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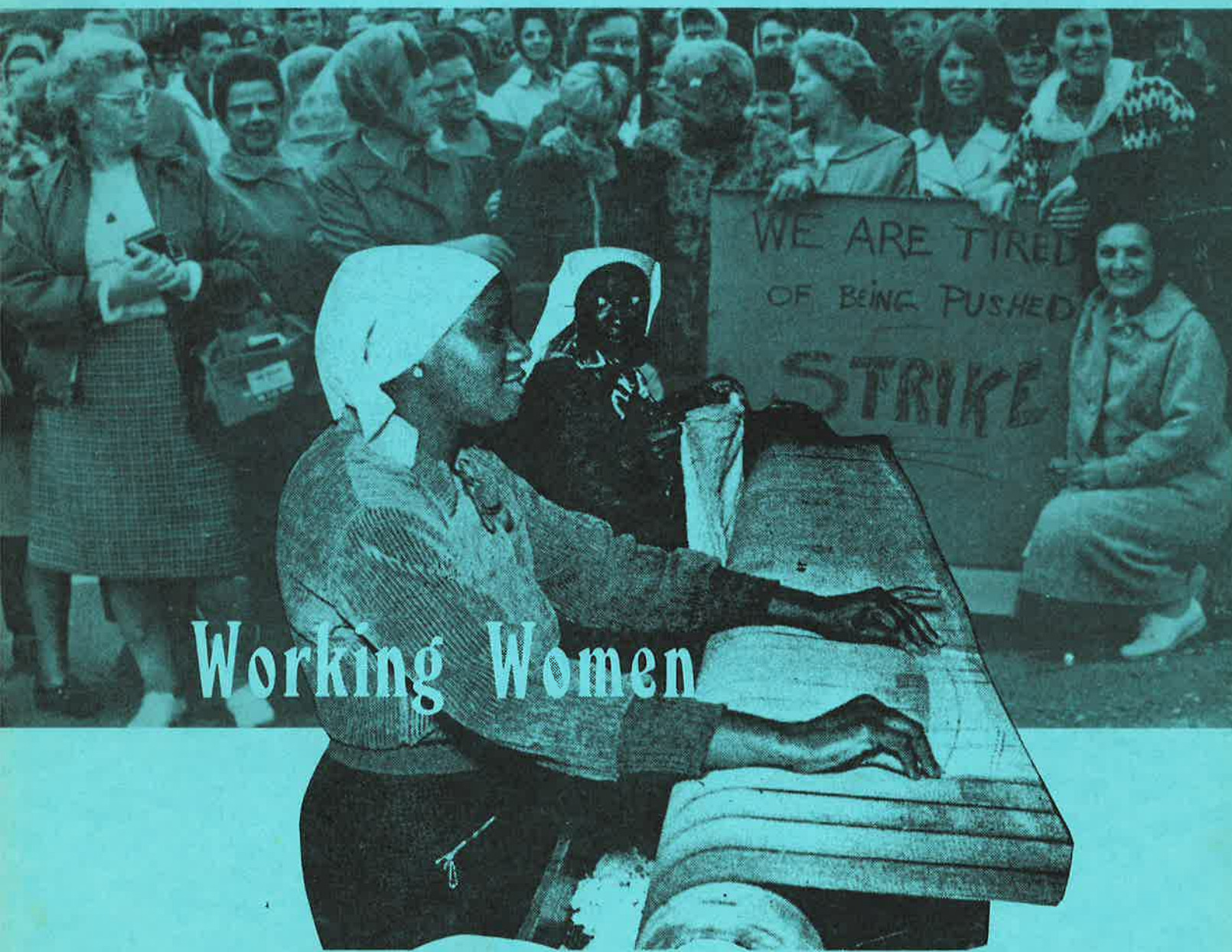
OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 1971 VOLUME 1 NUMBER 8

Published by WOMEN of Youth Against War & Fascism

BATTLE ACTS

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



Working Women

Special: A mother of an Attica prisoner speaks out

women workers

by ALICE ROBINSON

Who is the American working woman? Is she Black, white, Puerto Rican, Asian, Chicano? Is she married, single, divorced? Young or old? Does she work in a factory, office, restaurant, or at home? Does she have children? No matter which combination of the above she is, she has one thing in common with all working women: she works because she has to!

Of the 31 million women in America who worked in 1970 for wages outside the home, more than half of them went to work out of absolute necessity: 12 million single, divorced, separated, or widowed women were heads of households; and almost 5 million wives shared the breadwinning with their husbands who made less than $5,000 annually. But there is more to it than that.

A look at certain trends indicate that women must work to support themselves and their families. Until 1940 the typical pattern of women workers followed was one of working until they married or had children and then never again entering the labor market. Today there are a greater number of older married women workers than at any other time.

In 1970 married women made up 60 percent of the female labor force as compared with 30 percent in 1940. And the vast majority of their husbands made less than $10,000. Of these women, 11.6 million were working mothers; one-third of them had children under six.

More Black wives work today than white wives — 51 percent compared with 39 percent. For families with preschool children, 44 percent of Black wives work compared with 27 percent of white wives.

The explanation for this reveals that racism pays Third World women and men less for their labor: according to Labor Department statistics, in 1966, about one-third of all Third World families "had incomes below the poverty level, as compared with less than one-tenth of the white families." Forty-two percent of these Third World families "would have been in poverty, but for the wives' earnings; in these families, the contributions of wives meant that only 19 percent of them lived in poverty." By 1969, 47 percent of all poor families had a female head as compared with 28 percent a decade earlier.

It's not surprising then that 9 out of 10 American women can expect to work outside the home at some time in their lives. But what about at home? Do women still follow the traditional pattern of doing the housework? One estimate is that married women spend an average of 40 hours per week on housework, which gives them a total workweek in excess of the average married man. Starting from the statistic that the wife does on the average of 2,053 hours of unpaid household work in a year, I calculated that, at the minimum wage, each woman should receive a yearly salary of $3,387.45!

Of course, some sceptics will say that women's work in the home really isn't work — lugging the laundry, washing the dishes, nursing the measles aren't work, that is! Traditionally because housewifery is unpaid labor performed for personal use, it is considered menial, meaningless, worthless labor. But, that is not really the case.

In 1918 and again in 1968, it was estimated that the value of housewives' services came to about one-fourth of the gross national product (GNP), the total national output of goods and services at market prices. With the GNP $865 billion in 1968, that would mean that housework had the value of $216 billion! A very significant and, hence, valuable service, it seems!

We women, and men who work outside the home earn wages in order to live. In exchange for money with which we can buy the goods and services that we and our families need — rent, utilities, food, clothes, transportation — we sell our labor power, our ability to produce all the goods and services in society. When the boss talks about "his" profits, he's actually talking about how much he is exploiting us. Because where do his profits come from? They come from the goods and services that we produce and that he doesn't pay us for. No wonder the bosses live better than working people!

And no wonder they use male chauvinism and racism to keep the men and women, Third World and white workers divided — it prevents us from fighting together for our rights. By paying women and Third World people less, the bosses can keep down the wages of all workers and keep more of the profits for themselves!

In 1969 the median wage for women was $4,977, while for men it was $8,227. That was 40 percent less for women. Even in the case of clerical workers, who are predominately women, women make less than two-thirds what men make! And for what? Easier jobs and shorter hours? No, the jobs open to women are among the most menial and degrading in this society. Over 70 percent of women workers in 1968 occupied clerical jobs, operative jobs (that is, factory work), and service jobs (the laundry workers, waitresses,

hospital aides, charwomen, etc.) These kinds of jobs are ones in which women are treated without respect, where pay and benefits are among the lowest, and where the work is monotonous and often backbreaking. Women make up 95 percent of service workers in this country, and half of these workers are Black and other Third World women.

Third World women are not only exploited on the job as workers and women, but they suffer the added degradation of racism. Of the Black women who work, over half are service workers as compared with 18 percent of white women workers. These women do the washing, cooking, and cleaning for others. Work that is essential but — in this society where household work is not socialized — is considered lacking in respect and dignity, and moreover is often extremely difficult and exhausting. The wages received by these women — in 1966, $2,815 — are the lowest of all workers, except private household workers.

Over 65 percent of private household workers are Black. These women who clean the homes and care for the children of rich women received the median wage of $1,851 in 1969. They are not even covered by federal minimum wage laws!

Of the 31 million working women in the U.S., slightly more than a tenth, or only 3.7 million, are unionized. That means that even the most elementary benefits — health insurance and paid pregnancy leaves, paid vacations and sick days, job security and seniority rights — that have already been wrung from the bosses through

struggles of working people over the last 100 years are to a large extent denied to the 27 million women workers who are not unionized.

What exactly does this mean to a woman on the job? For one, if she's pregnant she often has to work up until her eighth or ninth month of pregnancy because she needs the money. And then she may loose her job or her seniority when she leaves to give birth.

She has to stop working because there are no day care centers. Rather it's up to each woman to find someone to care for her children — and if she can't afford it, either her kids are left alone (as are 1 million kids under six in New York City,) or she doesn't work.

The lack of health care means that hundreds of women each year suffer irreparable harm due to on-the-job injuries and accidents that don't receive immediate medical attention. Lack of seniority rights allows companies to promote a man to a higher paying job over a woman with years more experience than that man. And for Third World women, the lack of union protection leaves them open to racist abuse and firings, with no recourse for grievances.

One could ask, why is this? Has it always been so? Have women always been second-class citizens? The answer is: no! Before written history when people lived under primitive communism, everything was owned in common, and descent was traced through the mother. Women were not only respected but were responsible collectively along with the men for

the welfare of the community. Men hunted and fished and women managed the communal households and the children. But, with advancing technology men began to acquire wealth in the form of livestock and agricultural surplus, and private property took the place of common ownership. The tables were turned so that men could pass on their property to their children. To do this — to destroy the matriarchy and set up the patriarchial family structure — the women had to be enslaved, had to become the property of her husband. Therein, with the beginnings of private property and the overthrow of the matriarchy, women were first enslaved and have remained enslaved throughout all the centuries where private property held sway. Only in socialist countries where private property has been abolished are women in the process of attaining true equality with men.

Nowadays, women in America are told we are "equal" to men. But women know this is not true and cannot be true until we have the opportunity to participate in all aspects of society on an equal footing with men. To accomplish this means that the burden of responsibility for child care and housework must be taken off the shoulders of each individual woman and shared by society in common.

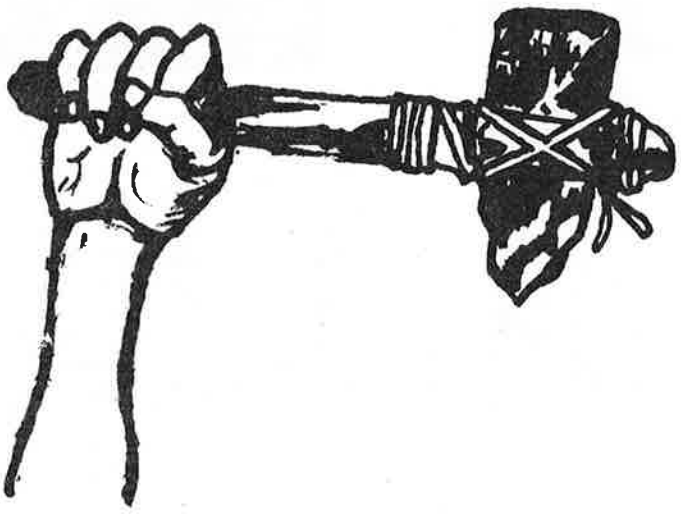
Only after the special needs of women are met can we even begin to enjoy equality with men. And working women, because we have the power to organize and fight together in large numbers, will be in the forefront of this struggle for real equality and rights for women — and an end to the oppression of all women throughout this country.

I doubt whether the name Ella May Wiggins appears in any anthology of song writers or poets, although she wrote one of the most moving songs I've ever heard. But her name has appeared in BattleActs before (no. 4, March 1971), because Ella May was one of the leaders of the 1929 Gastonia, N.C., mill strike, a "crime" for which the company had her shot down in cold blood.

Her song, and another one, also written by a woman working in the mills, describe the heartbreak and pain of the "mill mother." Forced to tear herself from her babies and leave them uncared for, to slave all day under the most backbreaking conditions, with her children working beside her almost as soon as they can walk, she still brings home barely enough to keep herself and her family alive.

But the real beauty of these songs is the strength and courage they show. They both end with the firm conviction, that in spite of the hardships, by fighting together, the workers will succeed in freeing themselves and their families from oppression.

by Helene Gershowitz



MILL MOTHER'S LAMENT
(1929)

We leave our homes in the morning,
We kiss our children good-bye,
While we slave for the bosses,
Our children scream and cry.

