



LIBERATION NEWS SERVICE

#848 February 9, 1977

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Dear Subscribers:

This month we are beginning work on our
first packet of original graphics, scheduled
to be sent to you early next month. Send us
ideas of feature graphics which you can use
and would like to see in the future. For
more information on our upcoming publication
plans, see the letter to subscribers on page 1
of packet #847.

In this packet we'd like to call your
attention to the interview on page 6 which we
recently did with a woman steelworker at Republic
Steel in south Chicago.

Please take note of the important corrections
below for packets #846 and #847.

LNS

CORRECTIONS FOR PACKETS #846 AND #847

On the front cover of packet #846, the
Puerto Rico strike story should be listed in
the INTERNATIONAL section, and the Supreme
Court story should be listed in the NATIONAL
section.

Also in #846, in the NEWSPAPER MAGNATE
BUYS NEW YORK MEDIA story, page 6, seventh
paragraph, the first sentence should read:
Voice employees have talked about unionizing
before.

In the SADLOWSKI FIGHTS FOR STEELWORKER
UNION PRESIDENCY story in packet #847, page 3,
2nd column, 6th paragraph, the sentence should
read: "There are 65,000 less steelworkers
producing the same amount of steel as
3 years ago." In the last paragraph of
the steel story, on page 5, the sentence should
read with the following capitalization and
parentheses added: "Even the present Rank and File
Movement (an established group separate from Fight-
Back, another rank and file group)..."

In the SINGAPORE REGIME INTENSIFIES
REPRESSION story in packet #847, page 2, the
correct spelling of the journalist mentioned
in the fifth paragraph is Ho Kwon Ping.

EX-GOVT. OFFICIALS MOVE BACK TO INDUSTRY--cont.
from p. 3:

a large power company in New Orleans; Jack Carlson,
assistant director for energy and minerals, who
took a position as a senior analyst with the U.S.
Chamber of Commerce; and Tom Falki, director of
the Bureau of Mines, who will soon take a position
in the Pittsburgh coal industry.

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(See article on Toronto Amnesty conference in packet #846. See photos to go with this story in packet 849)

200 VETERANS, DRAFT RESISTERS AND AMNESTY SUPPORTERS DEMONSTRATE AT WHITE HOUSE FEBRUARY 5

by Dee Charles Knight

(Dee Charles Knight, long-time activist for total and unconditional amnesty, was formerly an editor of AMEX-Canada, a magazine for American exiles in Canada.)

WASHINGTON, D.C. (LNS) -- Some 200 Vietnam-era Veterans, draft resisters and amnesty supporters braved below-freezing cold and gusty winds in a spirited demonstration for total amnesty and veteran's rights in front of the White House on Saturday, February 5. The demonstration was the focal point of an 11-day Vigil and Mobilization for Veterans Rights in Washington. The mobilization followed the International Conference of Exiles, Veterans and Amnesty Supporters held in Toronto January 29-30, which protested Jimmy Carter's limited pardon of draft resisters announced just days before.

Militant slogans and colorful banners set the tone for the action, which began with a picket line in front of the White House, followed by a rally in the park across the street from the presidential mansion. One slogan summed up the demands and mood: "AMNESTY, JOBS, BENEFITS, RIGHTS -- WE WANT THEM NOW AND WE'RE READY TO FIGHT!"

Along with a busload of vets and supporters from New York City, there were participants from New England, Philadelphia, Baltimore, the Midwest and California. A delegation of a dozen draft resisters from Canada and Sweden joined in, showing their support for the Toronto conference's resolution to "use their new mobility ... to continue the fight for universal, unconditional amnesty for all categories of war resisters and victims..."

Jack McCloskey, a disabled Vietnam veteran who was wounded and decorated for valor in Vietnam, spoke at the rally: "I have an honorable discharge and I am for total and unconditional amnesty. The only difference between the war resister and the veteran is that the war resister learned before the veteran, the true nature of that war. But I ask you not to forget the brothers and sisters who only learned about that war after they went into the service. They, more than anybody, need an unconditional amnesty."

Joe Certaine, a black veteran with an undesirable discharge for resisting the war, leads the Veteran's Action Committee in Philadelphia. He explained the hopelessness of his efforts to get his discharge upgraded through the military review process, and he attacked former President Ford's "clemency" program, to which he had looked for relief in 1974.

"I completed my alternative service requirements in December, 1976," he noted. "I received a certificate of completion and pardon from President Ford. But to me the pardon doesn't mean anything because I still have to go through the lengthy process of getting my discharge upgraded."

"I am encouraged to see that those who resisted the draft are finally free from prosecution," he said, "...but by choosing only draft resisters, a group which is primarily white and middle-class, for his pardon, President Carter has not gone far enough. He has not given adequate consideration to the vast majority of Blacks and other minorities... who make up over one-

third of those who received less than honorable discharges from the Vietnam conflict."

Jack McCloskey explained the demands for jobs and decent benefits by pointing out that the Vietnam-era veteran's official unemployment rate is 18%, as compared to the national average of 7.8%. For Blacks and other minority vets, he said, the rate is more than 20%.

