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BATTLE ACTS

"...no more traditions chains shall bind us..."

YAWF Women's International Women's Day demonstration 1970.

International Women's Day & Clara Zetkin

by Kathy Durkin

Women took to the streets of the Lower East Side in New York City March 8, 1908, to dramatize their demands for a decent living and human rights under the banner of "Votes for Women." It is a tribute to Clara Zetkin, a German socialist who proposed that March 8 become International Women's Day, that the 1910 International Socialist Conference proclaimed the day, which since has become the one international day that women celebrate to demand an end to their oppression. In 1917 St. Petersburg's women textile workers started a spontaneous strike to mark the day. They demanded "peace, bread, land"; soon their numbers swelled to 90,000 as the men workers joined their ranks -- the strike initiated the Russian Revolution! The tradition of struggle of March 8 was revived last year by women in many U.S. cities, who raised demands for such rights as abortions, childcare, equal pay, decent jobs and education. In New York City YAWF Women organized a rally and marched to the Women's House of Detention, where we chanted "free our sisters." We are going back this International Women's Day, to unite our struggle with our sisters around the world who are fighting for their liberation.

Clara Zetkin (1857-1933) dedicated her life to the revolutionary struggle in Germany, with the worldwide emancipation of women her first concern. She didn't come from the working class herself, yet she concentrated her energies on the fight for working women's rights. She knew personally the special situation that working mothers experience because she raised two children single-handedly after her husband's death. Her life's work, in that light, becomes all the more poignantly significant.

Clara Zetkin was born in Saxony, Germany, in 1857 to a family of scholars and university professors. Unlike most German women of her time, her training was more intellectual than domestic. She studied at a university, where she was first introduced to radical ideas. After teaching for a while, Clara decided to make a break with her family and went to live in Paris. She became active in the socialist movement there and married a revolutionary refugee from Russia. The first time she returned home after her marriage, her socialist friends hung a red flag in her garden!

It was when her husband died, leaving her with two small children, that Clara Zetkin became personally aware of the plight of working women. In Paris, and later in Stuttgart, Germany, she lived amidst great poverty. Her daily struggle to feed herself and her children had an enormous impact on her revolutionary ideas. Her determination to fight for socialism and the liberation of women deepened into a devotion to the struggle of working women that never ceased throughout her lifetime.

Clara Zetkin was the first to raise the question of equal rights for women before a gathering of Social Democrats at a conference of the Second International in 1889. Rosa Luxemburg of Germany and Lenin and Alexandra Kollontai of Russia supported her position. In 1907 at the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart, Zetkin, among other German women, demanded that women's suffrage be fought for with the same vigor as that of universal manhood suffrage. The congress

voted unanimously to support the women workers' campaign for the vote.

Finally, in 1910, after 21 years of agitation for a special day to be set aside to call for the solidarity of working women all over the world, March 8 was proclaimed International Women's Day by the Second International Conference of Socialists in Copenhagen on the proposal of Clara Zetkin. She hoped to use the day to attract broad groupings of women to unite and fight against the oppression imposed upon them by capitalist society. This day, commemorating a 1908 demonstration of women in New York City, has come to symbolize the women's struggle throughout the world.

Representing the women's organization of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), Zetkin also played a leading role in the International Socialist Women's Conference in Stuttgart in 1907, which established the Women's International Council of Socialist and Labor Organizations (the Women's Socialist International). For many years she was the international secretary of this council and was influential in the worldwide socialist women's movement.

From 1890 until 1917, Zetkin was the editor of "Gleichheit" (Equality), a bi-monthly journal put out by women in the SPD, which centered on the problems and demands of working women. Extremely articulate and highly politically developed, Clara was able to reach masses of working women through her articles.

When World War I broke out, the majority of the German SPD supported the German war effort and the German government. Zetkin, Luxemburg, and other members of the SPD who opposed the war — because it was an imperialist war being waged by and for the German bourgeoisie — formed the Spartacist faction in the SPD. In September 1914, they wrote a declaration protesting the SPD's support of the war and took a firmly anti-imperialist and anti-war position.

To openly come out in opposition to the war during a time of heightened war fever and German

Die Kommunistin

Organ der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Sektion der Kommunistischen Internationale)
herausgegeben vom Frauen-Reichssekretariat. Gegründet und unter ständiger Mitarbeit von Clara Zetkin

Nr. 18

Die Kommunistin erscheint am 1. und 15. jeden Monats. Beiträge der Leserinnen werden sehr dankbar entgegen genommen. Preis halbes Mark. Einzelhefte 500000 Mark.

Berlin, 15. September 1923

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Jahrg. 5



Aktion des gesamten Proletariats bringt das Ende der Wucherherrschaft

Clara Zetkin's women's magazine attacks inflation.

chauvinism, when the majority of the German socialists supported the war, required an enormous amount of courage and adherence to a truly revolutionary position of internationalism. For Clara Zetkin, this also meant daring to stand up alone at a time when the entire feminist movement was pro-war.

Yet, during the course of the war in March 1915, Clara convened the Socialist Women's Conference with delegates from European parties. It was extremely significant that women socialists from belligerent countries could come together at such a conference and strengthen their international ties by calling for an end to the war.

In the summer of 1917, Clara was fired by SPD leaders from her job of 26 years as editor of "Gleichheit" because of her opposition to the war. After that, Zetkin immediately assumed charge of the Women's Supplement of the party paper of the Independent Social Democrats, entitled "Grauenbeilage." (Her grouping in the Spartacists affiliated with this party after irreconcilable differences with

the SPD over the war.)

In October 1917, the great proletarian revolution in Russia shocked the world capitalist forces; an intense period of reaction followed. At a time when all bourgeois propaganda decried the revolution and the German Socialist movement itself was split over supporting the Bolshevik seizure of state power, the Spartacists again upheld their revolutionary principles and supported the revolution. In fact, Clara Zetkin wrote a pamphlet defending the Russian Revolution and the establishment of the first worker's state there. The Spartacists left the Independent Socialists, which meant Zetkin had to forfeit her job as editor.

In January 1919, Zetkin helped found the German Communist Party (CP). Clara immediately set into motion plans for a women's newspaper and organizing among working women. Zetkin knew the problems facing women in postwar Germany — unemployment, rising prices, lower wages, higher taxes and the loss of many husbands and sons in the war. She also knew that in the USSR the status of women was already vastly superior to that in any capitalist country — women were equal before the law and were encouraged to participate in every level of life. Also housework and childcare were being collectivized and taken care of by society, instead of by individual women in isolated households.

She visited Lenin in 1920 to ask his advice; in the course of their conversations, which Zetkin later wrote into her famous "Recollections of Lenin," they discussed the oppression of women, how to organize the masses of working women who were in ferment after the war, and how to win them to the revolutionary struggle which would lay the material groundwork for their liberation. Lenin stressed showing women by the concrete examples in the Soviet Union that the total liberation of women could only occur through the socialist reconstruction of the economy. Lenin felt the importance of reaching women so strongly that he suggested one-half of the work of the German CP be concerned with women's struggles.

Lenin suggested to Zetkin that German women call a nonpartisan international women's congress with delegates from working women's organizations, unions, bourgeois organizations and professions in each country, which would put forward demands of women for equal pay for equal work, an 8-hour day, the right to be in trades and professions, labor protection for women, the right to organize unions and care of mothers and children by society. Clara whole heartedly worked to set up the congress but was unable to call it because of many organizational problems.

As one of Clara Zetkin's contemporaries wrote in 1915, "She is socialist in every fibre and is a fighter ready to face death rather than give up on any issue of import in the people's struggles." Until her death in 1933 Clara Zetkin affirmed her revolutionary principles in the face of enormous political opposition and personal hardship.

International Women's Day stands as one concrete result of Clara Zetkin's lifetime career of struggling for women. This March 8 let us remember the legacy of Clara Zetkin.

APPEAL TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

F
R
O
M

NGUYEN
THI
BINH

Foreign Minister
of the Provisional Revolutionary Government
of South Vietnam

MESSAGE: received by telephone from PRG,
2:00 pm Sunday, February 7, 1971, Ann Arbor,
Michigan.

The PRG in Paris has today issued an appeal to the student and youth conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and to peace loving people throughout the world to initiate firm, broad and immediate actions, including massive street demonstrations to condemn U.S. aggression in Laos and to check new plans to invade Cambodia, Laos and North Vietnam.

