmative action by forbidding universities to set admissions quotas which make sure a certain number of minority students get to attend. Race can be "a factor" in admissions decisions, added the justices in a lame effort to prettify their racist decision.

By deciding in favor of Alan Bakke's suit to get into medical school, the Supreme Court gave its stamp of approval to his contention that whites have become the victims of "reverse discrimination." Absurd! How can white people in the US be considered the victims of discrimination when Blacks and other minorities are still handed the worst of everything? The unemployment rate among Blacks is still over twice that for whites. The average income of a Black adult is only 3/5 of the white average--and the gap is widening! Only one doctor in fifty is Black--and it's a safe bet that when Allan Bakke graduates he won't open a practice to serve the people of Watts or Harlem.

The significance of the Bakke decision is that it is a roadblock, intended to stop the further progress of Blacks and other minority peoples in their long fight against discrimination and oppression. Affirmative action was won through bitter battles in the civil rights movement and Black Liberation Movement in the 1960s and early '70s. Today the rich who rule this country face a severe economic and political crisis. The 5-4 vote for Bakke and the "race as a factor" ruling by the Supreme Court reflect differences in the ranks of the ruling class on this question. How much of the burden can be dumped on Black people how quickly, without creating unacceptable social problems?

One obvious reason for their caution was the powerful movement which grew up to oppose the Bakke case. Students and professionals, Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and Asian, made up the main force of the movement, which also drew support from thousands of whites who wanted to stand against oppression and for justice. It became the most massive upsurge against attacks on minorities in this decade, educating and mobilizing many people and organizations to the defense and extension of minority rights.

The Bakke decision only highlights the need for such a movement. Further court cases, some of them going beyond the campus to attack affirmative action in hiring, job training and promotion, are on the docket now and must be exposed and resisted. Nor can the struggle against discrimination and the oppression of national minorities be limited to taking on legal shackles, old and new. It is breaking out on dozens of battlefields from the anti-Rizzo fight in Philadelphia streets to the boycott and marches against the Klan in Tupelo, Mississippi, as articles in this issue of The Worker report. Build the Fight! Defend and Extend Affirmative Action! Fight Discrimination and National Oppression!

THE WORKER

The Worker is a newspaper which tells the truth about working people and their struggles, about what's happening in society and in the world. It is a tool to spread the word about important battles and to draw the lessons from them. It is a tool to help forge a powerful workers movement in this country. It is a tool to link that movement with the movements among minority nationalities and unite everyone possible in a common fight against the common enemy.

The Worker does not claim to be neutral. It stands openly with working and oppressed people. It analyzes national and international events from their standpoint and tries to show who are friends and who are enemies.

The Worker stands opposed to the wealthy few who own and run this country and benefit from the system that robs and abuses the great majority of

people here and around the world. It calls these bloodsuckers what they are: capitalists, those who live high off the labor of others. The Worker will expose, harass, embarrass and attack the oppressors of the people without mercy.

The Worker is published by the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters (RWHq), a communist organization. The RWHq wants to build every struggle and ignite every spark of understanding to help build a movement that will rip down the capitalist system and replace it with socialism, the rule of the working class.

The Worker is a tool used by fighters on many fronts. It is paid for by sales and contributions of working people. Join the struggle, use The Worker, help make it a stronger force for freedom.

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Letter

Brooklyn, New York

Dear Worker,

Our plant, Drakes Bakery in Brooklyn, is going to be merged with the company's supermodern plant in Wayne, New Jersey. We've been told we can transfer our jobs, but this seems like an empty promise. First, the new plant has lots of automated machinery. And second, how do we get the 30 miles to Wayne? The company and union both say that transportation is "our problem". It sure is.

This is our bread and butter they are messing with. Jobs are scarce, and extra so for those of us who are Black and Spanish, and that's almost all the low seniority workers, as usual. We have worked here for years, worked holidays and weekends, often had to work 10 hours a day. And what about Drakes, meaning Borden's which owns it? They take the money and build a new plant with new machines and stick it out in the sticks. We are demanding that the company provide a bus so we can get to work in New Jersey.

Our plant is not the kind of place where everybody walks off the job when there is a grievance. But we are starting to get together. We took up some big collections for the coal miners when they were on strike. Now, it's got to be all together. We have started a petition for the bus, and did up buttons saying "WE WANT OUR JOBS--BUS US" in English, Spanish and French. Many of us have started wearing them right on our uniforms.

Next time anybody sees the Borden Cow with its smiling face, think of us here at Drakes fighting for our jobs.

A group of workers at Drakes Bakery



To Our Readers:

The Revolutionary Workers Headquarters apologizes for the smaller August issue of The Worker. In July we moved our central office from New York to Chicago. Moving, building the new office, and developing the Chicago staff took more effort than we expected. We decided to cover some key struggles in the August issue and get the paper out for mass distribution at 10¢.

In September we plan to publish our regular 24-page paper, including the Spanish section. Among the articles scheduled for the next issue: an analysis of the effect of the labor law reform bill in Congress and the roles played by big business and the top trade union officials in the fight over it; up-to-date report on the postal contract and and steel convention battles; an article from Northern Minnesota on the struggle of farmers against high tension wires ruining their land; news of the Black movement against discrimination and oppression in Northern Mississippi; and more.

1,000 Native Americans Demand Justice in D.C. LONGEST WALK REACHES GOAL

Washington D.C.--With traditional Indian drums leading the way, 1000 Native-Americans marched into this city July 16th, displaying the pride and determination that had carried them from San Francisco since February 11th on their Longest Walk. As they entered the city, they brushed by tables the government had set up to collect their weapons, propelled past by their sense of dignity and hatred of the rich man's laws.

From the Native-American Survival Schools of Minnesota, from the grazing lands of Navajo reservations in the Southwest, from the Tuscarora tribe as close as North Carolina, they had come. They had staged this exhausting and dramatic protest to take their cause before the American people. They were fighting for their lands and their right to exist as Indians. They came to Washington to try and defeat 11 pieces of anti-Indian legislation.