"Eight hundred thousand Vietnam-era veterans have less-than-honorable discharges," McCloskey said. "Ninety percent of these bad discharges are for things that would not be considered a crime in civilian life."

A delegation from the rally had an appointment to meet with President Carter's Special Counsel, Robert Lipshutz, at lunch time. But instead of being ushered inside for their meeting as planned, the group was met outside in the cold by an assistant to Lipshutz, who could not answer any of their questions and explained that their remarks would be conveyed to the president.

"It reminds me of the way we're treated by the Veteran's Administration," commented McCloskey, who was a member of the delegation.

The group delivered an open letter to Carter that was drafted by the veteran's caucus at the Toronto conference and carried the signatures of the rally participants.

EXCERPTS FROM AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER

"We, American veterans from all over the United States, many of us having fought in Vietnam, are outraged by the fact that your 'pardon' excludes most of the poor and minorities who need and deserve unconditional amnesty....

"800,000 Vietnam-era veterans, including some of us here, have been branded with less-than-honorable discharges because of our direct and indirect resistance to a war which was not in the interests of the American people, least of all to those of us who were forced to do the fighting and dying....

"President Carter, a less-than-honorable discharge is a life sentence to job discrimination and social exile, and for many a denial of veterans' benefits. Even many veterans who were wounded in Vietnam are denied medical attention if they have a less-than-honorable discharge. And those who do receive honorable discharges soon find that their GI benefits are grossly inadequate.

"If you really want to give us justice, President Carter, you should give a total and unconditional amnesty to all the resisters and victims of this unjust war; not only the draft resisters, but also the veterans with less-than-honorable discharges, deserters, and civilian anti-war protesters. Every veteran should be given an uncoded honorable discharge which doesn't carry a life-long stigma with it. And all veterans should be given decent veterans' benefits."

Twelve veterans' representatives, of whom roughly half emerged as new leaders in the current mobilization, were delegated to join the steering

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

OPPONENTS OF APARTHEID DENOUNCE
FRENCH TIES TO SOUTH AFRICA

by Schofield Coryell

PARIS (LNS)--French opponents of South African apartheid, in a late January session, targeted the French government for its "economic, military and political support" to the racist Pretoria regime.

Meeting under the auspice of the Paris-based Investigative Committee on Apartheid, French teachers, writers, journalists, trade union leaders and religious figures, heard detailed testimony condemning apartheid from South Africans, including an exiled white journalist and a representative of the African National Congress, a South African liberation organization.

The Investigating Committee sharply criticized the government for its consistent United Nations votes in favor of the white minority regime. For instance, on December 19 the French voted in the Security Council, along with Britain and the United States, against a resolution urging concrete measures to combat apartheid.

And in the last General Assembly session, France voted against a resolution--adopted by a strong majority--demanding an embargo on arms sales to South Africa and calling for the halting of all economic and nuclear cooperation with that regime.

The fact is, French industry and government have extensive business ties with South Africa. France is South Africa's main arms supplier at a time when Pretoria's arms budget is rapidly expanding: in 1976, it was double what it had been in 1975, and that was already much higher than previous years. French military sales to South Africa in the past decade total well above \$250 million.

Pretoria has recently declared all of Africa south of the equator a "defense zone" in which the South African Army is authorized to intervene whenever and wherever it is considered necessary.

Despite a 1963 U.N. embargo, France has openly sold Pretoria weapons other countries hesitate to provide directly--including Mirage planes, tanks, helicopters and machine guns. President Giscard D'estaing announced in March, 1975 that France would cease further arms deliveries to South Africa, except for Naval weapons and equipment, but the French contribution to Pretoria's military might continues nevertheless.

French firms have also been supplying South Africa with equipment they claim is for "civilian" use, although its military applications, in most cases, are obvious. French shipyards are now producing four ships for delivery to South Africa in 1977 and 1978 and France has contributed decisively to the South African nuclear industry.

The French trust Framatome, for example, is busy building a nuclear reactor for the South African armed forces in Koeberg, near the Cape. The South African press has presented this contract as a "victory for French technology" while in the French press it has been defended as a source of employment for French technicians.

In addition, France and South Africa have exten-

sive economic relations--imports and exports of a wide variety of goods, and direct investments in various fields by some 90 French corporations. Such investments more than quadrupled between 1966 and 1976, according to official French and South African sources.

This second sessions of the Investigating Committee on Apartheid was organized mainly by MRAP--the "Mouvement Contre le Racisme, L'antisemitisme et Pour La Paix" (Movement Against Racism, Antisemitism and For Peace), an anti-racist organization that originated in the early 1900's. Co-sponsoring were a variety of humanitarian and progressive organizations, including the League for the Rights of Man, the Union of Judges and the French Association of Democratic Lawyers.

The French public has, up to now, been relatively indifferent to questions touching South Africa, but the setting up of the Investigating Committee is an attempt to focus attention and possible action against the special role played by the French government as a supporter of apartheid.

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MONTANA PENAL SYSTEM DISCRIMINATES
AGAINST NATIVE AMERICANS

NEW YORK (LNS)--Native Americans in Montana are being discriminated against in jail sentencing. According to a recent study by University of Montana graduate student, Curt Griffiths, a proportionately higher percentage of Indians are imprisoned than whites, and on the average must serve longer terms.