The PRG confirms that as of February 4, tens of thousands of Saigon, Thai and American troops have crossed into Laos with motorized vehicles. More than 20,000 Saigon paratroopers, marines and rangers are involved. At least two regiments of the 3rd infantry division of the puppet Thai army have gone into Laos, in coordination with the puppet army of Laos.

The PRG asserts that the U.S. ground troops, and not just American advisors, are involved and that round-the-clock bombing in support of ground troops is being carried out by the U.S. Air Force in Laos. This military aggression is the first stage of a still larger aggression being planned. The PRG says that the apparent U.S. plan is to invade all of Indochina, including Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam and that 10,000 U.S. troops are now massed on the Laotian border.

The PRG urgently calls on the people of the world to condemn this new escalation of the war and to take actions now that could check the plans for even greater escalation about to occur. The PRG states that there is a world-wide news blackout on this military escalation and that the American people must bring this news to their communities through every available channel.



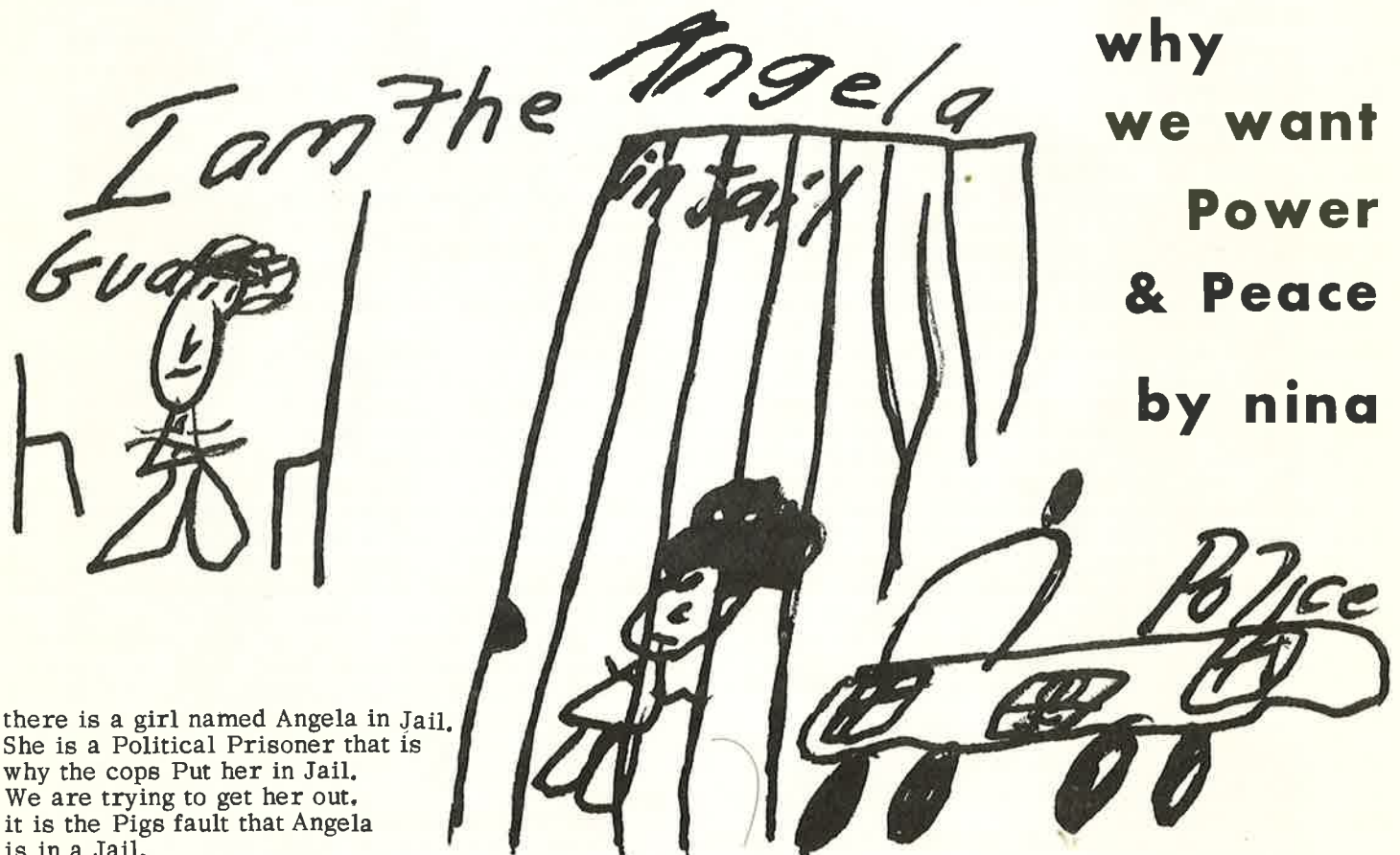
Children's liberation NOW

● ● ● SECRET BULLETIN ● ● ●

a review--by aaron

by Kao Sha Jua & San-Chuan
published in People's China
available through Battle Acts
40¢

Once there were two friends. The girl's name was Chen Hsiao-fen. The other child thought that he was older, though they were the same age. One day they were printing secret bulletins. The bulletins said that Shanghai would soon be liberated. But when the boy tried to mimeograph it, the stencil tore. Chen Hsiao-fen said to add some kerosene. But the boy was stubborn. He said it did not need kerosene. But it kept tearing. Then the boy exposed the bulletins. Then a spy saw him. The spy grabbed him. The girl distracted the spy so he let the boy go. The spy grabbed the girl. Then the boy went to the park. When he got to the park the girl was there. But she was badly bruised. They were thinking of the coming liberation. Then the boy thought that the girl was older. I liked the story because it showed that the boy thought that he was older in the beginning and in the end he thought that the girl was older.



there is a girl named Angela in Jail.
She is a Political Prisoner that is
why the cops Put her in Jail.
We are trying to get her out.
it is the Pigs fault that Angela
is in a Jail.

Word Power & the Sounds of Struggle

by Jeanette and Mallory Merrill

Mallory is six. She's in the first grade. She's imaginative and creative, sensitive yet aggressive—full of energy and enthusiasm—really no different than millions upon millions of other girls and boys her age. But already I can see the effects of the system's schools on her—developing traits of self-centeredness, self-interest and competitiveness with her classmates. It's a problem that all sensitive parents face, but especially mothers—we who have always borne the responsibility for raising children.

Tonight, after supper, Mallory said in a rather bored tone, "Hey, mom, I have to study my sounds. Will you help me?" And so she began: "A is for apple, B for boy..." I cast a rather disappointed glance her way. It's funny, we didn't say much, but she knew exactly what I was trying to convey—at least what I was trying to encourage her to do.

In a matter of seconds, she said rather joyfully, "I have a great idea, mom. Let's use 'power words', ok?" And so she began once again: "A is for Angela, B is for Bobby. B is for Black, too! I really can't think of anything for C now, mom."

"Forget C, Mallory—think of some others." I said.

And so it went on: "Fist, freedom, Panther, Ericka, Martin, Geraldine, woman's struggle (I was really on cloud 9!), poor, power, people, worker, sister, etc., etc."

True, there was no alphabetical order, but

Black Angela
Martin Huey
~~A~~ Ericka Power
Woman's Struggle
Bobby Seale
fist Sister
Poor
Panther
People Worker
Geraldine

neither was there boredom or lack of interest. The momentum picked up with each new "sound of struggle." It was our own little game. And she practiced writing them too (with some help in spelling the more difficult words).

I had just finished reading aloud to her (not half an hour before) "Children's Liberation Now" in the February, 1971 issue of BATTLE ACTS. I'm sure this helped provide the initial impetus and interest in our new game—"Word Power and the Sounds of Struggle."

We didn't worry about letters being slanted the wrong way, as she made eager attempts to put her thoughts on paper, or the fact that alphabetical sequence was lacking. And beaming with pride, we hung her paper on the refrigerator door with a magnet for all to see—and learn.

What a comparison to the sterile and suffocating classroom atmosphere where only the "neatest" work is put up on the bulletin board—where children are stripped of their beautiful imaginations—where to be sensitive is to be labeled "a dreamer," a "slow learner"—where children are pitted against one another from the very earliest age.

The educational system does a job on our children—it strips them of self-confidence and dignity; it discourages creativity. It discourages concern for others. But our children are born with free minds and strong spirits. They're willing to learn and share. They're so filled with compassion and honesty and truth. I've seen it with Mallory. It's in all children.