But it was not the Congressmen and columnists of Capitol Hill who were waiting to receive them. It was teenage Blacks who gathered around with interest when a group of Indians put up Longest Walk posters in Malcolm X Park. It was nurses from a recent strike at the Washington Hospital Center and other medical personnel who offered their services free to the marchers. It was the scores of people who lined the streets to greet the Indians as they marched in.

While other Americans who have felt the oppression of the system stood in solidarity with the Indians, the Washington politicians gave them the cold shoulder. Instead, senators like Ted Kennedy got into arguments with the Walk's leaders rather than discussing the real problems. This was not unexpected by the Indians, who have firsthand experience from their own reservations. There they deal with local politicians who are just mouthpieces for big corporations out to steal the resource-rich Indian lands.

In D.C. the Indians were protesting legislation like the "Steelhead Trout Protection Act", which under the guise of protecting endangered species would prevent Indians from fishing on their own reservations, destroying a source of their income and food.

The most lethal bill is the progressive-sounding "Native-American Equal Employment Opportunity Act." It would repeal all existing Indian treaties, end all Indian-run hospitals, schools and housing, and take away Indian hunting and fishing rights and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The sponsors of these bills are owned body and soul by the energy monopolies lusting after the rich deposit of coal, uranium and oil on Indian reservations.

A check of Library of Congress records by the Indians showed that the author of one of the bills, Rep. Jack Cunningham (R-Wash), received huge campaign contributions from the Peabody Coal Company.

While the Walk proved once again to the Indians that their worst enemies can be found in Washington, it also showed them the potentially broad support they have among the American people. Millions followed through the news, joined in, or offered help in dozens of other ways. In turn, the Indians reached out to other struggles, like the Seabrook,

New Hampshire anti-nukes demonstration, which confront the same enemy--big business and its political representatives.

As one Indian said at a rally during the week of demos and cultural

events in D.C.: "The four great colors, Black, red, yellow and white, have all gathered in common support against common oppressors."

The Longest Walk was also significant for bringing many different tribes together for the first time, including traditional enemies. It opened the eyes of young and old alike to the similar problems Native-Americans across the country share. They saw how their fight against the rich man's system is the foundation upon which to build inter-tribal unity. They learned that they could both give and get support from a great many Americans already struggling against that system.



Native Americans complete cross country walk. A tremendous display of unity and protest.

Trenton Workers Organize to Tackle Runaways

Trenton, N.J.--Plant after plant closed down. Wages and benefits slashed in many of those remaining. On July 20, a demonstration of 80 Trenton area workers kicked off a mass campaign to organize against the shutdowns and benefit ripoffs.

Simmering over a dozen plants leaving the area in the last few years, the workers' anger reached the boiling point from a recent lockout at Acme-Hamilton Manufacturing Company. It sparked employees there and in numerous other plants into city-wide action.

The 450 Acme-Hamilton rubber workers struck against a proposed 10% wage cut on May 1. An agreement finally reached in a New York City Bankruptcy Court guaranteed the workers' wages and benefits. The company responded by locking out all union members. Since then about 50 management personnel and scabs have done some production and shipping. The company has made \$5 million since the lockout and workers haven't received a penny of vacation or severance pay.

Even while their cases in Bankruptcy court and in the NLRB were pending, workers saw the need to take other action. Four times they travelled two hours to fill the New York City courtroom to speak against any decision that would permit the company to throw out their union contract so it could pay its creditors. Four times the hearings were postponed.

Though angry and frustrated, the workers did not give up. On June 22, 150 rank and file workers and some union officials from 10 area plants met and formed the Committee to Fight Plant Closings. They laid plans for a mass petition drive and for the July 20 demonstration to hit the numerous Trenton area plant shutdowns and in particu-

lar, to fight the abuses at Acme-Hamilton.

Their demands: 1) Keep the Plants Open (under existing union contracts), 2) Guarantee Separation Benefits, and 3) Union Jobs at Union Wages. These won them wide support around Trenton, in workplaces and particularly in the Black community. Black committee members took the campaign out to their churches and community organizations and got various degrees of support from community leaders.

One Black member of the Trenton School Board supported and joined the demonstration on July 20. He volunteered to serve as an intermediary when the workers who marched from Acme-Hamilton to the State House tried to bring their case to the governor. The governor's office told him, "No one is in."

The demonstrators decided to camp at the State House until someone was "in", and finally a member of the governor's staff appeared. He spoke to a delegation of angry workers only long enough to say that the governor was "powerless to do anything." The delegation pointed out a number of ways the governor had power to support them, but got no satisfactory response.

The Committee has, however, received enthusiastic support from fellow workers. Over 1500 signatures have already been collected on petitions, and more are being filled. The demonstration was a first shot in a campaign that's sure to grow. Today this fight of workers and minorities is a key topic of discussion throughout the city. In the future, the Committee to Fight Plant Closings will again bring that outrage into visible action.

Public Workers Launch S

Summer 1978: National Guard camped in Memphis firehouses. The nation's capital immobilized by a week-long "unauthorized" transit strike. 2000 uncollected tons of trash piled up in Philadelphia playgrounds. The wave of city workers' strikes and job actions have made this a long, hot season for city fathers nationwide.

The "city crisis", which three years ago meant "the problems in New York", has become a widespread phenomenon. Inflation, the departure of inner city industry and the accompanying reduction in the tax base, rising unemployment--all of these have contributed to expenses far outstripping city coffers.

In most places the pattern is similar: even with outrageous taxes, they can't keep the cities running. The priorities of the officials are to find some way to cut costs and pay off the banks that own the financially shaky city bonds and in the meantime keep order. To reduce expenses they slash services to the bone, and with them wages and benefits of city workers.

The "lazy, wasteful public workers" get blamed for deteriorating living standards (of course the cuts rarely touch those patronage jobs where politicians' pals collect healthy salaries but seldom even show up at their offices.) Now government officials at all levels are leaping on the tax revolt bandwagon, hoping the public will cheer on an all-out assault on anything paid for by taxes--and particularly on "overpaid" city workers.