Only 5% of Montana's total population is Native American. However, Griffiths reports that 20% of the population at the Montana state prison is composed of Indians. One reason for the disproportionate number of Indian prisoners is that the average sentence given Native Americans is twice that given to whites. Through interviews with prisoners, Griffiths learned that the average period of incarceration for whites is 14 months, while for Indians the average is 2 1/2 years.

One example of discriminatory sentencing cited by Griffiths was the case of Kenny Gringas, the inmate director of the North American Indian League (NAAIL). Gringas is currently serving a 50-year term, while his partner, a white with an identical criminal record, received a 25-year sentence for the same offence.

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"The biggest thing management has had going over the years is this game of divide and conquer--especially between blacks and whites. Like my pa used to tell me about the sharecroppers down South. The black sharecropper would get a house that was just a little better than the white guy...but the white guy would get a dime more on a bale of cotton than the black. And so they'd always be jealous of each other about something and always fighting each other instead of the boss. Management's still doing that kind of thing. ...There's no way you can be a union man and a racist."

--Ed Sadlowski, candidate for steelworkers union

FIVE BLACK YOUTHS FACE DEATH PENALTY
IN GEORGIA TRIAL

NEW YORK(LNS) -- Five young black men, four of whom are teenagers, face the death penalty in southern Georgia. Supporters in the area feel that these men are being held on grossly insufficient evidence. For many, this case calls to mind that of the Scottsboro Boys, nine black youths who were falsely accused of rape in 1931 in Alabama.

Roosevelt Watson (17), Henderson Watson (21), James Edward Jackson, Jr. (17), Johnny B. Jackson (18) and J.D. Davenport (18) were arrested in January of 1976 and charged with armed robbery and murder. They are accused of having robbed the owner of a Dawson, Georgia grocery store and having shot a white man who was a customer in the store.

The victim, who got into an ambulance unaided and lived for six hours after the shooting, was not questioned. The arrest was made on the basis of the store owner's identification of the defendants in spite of the fact that they were not named until five days after the crime took place. The witness originally stated that four men robbed his store, and named only Roosevelt Watson as a participant that he thought he could recognize. When the other four men stated that Roosevelt Watson could not have committed the crime because he was with them at the time it happened, they too were arrested.

A confession was obtained from Roosevelt Watson after he was forced by local police to wade in an icy pond for five hours, in a "search" for the murder weapon which was never found, and threatened with castration and electrocution.

Bail has been set at \$100,000 for each defendant. Blacks in Terrell County and some of the local churches have taken up collections to raise bail and help pay legal fees. With a total of a half-million dollars in bond money to raise, only Roosevelt Watson has been released so far. The defendants decided among themselves the order of their release as the bail money is raised.

Trial To Focus on Racism

No court date has been set up for the trial yet, but it is expected to begin in June. "Nothing is really happening legally right now," said defense attorney Millard Farmer. "A lot is happening otherwise in the fact that people are beginning to focus on the problems of the real racism that exist in this county. . . but if you talk to the blacks in the area. . . they say well this ain't nothing, this has been happening for a long time."

The pretrial motions to be presented include a check on the racial composition of the jury pool which was recently found to underrepresent blacks by 44 %. Other motions will contest the threats made on Roosevelt Watson by police.

The defense is concerned with the possibility of not having enough time to raise all of the pertinent issues and present all of the facts which are relevant because of the judge's schedule. Judges in Georgia travel a circuit, and the judge for Terrell County has six other counties in his jurisdiction. Three trials a day is the norm in this situation.

Georgia's Death Row

There are presently three teen-agers on death row in Georgia. The most recently convicted is Gary Hawes, aged 16, who was sentenced early in January of this year. Attorney Farmer sees this conviction as indicative of the general pro-capital punishment attitude in the area. These cases are only 75 miles apart," says Farmer, "and they are both right here in the buckle of the death belt."

There are presently 61 people on death row in the state. Half of them are black although blacks are only 25.9% of the population. There are no whites on death row for killing a black, and there are only three blacks on death row for the murder of a black victim.

The state of Georgia played a key role in the recent Supreme Court decision reinstating the death penalty. After the 1972 U.S. Supreme Court decision *against* capital punishment, 34 states rewrote their death penalty laws in order to circumvent the decision. Georgia rewrote its law almost immediately; the current statute has been in effect since 1973. The Supreme Court's July, 1976 reversal of it's previous ruling was based on the fact that it found the Georgia, Florida and Texas laws acceptable.

"Something is going to come through and straighten out [the town of] Dawson," said Mrs. Watson, mother of Roosevelt and Henderson Watson. "I may be dead and gone, but I know it's got to happen."

Mr. Jackson, father of Johnny B. and James Edward Jackson, Jr., was an agricultural laborer on Jimmy Carter's peanut farm. Dawson, Georgia is twenty miles from Plains, the seat of the "New South."

* * *
Contributions can be sent to Team Defense,
C/O Law Center, P.O. Box 548, Montgomery, Ala. 36101.