And when we draw our money,
Our grocery bills to pay,
Not a cent to spend for clothing,
Not a cent to lay away.

And on that very evening
Our little son will say:
"I need some shoes, mother,
And so does sister May."

How it grieves the heart of a mother,
You everyone must know;
But we can"t buy for our children,
Our wages are too low.

It is for our little children,
That seem to us so dear,
But for us, nor them, dear workers,
The bosses do not care.

But understand, all workers,
Our union they do fear.
Let's stand together, workers,
And have a union here.

LET THEM WEAR THEIR WATCHES FINE
(1910)

Here is a textile worker's song—hard, bitter and unadorned, like the life described. But then a moment of beautiful and profound poetry comes out of these depths, a simple four-line rhyme from which the title of the song is derived. Will Geer heard a woman in the West Virginia mountains singing this song and he wrote it down. She said she had made it up herself to the much parodied "Warren Harding's Widow."

I lived in a town away down south by the name of Buffalo;
And worked in the mill with the rest of the trash as we're often called, you know.

You factory folks who sing this rime will surely understand,
The reason why I love you so is I'm a factory hand.

While standing here between my looms, you know I lose no time,
To keep my shuttles in a whiz and write this little rime.

We rise up early in the morn and work all day real hard;
To buy our little meat and bread and sugar, tea and lard.

We work from week end to week end, and never lose a day;
And when that awful payday comes, we draw our little pay.

We then go home on payday night and sit down in a chair;
The merchant raps upon the door—he's come to get his share.

When all our little debts are paid and nothing left behind,
We turn our pockets wrong side out but not a cent can we find.

We rise up early in the morn and toil from soon to late;
We have no time to primp or fix and dress right up to date.

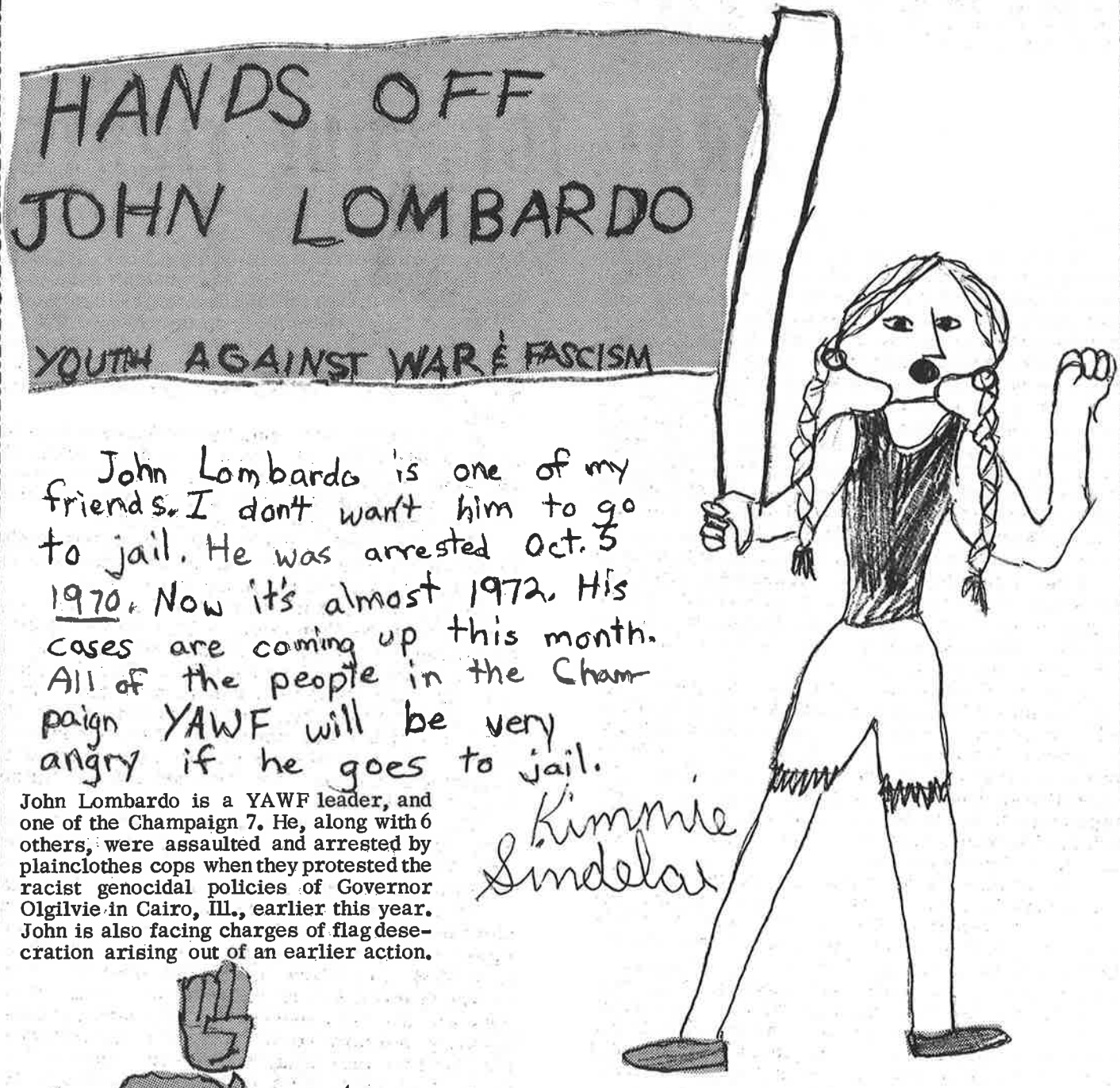
Our children they grow up unlearned, no time to go to school,
Almost before they have learned to walk, they have learned to spin or spool.

The boss man jerks them round and round and whistles very keen;
I'll tell you what, the factory kids are really treated mean.

The folks in town who dress so fine and spend their money free,
Will hardly look at a factory hand who dresses like you and me.

As we go walking down the street all wrapped in lint and strings,
They call us fools and factory trash and other low-down things.

Well, let them wear their watches fine, their rings and pearly strings;
When the day of Judgment comes we'll make 'em shed their pretty things.



John Lombardo is one of my friends. I don't want him to go to jail. He was arrested Oct. 5 1970. Now it's almost 1972. His cases are coming up this month. All of the people in the Champaign YAWF will be very angry if he goes to jail.

Kimmie Sindelar

John Lombardo is a YAWF leader, and one of the Champaign 7. He, along with 6 others, were assaulted and arrested by plainclothes cops when they protested the racist genocidal policies of Governor Olgilvie in Cairo, Ill., earlier this year. John is also facing charges of flag desecration arising out of an earlier action.

Power to the Panthers

Geoffrey THEGREAT Power!

UNEMPLOYED?

fight for your rights!

by MARY PINOTTI

Unemployment insurance is a right working people have fought hard for. It's our food and rent money when the bosses fire or lay us off. The bosses always keep millions of workers unemployed, even when profits are high, so they can hire us cheaply when they need us. But the situation has been getting worse.

Recently there have been tremendous strikes, such as those waged by the steel and telegraph workers. The companies have agreed to pay wage increases to some of the workers, but to keep their profits high, they are laying the rest off. At Western Union about half of the workers found their jobs had "disappeared" after the strike was settled.

It's particularly hard for women to fight back in the face of this because the bosses keep alive that incredible lie that we don't really need the money we earn. They say that we work only for "extras" — but are clothes, housing, and education for our children and ourselves extras?

Part of Nixon's wage-price freeze gives large corporations a 10 percent tax break -- specifically so that money can be used to buy better machinery and equipment. This means they will automate lesser-skilled workers right out of their jobs. The bosses have always denied women training for skilled jobs, especially in technical areas. So women, and particularly Black and Third World women, will be hardest hit by Nixon's order.

The unemployment offices are cooperating with the bosses in trying to cut back not only jobs, but out-of-work benefits — they always take the boss's word. If a boss says that we quit or provoked our firing, they make us wait 12 weeks to appeal the case. Then they force us to take a job -- usually paying less than the one we left — because we need the money.

The Center for United Labor Action (CULA) has recently organized an Unemployment Grievance Committee to help fight against these cutbacks in our rights. It works like the grievance committee of a trade union. Two representatives go with the worker who has been denied benefits. They help present the case. They write leaflets explaining the situation, and pass them out in the unemployment office to other workers so they will know what's going on.

Take the case of Julia Baldwin,* a Black woman, married, with two preschool children. She worked at a bank for several years. The bank, cutting its staff down, asked her to quit in spite of her very satisfactory job record -- and in the usual racist fashion. When she refused, the bank transferred her from department to department, trying to force her to quit.

She came back from her vacation to find that she had been transferred again — to a job her supervisor had previously assured her she wouldn't have to do. She reminded him of this and he asked another woman in the same classification to do the new job. She also refused. The supervisor again asked Mrs. Baldwin to do it. When she said, "No," he told her "You have a problem," and sent her to personnel. She was fired.

Mrs. Baldwin was denied unemployment benefits because her boss said she provoked the firing. She appealed the case, and she won. But then the unemployment office requested an appeal on that decision! All this time, she didn't receive benefits.

She also filed a claim with the Human Rights Commission, which ruled that the treatment she received on the job, and the firing were racist.

Mrs. Baldwin then contacted the CULA Unemployment Grievance Committee. CULA wrote a leaflet explaining the whole situation and attacking the racism of the unemployment office. They distributed it to the workers in the unemployment office on the day of her next hearing. Working women and men also formed a picket line across the front steps of the office. They carried signs saying "Stop racism at the unemployment office" and "We demand benefits now for Julia Baldwin."

She went into the hearing, presented her case with the support of two CULA representatives, and won. Within a week she had a check for $900 -- the benefits she had been fighting to get for 6 1/2 months!

Spanish-speaking people who go into the unemployment office are faced with English-speaking interviewers. At the largest unemployment office in New York City there is not one interviewer who speaks Spanish! As a result, Spanish-speaking claimants are not even listened to. And worse, Spanish-speaking workers are pressured to sign statements they have not thoroughly read -- statements designed to prevent them from collecting benefits. Maybe that's why Lydia Ramon never was able to collect.

Or maybe it's because she had children. Women have an additional burden in the struggle for benefits, because our responsibilities of child and family care are held against us. We are even accused of not looking hard enough for work when in fact we cannot afford a babysitter.

Lydia Ramon worked at the post office. They changed her hours to a night shift which ended at 1 A.M. Then they decided to push the hours even later -- to 3 A.M. She had difficulty meeting these hours and so did her babysitter, who quit.

In addition, the post office gave her and other

workers a memorization test, which had nothing at all to do with her job. The test was in English. She is a Spanish-speaking woman. While taking care of her family in the day and working at night, she was unable to prepare for the test. They threatened her: if she failed the test she would be fired. After all this harassment she had to quit.

According to unemployment laws, you are eligible for unemployment benefits if you quit with good cause. The late hours, lack of a babysitter, and harassment from the post office were not considered "good cause." She was forced to wait 12 weeks to appeal the case and then lost it. The unemployment office's referee told her, "You can't contest a federal case."

Women across the country are penalized if they are pregnant. In Seattle, where you can be fired for being pregnant, you are not eligible for benefits because, "It's your own fault." One woman had been laid off and collected her benefits. When the Seattle unemployment office found out she was pregnant they asked her to pay all the money back. Outraged, women and men in Seattle, organized by the Union of the Unemployed, formed a picket line in front of the office and demanded she keep her benefits. In the face of this, the interviewer decided to "reevaluate" his decision.

In New York it's also difficult for pregnant women because you have to prove you're available to work in order to be eligible for benefits.

The unemployment office pushes women into lower-paying, lower-skilled job categories. One example is Carol DiAngelo who was fired from an employment agency.

Carol's official title was receptionist, but on the job she was really an administrative assistant. She interviewed workers looking for jobs. She collected benefits for a while, and then was sent out to a job interview in her pay category, senior clerk. She refused the job because it would mean a cut of $5 a week from her previous starting salary 2 years ago.

To punish her, the unemployment office reclassified her as a receptionist and sent her to jobs with $96 a week maximum pay — a cut of $24 a week.

Older women suffer harassment too, because bosses expect them to do jobs that require the good health of a younger person. Helen Howard is 62. She had to take a job where the work load was so heavy she could tolerate it only 4 months. She began to collect benefits. They sent her to take a job, but she had to refuse because the pay was too low and, again, the workload too heavy. Her unemployment benefits were cut off because she was not "really in the job market."