Our children represent the future of humankind—Let's help liberate them now!!

Sisters – behind prison bars

by Maryann Weissman

Maryann Weissman, National Co-ordinator of YAWF, was arrested July 1967 and sentenced to 6 months in jail for defying a bar notice given to her and Key Martin, National Chairman of YAWF, at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, when YAWF organized support for Andy Stapp, a GI resister. At that time, the GI movement was in its infancy, and YAWF's support of Ft. Sill GIs was instrumental in the eventual founding of the American Servicemen's Union. Ten weeks of Maryann's sentence were spent at Alderson, West Virginia, the only federal reformatory for women on the East Coast. The last ten weeks of her sentence were spent at Passaic County Jail. The government paid the county \$22.50 a day to keep Maryann in that jail where security is much tighter and lock up is 24 hours a day, as compared with an 8 P.M. lock-up at Alderson. February 5, 1970, Maryann was sentenced to a month at the Women's House of Detention in New York City for contempt of court. She had spoken out against the racist rulings of Judge Murtaugh during the trial of the New York Panther 21. Maryann is now actively involved in the case of the Auburn 6—six Black prisoners who were framed up as leaders of a rebellion stemming from a 1970 Black Solidarity Day celebration at Auburn prison.

"Sometimes I am on fire with ideas and eloquence about the crimes of prison... Most of the time prison leaves me feeling sad and empty and bewildered by the enormity of the hurt. Bruised, that's what I feel..."

-- a woman prisoner *

A sister, a comrade, handed me the quote. She knowingly asked if it brought back memories. It certainly did bring back feelings. Feelings that were stored up and can only superficially be expressed.

Such a quote could summarize one's experiences in prison, but it really just opens the door, leaves too much unsaid, too much unchallenged.

For the fire this sister felt and feels is the fire that has set the prisons across the nation in the blaze of rebellion. With each word of a prison rebellion, I am struck by the fact that nowhere across this country have our imprisoned sisters rebelled. Yet, I remember refusing with others to lock in for one of those meaningless counts because some hack was short on the count because she forgot that she had sent one of us off the floor. Few were the matrons who would walk down the corridor alone when we were unlocked.

During the New York prison rebellions, word got out of the Women's House of Detention that male guards were brought in that Sunday and had encircled the chapel, one of the few places where the sisters go in any number. Recreation was cancelled. The number of guards on duty were doubled, and except for "meals" and essential work details, everyone was locked all day. Even though the sisters' rebelliousness was silenced that day, we know their real feelings—we have watched the sisters, as we protested at the House of D, send out objects set on fire, raise clenched fists and scream "power to the people."

I know from everything I've experienced and read that the conditions of a women's prison, or to be accurate, a concentration camp where oppressed women are held, are no better than any other concentration camp. There is no less dirt. There are no fewer rodents. The degradation is no less. The time is no shorter. But we know that in this society we are forced into accepting or believing ourselves helpless. And prisons are so structured that every order, every slam of the gate, every turn of that oversized key in the oversized lock is made, is calculated, to drive you into accepting that role of helplessness. For in prison, you are helpless to do even the smallest thing such as turn your light on or off.

This is not to imply that life stops with the turn of the key. It was my experience in the short times that I lived behind bars that just the opposite occurs.

In retrospect, for the first time you understand the freedom or complete lack of freedom under which we all exist. Jail magnifies society. The struggle to exist is intensified. Here the hustle, the con, continues. Money plays its role of power. You must make clear where and how you stand. You become more conscious of yourself, or at least of yourself as you affect others. Your words, your actions, your gestures are weighed, so that in no way will you add to the hurt of a sister. For the first time in your life, you have time to sit and check yourself—what you are doing and where you are going.

And you find a way to escape the walls, through the exchange of desires, experiences—you find a new type of love—different than comradeship—

* (From Connections, newsletter about prisoners published in San Francisco.)

different than the love for kin or lover—and no matter how hard I try to describe it, my words are empty and I feel sad.

I believe I made many sisters in jail, those who are still there, those who have been sent back and those who are out. We remember each other on holidays when you are allowed to send out or receive greeting cards from unapproved correspondents. (A prisoner is allowed only a few correspondents. These are usually only family and close friends, people who are carefully screened and whose letters are highly censored.) Frequently, we will send or receive a belated birthday card just to let each other know where we are and that we remember.

Last week, I got a note from a sister with whom I spent last February in the House of D. "Just a few lines to say a lot more than hello. How is everything in New York. Well here in this funny city

Kathe Kollwitz



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called Norfolk, I'm sitting on my sofa wondering whether or not to come up there for a few weeks. I'm married now and living very happy without any trouble from anyone. For the last two weeks I've been sitting at home thinking about the Panthers—wondering. Tell Joan and Afeni hello if you can. Love, Shirley."

This letter came while Denna and I were spending several days together in New York. Denna and I had been in a county jail together several years ago. She had made parole on her second sentence for possession of heroin. We had seen each other just twice before, when she first got out.

The first time, we did all the things we complained about not being able to do in jail. We picked a softly lit place to eat—this was the first time we had seen each other outside the glare of institutional lights. You can be sure that neither of us ordered beans, rice, or potatoes. She wore a small clip on her turban, which she put in her shortly cropped Afro after removing the turban. "Well, for a year they wouldn't let me straighten my hair in the County so I learned to like it," she said, "and when I went to the State, they told me to straighten it. When I wouldn't, they had a mixed kind of respect and dislike."

The second time we saw each other was short and as sad as the first was bright. She had lost her job and was sick. She needed a fix...

Too many times in the County I sat with, held, and yelled for something for a "cellie" who was cold, and wet with pain, and sick. I had to cover for my sisters because the only way the guards could prove a woman was on drugs was when they found her sick. (The doctor in the County came once a week. He was afraid to touch us. If you used scag, you couldn't get an aspirin. If you didn't, when you asked for an aspirin you'd get darvon every three or four hours. But we wouldn't take the darvon. We'd keep it, horde it, so when a sister came in who was going through cold turkey, we'd give her five or six darvon at once. If it didn't help medically, it was good to know someone else cared.)

The last time I saw Denna she came to stay with me, but she would have come to stay with anyone of us whom she knew and trusted. She was looking for a place where she could get straight before she had to see her parole officer—by now she was strung out on a \$20-a-day habit. And she thought she was pregnant.

Denna had herself together when she left New York to see her parole officer in another city—the place where every pig knows her on sight and stops her to check for drugs. It would be another month before she saw her parole officer again—she could have another month on the streets.

All we could do was part with an embrace. She, assuring me never again, and me, saying that if there had to be an again I could understand...

...Understand the desire to feel something better at great cost. Understand that with our different ways—we needed the same thing. Understand—love for the oppressed—hate, a desperate hate, for those who cause any part of this oppression.

Have you had trouble getting a telephone call through lately? If you have, the next thing you probably have done is call the operator. Now, assuming you can reach the operator, you take out your anger at the phone company on the operator. But did you know that the operator, too, has had trouble getting calls through all day; and on top of that, she is forced to politely accept not only your abuse but the abuse of thousands of other customers of the phone company.

Perhaps you have wondered what exactly an operator does. Does she simply push buttons all day and say, "May I help you?" No! Her main function is to serve as a scapegoat for the telephone company's inadequate circuits and service. Instead of improving the company's equipment and lines, the management decides it is easier and cheaper to put on a courtesy campaign through the operators.

During training, we are shown films and given written instructions demanding that operators always be "courteous and patient." We cannot interrupt a customer, accuse the person of dialing the wrong number or hang up if someone is swearing obscenities at us.

If we can put up with all the nastiness and rudeness people give us, we may even receive a letter of commendation from a customer! This very rarely happens and when it does, the operator is required to reply with a personalized thank you note! Occasionally, the company will "reward" an operator by printing her name on a piece of paper and tacking it on the bulletin board with a blue ribbon!