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(Thanks to Southern Poverty Law Center for much of this information.)

EX-GOVT. OFFICIALS MOVE BACK
TO INDUSTRY

NEW YORK (LNS)--Remember the revolving door syndrome, where an industry official leaves his or her company to work with the government agency regulating that industry, then goes back to the old job--often at a considerably higher salary? Well, as administrations change hands, that revolving door speeds up.

The latest high-level official to return to industry is a Nixon man, Ken Brown, who just took a job with Gulf Oil. As general counsel and congressional liaison for the Interior Department, Brown was directly involved in the establishment and direction of the Interior Department's offshore oil and gas leasing programs. Evidently, he is now going to recycle his energy expertise as an industrial lobbyist.

Other Interior officials who have joined the ranks of industry or have taken industry-related jobs include C. King Mallory, deputy assistant secretary for power regulation, who left to work for

[CONTINUED ON INSIDE OF COVER]

(See graphics)

PUBLIC "DEFENDER" FIRES WOMAN OFFICE WORKER
FOR REFUSING TO MAKE BREW

NEW YORK (LNS)--A legal secretary in Chicago's public defender's office has been fired because she refused to make coffee for her boss.

Iris Rivera, 35, was given a two weeks' termination notice on January 25th when she wouldn't comply with a new policy set by director James Geis at the Office of the State Appellate Defender. That office represents criminally-accused poor people in their appeals.

"From now on," wrote Geis, "all secretaries will have responsibility for making coffee without assistance from the attorneys." But Rivera refused. "I don't drink coffee," she explained. "It's not listed as one of my job duties -- and ordering coffee is carrying the role of homemaker too far."

"If you're refusing to make coffee," responded Geis, "consider yourself fired."

Rivera, a former factory worker and a widow who supports herself and three children on an annual salary of \$9,600, promptly filed a sex discrimination complaint with Illinois' Fair Employment Practices Commission. At the same time, she appealed her dismissal to Ted Gottfried, the State Public Defender in Springfield. The appeal has been denied.

Area secretaries who heard about the stand-off contacted Women Employed (W.E.), an organization of women office workers. The group mobilized a demonstration at Rivera's office on February 2nd. According to Jackie Shad of W.E., fifty women "demonstrated for the ignorant executive exactly how to make a cup of coffee." Before it was over, Jean Hoffencamp of W.E. presented a bag of wet coffee grounds to one of the lawyers. (Geis was on vacation).

Afterwards, in an interview with the *Chicago Daily News*, Bruce Stratton, an administrator in the office, reiterated management's position. "He said," the *News* reported, "that since attorneys are paid more than secretaries, delegating the coffee brewing to the secretaries was 'cost efficient.'"

Rivera is standing firm. "I am paid to assist in the handling and disposition of appeal-related matters in this office," she wrote earlier in her appeal. And she told the *News*, "just because I'm a woman doesn't mean I should have homemaking duties in the office."

Apparently, Chicago-area office workers agree. "It's incredible," said a staffer at Women Employed, referring to the response to the demonstration, "the phone hasn't stopped ringing for two days. Women from all over are registering their support."

After the struggle was reported on the evening news in New York, office workers sent telegrams of support to Rivera. They also began to mobilize workers and sympathetic lawyers to exert pressure on the Public Defender to rehire Rivera and do away with the policy.

But initial support from Rivera's co-workers has dwindled as pressure from the attorneys and management mounts. And since her Fair Employment claim may not be heard for two years, Rivera expects to lose her job. She is worried about getting a new one, noting, "I'm afraid that I'm labelled a militant or a troublemaker."

Still, she is hopeful that continued support will force the Public Defender's Office to rehire her. And she is amazed and gratified by that support. "I'm getting calls from secretaries all over the country," she reports, and added, "her sense of humor apparently intact--"who would think that something so petty would brew up into something so big?"

* * *

(Telegrams in support of Iris Rivera should be sent to James Geis, Appellate Public Defender's Office, 180 N. LaSalle, Room 410, Chicago, Ill., and to Ted Gottfried, State Public Defender's Office, 300 East Monroe, Suite 100, Springfield, Ill. 62701. Iris Rivera can be contacted through Women Employed, 37 S. Wabash, Chicago, Ill. 60603).

TO: JAMES GEIS, DEPUTY "DEFENDER"
FROM: WOMEN EMPLOYED

We know that many executives call upon their busy secretaries to make coffee not because they desire to demean a secretary's professional status, but because they lack the skills required to operate a complex piece of office machinery.

To aid executives caught in this embarrassing state of ignorance, WOMEN EMPLOYED today presents a beginner's lesson on "How To Make Coffee." These simple instructions should enable any novice to master the operation of two common types of coffee making apparatus.

I. COFFEE VENDING APPARATUS, Hereinafter referred to as "Coffee Machine"

Step 1: Proceed to coffee machine & position yourself so you are facing same.

Step 2: Insert coin into slot labeled "Insert Coin Here."

Step 3: Push buttons, selecting appropriate strength of brew, cream and/or sugar. (Many executives will enjoy this step as it allows them to utilize their famous "decision-making ability.")

Step 4: Remove cup when full.

