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CAN THE GANDHIAN MOVEMENT IN INDIA CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT?



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Can the Gandhian Movement Meet the Challenge of Fascism in India?

BY DAVID MORRIS

According to all reports from India, Indira Gandhi and her supporters have succeeded far beyond anyone's expectations in setting up a structure of fascism. This poses the most serious challenge to Indian Gandhianism since the death of Mahatmaji Gandhi. How well has the Indian Gandhian movement met the challenge and what is likely to be the future of the nonviolent movement in India?

To answer these questions it's important to understand the underlying causes of the recently declared "state of Emergency" and the responses of different sectors of Indian society.

1976 will mark the tenth year that Indira Gandhi has been India's Prime Minister. During those years, there has been ongoing political struggle inside and outside of the ruling Congress Party which has centered around three political issues: centralization vs. decentralization, industrialization vs. an agrarian society and parliamentary democracy vs. revolution. There are other important secondary considerations like political opportunism, the effects of caste, the flexibility of the Indian joint family, and the ancient traditions of manipulation and political

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maneuver, but these three issues are the dominant themes.

These themes can also be found in the American experience. The debate over the United States Constitution and the later Federalist/Anti-Federalist quarrels were quarrels over the degree of centralized power that the new United States government should possess. One aspect of the Civil War (or Second American Revolution) was the quarrel between industrial capital, mostly located in the north and landlord capital, mostly based in the South. The conflict between the capitalist development of the United States and revolutionary alternatives can be traced from Robert Owen forward.

As the editorial writer for the *Hindustan Times* told me in New Delhi last August, Indira Gandhi is the representative of those groups in Indian society that support the growing industrialization of India and therefore also support the greater centralization of power by the Indian state. These groups include the large private industrialists like the Tata and Birla families, the small and medium entrepreneurs who operate "modern," mechanized factories, the managers and planners of the state-owned industries, trade union leaders who see the further industrialization of India as

15th century Indian tapestry from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



increasing the strength of the labor movement and the members and leaders of the Communist Party of India (pro-Moscow). Along with some groups of farmers who have developed American agribusiness techniques and the military, these groups rule the Indian state, dominate its economy and, through the civil service, are trying as hard as they can to "modernize" India.

There are powerful groups opposed to this centralization and emphasis on industrialization: most landlords, the network of small and large moneylenders that extend to every village in India, the large and diverse community of Gandhians, radical intellectuals committed to revolutionary forms of socialism (as well as radical intellectuals who are out of power and therefore rebellious), professionals used to Western forms of political activity (especially lawyers and doctors), members of the various Maoist-oriented revolutionary groups, as well as the Brahmins, priests and artists committed to maintaining the traditional forms of Indian society.

There is a third sector which is uncommitted to either vision of what India should be, partly because neither side has won their allegiance. These are the rank-and-file of organized industrial labor, the millions of workers in unorganized, often

primitive factories that produce solely for the domestic market, and the vast numbers of rural landless workers, some of whom are "free" and others of whom work under semi-feudal conditions for the large rural landlords. This sector is the sector that holds the key to India's future, since its support is vital to all, revolutionaries and reactionaries alike.

There is a fourth sector of small shopkeepers, lower level professionals like teachers, nurses and civil servants; small urban landlords and the educated unemployed, who are capable of creating urban disturbances but who lack a commanding position in Indian society.

The conflict between those committed to centralization and industrialization and those opposed came to a head when J.P. Narayan led a portion of the Gandhian movement into open confrontation with Indira Gandhi and her supporters. Before the "JP Movement," the opposition to Indira Gandhi and her supporters had been in the hands of Moraji Desai, one-time Deputy Prime Minister, and representative of the entrenched landlord and moneylender groups. However, their "Grand Alliance" of Hindu nationalist groups and landlord/moneylender/rich peasant parties were unable to capture much support, since these groups were also the oppressors of the third sector of industrial and agrarian workers. Their version of "decentralization" was a return to the "good old days" when the rural elite of landlords, moneylenders, rich peasants and priests ruled the countryside.