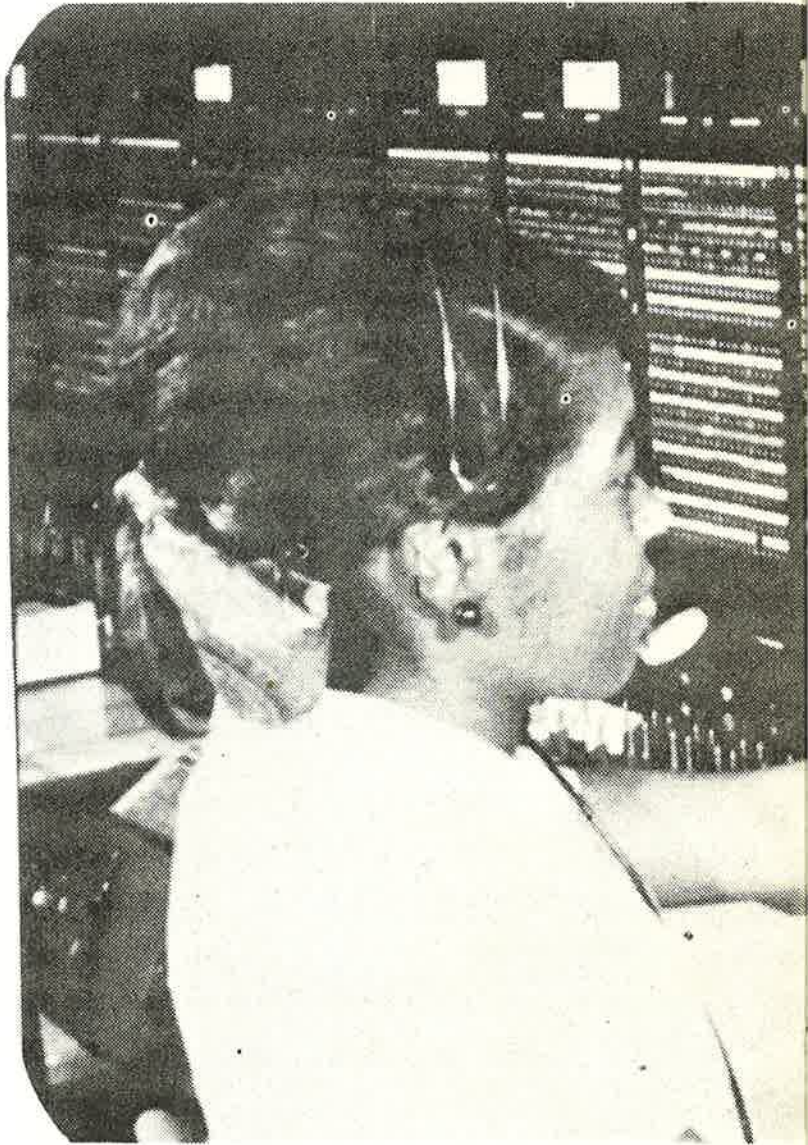
Women telephone operators are the most exploited of all phone workers. We are paid the lowest wages and work under the worst conditions of any other group of telephone company employees. Operators in Boston start at a net pay of \$80 a week, or \$2 an hour, and receive only 5 cents an hour increase every six months. Top pay in Boston—even if a woman has been working for 25 years—is \$110 a week. Few women can stand the conditions for more than a few months. The turnover rate is 60 percent in six months.

Operators are mostly working mothers, students or young women living at home. Half of the operators are Black and Third World women while the management is almost all white. Racism is an unwritten company policy—they feel they are doing Black women a favor by "keeping them off welfare."

Being an operator is like being a link in a chain of women who serve businessmen. All the high-paying jobs in the phone company are given to men. Men decide pay, hours and lay-offs. In an all-women telephone operator's office, the manager is always a man. He even decides the kind of clothes the women wear! The rank-and-file operator never sees "him"—only the chief operator talks to "him," and not very often.

A full-time operator works nine hours a day, including a compulsory 45-minute lunch break that is taken out of her time. After that we are allowed only two 15-minute breaks during the day. The rest of the time we are expected to sit at the board. We're not supposed to look up from the switchboard or turn around, much less talk to the women next to us, even during slow periods when there are 5 minutes between

DIAL "0" FOR - 0



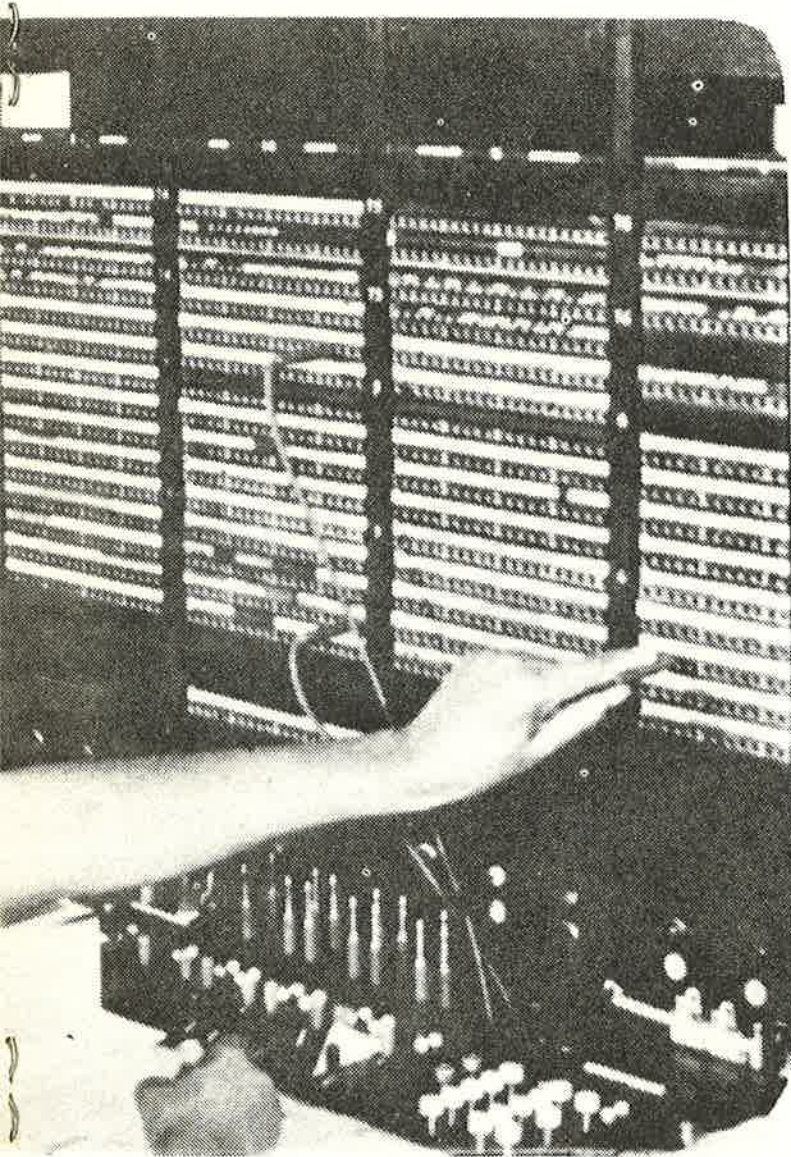
calls. We must just sit there and watch the clock.

"Superfluous" talking is forbidden even between operators and customers. Instead, we are forced to memorize pat formulas designed to fit any situation, and if the customer doesn't understand the formula, we are supposed to sweetly repeat it. This, of course, only infuriates the customer more.

An operator is not allowed to make any mistakes.

by Brenda and Peggy
Boston YAWF Women

OPPRESSION



All calls taken by each individual operator are checked by computers in the Central Ticket Investigating Bureau and all errors are recorded. Then, we are confronted with our mistakes periodically. Each mistake is treated as if it has sent electric shocks through the entire Bell System.

Besides this, supervisors act like spies and

leeches, constantly harassing us: "Work faster! Stop talking!" "The customer is always right!" An operator can be fired on the spot for a "bad tone of service" or for a "bad attitude." The supervisor can secretly plug in to any call an operator is handling. She can also plug directly into the operator's headsets and accuse her of an infraction. The operator cannot even turn her head to her accuser to defend herself—if she does, she can be fired for "insubordination."

Out of an office of 60 operators, only two are allowed to go to the bathroom at a time. When we want to go, we have to call over a supervisor who puts us on a waiting list. Supervisors count heads every half hour to make sure no one has escaped! We are reprimanded if we leave for lunch, coffee break, or home one minute early. It is our problem if we get stuck on a call and have to leave 5 minutes late. Women get so tired of sitting at the board that they offer to do anything for the supervisors—just to relieve the boredom—including washing the boards, sinks and toilets for just a few minutes.