Public employees, for the most part only recently unionized, are not about to let public services or their living standards be ripped away in the name of the "common good". As many as 400 deaths by fire in New York City, for example, could have been prevented, union officials estimate, if 25% of the department hadn't been laid off since 1972. The union's main

contract demand this fall is for 2,000 additional men.

Over the past fifteen years union membership in general has declined due to union busting, shutdowns, runaways and the do-nothing policies of union leaders. The majority of new union members have been public employees. They've fought and won decent wages, now being eroded in the era of takeaway contracts and inflation.

Take Boston MBTA drivers, who average \$17,000 a year. According to federal figures today, an intermediate standard of living for a family of four in New England requires at least \$20,000.

In addition, layoffs, loss of jobs to attrition, and insufficient funds for upkeep and repairs have caused speedup and increasingly dangerous working conditions. Several New York subway maintenance men have been killed because job eliminations meant there was no-one to spot oncoming trains.

The fierce battles of city workers this summer have emerged from these conditions.

And there's worse to come in the plans of the city rulers. Philadelphia's "solution" to the crisis provides a glimpse of the future course for other cities. There, the blatantly racist Mayor Frank Rizzo aims to cut social services to the bone in order to beef up the police force whose brutality is infamous. The intention is clear: get rid of those expensive budget items like hospitals, schools, firehouses, garbage collection and if the people don't like it, shoot them.

But while the oppression has intensified, so has the resistance. The actions of city workers nationwide has hit back at the plans to destroy living standards, at the city leaders and their big business backers, at their junior partners who mislead the unions. The long, hot summer will not end Labor Day.

Phila. Strike Chops Rizzo Plan to Pamper Cops

Frank Rizzo, mayor of America's 4th largest and one of its most decayed cities, arrogantly announced in June that he was hiking cops' pay by 9% and that non-uniformed workers would pay for it with a no-increase contract and 3,500 layoffs.

The 19,600 city workers, damned if they'd be sacrificed for the cops, opened a mass meeting to vote on the contract with the chant, "Strike! Strike! Strike!" They rejected Rizzo's cutthroat offer 7,000 to 0.

Rizzo threatened and blustered through a ten-day strike, but the workers defied him, court orders and their own union leaders. They finally forced a settlement which gives them a 7% increase and made Rizzo agree that cops, too, would be subject to layoffs.

Rizzo set the terms of the battle before the strike when he snarled, "If I got to decide between a policeman and a sanitation man, a sanitation man loses."

The racist overtones of his remark were not lost on Philly residents who are well aware that the cops are overwhelmingly white and the majority of sanitation workers are Black. The Mayor's outspoken racism and attacks on city workers added fuel to the anti-Rizzo upsurge that has been growing since the spring, when he called for a "white power" movement led by himself.

City leaders also designated 29 areas where people could dump trash during the strike. Eighteen of them were in playgrounds in the Black neighborhoods (the city is 36% Black).

Naturally, political loyalty is more important to Rizzo than anything, even race. He likes Earl Stout, the Black director of AFSCME District 33, representing 17,000 sanitation workers. Stout worked overtime to disorganize the strike and get people back to work, for which Rizzo termed him "a reasonable union leader...a reliable man."

At a press conference four days into the strike, a reporter asked Rizzo to

comment on the fact that the sentiment of Philadelphia was with the strikers.

"I don't care what the sentiment is," retorted Rizzo. "Frank Rizzo makes the decisions around here. I run Philadelphia."

Since Rizzo took office in 1972 the only openings for city jobs have been in the police department, with 500 additions to the force. In the same period, 220 firemen's positions have been lost as well as 3,000 non-uniformed jobs. After the contract was signed on July 24, 66 cops were laid off (.8% of the force), 85 firemen and 450 non-uniformed workers (a full 6% of the total). 2,900 additional layoffs are expected.

Rizzo's fond dreams of becoming the new Mussolini, dictator of "the city of brotherly love", provide the impetus for the movement against him among both Black and white Philadelphians. But his attack on city workers and particularly on minorities is not peculiar to Philadelphia.

As city coffers are less and less able to cover social services or city contracts, the Philadelphia story may well be repeated--step up attacks on city workers, cut services like crazy, especially in minority communities, and beef up the cops to violently quell the disorder that ensues.



New Orleans sanitation men sit down.

HOT TOWN - SUMMER IN THE C

Around the country other city workers faced similar attacks and fought against them.

Louisville, Ky. Mid-July. City officials offered firemen 5.5% increases. A five day militant walkout turned back the attack and won them 14% wage hikes and amnesty for strike actions.

San Antonio, Tx. July. Texas laws do not allow public strikes, but that didn't stop angry sanitation workers who were fed up with extremely low pay and rampant understaffing. While tense scabs with cop escorts were pummeled with rocks, the wives, mothers and children of the strikers held militant support demonstrations.

Detroit, Mich. July 31. Sanitation workers wildcatted against forced overtime and were joined by a transit mechanics walkout which virtually paralyzed the city.

Boston, Mass. Late June. The state passed an outrageous law which axed the cost of living increases from the existing contract and changed (for the worse, of course) bargaining rights of transit workers. The Carmen's union, representing Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority drivers, called a

one day job action to protest the bill. New York, N.Y. Early July. Transit workers, the most organized and militant of the city's unions, finally got to vote on their contract after 5 months of legal and illegal wheeling and dealing by their union leaders and the city. They voted it down (it stunk) only to be told that they had voted it up! The rabbit the union leaders pulled out of their silk hats was that they also counted votes from non-public drivers in the same local. The workers are organizing to fight the vote steal. New Orleans, La. Late July. Transit workers held a one day work stoppage to protest unsafe vehicles, forcing officials to make some emergency repairs which had been delayed for months.