J.P. Narayan and the "left sarvodayas," surfacing in Bihar in 1974, began working for broad social and political change. Since the Gandhian heritage of the struggle for independence gave them the legitimacy that the revolutionary Naxalite groups were denied through repression, they quickly attracted the support of the fourth group of urban "small bourgeoisie." This group was suffering from the horrendous inflation, governmental corruption, and a combination of recession, drought, floods, and the deteriorating quality of urban life (Bihar is the blessed state that suffers droughts and floods constantly, usually at the same time).

J.P. Narayan is not only a leading Old Gandhian; he is also a veteran of the Acharya Bhave movement who has seen the suffering and misery of the rural landless workers. While he was trying to broaden the base of the agitation to include mass involvement of rural workers, he also attracted two normally antagonistic groups: the right-wing rural elite parties like the Jana Sangh and its paramilitary wing, the RSS, led by Moraji Desai, and the left-wing Naxalites. For Moraji Desai and his followers, it was an attempt at yet another comeback; while for the Naxalites, it was a chance to broaden their own base and receive some protection from the continuing repression under the DIR and MISA (State of Emergency) regulations.

The battle between the JP Movement and the Congress Party in Bihar broadened as it spread to

Gujarat. This state was the scene of violent rioting and rebellion in 1973, when university students joined the small bourgeoisie and some industrial workers to oppose a corrupt state government and the deteriorating economy. The "JP Movement" swelled with the addition of Jana Sangh, RSS, Old Congress, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Naxalite cadre, plus newly recruited sarvodaya from many places, including the universities. It seemed (as the struggle continued into 1975) that the Indira Gandhi government was going to be driven to the ropes and then replaced by some broadly popular decentralist government dedicated to the principles of Gandhianism.

Yet the weakness of the JP Movement also became apparent when it proved unable to respond to the national railways strike that developed during this same time. Part of it was because of the confusion and turmoil within the ranks of the JP Movement as cadre of the various political persuasions rubbed elbows, but part of it was also because Indian Gandhianism has never developed a principled position on industrial workers and its stand on industrialization has been one of almost total opposition.

Without the support of the organized industrial workers, and with the presence of landlords and moneylenders scaring off rural workers, the JP Movement was forced to rely on the volatile but essentially powerless alliance of idealists, small bourgeois, opportunistic rural elite politicians and university students. This alliance was capable of producing a certain amount of flame but very little sustained heat.

Meanwhile, those committed to industrialization and centralization had been at each other's throats for years. The battle lines were drawn between those who sought to develop the Indian economy along the path of USSR state capitalism and those who favored integration with the capitalist world market. The technocrats pledged to the process of state planning and the Communist Party of India (pro-Moscow) sought restraints on the private capitalists, while the private capitalists complained bitterly that they weren't being given the freedom to develop as high a rate of profit as they could earn.

The sight of a crystallizing Opposition and a growing awareness that the entire process of industrialization in India was increasingly threatened began to force the antagonists to rally around Indira Gandhi, who was and is firmly committed to both Russian and Western models of rapid modernization of the Indian economy and Indian society, by almost any means necessary. This closing of the ranks among those who favor further centralization and industrialization was, of course, encouraged by Indira Gandhi, who spread the message that "... I'm not in trouble, we're in trouble..."

So the stage was set for a resolution of the ten years of largely nonviolent political debate. The "civil war" itself verged on open rebellion in those May and June days when the Opposition,



Indian carving of the god Siva, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

now increasingly under the leadership of Moraji Desai, agitated in the streets of New Delhi for Indira Gandhi's immediate resignation because of the Allahbad court judgment finding her guilty of corrupt election practises. At the very moment when it seemed that the Opposition was at its strongest, it was actually at its weakest: the internal strains of the decentralist Opposition were creating such tension that towards the end J.P. Narayan and Moraji Desai weren't speaking. The Gandhian movement to purge and renew Indian society had been taken over by the cadre of the rural elite, themselves the cause of so much rural misery.

And now it's possible to see that at the moment that Indira Gandhi seemed to be at her weakest, she was actually cementing together a coalition that would let her and her supporters rule with greater strength than before.