Handing unemployed workers the leaflets with the address and phone number of the Unemployment Grievance Committee of CULA (167 West 21st St., New York, N.Y.; 212-741-0633), we are seeing the militancy of people who are willing to fight their grievances. We are seeing that to fight the injustices which come down daily from the bosses and their government, we have to rely on ourselves and our own organization. Many people waiting in unemployment lines take the leaflet and say, "I'm getting the benefits now, but I'll keep the leaflet in case something goes wrong."

*All names in this article are ficticious to protect the women from any possibility of reprisal by the unemployment office.

editors: SUE DAVIS
EMILY HANLON

technical editor:
MEIRA POMERANTZ

staff: YAWF WOMEN

Editorial office:
46 West 21 st ST.,
N.Y.,N.Y.

Telephone: (212) 242—9225

Published bi-monthly

YAWF WOMEN
939 MAIN ST.
BUFFALO, N. Y. 14203

CULA FIGHTS FOR YOU

by GAVRIELLE GEMMA and BARBARA TEEL

5:00 p.m., Monday, August 16, 1971: Across the country, millions of women are pouring out of office buildings and factories after working eight long hours -- filing, typing, pushing buttons, turning screws....

Thousands more are coming out of luxurious homes after cleaning the clothes and changing the diapers of the well-to-do and their children....

Thousands more -- the waitresses, phone operators, laundry workers....

It has been a terribly tedious day and now we must go buy food, cook dinner, wash the dishes, and put the kids to bed....

A day like any other? No! -- harder, more frustrating than most. It is the first day of Nixon's wage freeze. And our hopes for a better life are frozen too. We know, despite all Nixon's promises, our frozen pay just doesn't cover the rising prices in the supermarket.

5:00 p.m., Monday, August 16, 1971: Across the country, all those well-fed, immaculately dressed owners of companies are toasting each other and Nixon on a job well done: "Here's to frozen wages!" "Here's to a 90-day moratorium on strikes!" "Best of all, here's to the stock market!"

Yes, it is a glorious day for the Chairman of the Board and the bosses. They can sit back and relax after this fiendishly busy day of buying and selling on the stock market. Their fortunes are secure again, flourishing with Nixon's blessings.

The wage freeze means not only a tightening of the belt, but for women it means the perpetuation of the inequality that locks us into overworked, underpaid jobs. Nixon is trying to still out cries of "equal pay for equal work," by demanding that we "sacrifice for the common good."

But his decree isn't for the good of millions of working women and those who are unemployed and on welfare -- getting through each day already involves sacrifice enough for us. The poor and working class of this country can't sacrifice what we don't have!

For women and men who want to fight Nixon's wage freeze, there is an organization, the Center for United Labor Action (CULA), that is doing it. CULA was set up earlier this year by militant rank-and-file women and men from trade unions in New York City and around the country to voice the needs and demands of all working people, those unemployed and those on welfare as well. At street rallies, union meetings, and on the job, the women and men of CULA are speaking out against the wage freeze. CULA is calling for an Emergency Congress of All Labor -- Black, Third World, and white, women and men, the rank and file and labor leaders -- to meet and discuss a course of action we can take against the freeze.

Our motto at CULA is: "If you don't have a union, fight to get one. If you do, fight to make it fight!"

For decades, racism and male chauvinism have kept the union movment from fighting. Labor union leaders have done little to end these divisions created by the bosses, and have failed to unify the workers in a strong, militant labor movement. At the same time that CULA sees the ultimate necessity of uniting all the workers, it realizes that the racism of the white workers combined with the superexploitation of Third World workers makes the development of a Black and Third World Caucus a necessity -- every oppressed national minority must have the right to determine what course their struggle should take.

In the same way, all women suffer from the male chauvinism not only of their bosses but also from their fellow workers. For Third World women, male chauvinism is an added degradation to racism. The fact that only 3.7 percent of the 31 million women who work are organized into unions speaks much about women's low pay and inferior working conditions.

The bosses unfortunately have had, to a large degree, the cooperation of the union leaders in this. Have you ever heard a union leader tell the men that it is in their interest that women be treated equally on and off the job? Have you ever heard them explain that if women and all Third World workers received equal pay, then they couldn't be used as a threat to the white men's jobs?

We've never heard it! And we've also never heard them talk about the burdens of working mothers, such as having to find the precious few day care centers, or having no maternity leave, or of being the first to be fired. If they have mentioned these things, it was because they needed the support of the women for an election or to win a strike!

So, the women trade unionists of CULA have organized within CULA to make sure that the problems of women are dealt with. Years of in-

doctrination have made so many women feel that a union is a man's organization--that their only place is in a "women's auxiliary." But we have never been and are not an auxiliary part of the work force. And ever since we were forced to work outside the home, we have taken our place on the front lines of the workers' struggles. The women of CULA are going to make sure that women will continue to do so!

CULA women have been actively organizing on the job to encourage a working women's consciousness. We engage in and have won small fights like the right of women to wear slacks and protective clothing on the job. We challenge jobs that have been previously open only to men. Many of us at CULA have recently walked on picket lines and are still on strike, despite the wage freeze.

Women of CULA believe in fighting with men on issues that affect both men and women. Throughout the country we have taken the stand at Public Service Commission hearings on telephone and power rate increases to expose the gigantic monopolies. In Wilmington, Delaware, CULA was among the community and labor groups that actually stopped Delmarva Power and Light Company from getting an increase.

CULA goes to these hearings and holds demonstrations to represent the working people. We are the ones who suffer from deteriorating service and rising utility rates, and yet these "public" meetings are scheduled during the day, when working people can't come.

CULA chapters have recently set up Unemployment Grievance Committees (see article on pages 6-7) to try to help the ever-increasing number of people forced off the job, whose cries of desperation go unheard behind the mountains of red tape and racism at the unemployment office. We go to the unemployment offices and hand out leaflets, telling the women and men about CULA, talking with them, and offering our assistance. Many of these people come into the CULA office every week. One woman who came to see us broke out crying from the frustration and desperation she felt. The men in the office were somewhat taken aback--but other working women were there who were able to console her and let her know that she was not alone.

Very often, the same anger and frustration that this woman felt forces men and women to steal to keep their family alive -- many women are even driven to sell their bodies. Then they are condemned as criminals and sent to prisons like Attica, where our heroic brothers recently rebelled against the inhuman conditions.

After Rockefeller called out the National Guard to massacre the prisoners, CULA issued a statement which reads in part:

"Attica, like all state prisons, is a sweatshop. The average pay is 40 cents a day making mattresses, shoes, and license plates, working from dawn until night where the foreman-guard has a club in hand. And then even the 40 cents is taken away by the commissary. On top of that, the prisoners are fed hardly enough low-grade food to stay alive, refused medical care and beaten, and locked up in solitary for making the slightest complaint....

"Wouldn't you strike against these conditions? That's just what they did in Attica, but in prison a strike is a rebellion -- it has to be!"

"Rockefeller runs the state prisons as forced labor camps for poor people accused of stealing (just to survive), using prison slave labor to undercut wages and take jobs away from 'free' workers. Prisons are concentration camps and super-sweatshops for the Black and Puerto Rican nationalities.... Their struggle for freedom benefits all poor and working people....That is why the white prisoners supported the rebellion, without reservation, to the end....

"Among the demands of the Attica prisoners were basic labor demands. They called for the minimum wage, the right to join or form labor unions, workmen's compensation...an 8-eight hour day....Their crucial demand was for amnesty -- for no reprisals. That demand is the same as strikers holding out for everyone to be rehired in good standing after a strike."

At the same time that our brothers are being massacred, Nixon asks us to "sacrifice" and understand that his new economics are for our good. He asks us to believe his lies and slanders about the prisoners. But the working people of this country have heard too many lies -- we have sacrificed too much and too long for Nixon and his fellow bosses. We have nothing more to sacrifice -- except them!

To obtain the full CULA statement on Attica or for more information about CULA and the chapter in your area, write us at 167 West 21 St., New York, N.Y. 10011.

uprising OF THE 20,000

by MISSIE CHESSMAN

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...." In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the tired and poor of Europe responded to the call of this new nation. Knowing little or nothing of the lives of the already exploited Black, Chinese, Mexican, and Indian people in the U.S., families of all sizes left their homes to begin a new life in the land of "opportunity and freedom."

Their joy on arrival was short-lived. Any money they had managed to bring with them was quickly consumed by the costs of food and housing. Especially in the crowded Eastern cities of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, it soon became obvious that the small earnings of a single breadwinner were not enough to support a family. And so the women and children went in search of work outside the home -- something that most of them had never had to do before. Unable to understand English, and often completely illiterate, the women immigrants were forced to take jobs under the most horrendous conditions, just to keep their families alive and together.

Their years of cutting, basting, sewing, and pressing in the home provided them with one skill which was eagerly and cheaply bought by the bosses of the clothes-making trade. Some of the women did piecework in small home shops set up in tenements; some found jobs in task shops, while others went to work in factories. But no matter where they worked the conditions were the same. Crowded into dark, airless, rag-strewn rooms, the women worked long hours at the same monotonous task. During the summer there was no relief from the heat, and in winter no protection from the cold. No fire or health precautions were observed anywhere.

While the normal working day in factories was 10 hours, it was limitless in the home and task shops. Here the workers produced garments for a contractor who then sold the articles to a large manufacturer for finishing. The wages paid the workers had to be incredibly low to ensure a profit for both the contractor and the manufacturer. In spite of the inhuman, dangerous conditions and the pitifully poor wages, the women went each day to see if the boss had work to be done. The worst days of all were those when there was no work -- and no wages. No job meant no family was ever secure.

In most of the garment factories the women had to pay for the needles and other supplies they used. They were also charged for the power needed to keep the machines running and the business going. The bosses, always clever at thinking of ways to increase their profits, levied a tax on every woman's chair and charged each of them 25¢ for the locker where they kept their hats. If by accident a garment was damaged by a woman whose eyes were strained or whose fingers were maimed, the boss deducted an amount two or three times the value of the garment from her wages.

Efforts to improve working conditions and raise wages in the garment industry made little progress until the early 1900s. Union organizing in the isolated home and task shops was nearly impossible. Even in the factories, union representatives, who were primarily English speaking, first had to overcome the problem of simple communication, since most of the women were immigrants and spoke little English. In addition, the workers knew that the bosses consistently fired union organizers or anyone who sought contact with them. The fired worker was easily replaced by one more desperate, more docile. With the police and courts to back them up, the bosses would try to do whatever profited them with impunity.

In 1908 in New York City there were 30,000 garment workers; 80 percent of them were women, and 70 percent of these women were between the ages of 16 and 25. During that year the workers at the Triangle Shirt Waist Company, the largest of its kind, pressed the owners to improve the intolerable conditions in the factory and to raise their wages. In response, the bosses offered to set up a company union. The workers saw this for the trap it was and immediately arranged to meet with representatives of the then-militant International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) and the United Hebrew Trades. Shortly after this meeting took place the Triangle bosses fired all company people who participated.

The local chapter of the ILGWU called for a strike against the company. The Triangle owners

hired scabs and professional thugs. With police and judges as accomplices, they arrested many women. But the strikers were strong and stayed firm until a compromise was reached. Knowledge of the strike, and particularly of the steadfastness and courage of the women, spread throughout the industry.

In November 1909, several hundred garment workers, mainly from the small, non-unionized sweatshops in New York City, walked off their jobs in protest against the cruel practices and slave wages of the bosses. The strikers were quickly joined by women from other shops and factories, including the Triangle Shirt Waist Company. Picket lines were set up. A mass meeting was called for November 22 in Union Square. There, thousands joined in solidarity with the strikers. The union leaders began by urging caution, deliberation, and reason. Then, a young woman, fed up with admonitions and hesitation, took the floor. Clara Lemlich made her position clear to the strikers and their sympathizers:

"I am a working girl, one of those who are on strike. I am tired of listening to speakers who talk in general terms. What we are here for is to decide whether we shall or shall not strike. I offer a resolution that a general strike be declared now!"

Shouting and waving their hats, the workers jumped to their feet in agreement with the bold young woman.

Within days 20,000 garment workers, almost all women, walked off their jobs and joined what became known as the "Uprising of the 20,000." Recognizing the need for organization, the women set up local offices to register strikers, arrange picket lines, and collect money to pay fines and strike benefits. In the face of constant harassment and arrest, the women returned each day to take their places on the lines. Most active among the strike leaders were young women like Esther Lobetkin, Bessie Switski, and Clara Lemlich. Working endless hours, hardly sleeping or eating, they gave strength and encouragement to their sisters who were just beginning to break the chains that kept them enslaved for so long.