Why then are women attracted to working for the phone company? Most women think of it as a half-decent, clean, good-paying, stable job. When an operator starts the job, she is told she will get a lot of benefits if she stays long enough. One example is half-rate on your own phone bill. But the company does everything it can to disqualify the operator for this—you can't even get this "benefit" for at least a year or more. One woman was fired and rehired in two weeks so that she would lose all the benefits she had earned. Every sick day is taken out of our pay despite all the so-called medical benefits. If a woman has to leave early for illness or home problems her pay is docked.

About one-half of the operators work part-time. Despite the lack of operators (how often have you gotten a busy signal when you've dialed "O" or had to wait, 5, 10 minutes and even longer for an operator?), women who call in for emergency "voluntary time" are denied it. Part-time operators are the first to be laid off—without warning—no matter what their seniority. Many women who desperately depend on their jobs are given no warning—"that's your tough luck" they are told. When women complain, the management says, "it's the union's fault" or "it's due to inflation." But, of course, the company has been advertising and hiring all along.

But the real reason for the lousy, low-paying jobs, unexpected lay-offs and miserable service has nothing to do with the workers. The real reason is that the giant monopoly AT&T is run not in the interest of the workers or the customers, but in the interests of the few who get rich from the low wages and poor communications.

So the next time you dial a wrong number or call the operator for help—the next time you're ready to rip your phone off the wall—don't take it out on the operator. Remember, she's your sister, and as hard a time as you may be having, multiply her frustrations by 100—at least. After all, we're only playing Bell Tel's game when we take out our frustrations on the operators.

MA BELL--GO TO HELL!!

STRIKE! women in gastonia, n.c.

by Kate Stoval

"I'm the mother of nine. Four of them died with whooping cough, all at once. I was working nights and nobody to do for them, only Myrtle. She's eleven and a sight of help. I asked the super to put me on day shift so's I could tend 'em, but he refused. I don't know why. So I had to quit my job and then there wasn't any money for medicines, so they just died. I never could do anything for my children. Not even keep 'em alive, it seems. That's why I'm for the union. So's I can do better for them."

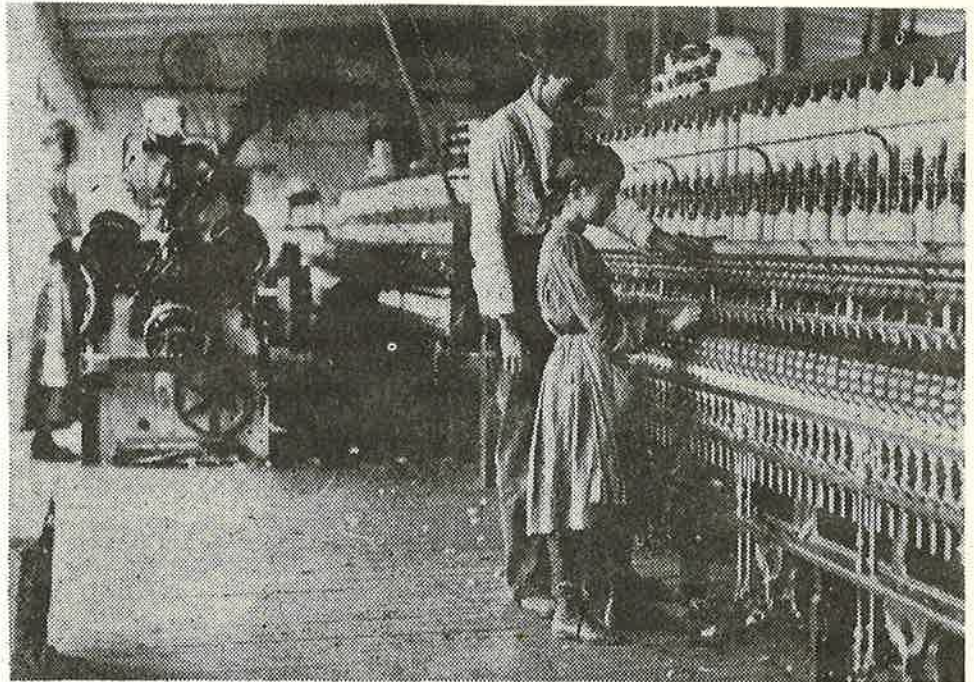
These were the words of Ella May Wiggins, a 29-year-old working mother who was murdered by a goon squad during the 1929 strike at the Loray cotton mills in Gastonia, North Carolina. And it is not by chance that it was a woman who was shot. Ella May Wiggins and thousands of women like her were not bystanders in strikes such as the one in Gastonia. In textile mills across the U.S., it was women who made up the majority of the workers. It was women who very often led the battles, and fought and died beside the men for better working conditions and for union recognition.

Gastonia was a typical southern mill town. Almost all the workers had come to the town from the surrounding hill and mountain country, where they had lived at or near starvation for decades and were finding it more and more impossible to live by farming. All but a small handful were white—Black workers, if employed at all by the racist owners, were given the most menial, low-paying jobs. (In many southern mill towns at that time Blacks were not employed at all by the mills, but had to eke out an even poorer existence than the mill workers as domestic or handy workers—that is, yard mowers, etc.)

The bosses had an abundant supply of cheap labor—unskilled workers who had previously worked on the land, women and children whom they paid still less than the men, as well as a large reserve of unemployed labor. This reserve,

which they could use as a threat to keep wages as low as they liked, consisted of whites still living in the hills and of the many unemployed and vastly underemployed Blacks who lived in the area. The average wage in the mills in the Gastonia area was \$12 a week for

housework when they came home. Their wages were lower than those of the men. And they got only a few weeks off before and after the birth of a child. In addition, they suffered the terrible pain of knowing that their children who were too young to work or to go to school



a 10- to 12-hour day.

Loray mill owned the houses the workers lived in, renting them for a high rent, keeping them in bad repair, and requiring a certain number of family members to work in the mills before they were eligible to rent a house. Many of those who rented houses had to sublet space in order to pay the rent. The company store and the credit system kept workers in debt all the time. There were also company boarding houses and a company playground. The ministers in the company churches—which were all of them—preached against the strike when it broke out, as did the Gastonia Gazette, the company-controlled local rag.

The conditions of women workers were unbearable. Not only did they have to work 10 or 12 hours in the mill, but they had to do all the

were at home all day with no one to care for them.

One of the sparks of the Gastonia strike and the attempt to organize the Loray mills was the introduction of greater speed-up and piece-work, euphemistically called the "rationalization process" by the bosses. Speed-up was labeled "stretch-out" by the workers because they had to tend a larger number of machines—literally stretching themselves over a larger area. The machines were already moving at double-time at the time of the speed-up.

The Loray mills, owned by the Manville-Jenkes Company, were the largest of their kind in the entire United States. If Loray could be organized, the whole Southern factory system and company towns would be threatened.

In February, 1929, Fred Beal,

growing up in a southern mill town

by Kate Stoval

Little has changed in the textile mills of the South since the days of the Loray strike. The working conditions have improved somewhat, but most of the mills remain unorganized -- a mill town is still a mill town, and the tired, aged faces of the women and men remain the same. One of the biggest changes has been the hiring of Black workers in the mills. This is beginning to prove a real threat to the owners who are faced with a new surge of militancy from the Black workers -- a militancy which cannot help but spill over to the white workers.

But although there have been these few changes in the conditions of the workers in southern mill towns, workers and all others living in these mill towns still find every aspect of their lives controlled by the mill owners.

Because a single industry--the cotton mills--is the largest employer, the owners always hold the threat of vast unemployment over the entire town. If there are massive layoffs or if the owners decide to close the mills and move elsewhere in search of workers whom they think will not rebel and will work longer hours for lower wages, they can throw the whole town out of work, because the small shopkeepers cannot continue if there is no one to buy their wares.

Today, the mill owners still own the town, but they have tried

to take on a more liberal facade. They have sold most of the company-owned houses and stores to improve their image, and to avoid the cost of upkeep, but they still are the real owners. It is they who hold controlling interest in the banks -- which hold large mortgages over the houses and stores.

Schools are terrible. They are

purposefully kept this way by the bosses, whose children go to private schools. The bosses consider themselves the "heads" and want to make sure that the workers, the "hands," will only be able to get jobs in the mills. In the school in the mill town that I grew up in, we were taught no physics, chemistry, or math beyond simple geometry. There were no shop classes. Typing was begun only after the bosses realized that they had to pull a few secretaries out of the local high school; but other stenographic skills were ignored, lest we get any ideas that we were too good to work for the local mill bosses.