Judging by the standards of the supporters of this experiment in fascism, the Emergency has been far more successful than anyone would've predicted. The monsoon rains were heavy and timely, so that the 1975-1976 crop will be one of the best ever. The jailing of the Opposition and the purging of the civil service helped create enough fear so that urban life runs more smoothly and efficiently than before. The good crops, the worldwide recession and the new order prohibiting strikes have brought inflation down to the point that the government is claiming "negative inflation." The cohesiveness of the alliance of in-

dustrializationists depended on the ability of the new fascist government to win international support, particularly foreign aid, trade agreements and a liberal credit/investment agreement with the United States that would give India the high technology knowledge that its industry desperately needs.

These have all been forthcoming, despite the hostile reaction to Indira Gandhi personally by most of the Western media. The World Bank has signed agreements for \$850 million; agreements have been signed with the International Monetary Fund and the International Development Agency, as well as with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). These loans are mostly for "infrastructure development," indicating that these US-dominated agencies believe that India can be fruitfully integrated into the capitalist world market. A trade treaty with Iran was signed for over \$1 billion; the Indo-Japanese Joint Trade Commission successfully negotiated another \$1 billion in trade, much of it the "third party" deals that India is increasingly accepting. (An industrialized nation like Japan sets up a factory in India to use cheap Indian labor, producing products for export to other countries; in essence, runaway shop agreements.)

But the icing on the cake came in the first week of October, when External Affairs Minister Y.B. Chavan and Henry Kissinger met in Washington for a two day session of the Indo-US Joint Commission. When the talks had concluded, India and the United States were more firmly trade partners than ever before, with India opening up formerly protected key sectors of the Indian economy to multi-national investment and with the US committed to giving India some of the sizable credits and much of the advanced technology that it asked for. There was also a suggestion that President Ford might visit India in the spring or summer. It was considered quite a coup for Indira Gandhi and her supporters, who had been worried about what stand the United States would take, since media hostility was so great. It was also a victory for the United States Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (FICCI), both backers of further trade alliances between the US and India.

The series of diplomatic successes rests on the international recognition that the Indian government is now willing to do whatever it has to in order to become a part of the capitalist world market, while retaining its ties with the Soviet Union. The program of export subsidies has been put into effect and exports are running at a higher rate although it's too early to tell if the rate of exports can be sustained. Since strikes are banned, production is up, but *production* is not so much the problem as *demand*, and there has been no vast redistribution of wealth in India. The government is getting more income from the crackdown on black money speculators, smuggling and income tax raids, but little of this filters down.

The attempts at rural land reform are not purely rhetoric; India has followed a policy of building

its industrial structure at the expense of agriculture, but is now going to try and develop productive small farmers. This has been made politically much simpler by the fact of the landlord support of the Opposition parties. This isn't necessarily as radical as it sounds, either, since even the World Bank encourages far reaching agriculture reforms and a transformation from "primitive" agriculture to "capitalist" agriculture.

If this strategy were completely carried through, India would have a much smaller percentage of its population engaged in actual farming, with most of the farmers small, efficient producers using the latest Western technology to achieve high yields, while agribusiness techniques would be used in other areas. This demands a tremendous amount of capital to pay for fertilizers, special seeds, machinery and skilled labor. But it would help "stabilize" the countryside with a new *kulak* class and might raise food productivity. There would also be tremendous dislocation of millions of people, as always when this sort of modernization is attempted. This is one place where the centralized power of the state is absolutely necessary to squash the inevitable rebellions of the uprooted.

What can be learned from Mahatma Gandhi's political and moral teachings that would be of use to the hundreds of millions of Indians now oppressed not only by the new fascism but by the semi-feudal, semi-colonial society that blocks their personal and political liberation? First of all, Gandhiji placed a great deal of value on political analysis, as shown in the selection of tactical attacks like the Salt March. Secondly, he constantly worked to develop a broad "United Front"; in the situation before Independence, a "national liberation front" of all Indians against the British. Third, he constantly took his campaign "to the masses" and insisted on the importance of winning agrarian support at a time when more Westernized politicians like Nehru were concerned with upper class urban society. Fourth, Gandhiji constantly stressed the need for "Cultural Revolution" within the ranks of the liberation movement, even to the extent of withdrawing from the struggle until he had personally made changes in himself that he thought were important. And, of course, he was thoroughly committed to the creative use of nonviolence to achieve social, personal and political change.