On December 3, the garment workers led a march to New York's City Hall to protest the brutality of the police and judges. By late December the uprising spread to Philadelphia, where several thousand garment workers, most of them women, walked off their jobs in a general strike. Throughout the cold, damp January days the women kept the picket lines moving. Some supplied food and clothing, while others marched. Every day they were insulted, abused, and arrested; but every day they returned.

Finally in February 1910, three months after the strike had begun, negotiations with the Garment Manufacturers Association in New York ended in a victory for the workers. A majority of the members of the Association were forced to concede to union recognition. The militant stand and solidarity of the strikers won for them a 52-hour week and four legal holidays with pay; negotiations for wages to be held at the start of each season; an end to payment for needles and other supplies; and amnesty for the strikers. The uprising had been the largest action by garment workers in the U.S., and their first major victory. It established the position of women as leaders in the struggle for labor organizing and defenders of working women's rights.

Although the strike erased some of the more blatantly abusive practices of the bosses, the dangerous conditions in the workrooms remained unchanged. It was not until a raging fire destroyed the Triangle Shirt Waist Factory in 1911, killing 146 garment workers, that attempts were made to enact minimum safety laws in New York. But reform legislation is merely a pacifier -- a token relief from oppression. It never has meant, and never will mean, an end to wage slavery.

Today, there are still thousands of small, non-unionized sweatshops across the country where women work under the same conditions that existed at the turn of the century. Here, and in the factories, working women face irreparable damage to their health, if not death, at wages far below that of their male counterparts. Women will win equal pay, maternity leaves, on-the-job child care centers, and decent working conditions only when women unite, as they did in the "Uprising of the 20,000," and join their struggle with the struggle of all oppressed people to throw the bosses out!

angela— On George Jackson

Angela Davis faces death in the gas chamber in California on phony charges of murder and kidnapping. In reality she has been charged because of her courageous struggle for Black liberation. In particular she has put her life on the line in support of Jonathan and George Jackson, Ruchell Magee, and the rest of the Soledad Brothers. And now she needs support at her trial, which will be held in the near future.

August 23, 1971

An enemy bullet has once more brought grief and sadness to Black people and to all who oppose racism and injustice and who love and fight for freedom. On Saturday, August 21, a San Quentin guard's sniper bullet executed George Jackson and wiped out that last modicum of freedom with which he had perservered and resisted so fiercely for eleven years.

Though deprived so long of the freedom of movement enjoyed by his oppressors, even as he died George was far more free than they. Like he lived, he died resisting. A Field Marshal of the Black Panther Party, George belongs to a very special breed of fallen Black leaders, for his struggle was the most perilous.

He was recognized as a leader of the movement which sought to deepen the political consciousness of Black and Brown prisoners who constitute 30 to 40 percent of California's prison population. His impact on the community outside was and continues to be boundless. George's example of courage in the face of the spectre of summary execution; his insights honed in the torment of seven years of solitary confinement; his perserverance in the face of overwhelming odds will continue to be a source of inspiration to all our sisters and brothers inside prison walls and outside.

His book, Soledad Brother, a stirring chronicle of the development of the highest form of revolutionary fortitude and resistance, serves as a primer to captured brothers and sisters across the world. Equally important, this volume, perhaps more than any other, has given impetus and shaped the direction of the growing support movement outside the prisons.

George, from behind seemingly impenetrable walls, has placed the issue of the prison struggle squarely on the agenda of the people's movement for revolutionary change. His book reveals the indivisible nature of the struggle on the outside of the prison system with the one inside. Whether in prison or not, Black and Third World people are the victims and targets of a common system of oppression and exploitation. Only the methods used are different.

The prevailing conditions of race and class exploitation invariably result in the captivity of a disproportionate number of Black and Third World people. Our brothers and sisters are usually locked up for crimes they did not commit, or for crimes against property -- crimes for which white youths receive prosecutorial, judicial, and penal leniency.

George himself was an 18-year-old man-child when he was sentenced to serve from one to life for a robbery involving $70 -- one to life -- or eleven years' enslavement and sudden death. Through George's life and the lives of thousands of other brothers and sisters, the absolute necessity for extending the struggle of Black and Third World people into the prison system itself becomes unmistakably clear.

The legacy left us by George and his dead brother, Jon, means that we must strengthen the mass movement which alone is capable of freeing all of our brothers and sisters in prisons. We know that the road to freedom has always been stalked by death. George knew that the price of his intense revolutionary commitment was having to live each day fighting off potential death blows. He had repeatedly seen death used as a standard reprisal for blacks who "stepped out of line."

In January of 1970, he had seen his brother prisoners, Nolan, Miller, and Edwards, warrantlessly and viciously murdered in the Soledad Prison yard. In Soledad Brother, George graphically told of the manner in which he had learned to thwart the many past attempts to murder him.

The dimensions of the task which lie ahead of us are clearer now, but the price of our new vision has been the death of two brilliant and brave revolutionaries, brothers in blood. Associate Warden Park promises us that the new wave of repression which has been unleashed within San Quentin will not halt with George's death. Rather, he has ushered in new terrorism by openly inviting guards to make a show of force and fully exhaust their vengeance on the prisoners themselves. Efforts to squelch revolutionary prison activity will not stop with one murder Park tells us, but will continue until San Quentin is purged of all revolutionaries and every revolutionary thought.

The newspaper of George's party, the Black Panther Party, is hereafter forbidden within San Quentin's walls. "Old-fashion prison methods," namely raw brutality, without its cosmetic dressings, is officially the new regime. Brothers Ruchell Magee,

drawing by Tecla

Fleeta Drumgo, and John Clutchette are identified targets; others in the so-called Adjustment Center who have taken sides are equally in danger.

Our responsibility extends to all these brothers upon whom war has been declared -- the people must secure their safety, and ultimately their freedom. Prison authorities seek only to cover up their own murderous crimes by attempting to initiate new frameups. These efforts must be swiftly and forcefully countered.

The Jackson family must be saluted. Their grief is deep. In little more than a year two of their sons, George and Jonathan, were felled by fascist bullets. I express my love to Georgia and Robert Jackson, Penny, Frances and Delora.

For me, George's death has meant the loss of a comrade and revolutionary leader, but also the loss of an irretrievable love. This love is so agonizingly personal as to be indescribable. I can only say that in continuing to love him, I will try my best to express that love in the way he would have wanted -- by reaffirming my determination to fight for the cause George died defending. With his example before me, my tears and grief are rage at the system responsible for his murder. He wrote his epitaph when he said:

Hurl me into the next existence, the descent into hell won't turn me. I'll crawl back to dog his trail forever. They won't defeat my revenge, never, never. I'm part of a righteous people who anger slowly, but rage undammed. We'll gather at his door in such a number that the rumbling of our feet will make the earth tremble.

Reprinted from The Black Panther 1, vol. 7 (August 28, 1971), pp. 18-19.

Women rebel at Alderson

Over 100 demonstrators, mostly women, gathered outside Alderson Federal Reformatory for Women in West Virginia on October 2 to show solidarity with the women inside and to protest the prison conditions. The demonstration was one of many actions called by the Harrisburg Defense Committee and supported by numerous groups including the prisoners Solidarity Committee (PSC) of YAWF.

In the wake of the heroic Attica rebellion numerous strikes, protests and rebellions have convulsed ruling class concentration camps from Parish Prison in Louisiana to Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary in Kansas. The courage of the inmates at Attica, who stood up against the combined power of the prison, state, federal authorities, obviously struck a cord in the hearts of tens of thousands of prisoners across the nation who suffer from the same racist abuse and inhuman conditions.

Even at Alderson, which is acclaimed a "showcase of women's jails," the women inmates held a memorial service for the murdered Attica prisoners. Prison officials responded by transferring 66 "ringleaders," 10 percent of the population, to maximum security prison in Ashland, Kentucky.

When 37 women refused to be transfered, tear gas was used to force them onto a bus. A spokesman for the prison called the sisters, "the type who take things in their own hands...sparkplugs in this sort of thing, the more vocal, more outspoken, more revolutionary types." His description was meant as an insult to the sisters, but it is really a tribute to strong and courageous women who dared to honor the dead of Attica and defied their own prison-keepers.

Speakers from the PSC, the Third World Women's Alliance, the National Committee for Defense of Political Prisoners, and Washington, D.C., Women's Liberation addressed the rally. Laurie Fierstein who spoke from the PSC, said: "The prisoners at Attica asked for better conditions, amnesty, to be treated as human beings...Rockefeller answered them with high-powered weapons, gas, and torture. The women here at Alderson asked to show solidarity with the Attica inmates -- they were answered with gas, and transfers to hellholes. The rulers will not give an inch and will continue to answer protests of the oppressed in the most bestial manner. This means we must fight back harder than ever to show solidarity and to tear down the concentration camps."

filing: A is for aggravation,

by MEIRA POMERANTZ

Try to imagine someone having to spend 7 hours a day alphabetizing the names of pedigreed dogs? Okay, how about alphabetizing financial reports from companies and then stuffing each into certain folders? Well, over 9.4 million of the women who work in this country don't have to imagine such ludicrous ways to waste time -- we live it 5 days a week!

We are poor white and Third World women who were locked out of learning skills and trades in schools, so now we are locked-in the "lower status," miserably paid, unorganized office jobs like filing. These jobs are the crumbs left over by the bosses -- the crumbs that are hardly "important" enough to be bothered with. But if the bosses didn't have us to sweep them up, they wouldn't be able to walk through their offices to their desks because of the chaos!

And yet, those of us who get thse jobs feel lucky and sometimes even privileged. The boss makes us feel like we have to "qualify" for the position, that being a file clerk is something special because it is a so-called white collar job. They want us to feel that because we don't get our hands dirty, we're really in a different class from the factory, maintenance, or service workers.

But we're not! There are only two classes -- the bosses and the workers. It's the bosses who classify us as blue-collar or white-collar workers to try to divide us. But are we file clerks any less enslaved to our jobs than the factory workers? Don't we all have bosses who exploit us? Do we live in luxury housing or send our children to private schools like our bosses?

No! We suffer in the same way as do our sisters and brothers who are labeled "blue-collar." And, in fact, in exchange for keeping our hands clean, we often have no unions -- which means we have lower pay and benefits than the factory workers who fought to get unions.

Despite this, we must "qualify" for a job that any first grader who has mastered the ABC's could do. What these requirements really amount to are a pair of computerized hands with no emotion, intelligence, or human needs. This means that if a woman has young children, if she doesn't see the company as her life's blood, if she doesn't look "right," and especially if she is a Third World woman, she is the last to be hired. In most cases, these are the women who most need to work to eat and feed their families. These are the women whose only "alternative" is welfare.

Once we have qualified, we suffer mental stagnation from doing work that has no relevance to our lives. Our bosses find the most monotonous, tedious tasks to keep us busy. The harassment from the bosses and the unsafe working conditions go unchecked because we are not unionized. The boss calls us "girls" to enforce our inferior position -- a double degradation for Black and Third World women.

I used to work for a company that registered pedigreed dogs. It sounds ridiculous until one sees the tremendous profits that the company made from registering dogs in the studbook. At the same time they made their profit, they would spit $85 a week at us. They treated the dogs better than us!

B is for boss, C is for crap...

There were 40 women in our department, about 10 of us were file clerks. Our job was known to be the lowliest in the office. We used to call our supervisor "Hitler." She was a racist, chauvinist woman, spending most of her time trying to divide up the office. She wouldn't allow the file clerks to talk to the other workers or even amongst ourselves. During our break we could not leave the room, even if it was "our time." The only place we could go was a tiny restroom where all 40 of us stuffed ourselves, and stood for a few minutes to catch our breath. It was like being held captive.

We couldn't do anything in that office without getting Hitler's okay first. She loved getting her ass kissed. If we were one minute late she would dock us 15 minutes pay. One of the women, a widow, had a 4-year-old son whom she had to take to a sitter every morning before work. Of course, she was late sometimes on rainy days. Whenever she was, old Hitler would give her a lecture about teaching her child to be punctual.

In the office where I work now there is a long wall of filing cabinets with scores of small drawers. There is another room with rows of shelves with folders filed on them. We are forever bending down to the bottom drawers, making sure to hold down our skirts, constantly reaching, stretching, having to stand on ladders and stools to get to the high files. Many times we slip off the stools and land hard on the floor. This happens to the older women frequently. Being on our feet all the time, carrying stacks of 40 or 50 file folders gives us aches and pains all over our bodies. We have to run to deliver the files to the boss at every command -- jump when he says jump. "Don't get fresh with me, young lady," he snorted last week when I told him at 4:30 I was just too exhausted to bring the files.