Step 5: Return to desk, taking care not to spill coffee.

II. STANDARD COFFEE-MAKING APPARATUS, Hereinafter referred to as "Coffee Pot."

Step 1: Carry a water-tight container to the nearest water tap & fill it with water.

Step 2: Empty the water into the coffee pot.

Step 3: Insert basket into coffee pot & fill it with coffee.

Step 4: Replace lid & plug in coffee pot.

Step 5: Turn switch to ON (This is the most difficult step, but with practice, even an attorney can master it.)

Step 6: Coffee is done when it is dark brown in color. Place coffee cup under spout &

pull lever, filling cup.

Step 7: If you desire sugar, take sugar bowl or packet of sugar and spoon. Deposit desired amount of sugar in cup & stir with spoon.

Step 8: If you desire cream, repeat Step 7, substituting liquid or powdered cream for sugar, & continue to stir with spoon.

Step 9: Remove wet coffee grounds & wash coffee pot. Deposit coffee grounds in waste basket.

WOMEN EMPLOYED, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 312/372-7822

(See IBM graphic in #847)

IBM TAKES ITS EFFICIENCY TO COURT

NEW YORK (LNS)--The setting was a huge anti-trust action against International Business Machine Corporation (IBM) brought by California Computer Products, and some members of the trial audience were acting very strangely.

Two men and four women "would race out of the courtroom as soon as the judge excused the regular jury...and then come back in when the regular jury was seated," explained Harold Collins, an attorney for Cal.Comp, as reported by the Wall Street Journal. "It became apparent that something was going on."

Well, something was. After two months, inquiries finally forced IBM to explain the activities and call an end to them.

The six people were part of a "shadow jury" hired by IBM in an effort to determine the real jurors' reactions to its presentation of its case in court. The corporation paid the six "ordinary people" to attend and take notes on the hearings, and then analyzed their reactions.

The project, costing \$25,000, was conducted under the auspices of a University of California professor, Donald E. Vinson. At the end of each trial day since November 22--a week after opening arguments--Vinson interviewed the members of his special jury and took notes on their reactions. He then handed over the notes to an IBM attorney who briefed IBM's chief trial counsel on the findings.

Vinson said he was given "free rein" in the project and that the shadow jurors never knew for whom they were working. He said that he was "saddened by the sudden termination of the project." Vinson plans to publish his findings in academic journals, though, and says he hopes "to get a book out of this also."

Asked if the "shadow jury" gave IBM counsel any advantage in the proceedings, IBM's chief counsel, David Boies conceded, "Yes...It's important to have a neutral observer tell you where you're getting through and what you were doing wrong. I still think it was a good idea."

Boies denied that the project was cancelled to avoid the appearance of improper behavior, saying rather that "because stories began to come in, the objectivity of our hired jurors was threatened. They might have known who they were working for and that would eliminate the element of neutrality."

Even the Cal. Comp. attorney--IBM's opponent in the suit--said he didn't know if IBM's behavior was "unethical," but he added that "it's definitely the type of action only a very rich party can afford."

"Indeed, it sounds like a very clever idea to me," commented Wesley J. Liebler, a law professor specializing in antitrust cases at UCLA. "Just another example of IBM efficiency."

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GEOLOGICAL FAULT DISCOVERED NEAR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS

NEW YORK (LNS)--The Niagara Mohawk Power Corp. disclosed last December that during excavation for a new nuclear power station it had discovered a geological fault in the bedrock that is near one of the two nuclear plants already operating in the area. Although the fault is about 1400 feet long and lies only 1000 feet from one of the currently operating plants, the power company claims it will not hamper construction of the new plant, scheduled to begin generating in 1982. The utility said the significance, if any, of the fault is being investigated.

Any severe tremors around the fault could result in damages to the plant, and possibly a release of dangerous radioactive material into the environment. But business interests remain non-plussed by the potential hazards.

"I'd be very surprised if a fault in that area proves significant," said the top geologist at a major New York-based mining concern. "That is an extremely stable area."

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BURGERS FATTEN McDONALDS PROFITS; "NO SATURATION POINT IN SIGHT"

NEW YORK (LNS)--The McDonald's Corporation expects to post record earnings and revenue for 1976. Edward H. Schmitt, the company's president, stated that revenue for 1976 went up a healthy 24% since 1975 and has passed the billion-dollar mark.

Schmitt is optimistic about the future of the hamburger business, explaining that the room for expansion is virtually limitless. The company has shown it can market hamburgers successfully in Europe, Canada and Japan, and with no saturation point in sight, McDonald's expects to reap even bigger profits for years to come.

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AMNESTY SUPPORTERS DEMONSTRATE: continued from page 1

committee of the National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty (NCUA), in a meeting the day after the demonstration. The Steering Committee is to meet again February 10 to plan further actions to mobilize veterans around the country.

The eleven-day vigil and mobilization is to culminate with a conference of peace movement leaders February 9-10. The conference will deliver 100,000 signed petitions to the White House demanding total amnesty as well as normalization of diplomatic relations and reconstruction aid for new governments of Indochina.