Salt Lake City, Utah. Late July. Firemen threatened to strike unless the city moved a fire headquarters from its present location. It was built on landfill made of radioactive waste and even the state admits the radiation level is seven times the safety limit for uranium miners. Asheville, N.C. Late July. The Mayor and City Manager refused to settle a wage dis-

Strike After Strike



Striking D.C. bus drivers discuss the wildcat in front of the Metro Terminal

Gov't. Steals D.C. Transit Strike Gains

Washington, D.C.—A fierce seven-day transit wildcat which began July 19 was nearly 100% effective as workers battled the Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (METRO) demanding their cost of living (c.o.l.) increases.

The 21¢ per hour hike was supposed to go into effect July 1, but METRO openly violated the contract and refused to pay. The strike ended only when a federal judge, under great public pressure for a settlement, forced METRO to submit to arbitration.

On August 3rd arbitrators told the company to pay up. METRO retaliated with 10 firings and 85 suspensions.

The next day the federal government pulled a stunt which was an almost unbelievable assist to METRO bosses. The Labor Department suddenly announced it had overestimated the cost of living for the last quarter. Not only that, but it had figured c.o.l. too high for the Washington D.C. area since November 1976.

METRO, crowing over its ill-gotten gains, said the workers were only due

14.5¢ hikes. Then they added up two years of c.o.l. payments and estimated that the workers owe METRO \$380,000. The company announced it would withhold c.o.l. pay until they decide they've been repaid!

For bosses everywhere, and the federal government as well, this fight is an important testing ground for further take-aways. The D.C. transit workers have the best contract provision in the country for c.o.l. increases. No capitalist wants this example out there for workers to see.

Desperate in the crisis, METRO sought to steal the c.o.l. so they could use it as a bargaining chip in upcoming binding arbitration. They planned to trade it back with one hand and take away even more with the other.

For example, they want to create part-time positions (also key in New York City transit negotiations). Part-timers cost less in both wages and benefits. They can also be used as a threat against full-timers who must prove their "worth" to the company or the bosses will eliminate their jobs and hire for peak hours only.

With this kind of battle coming later in the summer, the fight over c.o.l. was crucial. As the wildcat grew, union officials worked hand-in-glove with METRO to try and get the buses rolling again. Since these misleaders were not going to fight for their 21¢, workers prepared to fight for themselves. They organized their own meetings and tactics. Back-to-work orders were virtually useless. METRO, the Washington Post and the courts all ranted and raved that the strike was aimed at the public. But there was enough support for the wildcat to scare all three D.C. mayoral candidates away from opposing it—they refused to comment.

While the drivers and mechanics are on the job now, the combined attacks of bosses, union hacks and finally the government have shown workers that the fight is not over. Activists among the transit drivers and mechanics are working to build a permanent rank and file organization to continue to fight for their stolen money, to oppose METRO's firings and suspensions and to build a battle to take back their union.

Tupelo Boycott

continued from page 1

Eugene Pasco in 1976 to force him to sign a confession.

The United League demanded that the cops be fired and when Tupelo officials refused, the league began a boycott of white-owned businesses in the area on March 24th. By the end of April the cops had been forced to resign, but the boycott campaign continued because it had expanded to include demands for an end to job discrimination, a larger Black voice in education, and an end to all police and Klan terrorism.

The boycott, a weapon southern Blacks have used often and well, has been 90% successful among Tupelo's Blacks. Men and women carrying signs patrol the square to remind shoppers that the demands have not been met. Downtown business at several places has dropped 20-30%, causing merchants to offer rewards up to \$1000 for evidence leading to conviction of any boycotters.

After the June 10th march, the United League spread the boycott to Holly Springs, the county seat of adjoining Marshall County, which is 65% Black. A number of electrical, garment and furniture companies, running away from other parts of the country and into the low-wage, non-unionized South, have moved into the county in recent years. But their racist hiring practices have limited job opportunities for Blacks there. Unemployment is still 15.8% and the average per capita income is \$2678 a year, over \$1000 below the state average.

Even around Tupelo, where giant corporations like ITT and Rockwell have provided some jobs for Black workers, discrimination is still rampant. As one Black worker explained:

"We don't want to go North, this is our home. But all we get are factory jobs. I work in a chair factory, but we have no union or seniority. They give all the best jobs to whites. A Black man can work there for 20 years, yet the foremen and best jobs go to whites no matter what age."

Hand in hand with the police and Klan terror and job discrimination is the turnover of Black-owned land into the hands of large, white-owned farming and ranching interests. One elderly man said:

"Years ago plenty of Black folks were farmers around here. We grew corn and cotton. A bad crop, back taxes, too much borrowed money and that was it. Now they've got a John Deere doing what 20 men used to do."

As the area went to soybeans and cattle, the local establishment found ways to cheat Blacks out of their land. United League organizer Skip Robinson remembers one woman who had 275 acres of land. When a landowner moved the fence and took over 75 acres of it, she kept quiet because she was scared—"You see, not only do we have the Klan but the Register of Deeds has been known to tamper with the records. If you go to court the judge might pick a known Klansman to be the foreman of the jury. Our family still has its land. My Daddy used to strap a rifle to his plow. That was his attitude. But with so many heirs living in the North a lot of land goes up for auction at tax sales."

The power structure can only maintain this oppression by straight-up terror. Local cops are encouraged to be active Klan members, while Tupelo's mayor held a closed meeting with the Klansmen before the June 10th confrontation. The local ruling class has also tried to promote "re-

continued on page 6

CITY

pute with striking sanitation and water department workers. Instead they drove garbage trucks themselves—and got ticketed for improper permits and backing into a wall!

SCHOOL'S OUT FOREVER?

The wave of city and state job actions is expected to continue through August as city after city pulls one or another attack on the workers. But the end is not in sight. In the fall, these officials will have to deal with the teachers. In Philadelphia and several Midwestern cities there is so little money allocated for public education that planned cutbacks will all but eradicate schooling for working class and minority youth. Philly plans to cut almost 30% of the present school employees—and teachers plan to strike if that happens.

What is clear is that "solutions" like more police terror can't dig the politicians or their profit-seeking big business backers out of their hole. And the more they try to burden the people, the greater the forces grow against them.