The main problem in forming "United Fronts" is the question of who you're willing to unite *with* and who you're unifying *against*. This calls for political clarity and analysis. However, the recent round of Indian Gandhian political activity showed a great deal of fuzziness and confusion, as demonstrated in the alliance with the landlord/rural elite/Hindu nationalist groups like the Jana Sangh, the RSS and Moraji Desai's wing of the old Congress Party. This is part of the larger problem of the "right-left" tendencies within the movement and their basic antagonism, although all concerned believe they are the heirs of the Mahatma.

For too many Indian Gandhians, the fact that the rural elite is under attack by the industrial state is sufficient to accept them as allies. This leads to a whole series of assumptions: that the cadre of the landlord/rural elite parties are genuinely concerned with Gandhian ideals and the social welfare of the oppressed. Arrests of Gandhian satyagrahas and political cadre of the right-wing parties are counted together; yet how many of these are dedicated Gandhians and how many are representatives of the old feudal orders, fighting for survival? Similarly, some Indian Gandhians were tremendously upset by the arrest of Moraji Desai and referred to him as "Morajibhai," "Respected Older Brother Moraji Desai." Yet there are many others who would feel that Moraji Desai is no friend of the rural worker and certainly not a progressive in the Western sense of the world.

Again, some Indian Gandhians feel that the state of Gujarat is an oasis of liberty because it is ruled by the Opposition "United People's Front." But what political groupings are represented in this United Front? The Jana Sangh, the Desai-led Old Congress and the KMLP, a landlord/rich peasant political party headed by the same Chhiminbhai Patel who was the target of the earlier JP agitation in 1974.

In short, for many Indian Gandhians, the main unifying principle of the "underground opposition" is still opposition to Indira Gandhi as a person and as prime minister. This is a fatalistic, negative analysis; opposition to Indira Gandhi is not a political program nor a positive demonstration of nonviolent social change.

But this focus on the removal of Indira Gandhi allows an avoidance of more basic issues. The failure of the Opposition can be blamed on the news media or on the "welfare state." Yet neither of these excuses display any understanding of what a healthy movement is about. Certainly the liberation forces of China or Vietnam didn't need the newspapers to tell them what was going on. And while the "passiveness" of the people might be blamed to a certain extent on welfare statism in the advanced industrial nations, it's not had much of an effect in India, for the simple reason that the vast majority of the Indian people receive nothing from the Indian government. Simple arithmetic will bear this out: the entire non-military budget of India comes to about \$5 billion annually. There are over 600 million Indians; that means about \$8-\$9 per Indian per year, hardly enough to encourage any false sense of security.

I do not question the sincerity of those Indian Gandhians who accept such explanations for the sudden collapse of the opposition. However, there seems to be another explanation that makes more sense in light of the Indian situation. This would be that the serious and highly principled original JP Movement was genuinely trying to develop a broad mass base and build ties with rural workers and others who had become alienated by the corruption and misrule *not only of*

the ruling Congress Party but also the rural elite. However, at the same time, there was a loose alliance of political parties who were being forced into extinction through the Congress Party's increasing control of the parliamentary system. This struggle to control the parliamentary system was also a struggle to control the Indian state, a conflict which the industrialist/centralists were winning because the rural elite parties essentially were also the oppressors of the rural landless workers and the outcastes.

The Opposition was a movement without roots; the J.P.-led Movement of Gandhians and sarvodayas was developing a base among the small bourgeoisie of the towns and some rural landless. Political opportunists like Moraji Desai then made the overtures towards alliance and joint action against Indira Gandhi and the industrialist/centralists, a move which at first was welcomed by J.P. Narayan and the socially concerned cadre of the JP Movement which was trying to build a broad United Front in much the same manner as Gandhiji had, 40 years before.