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AN LNS INTERVIEW:

WOMAN STEELWORKER IN SOUTH CHICAGO
DISCUSSES DISCRIMINATION AND SAFETY IN THE MILLS

I work at Republic Steel on the south side of Chicago. It's the famous Republic Steel plant where 10 workers got killed in 1937 trying to get the company to recognize the union.

WHEN DID YOU START WORKING THERE?

I started working there a year and a half ago. Before that I worked at U.S. Steel South Works. I got hired there at the beginning of January, 1974 when the Consent Decree took effect and they were forced to hire some women and some minorities into (the skilled) trades. That's how I got my job. But because we all had the lowest seniority, we got laid off after six months. Then they called us back six months later, but I already had my job at Republic.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WORKED AT U.S. STEEL'S SOUTH WORKS?

About 12,000 people. They started hiring women in numbers around 1972-73. But they didn't hire them into crafts. The mills are divided into production jobs and maintenance jobs (like millwrights, electricians, pipefitters--skilled crafts and people who are training for the skilled jobs). In the past, maintenance jobs tended to be all male, and mostly white, depending on the plant. Blacks began to get into the maintenance department I worked in about 5 years ago. But of 120 people, me and one other woman were the first women hired into that particular department since World War II.

There were a lot of women in there during World War II, and there was one woman still left. She told me that all the women that came in there were forced to sign contracts that when the men they were replacing came back from the war, they would quit their job. So one day her foreman came over to her and put his arm around her and he said, "Well, your guy's not coming back, so I guess you got your job." So she's still there--she's about 75 years old now.

WHAT DID YOU DO AT U.S. STEEL?

I was hired as a motor inspector's helper. That's a helper to an electrician and there were about 15 people in the electrical gang. It's sort of a on-the-job training. It's a big mill--about two and a half blocks long--and it's a real dangerous mill so people usually work in pairs. They're supposed to at any rate. We did all the electrical repairs for this mill.

I really liked the job, and I really worked hard. You work one week 7 to 3 in the afternoon, next week 3-11 at night, and the next week 11-7 in the morning, so it's very demanding physically.

YOU SAID IT WAS A TRAINING POSITION. WHAT'S INVOLVED IN GETTING THESE JOBS?

Well, U.S. Steel had a pretty good apprenticeship program, if you can get in it. At the same time the Consent Decree took effect, they instituted all kinds of tests. Most of these tests aren't related to what you have to know or learn. In the past, those jobs were given out pretty much by patronage. Now that's against the law, but they still maintain control over who they hire by those tests.

We had to take a written mechanical test. In a room of about 40 people, I think there were about

2 women out of 15 that passed the test. Because it's not the kind of thing that women grow up knowing. When I went to Republic Steel, I had had six months experience and had worked with people that had really taught me a lot. I just barely passed the test. The questions were the kind you'd be good at answering if you had a couple years of training in electrical training school.

DID THE CONSENT DECREE CHANGE THE SENIORITY LIST?

No, it wasn't affirmative action, if that's what you mean. It used to be that if you worked in one department in a plant, and you wanted to move into another department, you lost all your seniority. If jobs came up for bid, you were the lowest person on the list; for vacations and all other things too. And you were the first one laid off.

There are certain departments in the mills that are primarily black, like the coke ovens and the blast furnaces--the really nasty jobs. People have wanted to move into other departments, but they didn't want to lose their seniority.

The Consent Decree instituted a limited kind of plant wide seniority. You can move into another department at its lowest job category but keep your seniority. Then once you're there, you can start to bid on better jobs. But it might take a while because the better jobs don't open up that often.

The whole thing is a risky proposition because they'll lay off the helper, for instance, even if you have more seniority, before the electrician. So it's really not satisfactory, but it's a little better than it was.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR WORK AT REPUBLIC STEEL?

I was the only woman, or maybe one of two women in the entire electrical department of all of Republic Steel. There's about 300 women altogether at Republic. The electrical department is almost entirely white. Republic is much more segregated than South Works was. Probably because it's a smaller corporation, 4,000-5,000 workers in the whole plant, so it's less in the public eye.

The companies are very discriminatory by race. The first job I got at U.S. Steel, there was me and a black woman that got hired. I was given the job in the electrical gang and she was given a job supposedly in the millwright gang, which is also skilled. But then she was bumped down to oiler, which is the lowest, unskilled boring job. And she was a much more skilled worker than I was. She'd been an expert machinist for 10 years. And she got so fed up and disgusted that she eventually quit.

DID SHE THINK OF GOING TO THE UNION OR FILING SOME SORT OF COMPLAINT?

She thought about it but she didn't do it. And they told her, well, every millwright has to start as an oiler. But in this situation, there were 20 new people hired and she was the only woman in the millwright gang and none of the men got bumped down to oiler, or maybe one of them. The oilers, by the way, every one but her was Mexican. The entire Mexican component of the maintenance department was in completely unskilled work.

HOW DID THE COMPANY TREAT WOMEN IN OTHER DEPARTMENTS?

Well the stories I hear, there are really bad

conditions. First of all, some places really don't want the women there. So they don't give good locker room conditions--locker rooms are overcrowded, they're not clean, they don't build bathrooms in mills, so you have to walk outside the length of the mill in freezing weather.