P.O. Wildcat...

continued from page 1

"break the chain" of decent wage increases, with big contracts for truck drivers, auto workers and others upcoming.

That left P.O. as the chain breaker. Carter and his top advisors gave their full backing to the USPS efforts to hold down wages, knowing that the fact that all postal strikes are illegal gave the postal bosses a big edge in their assault.

The second front for the bosses included things like the "right" to reduce the workforce, the "right" to shift workers around, the "right" to increase discipline and productivity, the "right" to weaken the union grievance procedures. They went into the negotiations with a laundry list of takeaways.

The top leadership of the postal workers unions, mainly the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) and the Mailhandlers, countered with a joint negotiating team. They took the position that the no-layoff clause had to stay but they were ready to be "flexible" with any of the other points the bosses raised.

In this situation, with the bosses on the warpath and the union leaders backing off, the postal workers watched the spring go by with growing apprehension.

The past 3 years have been hard as hell for postal workers. Their last wage hike was eaten up twice over by rising prices. Over 60,000 workers have lost their jobs even with a no-layoff clause. And conditions at work have gotten worse, with a great rise in on-the-job accidents.

DOWN TO THE WIRE

The last stage of contract negotiations took place under a complete black-out. As the July 21 deadline neared, postal workers wanted answers, and all they got was rumors. The top union leaders were nowhere to be seen, except for an occasional bland press release.

With this union leadership vacuum, the field was opened up for lower level union leaders. Many responded to the membership's anger by talking militant, demanding to know what was up and reminding everyone of the "No Contract, No Work" stand, reaffirmed at the last APWU convention.

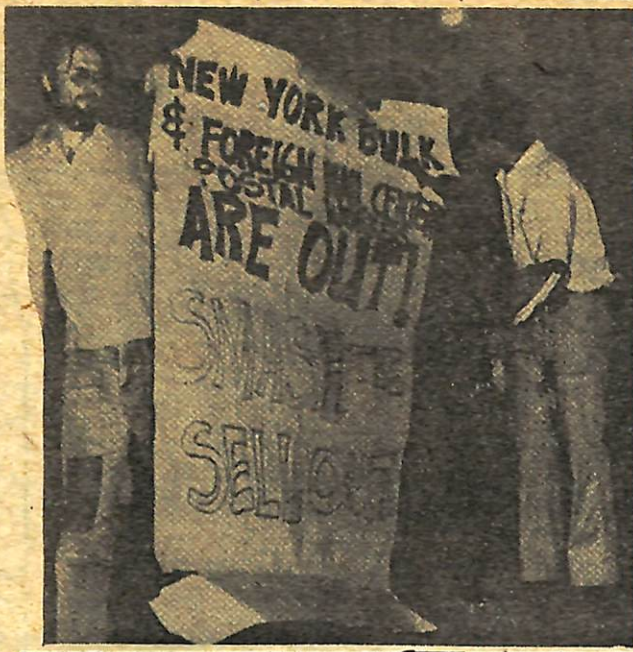
More important, postal workers were developing their own leadership. Around the country rank and file groups, coalitions, committees sprang up, each with its own views on how to move forward.

TUPELO BOYCOTT...

continued from page 5

spectable Blacks"--sell-out leaders who depend on the system for their high-paid poverty jobs and positions of influence. When Tupelo set up a biracial committee to "ease up tension", the United League demanded that any Black spokesmen be chosen not by the mayor but by vote of the Black community.

The United League is being asked to start boycotts in such small Mississippi towns as Lexington and Okolona, where a Black youth beaten by a dozen whites was arrested by the sheriff he asked to help him. The nearly 1000 who came out to protest this on July 8th are evidence of the Black struggle that is breaking through the terror and oppression in the South. As the ruling class attempts to snatch back the gains of the civil rights movement, Black people are remembering the hard-won lessons of the '60s, and using them to take up the fight today at a higher level. The boycotts and protests by the United League and its supporters are putting people across the country on notice that the Black liberation movement is once again on the rise and will be stronger for its past experience.



P.O. wildcatters show their stand.

Workers around the POW (*Post Office Worker*), a newsletter in the NY-North Jersey area, helped form a Good Contract Committee, which also developed tentative links with a number of groups in other areas. Such groups were to play a key role in starting and spreading resistance to the new contract.

THE SELLOUT IS UNVEILED

As the details of the contract became available in the days following the settlement, it was one of the worst in postal history. APWU president Emmet Andrews tried to say it was fine because it retained the no-layoff clause and exceeded President Carter's wage guidelines. Alas, the government released a statement at the same time saying that the raise was not excessive and it was happy with the pact.

Striking workers from the Jersey Bulk put out a leaflet with 17 reasons why the contract stinks on every major question--wages, working conditions, defense against management attacks.

The wage increase totals around 9% over the life of the contract, and the COLA has a cap, new since 1975, which means workers will seriously fall behind the cost of living.

The Postal Service is free to cut the workforce by attrition, harassment, unreasonable transfers, anything but a formal layoff. Some union officials say another 90,000 jobs will be gone by the time the 1980 contract rolls around. There is no improvement on getting an all-regular workforce, upgrading the casuals and flexis who have few rights and no union protection.

The continuation of mandatory overtime, strengthening the disciplinary procedure, no right to strike, no improvement in health and safety rules--this deal has sellout stamped all over it.

THE ATTACK ON THE WILDCATS

When the wildcats erupted the USPS went berserk. Postal inspectors showed up at the picket lines to take photographs and videotapes. Letters went out to every postal worker saying anyone not at work on Monday would be fired. 100 workers at the Jersey Bulk, 75 at Richmond, and every part-timer and casual who wouldn't cross the Meadows picket line received termination notices. Many workers got these at their homes from goon squads of postal inspectors who showed up at two or three in the morning. Ten strikers in San Francisco and two in New Jersey also face prison sentences on contempt of court charges.

And the union leaders? President Andrews said that the strike had nothing to do with the union, that it was illegal, and that the postal workers would not, he was sure, support it. And anyway, the contract was very good and people would vote for it. A spokesman for the Mailhandlers Union denounced the strikers as "outlaws" and said they were just as bad as the rank and file insurgents in the coal and steel industries.