There were many courses in home economics, however--after working all day or night in the mill, women still have to come home and do the housework. And, of course, there was no one to inform us about any means of making a living outside of the mill town itself.

Of the approximately 150 students who began in my ninth-grade class, only 33 graduated. Only three of these were ever able to go on to college, even by working to pay for it ourselves.

What doctors we had in the town were the next thing to quacks (we were among the lucky towns, in that we had any doctor). This, combined with the all pervading re-

(continued to page 19)

---gastonia strike

an organizer for the National Textile Workers Union and a member of the Communist Party, went to Gastonia to organize the Loray workers. During the first two months, he organized a few of the workers into a small, secret union. Through the company's extensive spy network, the union was discovered and some of the leaders were fired. This attack so enraged the workers that they held a mass meeting and decided to strike--25,000 workers walked off the job on April 2, 1929.

On the same day, the governor of North Carolina, who was himself a cotton mill owner, sent in five companies of militia to quell the strike.

From the very beginning women played leading roles in the strike and were among the most militant workers. This was evident in an incident described in the Baltimore Sun: "When they (the militia) arrived they began to clear the streets around the mill to the accompaniment of the nagging cries of the strikers. When one of the soldiers...started to push back a... woman who stood her ground, she told him to stop pushing; that she would go away but would not be driven. The soldier did not take the hint and the woman cracked him over the head with a stick. It required four soldier boys to carry her from the field and deposit her in the calaboose. The woman, Mrs.

Bertha Tompkins, with four children under five, whose receipt of \$4 for three nights' work of 11 hours each had put certain unconventional ideas in her head, was released on \$100 bail."

Another incident was recorded by an on-looker who "saw a woman striker knocked down and stuck with a bayonet until she bled profusely. She struggled to her feet and marched on-- in the parade."

The mill owners' slogan was "Mob Rule versus Law and Order"--but the real mob was the Committee of 100, organized by the company and consisting of foremen, superintendents, scabs, spies, privileged workers and

(continued to page 19)

South African Women— slave laborers for white “missus”

Racial oppression and class oppression inevitably bear especially heavily upon women. Added to the disabilities which affect women of all classes in a non-socialist society, they form a crushing burden. Nowhere is this burden heavier than upon African women workers in South Africa. The sign of their indomitable courage is that they have refused to be crushed and down-trodden.

In South Africa, the exploiters and employers experience no shortage of cheap unskilled manpower. And they have preferred to employ men because men can more easily be moved around (and detached from family ties) than women. They are also physically better able to endure the hard labor which apartheid ordains to be the lot of almost all African workers.

Seventy-three percent of African women (nearly four million) live in rural areas. Of these under 4,000 are employed for a wage. In the “reserves,” women often remain on the land, cultivating the family’s tiny plot—while their husbands, working as migrant laborers, toil in the mines, on the White farms, on the roads and on the railways. These women attempt to scratch out a living from the exhausted soil for their children, but are usually also dependent on money sent home by the male breadwinner from his pitifully small earnings, which are also greatly depleted by taxation.

Of the women in rural areas who are employed, more than 85 percent work on White farms or as domestic servants.

Only 27 percent of African women live in urban areas. Rigorous controls exist to keep them out. Of this 27 percent (which at the same time is 47 percent of all wage-earning African women) nearly 80 percent are employed in domestic service. Sechaba looks at the conditions, in the city and in the country, of this vast majority of African women workers.

In the nineteenth century in Europe, during and after the Industrial Revolution, servants worked unlimited hours for negligible wages and lived in miserable conditions. Worse wages and conditions than these are the lot of the domestic servant in South Africa today.

In the cities, most women still work for less than £50 per annum. In Natal, for instance, a woman working in Durban who returns to her family in the location at night will commonly earn around £3 per month. Out of this she may be required to pay her own fares—often amounting to more than £1 per month.

If she lives on her employer’s premises, she will generally be accommodated in a shedlike



Women demonstrate on South African Women's Day, August 9.

structure in the backyard, with a tin roof and a cement floor—icy in winter and stifling in summer. A servant's lavatory will be provided but no facilities for bathing or proper washing—she will be expected to fill a bucket from a tap in the yard. At night, like those who live in the location, she will be disturbed by police raids. Even if her employer permitted it, it would be illegal for her husband to spend the night in her room.

African servants are usually fed on a special diet, consisting of maize, mealie rice and beans. They are also supplied with a small quantity of meat weekly—meat which is sold in the butchers' shops as "Boys' Meat" and considered unfit for White consumption.

Often, after a heavy day's work, a woman servant is expected to "babysit" for her employers. She lies on the floor of the children's room wrapped in a blanket, as she is not expected to occupy a "White" chair.

A typical African maid's day is likely to involve cooking, housework, care of children and often heavy laundry. Few South African Whites bother to buy labor-saving devices. Why should they? For they regard their servants as machines.

Apart from domestic and field work, what openings are there for African women? The answer, in terms of professions, is painfully clear: there are no African women attorneys, advocates, commissioners, engineers, architects, vets, chemists or university lecturers. African women doctors are a rarity. In view of their educational disabilities (only 0.1 percent get the opportunity to go to Senior Secondary School (Forms IV and V), it is indeed startling that 11,000 African women have managed to become teachers and 12,000 to become nurses. Opportunities as typists and shop-assistants are almost non-existent. The Whites, with their stranglehold on commerce, employ only White women in such positions.

While servants in the towns work under worse-than-nineteenth century conditions, in the rural areas their circumstances are feudal. Often, if they are married to or children of farm laborers, they are forced to work in the farm kitchen for nothing when sent for by the "missus." The best they can expect, for working in the fields or in the house, is a bag of maize, a few shillings or some discarded clothing. The work they occasionally get on a paid basis is at best seasonal—and in any case pitifully paid.

As regards work in production, 1.3 percent of rural women workers and 4 percent of urban women workers are engaged in it. Though African women in industry average an annual wage of only £132, their contribution to the working class struggle has been a magnificent one. In the South African Congress of Trade Unions, women have done outstanding work—and have been notable for their political realism and fiery eloquence. Inevitably, such women have been heavily penalized. Such women as Mildred Lesiea and Elizabeth Mafekeng of the Food and Canning Workers' Union and Viola Hashe of the African Clothing Workers' Union have been banned and confined. In addition,



many African women trade unionists have been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment or detained without trial and mercilessly interrogated.

The conditions of domestic service make the formation of a union under South African conditions an impossible task. Yet many domestic servants have also shown political consciousness. In the Johannesburg bus boycott, thousands of them set off for work before dawn and arrived home after midnight, rocklike in their refusal to pay increased fares.

"Our women are a rock" says one of our freedom songs, and their strength and courage are ever equal to new demands. Now indeed a new path is opening before them. For in the guerrilla training camps, dedicated women are today also playing their part. Like Chaka's women-warriors of old, they join battle against the foe. And as the struggle mounts in heat and intensity, more and more will flock to the liberators' standards. Their fortitude and fire have never been more necessary than in this new phase of the struggle.

*Reprinted with permission from the Official Organ of the African National Congress South Africa, *Sechaba* 3, no. 8, London (August 1969), pp. 9-10.

The Women's House of Detention stands on Greenwich Avenue and Eighth Street in New York City. If you stand there in the early evening, you will hear voices calling out. Invariably they call the same words: "Get me out!" The following is an interview with a Black woman, Paulette Makins, who was bailed out of the House of Detention on December 20, 1970, by the Women's Bail Fund. Paulette had been in jail since July 4th—six months—because she could not pay \$100 cash bond!

Q. Would you tell me something about your background?

A. My father had six of us in the family. When I first came to New York, I was six. I was sick and stayed with my aunt. We didn't get along, so she put me out and I stayed with my father. When I was fourteen, I went to a shelter called Carnegie Hall. It's a shelter for girls whose mothers don't want them. It's on 12th Street. When I was 17, I was too old for the place, so they sent me to live at the Salvation Army. They gave me a little job, and put me on welfare. Then I met these girls who had done time upstate, and we broke some rules. The didn't want us to stay, and we all moved out. So I started hanging out, going to parties, and about this time I started shooting drugs. I didn't know what drugs were before, but I learned. So after a while I got a habit; I started doing things—I did everything a person would do when they're shooting drugs. But you know, I never robbed a bank or stole from a store. I didn't do anything so wrong that I should go to jail for it. I finally got in the House of D for something I didn't do. For something you don't do, you go to jail—for something you do do, you don't go to jail. Q. What was it like for you the first time you were in?