The working conditions also depend a lot on the foreman. One foreman fired five women because they wouldn't go out with him. He said he didn't like their attitude. And the way the union is now, there's a 90-day probation period--you're not really a full-fledged employee for 90 days, so a lot of firings go on during that time. They say they have a bad work record or they can't do the work or they're late . . . but it seems clear that it's discriminatory. And this way the companies can fulfill their hiring quotas.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH THE COMPANY?

I feel hostility from the foremen. I had this one foreman that used to come in every day, every morning, and he'd say, "hello son." This went on for eight months. Also, as far as people in production, a lot of the women that are hassled by the foremen are black. Both black and white foremen. I think the racist attitudes of the foremen apply even more to the women than to the men, the differences in the way they treat people.

WHAT ARE MEN STEELWORKERS REACTIONS TO WOMEN IN THE MILLS?

Where I work there must be 20 different nationalities and people of all ages. So there are differences depending on where people are coming from. Like most black women work, and I never met a single black person that told me that women shouldn't be working.

But most of the people I work with are older, white, second or third generation people whose wives don't work, or don't work fulltime. They have a real secure job and they make enough money to support their family themselves. So they're less used to the idea. But I've never felt hostility from people I was working with. Even though these people are probably least receptive to working with women, they've generally been helpful and tried to teach me.

WHAT ABOUT WOMEN IN REGARD TO THE UNION?

My impression is that the union has never been at the forefront of fighting discrimination. For example, the Consent Decree was concocted by the union when the companies were under the threat of massive discrimination suits because of the Civil Rights Act. For really very small sums of money, steelworkers had to sign away all their rights to sue the company for past discrimination. Black steelworkers and women steelworkers who had been stuck in low-paying jobs for 25 years because the company would not let them move up might have lost between \$50,000-100,000; but under the Consent Decree they might get a couple thousand.

Now obviously, the company has agreed to this because they were afraid of really massive court suits against them. So while the Consent Decree has brought certain benefits--for example I never would have gotten my job before--whatever gains came from the Decree were coming not from the union, but

from the civil rights movement and the laws that that movement brought into being.

WHAT ABOUT SAFETY IN THE MILLS?

For six weeks I was transferred to one of the worst places in the entire plant, the primary mills where they roll the steel. This was the middle of June and it was really hot.

The conditions were just totally unhealthy. They would send me up to repair cranes. They'd park the cranes over the furnaces and there'd be gas leaks. I could smell the gas real bad. I'd go up there and I'd start to smell the stuff and I'd feel a little bit sick. I went down and told the foreman that the gas was making me sick. He said, "Oh, you'll get used to it."

After 10 minutes you had to come down or you'd faint. People that were really used to it might stay up for 15 minutes. The cranes in the very hottest areas now have air conditioning. But the cranes in the slightly less hot areas, like maybe 120-130 degrees, don't have air conditioning.

There was always a huge amount of steel dust in the air. There was one young guy I was working with who had five lung infections in the last year.

They gave you this little respirator. First of all, it doesn't take the gas out of the air. Secondly you can hardly breathe through them so I was on top of this crane 50 feet in the air, climbing around all this greasy machinery and I couldn't see well enough with my respirator on, and was afraid I was going to fall off the crane, so I had to take it off.

Everybody I work with that's over 30 has high blood pressure and most of them are eating pills all day to keep their blood pressure down. I think that's a result of the shift work, your sleeping schedule is always different.

WERE OTHER DEPARTMENTS AS BAD?

Some were worse. In one, they do what they call scarfing. They take an oxygen torch and they take the crust off the steel. Well, this creates a huge amount of steel dust. This is steel dust that has copper in it, it has lead in it, so you're breathing all this stuff in.

This one electrician who worked there told me that everybody he knew there that was a scarfer either had lung cancer or tuberculosis in 10 years.

WHAT DOES THE UNION DO ABOUT THESE CONDITIONS?

The union doesn't do anything about health and safety. I complained about the gas at one union meeting, so the guy got very excited and he said, "yes, yes I'll do something."

He called up the company hygienist and asked him to go test the air in this one area I said was gassy. I noticed that there was not very much gas in the air the day the hygienist came. It depends on how much they turn the furnaces up and things like that. He's the company man, he knows when to come out and test the air. And they know he's coming. Anyway, the legal standards

allow very high levels for these things and some things there's no standards for at all, like the amount of dust in the air.

Also, the union has a real chauvinist attitude toward workers that don't speak English. Mexicans are in all the worst, low-paying jobs. For example, all the scarfers are Mexicans. And they have basically no protection from the union.

For instance, the union sent a letter to a Mexican worker, in English, about a hearing on his getting fired. He couldn't read it so he didn't show up at the hearing. When it got brought up at a union meeting, the officers got mad and they blamed the worker.

DO OTHER WORKERS FIGHT THESE CONDITIONS?

People complain a lot but they don't get any help from the union. So it seems like a hopeless cause because the company always tells you well, if you make steel, you have accidents. And they always arrange it so you're blamed for whatever accident you have.