Even as these attacks were launched,

what the authorities and their pets like Andrews feared most was happening. A one-day shutdown called by militants at the Bulk Mail Facility in Washington D.C. was 50% effective. Local presidents and union meetings around the country took positions rejecting the contract, demanding amnesty and even pledging to strike if New York City went out. Post office workers listened to all-news radio stations the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning to see what would happen.

NEW YORK CITY WAS THE KEY

By Monday the struggle was at a turning point. Wildcats at two or three isolated stations couldn't continue in the face of intense USPS repression. To keep going the struggle had to be spread. New York, the heart of the 1970 strike, is the main mail center in the country, with over 10% of the total postal workforce.

The NY local of the APWU and its leader, Mo Biller, had set themselves against the National APWU and Andrews during the negotiations. Biller was quick to denounce the contract as a sellout and run a lot of strike talk.

Behind all this militant talk, and the press coverage it drew, there was precious little distance between Biller's position and that of Emmet Andrews. Biller's line from the start has been that the most important issues were the no-layoff clause, wages and COLA. He basically ignored the key demands needed to rectify the miserable conditions post office workers face--no mandatory overtime, better health and safety clauses, and an all-regular workforce (upgrading part-timers and casuals).

What's worse, Biller's approach to the wildcats was identical to that of Andrews and Company. He denounced them for an hour at a time in speeches to stewards' meetings, accusing the strikers of being out to destroy and take over the union. He sent an open letter to the rank and file claiming the Jersey Bulk walkout was the work of a "few adventurers." Even Bulk stewards who were Biller loyalists didn't dare hand this trash out publicly, fearing for their health.

While almost everyone hated the contract, many workers debated serious questions about a strike: Would it work? Could we win anything? Will we all get fired? Biller said he was for a strike, but his rabid attacks on the "Bulk radicals" only fed anti-strike sentiment.

THE STRIKE VOTE AND THE JUDGE

On record as favoring a strike, the Metro leaders called an official strike vote for Monday, July 31, nearly a week off. This was mainly a stall to ensure the wildcats were disarmed. At the same time, the strike vote did present the Good Contract Committee and other militants an opportunity to mobilize the rank and file for a strike.

Aided by the NY-NJ Workers Organization, postal workers distributed a VOTE YES--STRIKE flyer to every main terminal on every tour and most of the smaller neighborhood stations. Fired Bulk strikers talked to postal workers at tour changes and snuck into lunchrooms to discuss the situation. Sentiment for a strike began to increase despite the confusing effect of Biller's attacks.

In the face of the union's refusal to back them up with either words or action, the Bulk strikers voted to end the wildcat on the night of Tuesday, July 25, with those fired fighting on the outside while the others organized inside.

As the 31st drew closer, Federal Judge Frederick Lacey rode to the rescue of the Postal Service, Andrews and Biller. Since the law forbids postal workers from striking, Lacey issued an injunction against the local's planned strike vote.

This injunction extended an earlier

continued on page 7

STEEL CONVENTION...

continued from page 8

piles one such offense on another, more and more steel workers can see just what a company-loving viper he is.

The monopolists who own the steel companies are delighted with the International's work. According to Bethlehem Steel's president, Lewis W. Foy, "We are already seeing indications of improved productivity at Beth's mills. Our employees are concerned about what is happening with the steel business and they are saying to us that we are going to have to work harder." Actually it's hard to see how McBride and his crew could work much harder for the companies than they already do. The *Wall Street Journal* summed up the lay-off campaign Foy carried out last fall: "Beyond the direct payroll savings, Bethlehem's job cuts seem likely to boost the productivity of its remaining shell-shocked workforce of over 90,000."

SHELL-SHOCKED OR STANDING UP

Wall Street's optimism is a little misplaced, however. Far from shell-shocked, steel workers are readier to fight than they've been in a long time. Furthermore, the rank and file, whenever the opportunity has presented itself, has gone up against the companies and their boys in the union office on a broader scale. One such instance was the Sadlowski reform campaign for the union presidency in 1976-77. Positions associated with this campaign--opposition to the ENA and to the collabora-

tion with the bosses it represents, to dues increases and to the dictatorial methods of the International--helped Sadlowski carry the basic steel locals by a 3 to 2 margin. The campaign lost in the smaller and more isolated non-basic locals where the Abel-McBride machine was not yet exposed.

The whole no-strike deal was challenged up front last year by iron ore mining locals in the Mesabi range. Although their contract contains the same ENA provisions as the basic steel agreement, hard-bitten miners, many of them Vietnam vets, struck anyhow. They ignored company and International demands that they honor the ENA and stayed out for months.

The worsening conditions steel workers face and the brushfires of resistance that keep breaking out have caused widespread discussion. In lunchrooms at Sparrows Point and Gary Works, after work in small bars in South Chicago and Birmingham, in union halls in Pittsburg and Eastern Ohio, workers are reevaluating much that has happened. The grueling 117 day strike in 1959 which won little and was later used by Abel to sell the ENA, no longer looks so bad after the defeats suffered under the no-strike, no-fight policies of recent years.

OPPOSITION FORCES

The unrest and anger brewing on the

rogated. Even some foremen may be fired for refusing to identify people from the pictures.

But feeling against the contract and the firings is running high throughout the system. At a meeting of Tristate (NY, NJ and PA) officials representing 150,000 APWU members, the contract was overwhelmingly condemned and the demand of amnesty for all strikers approved. \$4000 was voted for the legal expenses of fired workers.

The APWU San Francisco city local, which didn't strike, voted to send \$25 for every fired worker in the country. Workers at Chicago's O'Hare Airport facility have started an amnesty petition and the New York Good Contract Committee plans to take it up. (The GCC has also arranged for legal defense for the fired New Jersey strikers, since the Metro local has taken not one step to honor its repeated promises to defend them.) The Letter Carriers National Convention in Chicago at the beginning of August voted to recommend rejection of the contract.