Unfortunately, it was a serious mistake on the part of the embryonic "left Gandhians." The presence of people like Moraji Desai in a movement for broad social change was like the presence of Goldwater in the Continental Walk. It's true that Goldwater is opposed to the "liberal" state-capitalist drift of the Democratic Party, but are we all really on the same side? For the peasants in India the answer was no. A party that included representatives of the rural elite oppressors was not a party that met their needs, no matter how revolutionary the tactics or rhetoric.

Within months, the followers of Desai came to dominate the Opposition-JP Movement alliance and the search for a unified revolutionary Indian Gandhianism was abandoned in favor of more conventional opportunistic power politics. The traditionalist, essentially reactionary forces took over the control of an otherwise promising step forward for both Gandhianism and leftist decentralist politics. It was true that the Opposition's willingness to operate outside the parliamentary system was a radical step, but it was a radicalism of desperation, not of strength.

This raises another problem, perhaps best summarized by an ex-Maryknoll friend who worked with Mayan tribespeople in Mexico: how can one reconcile the task of "conciliation" with the realities of "class struggle?" This is a problem in all forms of political activity and I have no ready answer. But this one thing I feel sure of: unless the Indian Gandhian movement enters into political alliance with industrial workers and the rural landless, and rejects the support and political activity of the landlord-dominated rural elite, Indian Gandhianism will never develop the broad mass base necessary to overcome the daily violence of Indian society and the Indian state.

Recalling the adage about changing horses in mid-stream, I understand it seems like suicide to advocate a principled move away from cadre and politicians of the rural elite parties/opposition

groups to a "left" revolutionary United Front rooted in the masses of rural landless workers, at the same time reaching out to industrial workers with the vision of a decentralized, worker-controlled society, achieved through creative non-violence. Nevertheless, I think it really will be suicide not to undertake this "Cultural Revolution" right now, even under present repressive conditions. The moral and political clarity that would develop, I believe, would far surpass the momentary advantages of a continued alliance with the Jana Sangh et al. Once it was clear that there was a nonviolent, revolutionary alliance in opposition to both the present fascist policy of industrialization/centralization and the continued dominance of the landlords, I believe the Indian situation would reward creative nonviolence.

Indira Gandhi and her supporters aren't blind to these realities and are taking steps to neutralize opposition from this key "third sector" of landless workers and industrial workers. By using the carrot and the stick selectively, and through a constant "testing" of the political waters, they remain on the offensive. J.P.'s release from jail Nov. 17 can be seen as part of this "testing" process; as of right now, it's too early to tell what effect the ailing J.P. will have, since he is doubtlessly closely watched by the police.

The structure of fascism is being reinforced through such measures as additional amendments to the MISA/DIR detention rules and a purge of the Indian media. The new amendments mean that neither the prisoner nor the lawyer now have a legal right to find out what charges have been made. The restructure of the Indian media (with the co-operation of most of the newspaper owners) involves firing many of the outspoken editors and replacing them with more sympathetic (to the government) personnel. In the fall it seemed likely that the Emergency would be lifted in time for the March elections, in which Indira Gandhi and her supporters are bound to do well, by hook or by crook. However, now it appears that the Emergency won't be lifted until the leaders of the industrialists/centralists, Indira Gandhi, her supporters, etc., are convinced that it is no longer necessary. This means that the Emergency won't be lifted until the basic features of the new fascism have been written into law; then, when fascism is fully legalized, the Emergency will be abolished. This cosmetic change will not, therefore, bring any more freedom to India.

However, their strength conceals their weakness. Success in penetrating the capitalist world market means increasing exploitation of the domestic population. No matter how much the carrot and stick are used, the burden falls on the industrial workers and the rural landless, and there will be an ongoing potential for rebellion and revolution.

Will the Indian Gandhian movement, and other decentralist revolutionary forces be able to rise to the challenge? This is the question of the moment to those concerned with nonviolence and an end to casteism, sexism and landlordism in India.