DID YOU EVER HAVE ANY ACCIDENTS OR WERE THERE EVER ANY IN YOUR DEPARTMENT?

I didn't, no. One guy in my department got his finger cut off. I've heard a lot of stories about all the people that have gotten killed. One motor inspector was under a machine and it started moving and he got squashed.

And one man got killed in my department at South Works when I was working there. They had to fix these table rolls which were very hot. The crew before had refused to do it, they said it was too hot. But these guys came along and they said they would do it. They put a plate in front of the furnace and were positioning it when it fell over. One guy tried to run but his shoes were full of grease and he slipped and fell and got squashed by the plate.

And the day after this happened, the company sent three guys in the department to make an official heat shield. There's a certain standard type with legs on it so it won't fall down. They never had bothered to do it before.

The man's family is trying to sue the company. But the company had an investigation and they said there wasn't anything wrong with the original heat shield and they blamed it on the guy he was working with who had 35 years service. They told this guy, 'if you agree to retire we won't fire you.' So he was forced to retire and it was all blamed on him.

Everybody knows that the company's always talking about safety, but it's a complete mockery. They never fix anything until somebody gets hurt. That's absolutely understood.

It's those kind of things that have a basis in the Sadlowski movement. Because people feel that there's not anywhere to turn. The union isn't leading them, it's holding them back.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE RACE BETWEEN MCBRIDE AND SADLOWSKI FOR UNION PRESIDENT?

Well, I hope Sadlowski wins. I'm not exactly sure what he's going to do, but the people who are in power now are totally tied in with the companies. The union was constructed to have an extreme amount of power at the top. They instituted the whole no-strike agreement without any kind of ratification by the membership. We don't vote on our contract. It's just a ridiculous situation. McBride is now talking about doing away with electing the leadership. He wants it to be elected by the convention, which is pretty much stacked in favor of the union president and his staff people.

In the local union meetings, if you bring up something that they don't like and the union officials think you might win on it, they just adjourn the meeting on you. It sounds ridiculous but that's what happens.

There definitely is a lot of dissatisfaction. Nobody thinks that Sadlowski's going to solve all the problems. But he may remove some of the obstacles.

DO YOU THINK THAT STEELWORKERS ARE MORE EXCITED ABOUT THIS ELECTION THAN ABOUT OTHERS IN THE PAST?

I see a lot of participation. I've asked old-timers who were active in building the union and then were kicked out of it because they were too left-wing, and have started coming to union meetings again lately. I've asked them what they thought of Sadlowski. What they usually say is that this is the first time in 35 years that somebody who is not part of the union machine has gotten on the ballot. They see him as being somewhat independent and that, at the very least, he's going to make the union more democratic.

But there's a huge gap between people who are active in the union, which is a very small number of people, whether progressive or reactionary, and a huge number of people in the shops who don't take an active role and see the union as not really serving them.

I don't think the masses of steelworkers in the mills are going to get involved in election campaigns. And they're not going to be actively involved in the union unless a real rank and file movement is built.

As far as Sadlowski himself, I think he's a fairly honest guy. I think he's sincere. But he's going to find himself up against a lot of pressure from many different directions. So what he does is a lot dependent on what the rank and file does, on what kind of organizations get built in the locals that he has to be responsive to.

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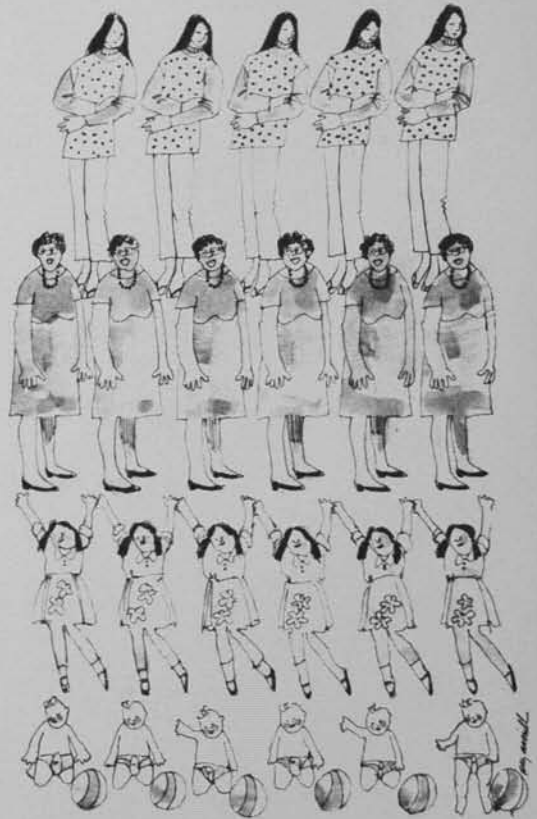
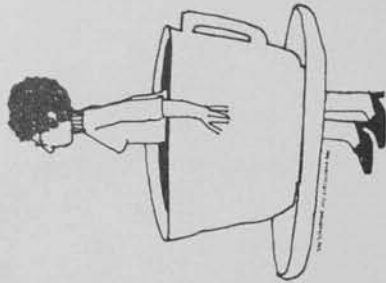
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