Fired workers from both coasts are mobilizing to go to the APWU convention, which begins August 13 in Denver, to agitate for a no vote and to make sure the issue of amnesty is not quietly swept under the rug.

The see-saw battle between the Postal Service and the postal workers, between repression and rebellion, will continue for some time. Mail ballots on the contract will not be tabulated until later this month. If the sellout is rejected, negotiations may be reopened or the USPS may refuse and throw it to binding arbitration.

In either case, the determination and militancy that post office workers show in weeks to come will have much to do with what they can gain at the bargaining table, and how prepared they are to strike should it prove necessary.

To send messages of support and financial aid to the fired strikers, write:
 POSTAL EMPLOYEES SUPPORT COMMITTEE
 c/o Nancy Toombs, 2525 Ashby Avenue, #3
 Berkley, California 94705
 BULK WORKERS DEFENSE FUND
 c/o Assoc. of Legal Aid Attorneys
 351 Broadway, New York, New York 10013
 Postal workers can keep up on developments in the contract battle by calling the hot line 201-435-3843.

shop floor have helped set other forces in the USWA into motion. It has created conditions for some local union officials to take a bolder stand and put pressure on others to get moving.

A number of local officers were elected on slates opposing the traitors now running the union. Others have lately come to realize the bankruptcy of grovelling at the company's feet. Some are fearful of going against the sentiments of the rank and file or sense opportunity in the current administration's weaknesses. And McBride has interfered in many locals.

A loose grouping of opposition officials has formed going into the convention. At this point the main issue they are united around is winning the right to ratify all contracts for the membership. There is also considerable sentiment for dumping the ENA, getting a fairer dues structure and ending sabotage of locals on strike.

Right to Ratify slates are running for delegate positions in at least nine districts. A District 31 convention voted to endorse a whole opposition program and Joe Samargia, president of a large Mesabi mining local, estimates that as many as 1,000 of the 3,000 elected delegates will go in pledged to fight for the right to ratify and the other demands. However, 2,000 USWA staff members, all appointed and paid by the International, also get to attend as voting delegates, a powerful block for McBride.

RANK AND FILE MOBILIZATION

Forces around the *Steelworker* newspaper are mobilizing to try and get the maximum possible benefit out of the convention for the rank and file.

They have put out the slogan "No wine and dine in Atlantic City" to sum up the feelings of many steel workers toward high-rolling convention antics. This is an important part of using the opportunity presented by the convention to put a spotlight on McBride's record of faithful service to the steel bosses to shove it back down his throat.

The *Steelworker* has singled out four key demands for the convention: 1) The right to ratify, 2) Smash the ENA, 3) Support, not sabotage, of steel workers' struggle, and 4) Keep the rank and file referendum vote for union officers.

These demands and McBride's shameful record will be raised first in local delegate elections throughout August. Supporters of the *Steelworker* are running for delegate positions, both as individuals and on opposition slates, and supporting tickets around the right to ratify and other issues.

All the way up to the convention, people working with the *Steelworker* will be organizing for it by collecting rank and file grievance forms inside the mills, representing the thousands of grievances in every facility which are filed and ignored by the union and company, or never even filed because what good would it do.

For the first day of the convention the *Steelworker* has called for a militant rally and press conference made up of delegates and other union members right in front of the hall. It will feature a giant garbage can on the Boardwalk in front of the entrance filled with thousands of the rank and file grievance forms. But this time instead of going into the can, the grievances will be pulled out and read to bring out the abuses that steel workers face and their demands for action. Delegates working with the *Steelworker* will also provide a sum-up of each day's goings on for a 24-hour telephone hot line to get daily reports back into the mills.

Although McBride and Company think the convention is their turf, Atlantic City is shaping up to be a battlefield in steel workers' escalating struggle to defend themselves against the companies and the traitors who have put the USWA at the companies' disposal.

P.O. WILDCAT...

continued from page 5

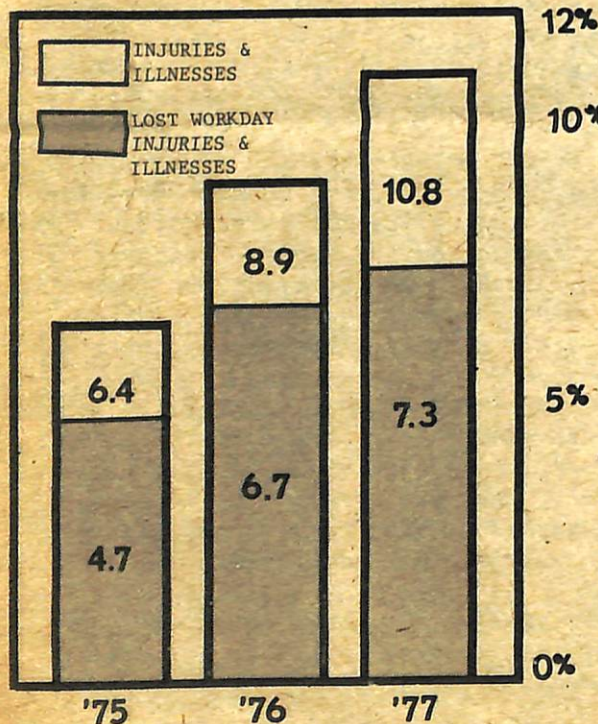
ie against the wildcat and actually banned any strike action by anyone, and outlawed leaflets or anything else which caused workers to stay out, call in sick or slow down on the job--even if the leaflet itself didn't call for any such thing! The good judge, however, did say that individual postal workers had the right to discuss striking, as long as they didn't do anything about it.

Biller caved in outright, telling stewards, "There is no strike vote. There will be no strike." With New York under control, the USPS began to breathe easier.