No! The bosses don't care about us. One woman I work with has a very sick mother. When she found out her mother had a limited time to live, she became very upset and missed a few days of work. When the boss interrogated her and found out that her mother was dying, he said it was "just too bad, but if you're going to work for my company, you'd better be here and work, or forget it."

If one of us is out, we are expected to do all the work, anyway. Even if there is only one file clerk in a section, she is supposed to do the work for all four people working there -- but she only gets paid for one. This is really slave labor. We've complained of this many times to the boss. He tells us in a very patronizing way "to do what we can!" What he means is: Don't stop! No breaks! Just work and keep working until it's all done! When this happens, we work slower than usual, until he is forced to get some people to help us.

We file clerks are getting angry and we're not going to be chained to the boss's filing cabinets much longer. We're going to get together with the other workers and refile the whole system. We are going to file the bosses in hell with a zillion papers for them to alphabetize. After we get rid of them, we'll organize our lives so that if there is any filing to do, a machine will do it. We'll then be free to develop ourselves as complete human beings.

SHENANDOAH ON STRIKE

by the Virginia Weekly and members of IUE Local 174

A decade ago the residents of the small town of Shenandoah, Virginia, collected $57,000 in door-to-door donations, which was presented to the Alliance Manufacturing Company, an Ohio-based subsidiary of the North American Philips conglomerate, as an encouragement to locate a plant in their town. At that time, the people of Shenandoah thought that bringing industry to their community would solve their problems of chronic unemployment and poverty, which are characteristic of the Appalachian region.

Well, Alliance came. Now one of those same citizens, a man who had donated $100 to help attract the plant, says that he only hopes someone will blow the Alliance Co. off the face of the earth!

Shenandoah is now the scene of the strike that began on June 2 as a result of the Alliance Company's refusal to make a contract agreement acceptable to the newly recognized Local 174 of the International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE). All but two or three of the 300 strikers are women, since women do virtually all of the plant's production work, making 85 percent of the small electrical motors found in nearly every typewriter, record player, or tape recorder.

The issues involved in the dispute provide one of the most graphic examples of how corporations exploit Southern and female workers in the name of "industrialization" and "progress."

In Ohio the average wage for Alliance workers is $3.10 an hour. In Shenandoah the starting wage is $1.60, and the top wage, the wage that 85 percent of the workers earn, is $1.76.

"We take home $55 a week. That's what it boils down to. In Ohio they get almost twice as much."

Not only that, but half of the bonus pay for overtime work is taken by the company and, according to the company, given "to the consumer." (Alliance's consumers are the electrical commodity producers, such as GE and Westinghouse.) In other words, instead of getting time-and-a-half for overtime, the Alliance workers get time-and-a-quarter.

The company has offered the workers 21-cents over a 3-year period. The workers are demanding a 35-cent raise the first year. One worker said, "We still don't feel that we was asking too much, considering we're 10 years behind, and we're not even making the cost of living today really. When they threw in this 21-cents for 3 years, this kind of floored us, you know."

The women's main complaints aren't about wages, though, but about working conditions, seniority, and grievance procedures. Like workers across the country, the Alliance employees have been hard-hit in recent years by speedup, harsh regulations, and dangerous working conditions.

"They were getting so they were really putting pressure on the girls. They weren't allowed to talk to one another. They thought they should sit at their work area and not go to the rest room except during their 10-minute period. I told the foreman if they couldn't use the restroom they might as well put a padlock on it."

The company refuses to recognize seniority at all.

"A girl that's been there 2 weeks could come in and take over a girl's job that's been there 10 years."

"When they laid off back in January or February they made the statement that there was some dogs in there that they had to get rid of. Girls that had been there 8 and 9 years they called dogs."

"They called them dead wood. Took 'em 10 years to find out they were dead wood."

The grievance procedure offered by the company is absurd.

"They want things their way. They want it left just like it is. On this grievance procedure, they wanted the final step left up to the plant manager, and then if you don't like his decision, strike. But who wants to strike every other week? You turn around and you've got a strike on your hands, because, you take a plant, in every department you're going to have some kind of grievance every week."

"We didn't want this strike, but we had no choice. We didn't have any choice because they didn't give us any. They forced us into this. You either take

what we offer or leave it."

"When they first came here they called us 'hillbillies.' They went back to Ohio and said we came to work barefooted and carried our lunches in molasses buckets. So after 10 years, you can see, I'm wearing a pair of shoes. They cost me a dollar. They've done a lot for me."

"This is why the company came here, because they knew they could get cheap labor here. And then they turn around and call us dogs. Now we're showing them how we can bite."

As women, as poor people, and as Appalachian "hillbillies," the Alliance workers had never experienced anything but condescension and arrogance from the company. Among the most condescending and arrogant was the company lawyer, George Gardner. But on June 2 the workers showed Gardner and Alliance Manufacturing that their 10 years of unchallenged exploitation are coming to an end.

"This Gardner is a sly feller, and he gets this real sassy grin on his face. 'Course it got wiped off the first day of the strike. He said he was going to serve us lemonade on the picket line, but I don't know what happened to it. The first day he drives up with the window rolled down and a great big smile on his face, and he gets an egg in his face. And he rolls that window up real fast, you know, and his car is plastered with eggs and rotten tomatoes, and he found that it wasn't the pleasant picket line that he thought he was going to drive up and meet."

"They told us when we came out that it was not going to be a picnic. They had the town police there the first day, that morning. That evening there were at least 25 state troopers for about 80 girls."

"They was afraid. They know we're a bunch of women, but they better watch us. We believe in what we're doing and we're gonna fight for it."

Within the first few days of the strike, the notorious, reactionary (Senator) Byrd machine went into motion to try to defeat the workers. The company easily obtained a court injunction forbidding more than three pickets within 100 feet of the plant. The state police, always one of the bosses' most useful tools in busting up strikes, declared that no one would be allowed to picket on the street leading to the plant. Any workers who set foot on the pavement were immediately arrested. The picket line was reduced to a row of people standing alongside the road, far from the plant.

The company quickly began recruiting scabs, most of whom were high school girls looking for summer jobs. The strikers greeted scabs' cars at the plant gate with rocks, eggs, tomatoes, and nails. Several of the scabs are below the legal working age, but the police have refused to take any action against the company.

More than 30 people have been arrested so far as a result of the struggle to shut down the plant. There were also eleven arrests under the old "stranger picketing" law, which said that no one could picket a plant unless they were working there when the strike began. Although the law had been ruled unconstitutional 20 years ago, the Chief of Police and the Commonwealth's Attorney decided it could still be useful in preventing anyone from supporting the strikers.

Arrested under the law were members of the Virginia Weekly's staff, a woman who had been laid off from Alliance before the strike began, strike supporters from Charlottesville, husbands of some of the strikers, and the head of the Virginia AFL-CIO. After threats of false arrest and conspiracy suits, the charges were dropped and the police stopped using the "law."

The workers from Alliance haven't backed down, though. They have taken on the company, the courts, the police, and the press head-on, and they are winning. Their fight has become a lot of other people's fight as well -- people all over the valley who are sick and tired of sacrificing their lives and their dignity so that the Alliance executives can make more profits. The strike has strong community support, and more and more of the scabs are being persuaded, one way or another, that they can't make their living by stealing other folks' jobs.

Supporters from General Electric, Westinghouse, Dupont, Dunn and Bush, and University of Virginia workers and students have all been on the picket line with the strikers. A Women's Support Group formed in Charlottesville has held a car wash to raise money for the strikers and has joined the picketing. A Women's Support Committee has publicized the strike all over the state and in many other parts of the country.

A carload of strikers traveled to Ohio and put informational pickets around the Alliance plant there, shutting it down when the Ohio workers refused to cross the line.

"There was a picket line at the Ohio plant for one day, and out of 700 employees I think it was 10 or 11 that went through it. So you can see what kind of support we had there. As a matter of fact, I was told that one man had went in at 5:00, and when he found out that the girls was out there and had formed a picket at 6:00, he clocked out and came back out of the plant."

The strike is now in its crucial weeks. Most of the scabs have gone back to school, putting even more pressure on the company. Yet Alliance seems determined not to treat the Southern women it has been robbing and exploiting for a decade as if they were human beings. By promoting divisions between Black and white, men and women, young and old, skilled and unskilled, Northerners and Southerners, corporations like Alliance try to keep working people from fighting together. But sooner or later, before this strike ends, the Alliance Company will be forced to understand that the days are over when companies come into little Southern towns and force these conditions down people's throats. The Alliance women, like so many workers all over the world, have decided to fight back.

* *

Send messages of support and contributions to IUE Local 174, 905 Bank Street, Shenandoah, Va. 22849. For more about The Virginia Weekly, write Box 336x, Newcomb Hall Station, Charlottesville, Va. 22901.

"We must build a new society in which women are not expected to drudge all day in the kitchen. We must have . . . community restaurants, central kitchens, central laundries, institutions which leave the working woman free to devote her evenings to instructive reading or recreations. Only by breaking the domestic chains will we give women a chance to live a richer, happier, and more complete life."

— Alexandra Kollantai

ALEXANDRA KOLLANTI

by RITA MULLINS

February 1917 -- on the front lines, in the trenches, the workers and peasants of Europe were facing each other with guns, starving, freezing, dying in a war begun by the businessmen and the generals to take over each other's markets.

In Petrograd and Moscow, the largest industrial centers in Russia and the largest textile centers in the world, Russian women were feeling the effects of the war. They stood for hours on endless breadlines with their children clutched against them in the biting cold. Many of these women worked long hours in the textile factories, under the most miserable conditions. Many of them had just come to the cities from the countryside, as the Czar's army conscripted their husbands and forced many of them off the land.

It is no wonder then that on February 23, 1917, International Women's Day, 20,000 women textile workers, tired of the war, the breadlines, the working conditions, went out on strike. By that afternoon, the streets of Petrograd were teeming with 90,000 striking workers, women and men. This was the spark that ignited the Russian Revolution.

It is not just a quirk of history that the women initiated the Russian Revolution. Industrialization in Russia had come quickly. In little more than a decade, backward, semifeudal Czarist Russia had been literally hurled into the world capitalist arena, as the advanced Western countries financed whole industries in their new market, Russia. As the industrialization of Russia created a new class, the working class, so within that a new woman was being formed -- the working woman. Women were the most oppressed of the Russian workers, paid less than the men for their labor and carrying the burdens of housekeeping and child rearing at home. That is why the Russian working woman fought to see an end to her oppression in the success of the revolution.

Alexandra Kollanti was, in many ways, a representative of the new woman. She was deeply committed to the emancipation of women, yet she knew that it would only come about with the liberation of all oppressed people.

Kollanti was born in 1872 into an aristocratic Russian family. But by 1896 she had broken with her family and become involved in the great social upheavals that were shaking Czarist Russia. After witnessing a textile strike of 12,000 workers, many women, she said, "I could not lead a happy peaceful life when the working population was so terribly enslaved. I simply had to join the movement." This decision was not only an intellectual one -- it meant taking her young son and leaving her husband, who refused to join her in the struggles of the workers.

By the 1905 Revolution, in which she participated, Alexandra was putting her new-found Marxist thought into practice. In 1907, she was a recognized leader of the working women's movement, and helped set up the first working women's club. Kollanti organized working women around their own demands and needs, such as health, maternity and child care, and political and social equality on all levels.

But to be a revolutionary in Russia after the suppression of the 1905 Revolution was very difficult -- all work had to be carried out with the utmost secrecy to escape detection by the Czar's police. For this reason, Alexandra began to lead a double life. On the surface she appeared to be an aristocrat while all along she carried on revolutionary work. She frequented the best dressmaker in St. Petersburg, so that her appearance would not arouse the suspicion of the police on the street while she carried secret documents!

In the fall of 1908, the First Women's Congress in St. Petersburg was called by women of the aristocracy and the merchant and professional classes. Alexandra, and many other women from working class groups, wanted to present a resolution that an entirely new social system was needed to bring about women's emancipation. While Alexandra was writing the proclamation, the police searched her apartment, forcing her into hiding. Despite moving about from friend to friend, she managed to write Social Foundations of the Woman Question. When she rose to defend her resolution at the Congress, she was recognized by the police. With the help

of some friendly workers at the hall, she was able to escape, but was forced to leave the country.

She went to Germany where she worked with Clara Zetkin, a leading German Marxist (see Battle-Acts, no. 4 (March 1971)), where together they worked to establish the first International Women's Day, which took place in March of 1911 at Frankfurt-am-Main. Later that year she traveled to Paris where she helped organize the housewives' strike, "La greve des manageres," against the high cost of living. It was a militant and spirited strike, during which many women were arrested.