A. The first time I was busted to the House of D, I just felt I had been there all my life. I had heard about it. It didn't hit me so hard the first time, not like the second time.

The second time, I felt like my mind was going to burst open. Especially when my friends come and go. You'd get friendly, then after a while, she'd go home. And being that I didn't have any letters, or any money for commissary, I felt bad. And then, I was off the calendar and didn't know when I was going to court.

Q. How do the women inside feel?

A. They are angry; but they hide their feelings from each other. They don't want anybody to know. It doesn't help getting upset, just gets the girls more upset; and being in that place is already upsetting. It would just make it worse. But sometimes you go to talk to them. You might say, "So and so, I know how you feel. What can I tell you? We're just like a helpless person in here. We have nothing and can get nothing. Just try to fight it. Don't let it get you down." There's not much you can really say.

Q. What generally is the reaction of the women to demonstrations outside the House of D?

A. We all say "Right on! Power to the People!"

Q. How did you feel towards women who had been arrested for political activity, like Angela?

"GET

by Veronica Golos

A. Angela, everyone liked Angela—how good she was—how smart she was. Just like any other person, once you get to know her.

Sometimes you hear talk about them, but they're like us.

Q. Then having someone from outside yell or visit is very important to the women?

A. It means a whole lot. If someone comes to see them it makes them feel like somebody cares—at least mail or money. If you know somebody on the outside cares about you on the inside, well you're all right. Other than that you feel nothing, you're sad, gone. Some feel that way--most feel "GET ME OUT!"

Q. How do you feel about the guards?

A. Some of the women inside thought they'd be back for homicide for killing a guard. Like the attitude I had, I thought I'd be back for that. You'd be surprised what those girls are thinking—that's why they have them locked up all the time. See, I never gave the guards an opportunity to get me all drugged up by fighting with those hacks. They're all afraid of us.

Some of the guards get tickled to death if they get you so mad you throw a glass of water at them, or you dirty up their blouse, any little thing. They love to see you suffer. They just love to see you go through hell. They're just pigs—that's why I always call them pigs. That's a good name they were named—pigs—I wish they were in jail.

Q. What do you think about the Bail Fund and other organizations that are supporting the prisoners?

A. I think it's great! When I first heard about the Bail Fund I got down and started writing. Some of the girls didn't believe it was true. Probably the first answer from the girls was "What do I have to do?" I'd tell them, "You're free to come, free to go."

Q. If other Bail Funds were set up, what do you think the attitude should be?

ME OUT!"

A. They should tell the prisoners or anyone who is bailed out that they don't have to do anything. That they're getting them out of jail because they feel that the women shouldn't be in there. Only that you're back on your feet and you have your freedom back.

Q. Do you want to speak about the conditions inside?

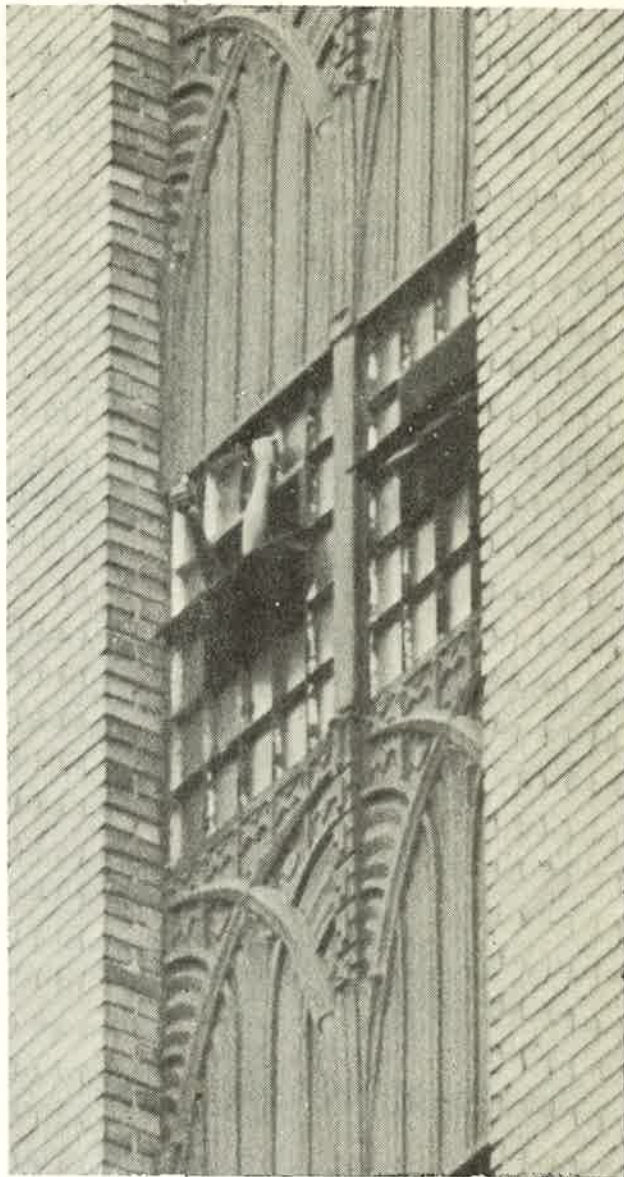
A. Yes. About 7 a.m. you have breakfast and go back in at 7:30. At 9:30 there is recreation. You go up to the roof or stay on the floor. But there's nothing to do. You can't go anywhere, only just stay on the spot—like a training dog, that's what it's like.

If you want to go back in your cell, you have to ask a pig to open up the gate. She'll ask you where you are going. She knows you're going back to your cell, but they make a big thing if you want to go back and read something. It makes you angry enough! You'd be surprised what you feel. During rec you can watch TV or listen to records of talk. But sometimes you just want to be by yourself. You get upset when they tell you to wait till rec is over -- and then you might cuss them out. Then you get locked up.

Or you know your temper and you just want to be cool. The pigs provoke you, and it makes the girls "go off." Quite a few girls just push over the food tray. They just don't care. The women inside get tired of being patient, of holding it down. Any girl in there can "go off."

Like a girl has a headache. The first thing a pig will tell her is that "the clinic truck was here this morning, why didn't you talk to the doctor then?" How are you supposed to know you're getting sick? So you just don't get anything. You have to wait till the next morning. You just have to suffer all that time.

They feel that when you get sick—being that you've been shooting drugs on the streets—that you want something to get high. (Yeah, you want



to get high, but no aspirin is going to get you high!)

I mean you've got to see a doctor to get an aspirin. Half the girls get sick because of the food, showers, or from the cells where the windows are all broken, or from the rats and roaches. They don't clean out the cells—the cells are filthy with dead rats. It's horrible—no heat; so you get sick in there, and the first thing the guards say is "reaction from drugs."

You're not supposed to get sick in the House of D. You supposed to stay healthy all the time. You ain't human so you're not supposed to get sick.

I see a lot of people outside, looking at the House of D. I heard someone say, "That's the House of D." The other one said, "That looks like a big apartment house!" I said to myself, "Yeah, if you could see it inside, see the conditions inside, BE there, you'd know it's not a big apartment house. It's a concentration camp—it shouldn't be standing up!

sisters—support union brothers

Two women, Peggy and Joyce, have organized the Camp McCoy Three Defense Committee in Colorado Springs for three GI organizers of the American Servicemen's Union (ASU). The Three were framed up on charges stemming from the August 26, 1970 bombing of the telephone exchange, electrical system and water works at Camp McCoy, Colorado. (August 26 is the 17th anniversary of Fidel Castro's attack on the Moncada Barracks.) Peggy, who has a small child, is married to one of the GIs Steve Geden. Joyce, a friend of Tom Chase, is a waitress who is trying to organize the waitresses in Colorado Springs into a union and get their support for the Three. Joyce and Peggy have contacted many union locals in Colorado to get support for the Three. As Terry Klug, National Organizer for the ASU, said, "That the announcement of the indictment came directly from Attorney General Mitchell makes it clear that this attack will be a major government attack on the GI movement." The Camp McCoy Three were transferred on February 27, in leg irons and their hands chained to their waists, to Madison, Wisconsin. The Madison address of the Defense Committee is The Camp McCoy Defense Committee, 306 North Brooks, Madison, Wisconsin. The following is a release sent out by Peggy and Joyce.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The American Servicemen's Union is made up of over 11,000 enlisted men and women in the American Armed Services throughout the world. Like other unions, it demands a federal minimum wage, election of officers, and to be treated with human dignity. In the 3 years since ASU was formed, the military, like any other boss, has constantly harassed the brothers and sisters.