ATTACK AND RESISTANCE

The battle over the 1978 contract is still raging hot and heavy. Strike centers are under virtual martial law. Postal inspectors are running the New Jersey Bulk Mail Center. Leaflets, even official union leaflets, were banned. More firings are in the works as photos and videotapes of the picket lines are reviewed and workers inter-

Speedup Threatens Lives



During 1975, just over 6 of every 100 p.o. workers was sick or hurt. Now it is up to 11 in 100, due to speedup-induced injuries.

Steelworkers Say:**No Wine & Dine at USWA Convention
McBride Faces Challenge For His Sellout Record**

On September 18, over 5000 delegates to the national convention of the United Steel Workers of America will assemble in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the would-be Las Vegas of the East. Lloyd McBride, USWA president, is out to maintain his control over a union rumbling with unrest at his sellout policies at a time when his masters in the steel companies are demanding more and more.

Already some forces in the union are mobilizing to challenge McBride's machine on the convention floor, putting forward demands--like for contract ratification by membership vote--that could provide new openings for steel workers in their struggle. The rank and file of the union, 1,400,000 strong, have been hard hit by company attacks. Many will be watching closely to see what new schemes McBride has in store.

Like most any international union convention these days, a good part of the program will be fun and games for the assembled delegates. There will be so many white suits it will look like a hospital operating room and the bars, restaurants, peep shows and especially the casinos will be packed. No wonder the rank and file often react with cynicism and hostility to even a mention of the convention. Their dues pay for the bash and then the International big shots use the good times to line up local officials behind McBride.

Also like the conventions of other unions, a lot of time will be spent in calling everyone "brother", cussing out the steel companies and hailing the varied and wonderful accomplishments of the International leadership.

But underneath the partying and the propoganda, there are big issues at stake in the USWA convention. If some of these questions are fought out on the convention floor, it will mark a significant difference with the average union convention in recent years.

LABOR TRAITOR--BOSESSES' WAITER

Lloyd McBride, handpicked heir to I.W. "No-Strike" Abel, plans to keep up Abel's tradition of collaboration with the big steel companies and to pour water on the fires of rebellion in the union. The steel companies are yelling "jump" and for McBride the convention is a place to figure out how high.

The Abel-McBride team have been invaluable agents of the big steel companies whose workers make up the core of the USWA membership. The American steel industry is old and inefficient. The overall economic crisis of US capitalism has intensified its problems, with demand for steel erratic. As a result, it has been insufficiently profitable for the capitalists to sink large amounts of new money into the industry.

The companies' main push over the last decade has been for increased productivity. The International leadership obliged with union productivity commissions in the mills and contract provisions which hinged employment to increased output. Worse still, they sat on their hands as the steel companies eliminated over 100,000 jobs from 1967 to the present--while jacking up production. Today the average steel worker produces the same amount in 30½ hours that took 40 hours to turn out ten years ago!

Whole plants have been shut down, like Youngstown Sheet and Tube in Ohio last year where 5000 jobs were lost and the attitude of the union officials is still "What can we do? We can't tell the steel companies how to run their business."

Black workers are frequently hardest

hit. Having made it into many plants, departments and crafts only in the last decade, they are the first to face layoffs. And when conditions deteriorate, the threat to health and safety is gravest in the coke ovens, blast furnaces and other dead-end departments where Blacks are concentrated.

Whenever contract time rolled around, the International bigwigs were ready to give Big Steel the green light for new attacks. When the 1977 sellout was presented to local presidents for ratification, it was voted down. Only after extensive greasing and arm twisting was the pact ratified. This helped fuel sentiment for the right to ratify by membership vote.

To top it off, the last two contracts

have featured the notorious Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA)--the no-strike deal which strips the rank and file of the right to walk out even for a contract.

TREACHERY THAT MANAGEMENT LOVES

Finally, the Abel-McBride machine has acted as Big Steel's police force, stepping in to sabotage or crush outright the increasing resistance. Their crimes range from refusing strikers their benefits and "early bird" contract agreements in small locals behind the backs of the members to appointing a monitor to oversee the Burns Harbor local because the workers in one department refused to stop their slowdown. As McBride

continued on page 7



Rank and file steel militants protest 1977 national contract in Harrisburg Pa.

Shipyard Workers Hit Beth, Hacks As Contract Nears

Sparrows Point, Md.--On July 29, 75% of the 400 workers in the welding department of the Sparrows Point shipyard staged a one-day walkout. They were victorious in forcing the company, part of the Bethlehem Steel empire, to rehire a shop steward fired the day before and reduce his penalty to a 5-day suspension.

The spirit of solidarity that developed among the workers gave them a powerful weapon to take into their battle for their contract, coming up on August 13. It provided the spark for 200 workers to show up for a cancelled union meeting August 5. After waiting a half-hour in the pouring rain for the cowardly, no-show union officials, 150 workers held a short meeting in a nearby bar, where they voted to authorize a strike if necessary.

The company has been going wild since the wildcat, trying to break the unity of the workers, using such tactics as interrogating those who walked out one by one, to try and nail the leaders. The workers are hanging tough--the only talking they are doing is to other workers in the plant and area, like at the company's repair yard, Key Highway, several miles away.

In response to these organizing moves, the company has brought down even more attacks on the workers. New rules are turning Sparrow Point into a virtual prison--the workers cannot talk to each other for over a minute, stand in groups of more than five or take cigarette breaks. One worker, John Fournelle, has already been suspended for ten days on no evidence for instigating the walkout. These actions have only outraged the workers into stepping up their fight even more.

They have collected 500 signatures at Sparrows Point on a petition with four major demands: 1) a meeting to discuss the contract, 2) a strike authorization vote, 3) reports on the negotiations, and 4) the right to strike over local issues. If these demands are not met, they are threatening to impeach the union officers, who have ignored the workers entirely while negotiating with Beth Steel hundreds of miles away in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. A similar petition is circulating at Key Highway.

Letters will be distributed to Beth's smaller shipyards in Hoboken, New Jersey and East Boston, Massachusetts, as the isolated locals never have in the past tipped the balance in favor of contracts rejected by Sparrows Point workers.

The struggle has already gotten support from the steelside at Sparrows Point and other Baltimore workers, including the Baltimore United Workers Organization.