Perhaps the best example of the character of Kollanti's political activities is her participation in the 1912 meeting of the Second International. It was here that the great debate unfolded of how the working classes of warring countries should react to the impending imperialist war -- World War I. Kollanti was chosen by the Russian workers of the textile syndicate, most of whom were women, to represent them at the meeting. When the time came for the Russian people to enter into the debate, Lenin asked Kollanti, who was not yet a member of the Bolshevik Party, to be the representative of the Russian people, saying, "She knows how to convince her hearers."

She spoke in the interests of the international working class when she said that war should be avoided at all costs, that it should be opposed since only the bosses and generals would benfit from it. She was supported by the great revolutionaries of the time, when she said that if the war came, the workers and peasants of both sides should unite and, amid the political and economic crisis, take power in each country in their own name.

When World War I finally erupted in 1914, Alexandra was forced to leave Germany and go to Sweden. There she continued her work against the war. Because of this, the Swedish authorities, although allegedly neutral, arrested her -- making her the first of the European socialists to be arrested for opposing the imperialist war. A great deal of work by her supporters finally gained her release.

Kollanti joined the Bolsheviks, the party of Lenin, in 1915 because of its antiwar position; and in 1917, just before the October Revolution, she was elected to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party. Throughout that hot, electrifing summer, she worked heart and soul to win the workers over to the Bolsheviks, to turn them against the war. When Lenin and other party members were forced into hiding, she was one of the foremost orators and agitators, speaking before meetings of the soviets (workers' councils), in the streets of the working class districts, to the women on the breadlines -- to all she raised the slogan of "land, bread, and peace." Partly as a result of her agitation, the historic July rebellion of the Kronstadt sailors took place -- a rebellion that contributed significantly to the coming revolution. That same month, she was indicted, along with Lenin and another leading Bolshevik, Zinoviev, for state treason.

After the victory of the Russian Revolution in October 1917, Kollanti was appointed People's Commissar of Social Welfare. She was the only woman in the cabinet at the time and the first woman in history to be recognized as a member of a government. Now she threw herself into the work of the revolution and devoted her energies to those who had first drawn her into the struggle -- the poor working and peasant women.

Alexandra's dearest hopes, and the hopes of millions of Russian women, for emancipation were now possible because the Bolshevik Revolution had smashed the patriarchal order founded on private property. The new socialist order was based on a cooperative society, where the factories and farms belonged to the people who worked them -- where there was no longer exploitation of women or men.

To lay the groundwork for the liberation of women, the Bolsheviks immediately enacted laws so that the patriarchy and the oppression of women would begin to be dismantled. Kollanti's book, Society and Maternity, written in 1912, became the basis for the new laws of the Soviet government; divorce and abortion became the legal right of all women, free maternity hospitals and medical care were provided along with daycare centers, schools, and plans for collectivized kitchens. Laws established the equality of women on the job and in all phases of life.

Kollanti was instrumental in establishing the institutions that put these legal rights into concrete practice. She also helped raise the consciousness of women by setting up women's congresses -- the first one, held in 1918, was attended by over 1,000 women from both working and the peasant classes. Alexandra's great ambition was to make women, usually apart from public life, interested in ques-

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"If there were broads around here who could write I'd know about it."
—Senior Editor, *Life*

"Few women seem to have the physical and mental energy to perform in higher positions at Time Magazine."
—Managing Editor, *Time*

about TIME

— By a participant

For half a century women on Time magazine with academic training equal to men had been hired in as newspaper clippers, secretaries, traffic clerks, or at best, researchers, while men were hired in as writers at almost twice the pay. Henry Luce, founder of what is today the world's largest publishing empire, liked to boast about the special role he had created for "his" researchers, whose job it was to dig up the facts and fix the errors after the men did the writing. They also made appointments, travel arrangements and ran out for coffee. Luce called them his "female priesthood," "veritable vestal virgins" whom the male writers had to "cajole."

The situation wasn't much better for aspiring professional women on the empire's other magazines. On Life, for instance, one of the clip desk "girls," a college graduate, was a free-lance writer who had a book coming out.

Up until the spring of 1970 it looked as if Women's Liberation hadn't been heard of at Time Inc. At the Ladies' Home Journal a group of women staged a sit-in in the managing editor's office, and at Newsweek the women employees lodged a protest with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. But all seemed contented in the Time-Life building. Two top editors were overheard to remark that such things could never happen there.

Then, suddenly, a few women started talking. As the talks grew so did the numbers. Some of us proposed bringing an action through our union, the Newspaper Guild. But we were a very weak shop, an open shop. A lot of the women activists in fact had never joined. After all, their college educations hadn't included a course in trade union struggle. They had been taught to regard themselves as "professionals," not workers. Most of them had always thought they could make it on their own. Nevertheless, those of us who were union members formed a women's committee, and later got the union to issue a resolution supporting our demands.

In May 1970, 150 women filed charges of sex discrimination against the company in the State Division of Human Rights. We were assisted by a lawyer in the office of the state attorney general which, as the official agency for the state Civil Rights Law, became a joint plaintiff in our case.

The first step was to prepare the complaint. From our research and testimony our lawyer drew up a statement of charges running 12 pages and citing 72 instances of discrimination! None of us ever fully realized how systematically we had been cheated until we saw the cumulative effect of our collective grievances written down in that document. It was like the shock of a cold shower. From then on nothing could hold us back.

It was just then, though, that management tried. On the eve of filing our complaint, our meeting was visited by a female member of management (invited by one of our own group!). She asked us to delay our action for a week. Management would like to "talk things over." They were shocked that we would "resort to this crude legal tactic." Didn't we know they would cooperate if only they knew what we wanted?

Calmly and dispassionately disposing of all management's arguments one by one, the women took a vote, 57 to 3 to proceed. The "lady" left before there was time to show her the door.

We soon learned that the State Human Rights Division was very touchy about stepping too hard on the toes of big corporations like Time Inc. The lawyer explained that the state can't order the company to make changes in the editorial practices we objected to (like our job titles and not giving us credit lines and setting up training programs). That would be an invasion of corporate editorial policy (or "traditional management prerogatives"). Like private property, that is sacrosanct. The state could only rule on general practices like hiring, promotion, and compensation. Our lawyer advised us to sit down at the table with our editors and conciliate our differences, and get the best we could, using our "leverage," the threat of taking the company to a public hearing.

So we talked — for 10 months. Some of the women thought we were raising the consciousness of management. Maybe we did a little bit in some cases. But what was more important was that we were raising our own consciousness. We were finding out that in the end the bosses were going to be guided by the budgets of their departments and the fiscal policies of the corporation whose consciousness was more concerned with the margin of profit than with women's liberation. We were learning that, as workers, we would get what together we were strong enough to demand and take, and no more. We finally got the message — the public hearing was a useful threat, but nobody had the slightest intention of letting us use it.

In February 1971, we signed the final agreement providing that the publisher "shall refrain from the commission of unlawful discriminatory practices in the future." (They didn't have to admit to them in the past.) Included in the 46 paragraphs of legal language is a requirement that the personnel department give us quarterly re-

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WANTED:
rights for divorced, working mothers

by BARBARA KOWALSKI, New Jersey YAWF

I got married when I was twenty-one. I wasn't sure it would work; I wasn't sure I was ready. But I was sure that I was pregnant.

When the doctor told me I was pregnant he made two suggestions, the first: "Why don't you and your mother go down to Puerto Rico for a few days?" He might just as well have said London, or Paris, or even New York. I didn't have the money for an abortion anywhere. So, I took the doctor's second suggestion. I got married.

The thought never entered my mind that I could keep my baby and not get married. All I knew was that my family -- and in fact my whole white, middle class upbringing -- made me feel that the only "decent" thing to do was marry. I realize now how hypocritical that legal document, the marriage certificate, is -- that it somehow made me "better" than the thousands of poor white, Third World and particularly Black women in this country who bear and rear children alone. But during the past three years, I have never regretted my decision to keep my son, as I have often regretted my decision to marry.

This "decent" thing took five minutes in a dingy judge's office. Six unhappy months later, my husband dropped me off at the hospital. While I was in labor, he packed his things and moved out. I gave birth to my son, knowing I was alone.

It is unnecessary to describe the heartbreak, frustration, bitterness, and despair I felt. My situation is not unique. What is heartbreaking is that daily millions of women are faced with similiar situations.

When we realized that our marriage was futile, my husband and I agreed to give the baby up for adoption. But as the months of my pregnancy wore on, I knew I could not give my baby away. I chose to keep Jonathan. I was responsible not only for myself, but for him. I found I had no time for self-pity. I had to find a job.

I applied for a job as an airlines reservations agent. Mine was an "equal opportunity employer," which proved to be a euphemism for starting everyone at the same pay, but promoting only the white men to the higher paying, supervisory positions. I worked there for two years and was given the "honor" of being put on a special team of "top agents."

In reality I was still a reservation agent-my "dis-" honor was manipulating people into buying first class seats: "You have much more leg room and wider seats in first class." "The meal service is much more elaborate in first class." How many people who couldn't afford the extra money did I lure into spending it for that "exclusive service"? I was oppressing as well as being oppressed. It finally made me so sick, I quit.

I was fortunate to have enough education to then get a job as a copywriter for a publishing firm. It was really a glorified production line. I had to turn out ads on books as fast as I could. My whole department, except for the supervisors, were on the time clock. Raises were awarded not for the quality of your work, but for the quantity and, even more important, for attendance.

Getting both Jonathan and myself ready in the morning was quite a job in itself, particularly in the winter months. After I dropped him off at day care, I had morning traffic to contend with. I was often late by as much as TEN MINUTES! Though I made up the time by staying late, my bosses warned me that I was being watched. No one else in the department had a child. My fellow workers understood my circumstances and did not begrudge me the ten minutes. My bosses, however, found me "irresponsible." During the year that I worked there I never received a raise because of my lateness. When I was absent I received no sick pay. I was finally fired for lateness and "bad attitude."

These two working experiences gave me a crash course in the desperation of working women, particularly of working mothers who must support their families alone. In order for us to work our children must be cared for. It should be free, on the job, and parent supervised. Paying for day care, or worse yet, leaving our children alone, is like being punished for having children -- it's inhuman.

And finally there is the humility of having to ask for money from your ex-husband -- the guy who walked out on you. If all else fails, what is there but welfare?

The life of a woman alone is difficult. But I realize now that it doesn't have to be. If we had the right to free abortions when we wanted, free day care, along with equal job opportunities for truly creative work, then all working women -- married or not -- would have the prerequisites for a full, meaningful life. And no women would be forced on welfare. We would be free to have relationships with men that are based on love and respect and not economic dependency.

But we don't have these things. Instead, we are made to think that we're "lucky" just to win the daily struggles of survival. But this isn't enough. We have to wage and win a struggle to get the prerequisites for all people to lead fulfilling lives. As women join with oppressed peoples everywhere, we come closer to insuring those changes.

Algerian Women

The discussion excerpted below took place in Algeria this spring during International Palestine Week. The interviewer is Rita Freed, Chairwoman of the Committee to Support Middle East Liberation and a representative of Youth Against War & Fascism, who was in Algiers as a delegate to the World Conference on Palestine. The speaker is Benmahdi Safia, Secretary General of the National Union of Algerian Women, which is linked to the governing FLN Party. Translated by YAWF Women, the interview will be run in two parts.

Q Could you outline for us the role played by the Algerian women during the revolution?

A They had a decisive role. They were the instigators, encouraging the men to struggle towards victory with never a retreat. Even the old women of the countryside participated, by preparing food for the soldiers. The women dug the underground fortifications in which the combatants hid, the cells of the revolution. They hid weapons, they were the first to prepare the way for the Algerian fighters.

In the cities, the young girls participated to a great extent. Many of us left high school to join the resistance. They sacrificed: they were sent to all the prisons in Algeria and in France as well, at the Sante, the one at Frenes, and elsewhere (Safia was one of those jailed for resistance activities) and even there they managed to do something. They studied, they got politicized, and when they were liberated at the time of independence they were ready to take on responsibilities in the government and the Party.

All worked. They became cadres, journalists, lawyers, midwives, people in important posts. It is a continuation for us. During the revolution they were nurses in the Maquis, combatants, fedayin (self-sacrificiers): those who planted bombs, transported weapons and documents, or did the difficult work of making contacts and serving as advisors. And now we continue with the second revolution, which is building up the country.