Last July 26, there was a bombing at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. On Feb. 11, at Ft. Carson, Colorado, 3 union organizers, who happened to be at Camp McCoy at the time of the bombings, were indicted. The army is trying to frame union organizers in an attempt to destroy the union. This is not the first time in the history of American labor that a boss has used foul means to try to stop a union.

The brothers, Steve Geden, 22, Dannie Kreps, 21, and Tom Chase, 21, all Vietnam vets, are being held on a total of \$55,000 bond. If convicted, they face up to 35 years in prison and fines of \$30,000 each. Steve and Dannie are married and both have small children.

Since enlisted men and women make so little, dues for the American Servicemen's Union are very low, and there isn't enough money to bail

them out, or pay for lawyers. The ASU has started a national fund raising campaign, calling on everyone to help raise money. We would like to see the brothers out of jail to help with their own defense, and we know that they will need the best lawyers in the country. Any donation will be appreciated, and can be sent either to the CAMP MCCOY THREE DEFENSE FUND, P.O. Box 2602, Colorado Springs, Colo., 80901, or the national headquarters of the American Servicemen's Union, Room 538, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10010.

The brothers are presently in the Denver County Jail, but will be moved any day now to Wisconsin. We are sure they would appreciate letters from other unions, showing support. If they are sent to the above P.O. box, they will be forwarded. An attack against one is an attack against all unions.

Camp McCoy Three Defense Fund

We would appreciate it very much if you could print this letter in your union publication. We can use all the support we can get. For further information phone us in Colorado at 635-0841. We could arrange for someone to come down and speak to you, if you wish.



GI political prisoners Tom Chase (left), Steve Geden (center) and Dannie Kreps (right). The brothers are now being held for bail—ransom totaling \$55,000 by federal authorities in Madison, Wisc.

Gastonia Strike

(continued from page 13)

gunmen.

Rather than be intimidated by the brutality of the Committee of 100, the red baiting and the race baiting organized by the bosses, the workers increased and intensified their struggle. Workers in mills throughout North and South Carolina joined their revolt for varying lengths of time.

The union made special efforts to struggle against racism and succeeded in uniting the white workers with the few Black workers in the strike. Red baiting completely failed to sway the militant struggling workers who supported the union whole heartedly.

The strike lasted for over six months and the strikers stood firm

in spite of every kind of attack. The Committee of 100 raided the union headquarters and the Workers' International Relief Store in predawn raids — the authorities "investigated" but never found any clues about the masked raiders' identity. Sixty-two families were evicted from their company homes, but the union and the Relief Committee set up tents and aid for the families. The strike went on. The union headquarters was attacked again and this time the workers fought back with guns, killing the chief of police and wounding three officers!

For two more nights and three days after this the mob hunted strikers and union members. They raided homes, routed women and

men from their beds, beat them and dragged them to jail and then beat them again. More than a hundred workers were arrested. Seventy were charged with murder, assault with intent to kill and conspiracy. The International Labor Defense came to the aid of those arrested throughout the strike, providing bail and other forms of legal assistance.

In spite of the valiant fighting of the workers, the battle at Gastonia in 1929 was eventually lost because the wealthy bosses, who are the power behind the armed might of the capitalist state, were able to exercise all their power to brutally break the much less powerful organization of a relatively small group of workers.

But this struggle was not the only one fought during that period. The combined power of the women and men workers who engaged in militant strikes throughout the country in the years that followed forced the bosses into finally granting union recognition and such improvements such as the eight-hour day, five-day week, minimum wage and child labor laws.

Even though the strike ended years ago, the spirit of the Gastonian workers' struggle lives on. Who knows what it may inspire in the years to come!

southern mill town

(continued from page 13)

ligion (perpetuated by the bosses) that promised happiness in heaven, made many poor, rural people and workers turn to faith healing.

Just as in Gastonia, all politics and "law enforcement" are controlled by the mill owners. In many towns, politics is so rotten that

even those workers who can pass the registration tests don't vote, for the most part.

But, the most oppressive conditions are in the mills themselves, where the cotton fibres fill the air and are inhaled with every breath. The tuberculosis toll is high, and another disease has recently come to light--byesinosis, or white or brown lung disease, with effects similar to the black lung suffered by coal miners.

In the weaving section of the mill where I worked, just as in all textile mills, all those who work there, mostly women, invariably go deaf after five or ten years. The sound is also terrible in other parts of the mill and leads to loss of hearing. The humidity is always kept high to make the cotton fibres stronger, even in the hottest weather--sometimes the tempera-

ture reaches higher than 120 degrees--and fainting is common. Also injuries frequently result because of the crowding of machinery, exposed dangerous parts and the pace at which workers are forced to move.

Women in mill towns are the most exploited and oppressed of the workers. Not only must they bear the children, raise them, take care of the home and work in the mills, but most of the religious and social pressure foisted by the mill owners through the ministers, teachers, etc., is filtered

through the women. But as in the Gastonia strike, once the women begin to fight back, they are among the most militant and courageous of fighters. Then the chains of tradition, the boss's traditions, are eagerly and quickly ripped off.

the Fighting

IRISH

The following excerpt from The Re-Conquest of Ireland by James Connolly, a leader of the great Irish rebellion of 1916, depicts the oppression of Irish women in Belfast at the turn of the century. Today the Irish nation is saying "no more" to their long-endured colonial oppression at the hands of the British, and the Irish women are rising up against their double oppression with the revolutionary tide to free their nation. Armed with chair legs, garbage can lids, bricks, bottles and an inexorable hatred, Irish Catholic women of Belfast attacked the British occupying troops in early February 1971.



...Wherever there is a great demand for female labour, as in Belfast, we find that the woman tends to become the chief support of the house. Driven out to work at the earliest possible age, she remains fettered to her wage-earning—a slave for life. Marriage does not mean for her a rest from outside labour, it usually means that, to the outside labour, she has added the duty of a double domestic toil. Throughout her life she remains a wage-earner; completing each day's work, she becomes the slave of the domestic needs of her family; and when at night she drops

wearied upon her bed, it is with the knowledge that at the earliest morn she must find her way again into the service of the capitalist, and at the end of that coming day's service for him hasten homeward again for another round of domestic drudgery. So her whole life runs—a dreary pilgrimage from one drudgery to another; the coming of children but serving as milestones in her journey to signalise fresh increases to her burdens. Overworked, underpaid, and scantily nourished because underpaid, she falls easy prey to all the diseases that infect the badly constructed "war-

rens of the poor." Her life is darkened from the outset by poverty, and the drudgery to which poverty is born, and the starvation of the intellect follows as an inevitable result upon the too early drudgery of the body.

Of what use to such sufferers can be the re-establishment of any form of Irish State if it does not embody the emancipation of womanhood. As we have shown, the whole spirit and practice of modern Ireland, as it expresses itself through its pastors and masters, bear socially and politically, hardly upon women. That spirit in the establishment had their origins in the establishment in this country of a social and political order based upon the private ownership of property, as against the older order based upon the common ownership of a related community.

Whatever class rules industrially will rule politically, and impose upon the community in general the beliefs, customs and ideas most suitable to the perpetuation of its rule. These beliefs, customs, ideas become then the highest expression of morality and so remain until the ascent to power of another ruling industrial class establishes a new morality. In Ireland since the Conquest, the landlord-capitalist class has ruled; the beliefs, customs, ideas of Ireland are the embodiment of the slave morality we inherited from those who accepted that rule in one or other of its forms; the subjection of women was an integral part of that rule.

...None so fitted to break the chains as they who wear them, none so well equipped to decide what is a fetter. In its march towards freedom, the working class of Ireland must cheer on the efforts of those women who, feeling on their souls and bodies the fetters of the ages, have arisen to strike them off, and cheer all the louder if in its hatred of thralldom and passion for freedom the women's army forges ahead of the militant army of Labour.

But whosoever carries the outworks of the citadel of oppression, the working class alone can raze it to the ground.