Among those who were militants, in the FLN as well as those outside it, there is not one who does not now continue this work. We educate our generation and remind it of all that happened during the revolution for the liberation of our Algeria.

There were many years of struggles, of strikes, and of privations. We were deprived of food and water. There was a blockade. The stores were closed, emptied deliberately by the French colonialists. In spite of these hardships there was solidarity which showed itself every day. There were large demonstrations throughout the country, the most important of which occurred on the 10th and 11th of December 1960. At this time General de Gaulle was on his way to Algeria to arrange meetings and ask for the pacification of Algeria.

All the homes were emptied, the people came out into the streets, from the very youngest to the very oldest, to demand our rights and our independence. Algeria is Moslem, they said. Algeria is Algerian. We would not submit to French orders. We wanted a politics of our own.

When we said "Moslem Algeria," in those first demonstrations, we were breaking with our old identity. For we had not been Algerians, Arabs, nor French -- we had been "French Moslems." But we had never asked French nationality. We didn't identify as French Moslems. So when we said Algeria is Moslem, it was to take back this word, and truly identify ourselves and our Algeria.

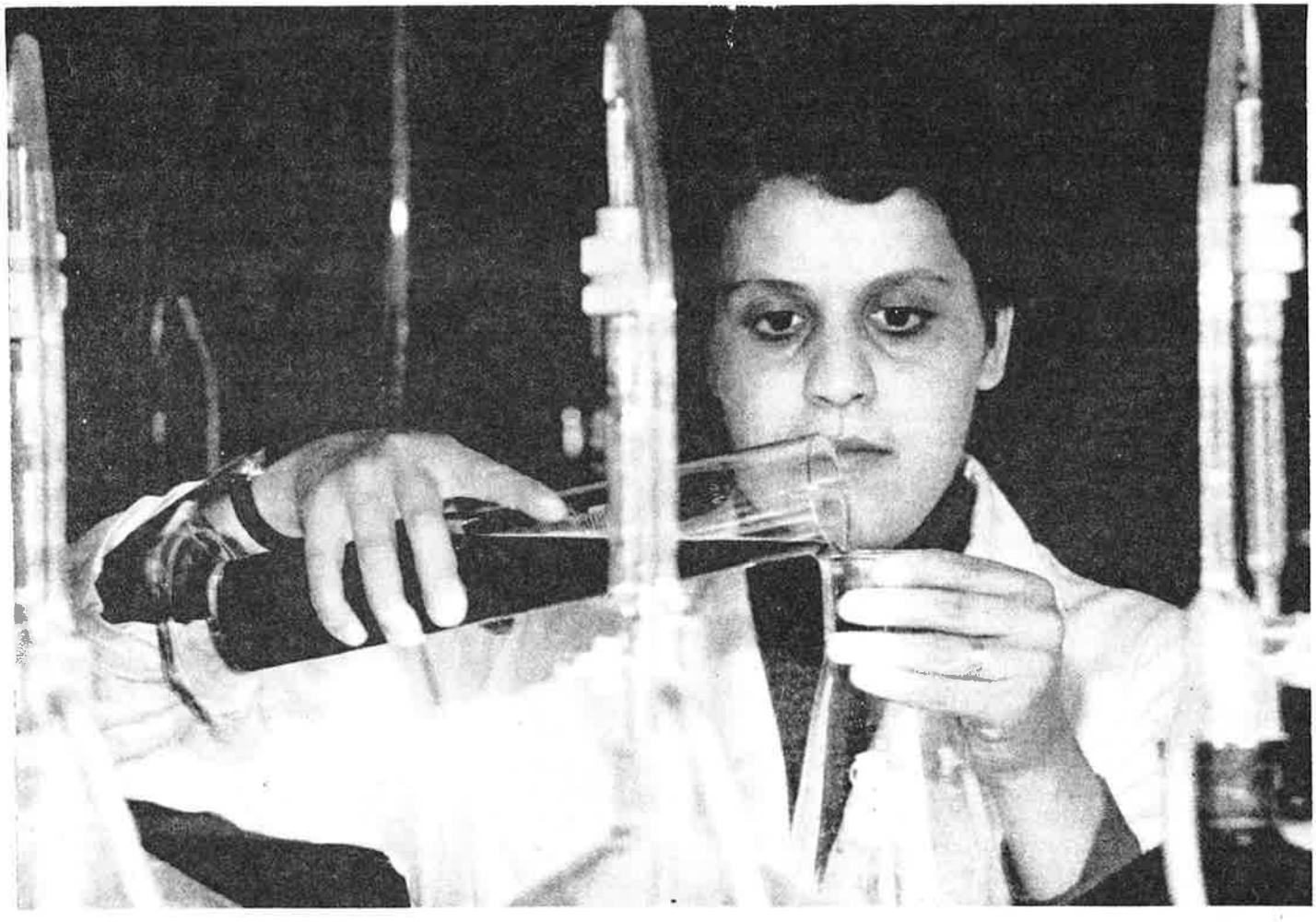
Many demonstrations followed, on every important occasion and event. Notably there were those of July 5, 1961 — marking the French conquest of Algeria on July 1, 1830, and of November 1, 1961 — the date when the FLN opened the revolution. We came out with banners and with Algerian flags, with which many people were still not familiar. There were constant demonstrations, right up until independence.

There was no respite. We could not relax. We had to take the situation in hand immediately. Because for six months no one had worked. No Algerian could go out into the streets without being killed. They buried hundreds, day and night. People had to stay indoors all the time. In order not to demoralize the population too much, we couldn't even bury all in the day time -- the remainder had to be done at night.

The National Union of Algerian Women was organized even before the proclamation of independence, to raise the spirits of the women who had to stay indoors with the children, and whose morale was very low. Their husbands, sons, and fathers were being killed, in the resistance, in the countryside, and at the hands of the OAS (French stormtroopers -- Eds.) in the cities -- between March 19, 1962 and July 5, 1962 there was much killing by the OAS.

It was necessary to be with the women, to support them, to raise their morale, and to organize the referendum, which was for our proclamation of independence.

We had to do the cleaning up throughout the country. The French had imposed a blockade on hygiene — there were mountains of garbage all over; there could have been epidemics of disease. The women went out into the streets, using all possible means, horse carts, mule carts — we had no motorized vehicles. Thanks to the vigilance and the solidarity of the people, we were able to get the situation under control.



Thanks also to the FLN, which organized all over the country, to give an orientation to the people and to clarify the path which had been chosen, which was the path of socialism and of social justice — that social justice of which the Algerian people had been deprived for so long, for 132 years.

Now we are working to organize the country. The young people are in the FLN Youth, the workers are in the General Union, the children in the Scouts, the women in the UNFA. The old people are also organized, and the Algerian workers abroad. In this way we will be able to liberate our country completely, particularly in the economic sector.

Q There are some people in the United States who claim that there has been regression in the role of the Algerian women since the liberation struggle, for example, in the cultural matter of the veil. Do you feel there is controversy between the women and the men on this issue? Is there a struggle on the special problems of women, such as having day care centers so that they don't have to stay in the house to take care of the children?

A The veil is not a problem for us. Veils are only found in the large cities. In the interior, in the mountains, the women have never worn the veil, during or since colonialism. They wear a long dress with a big belt, and a headdress, and it is they who work the hardest in the mountains that are steep and harsh, in the Kabyli. In the plateau the women also work in the fields. They wear the regional costume, a long dress with a shawl that is fastened at the shoulders, and a headdress in which they tie their long hair. And in the South there is another costume, which is not a veil.

The tourists come to the cities, and they see the veil. It is a Turkish influence. In Constantine the veil is black because the Turkish Bey, Ahmed Bey, whom they sing about in the Andalusian songs, and in Constantine and in Algiers, was imprisoned and tortured by the French.

In the cities there are large numbers of veiled women who work. It doesn't prevent them. Clearly these women are not cadres, but they work at all sorts of jobs: in small business, in tobacco, in textiles, in industry. At the most, the veil is a habit, a family custom, a sign of respect for the grandparents who are still living. One does not break old customs all at once. But the veil will be lost with the new generations.

The second half of the interview will be in the next issue of Battle Acts, with more discussion on the veil, child care, legal and social guarantees for women, literacy, and nationalized industry.

ARMY DEPENDENTS, UNITE!

by PEGGY GEDEN

For three years I lived the life of a military dependent—and the word "dependent" still sticks in my throat. I was either ignored, or scorned, according to my husband's rank. In any case, I was treated by the Army as if I was nothing but my husband's possession. The military has this neat little scale of classifications: "officers and their ladies, non-commissioned officers (NCO's) and their wives, and enlisted men(EM) and their women." My husband was an EM....

However, the military tries to put up a good front by claiming that they take care of their own. Of course, if the army "wanted you to have a wife, they'd issue you one." I learned early exactly where I stood along with all the other low-ranking military dependents.

For starters, the money situation is terrible. The salary of an enlisted man (E4 and lower) is below poverty level and once you've hit poverty, who cares if it is below. Our first year's income was $1,024, and after we paid the rent we didn't have to worry about food, because there wasn't any money left for it anyway.

Over 12,000 GIs and their families live on welfare if they're eligible, and the military doesn't bother to tell you that you might be able to get food stamps or surplus food. Most families that I've met got help from their parents, but your family can't help you, then you're just out of luck. If your husband's rank is below E4/4, which is 70 percent of the men in the military, you and your childrens' travel expenses aren't paid for, and it's very rare that you get stationed anywhere near your home town.

The finance office is one mess of red tape, so the paycheck each month is never the same. I knew a family with 4 kids where the guy got paid $30 for the month of December. The Army claimed they had been overpaying him for some months, so they decided to take all that he had been overpaid out of one check. They couldn't even pay the rent, much less feed the kids. There was nothing the guy could do about it, and the Army didn't care.

The housing situation is ridiculous. On-base housing is given out according to rank, so naturally the officers and lifers get it. They can afford an apartment in town, but instead it's the low-ranking families who have to rent these places and pay outrageous prices. Landlords know a trapped market, so rent averages around $150 a month. As compensation for the high rent, the apartments come furnished with mice, rats, roaches, and other lovelies. The military exercises no control, so you're stuck.

Leases are required by many landlords and for EM dependents this is insane. You never know how long you're going to be in any one place, so a lot of families get trapped into paying for a place for 6 months longer than they will live there. We always had to get a furnished apartment, which is more expensive, because we couldn't afford to ship furniture around. It's a vicious cycle of the dependent getting ripped off.

Military installations have PXs and commissaries where you can shop. Before my husband went into the Army I though they had low prices. I found out the opposite, fast! Some items may be cheap, but by shopping around on the outside you can always do better. Articles are finally coming out in newspapers about commissary corruption. It took them long enough to discover what every woman dependent has already known for a long time.

Because there isn't enough money and the rent is so high most women have to work. Here again, employers know a cheap and plentiful labor market when they see one. Most wages are below minimum and working conditions are outrageous. If a woman complains, she gets fired, because the bosses know that they can always get someone else. So again, you're stuck, and as a woman you have to put up with leering managers and many abusive comments.

The military supposedly provides "free" medical care, which does not include dental or eye treatment. This sounds like a fairly good deal, but the low-rank dependent does pay a price—her dignity as a human being. You have to wait for hours to even get looked at, and most of the doctors don't care about you. They're only serving their time, and just want to get out. They aren't concerned about you.

I had my daughter in an Army hospital—it was horrible. I got laughed at and made fun of and told I wasn't in labor when I was. My husband dragged me to the hospital and 15 minutes later I had my daughter. There wasn't a doctor around, so a nurse delivered me, and when the doctor did get there he turned out to be a raving sadist.

I had to take care of the baby the whole time I was in the hospital. Except for the first day she stayed in the room with me where the temperature was only 56 degrees and they gave her one light blanket. I had to make my own bed and get my own food 6 hours after I had the baby. I call all that pretty dehumanizing.

If a woman enters the emergency room with curlers in her hair, they won't take her. They simply don't care. Horror stories can be told by just about any military dependent. I was no exception. I'd rather go to a veterinarian he might treat me like an animal, but that's better than a "nothing."

When I think of how badly I've been treated, I can only imagine what misery Black and Brown women and children dependents go through. Their stories of being thrown off base, forced sterilization, and obvious segregation don't surprise me in the least. Why, the brass will resort to anything to maintain power—and racism is one of the most obvious means. Combined with the sexism, it must make the lives of Black and Third World dependents a living hell.

Another added "benefit" that the military provides to dependents is that we can count on being alone most of the time due to guard duty, KP, and a year's tour in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and wherever our husbands are sent to protect the profits of the bosses and the generals. So, a woman with children has to bring them up totally on her own. There is no end to the loneliness and frustration.

The military has got to be the ultimate male-supremacist institution in the world. Every day, the brass try to brainwash the men into thinking that women are subhuman creatures to be used and abused. "If women have to exist, then exploit them as much as possible" is their motto. The men are made to feel that there is actually something lower than a GI—women. They want GIs to take out all their anger and frustrations on this lowly creature when they get home, instead of fighting to get their dignity and rights from the brass.

The worst insult a CO can give a GI is to call him a "little girl"—or the most degrading, abusive names that every woman hates. In arms training, the men are told to "squeeze the trigger like you squeeze the tittie," and on and on ad nauseam. Prostitution is actively encouraged and sponsored by the military. Just think of all the Vietnamese women and girls forced to become prostitutes since the U.S. troops landed there! Rape is standard procedure--and I don't mean only in Vietnam where the GIs are told that rape is part of the booty. The military thinks nothing of a GI raping a woman on or off base. It follows, of course, that beating your wife and kids is acceptable practice.

Perhaps what is most incredible is that the Army actually expects the wife to urge her husband to be a "good soldier." Yet if your husband "gets out of line" they throw him into the stockade and take away all his pay, and you're left with nothing. If you get out of place, they call your husband up on the carpet so he comes home and slaps you back in place.

What the brass wants are Army dependents who follow their orders: be dumb, beautiful, and keep your mouth shut, while acting like a rehabilitation center for your man when we're through with him. But women, just like GIs, aren't going to keep their mouths shut any more. As individuals, women can't fight the military. Together though, something can be done. Something MUST and will be done.

Peggy, Sandi Kreps, and Joyce Betries have written a pamphlet, "Army Dependents Speak: Women and the Military," which goes into more detail about the situation of Army dependents. (The three women are working together on the Camp McCoy 3 Defense Committee which was formed to work on the case of three GI organizers, Steve Geden, Maynard Kreps, and Tom Chase, of the American Servicemen's Union who were framed up on charges stemming from the August 26, 1970 bombing of the telephone exchange, electrical system, and water works at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin.) For copies of the pamphlet, and contributions to the defense fund write: Battle Acts, 58 West 25 St., New York, N.Y. 10010; ASU, Room 737, 150 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011; or Camp McCoy 3 Defense Committee, 306 N. Brooks, Madison, Wisconsin.

—About Time

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ports on interviews, hirings, and promotions. The company refused to provide salary information. Instead, the Division of Human Rights will conduct periodic investigations into salaries. It was a legal landmark, the biggest case so far to deal with sex discrimination in employment.

Already token changes have taken place. We now have tryout systems for women who want to write and promises of new opportunities for training and promotion of women generally. The editors have promised to "protest" when we are refused admission to press conferences and press boxes. We were also upgraded in some of our job titles (in name only, no pay raises), and—something else that doesn't cost them anything—more credit lines and bylines. We also won the right to establish committees to meet with management representatives and hear complaints of sex discrimination.

The real enforcement of all our paper promises will ultimately have to come through the union, which will attempt to make our agreement a part of the contract. Growing recognition by the women themselves of the importance of the union to our struggle may be our greatest single accomplishment so far. Nearly a dozen of the formerly nonunion women have signed up since the start of the action and many of the others are thinking about it for the first time. Meantime, the union has initiated a demand for a day care center and improved maternity benefits in the next contract.

All the women at Time Inc. can say is: It's about time!

For George Jackson

by Emily Hanlon

How long ago was it, brother George,
that the black robes of injustice robbed you
of your youth, your life–for 70 dollars?
They sentenced you "to life," brother:
you were Black and poor and full of anger–
for 70 dollars, brother, they stole you from the streets;
for 70 dollars they threw you into their dungeons
to rot, to die–
your anger wasting away
behind those prison walls.

It was eons ago, brother,
because you refused to rot.
You refused to die for them,
and now you will never die.
For from the drops of a revolutionary's blood
a thousand more revolutionaries burst forth:
to avenge the death,
to avenge the crimes of the oppressors,
to free the oppressed.

It was eons ago, brother,
because like Malcolm and so many comrades,
your mind refused to bend
under the chains that bound your body–
and the prison walls became the link
between you and your people.

It was just a year ago.
that brother Jonathon held the oppressors at bay.
And for those few never-ending moments
in the minds and guts of the oppressed,
he freed us all
in your name,
for your freedom,
for all our freedom.

For in that moment of Justice,
all the feeble, black-robed bodies of injustice
felt the bullet,
and died a little,
with Judge Haley.

Long live those moments, brothers Jonathon and George!
Long live the freedom you gave us as you died!

They killed you.
They shot you in cold blood.
They hoped your strength would die.
But their own dying madness makes them blind:
they see all people as their pawns;
they see a human being as a body to exploit;
they see life as does a parasite, sucking,
living off the blood of others.
They see, therefore, death as the End.

And for them it is–their system is dying.
But ours is not yet born.
Your murder rings their death knell–
your strength is the heartbeat of the Oppressed;
your death the pangs of birth.

They shot you, brother, but you have not died.
Once they thought they had your life
in their hands, eons ago,
they took a Black youth and tried,
for 70 dollars, they tried to kill you.
But you refused to die, brother,
and then you became a warrior
in the name of the revolution–in the hearts of the oppressed.

No, brother George, you have not died!
Malcolm never died! Che never died!
The heroes of San Rafael never died!
Attica will be avenged!
The Revolution lives.

—Alexandra Kollanti

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tions closely affecting their destiny and that of future generations, so they would take an active part in all aspects of life.

She wrote several novels on this them -- Red Love, A Great Love, and Free Love. Alexandra says of Red Love, "I do hope that this book will aid in combating the old bourgeois hypocrisy in moral values and show once more that we are beginning to respect women, not for her 'good morals,' but for her efficiency, her ingenuity with respect to her duties toward her class, her country, and humanity as a whole." She also wrote, in this period, a pamphlet called Communism and the Family that dealt with many aspects of the lives of working women and their families. Under a communist society she says, "There will arise a great universal family."

In 1922, the last phase of Alexandra's life began when she was appointed Ambassadress to Norway. She was the first woman to be appointed and actually serve at such a post. Alexandra was admirably suited to diplomatic service -- she was familiar with the problems of many countries; she spoke 11 languages. In the course of her work, she signed several trade agreements and spent a great deal of time trying to convince the Norwegian government to officially recognize the Soviet Union. Alexandra retired from the post in 1945.

Throughout her entire political life, Alexandra Kollanti was always active in the service of working and peasant women. She tried to live her life as an example for other women to follow, to be independent, to be continually in the struggle for the emancipation of the toiling masses, to place above all else the building of a new society where women and men can be equals in all aspects of life.

—Inside attica

(continued from back cover)

Just like I said when I was asked the question: "Who do you have other there?" I said, "I have one thousand and ninety-nine brothers and one son!"

Sunday morning we were back again -- 9 o'clock -- we were standing at those barricades. Eventually we got through. We stood all day until after 8 o'clock that night. Knowing it would be useless to come back Monday morning, we got one car together and left for New York.

Since Monday I've been at my radio, the television on, unable to work Monday or Tuesday because I felt that I had to know what was going on. Up until now, I don't know. I've called numerous numbers. They've only given a partial list of the dead. Several people have called me and wanted to know if this man Thomas Hicks is my son. No. I feel sorry for Thomas Hicks' family, but I'm glad it's not my son.

Every time you call Attica -- I've called four or five times long distance -- the only answer we get is "Your son is not among the dead." What we want to know as mothers and as relatives is: when are they going to release the list of the dead and of the injured? And if there are some injured, is there a possibility we may see our loved ones before they die?

What's holding them up? How long can Rockefeller and Oswald play God and withhold this list from the relatives?

Before the rebellion, when I got letters from my son, he said, "Mama, please send me food." Then I sent him a package of food -- small things I know he likes. He's a Muslim -- he does not eat that pork. (The prisoners' diet is 85 percent pork because pork is cheap, although eating pork is against the religious beliefs of many of the prisoners, who are Muslims. A pork-free diet for the inmates wishing it was one of the prisoners' demands. Eds.)

One day I got a letter from my son -- and I came home with tears in my eyes as I read it. He said, "I'm writing this letter. My hands are so cold I don't know whether they belong to me or not. I've been working all day in three feet of snow with cardboard shoes on."

I didn't work the next morning. I sent my son combat boots, insulated underwear, a sweater with a hood on it. All these things were sent back to me when they transferred him from Auburn to Attica for talking to a brother in the yard. He was put in solitary confinement -- they call the box -- for two weeks.

Not knowing this I sent him a package. Everything that package consisted of -- beef baloney, a bag of oranges, a bag of apples, Gouda cheese and those kind of perishable things -- one month later were sent back to me -- rotten. My son never received them. And I asked, "Why?"

They can never get anything personal as long as they are in this box. Why are these boxes so? I understand we're supposed to have free speech -- and you can't even speak to a co-worker, a brother in the yard.

And these brave men -- I hope their death won't be in vain. They said they'd rather die like men than have to live like dogs. Now that's something to say -- you'd rather be dead than to have to live in a place like that.

There has to be an awful lot wrong with Attica for as many as two thousand prisoners to take part in a rebellion like this. As soon as I find what's wrong with my child I'm going to try to get back up there because I want to know: "Is he living or dead?" "Is he injured or is he well?"

Somebody must answer those questions.

ATTICA—

"I have 1,099 brothers & 1 son"

The following is a talk given by Georgia Hicks, the mother of an Attica inmate. She spoke at a meeting called by the Prisoners Solidarity Committee (PSC) at the New Yorker Hotel in New York City on September 18, the Friday following the massacre of the prisoners at Attica. Mrs. Hicks spoke along with other relatives of Attica prisoners and Tom Soto of the PSC.

Tom was invited to come to Attica by the rebeling prisoners at the beginning of the uprising. He spent four days inside the prison, talking to the inmates and voicing their demands amid the lies and distortions of the prison authorities, the press, and the so-called impartial negotiating committee.

Two special 8-page newsletters on Attica and its aftermath are available from the PSC. Included are an interview with Tom Soto and one with some of the prisoners relatives, as well as letters sent to the PSC from prisoners after the rebellion.

On September 29, the PSC chartered a bus to take 39 relatives to Attica to visit their loved ones for the first time since the rebellion. For the relatives, most of whom are Black and Third World and all of whom are poor, this was the only way they could make the long trip to the prison. The PSC needs money to continue and expand this vital service for the prisoners and their relatives. Donations can be sent to the national office of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, 58 West 25 St., New York, N.Y.10010.

If you need help in getting in touch with someone in prison, if you or your family need legal assistance or transportation, or if you would like to help the PSC, the addresses of local PSC chapters across the country are also available.

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First, I must give my thanks to the Prisoners Solidarity Committee because it was through this organization that I first learned about the rebellion at Attica Prison that my son was involved in.

Yes, my son is at Attica. Over a period of months he's been writing me asking me to write letters to different organizations. I wrote to Rockefeller. I wrote to the commissioner -- Oswald -- begging him to give him a transfer. He's a youngster -- twenty-one years old. He wanted to stay in a training program which they did not have the facilities for at Attica. He was transferred there from Auburn.

When this uprising occurred Friday, we left that morning with the Prisoners Solidarity Committee -- three carloads, drove all night through the rain and arrived in Attica sometime that morning about 9 o'clock. When we got there, there was a blockade- there stood all the state troopers with their rifles. They refused to let us through. We drove around to the other entrance. The same thing happened. We drove back again -- we were determined.

Outside Attica are (from left) Carmene Garrigia, Leona White, Georgia Hicks, and Curfew Lewis waiting for news of their loved ones.

Eventually we got through the troopers, but Attica sat on one side of the street, we were on this side. We were told that the only ones allowed on the other side, directly in front of the prison, were the hostages' wives.

One of the state troopers put a rifle in my face and he asked me, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going up closer so I can find out what's going on." He said, "Only the hostages' families are allowed over there." I said, "Well, I'm a hostages' family! I have a son over there! He's a hostage!"

We were forced to leave the car. We stayed there all day Saturday. Until 8 o'clock Saturday night we lay on the grass in the rain, unable to get food from the Red Cross truck on the other side of the street because they had no staff to bring it to us. We had apples from a woman's tree. But we stayed, waiting for news of what was happening.

We were told we could stay all night. We had sleeping blankets and were prepared to wait for news of our loved ones. They're in there with their loved ones -- the hostages' families were allowed to go on the other side. We mothers had just as much pain bearing our children as they had having theirs!

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