Photo from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



A Personal View of India's Crisis

KUMAR MEHTA

On the invitation of a rural development group consisting mainly of university students, I had the opportunity this summer to spend a week in a rural area in Madhya Pradesh. It was rice transplanting season. Men and women, both young and old, were working in knee-deep mud under a hot sun. After 10-12 hours of hard labor, what was the compensation? I was told that they were landless workers whose daily wage consisted of one kilogram of coarse grain. The land was owned by a rich landlord. No doubt, there were land-ceiling laws, but with some help from friendly politicians and bureaucrats, the clever landlords managed to escape them. For instance, the titles to legally-permissible parcels of land were held under different names, but for all practical purposes the entire 600 acres of land were owned and managed by one and the same man.

Over 90% of the village population consisted of landless workers. They lived in dilapidated mud-huts with thatched roofs which leaked very badly during rain. There were no sanitation or drinking water facilities. It is hard for me to forget that bread made from edible wildflowers (mahua flower) was a regular part of their food because there was no other way to provide two meals a day to all the members of a family, which frequently included old parents. Since the work on the land was seasonal, many were part-time artisans such as blacksmiths, shoemakers, weavers, masons, carpenters, etc. The wages for artisan work were so meager that there was never enough money to meet minimum personal needs of food, clothing, health care and education. About 35 years ago I had spent a few years of my childhood in a rural area, and I vaguely remembered the poverty in villages during the British raj. But never expected to find so much visible poverty after 28 years of self-rule. What happened to Gandhiji's dream of a prosperous countryside?

Surprisingly, after India won independence from the British rule in 1947, the Gandhian path of India's progress through rural prosperity was ignored in favor of the so-called "modern" path of progress. India adopted a Western model of socialism by capitalistic strategies involving big money, latest technology, and centralization of

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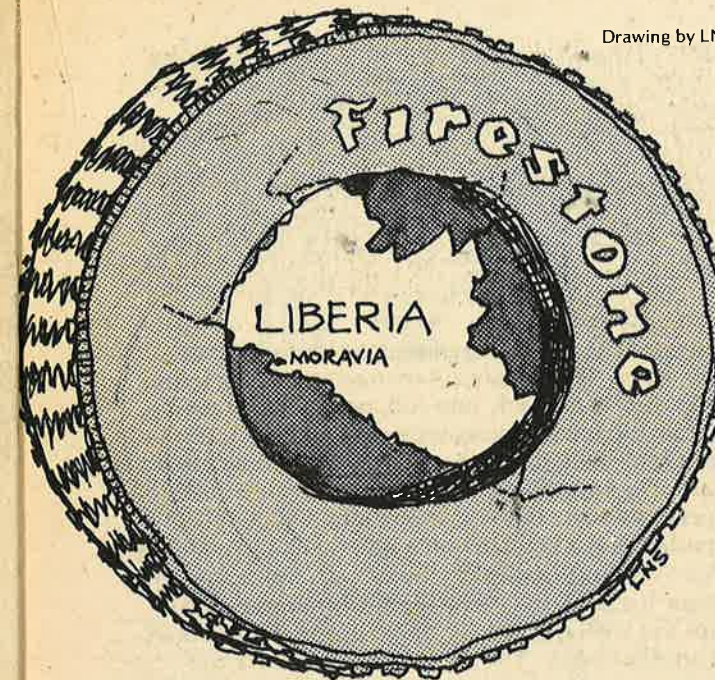
economic and political power. For a predominantly agricultural nation, the governmental planning and expenditure of national resources focused heavily on the industry and the city. Therefore it is not surprising that during the years 1947-75, after many dams, steel plants and chemical factories, the masses in the rural areas remain very poor. According to statistics released by the Government of India, 40% of the population continues to be below the poverty line. The poor, comprised generally of landless peasants, earn as agricultural labor about 200 rupees a month for a family of seven. The families live in single-room huts, and can afford only one full meal a day and have rarely an extra set of clothes for a change. Thus, it came as a shock to me that after independence the number of people below the poverty line has not decreased, but has actually doubled from 120 million in 1947 to 240 million in 1975.

The Gandhian ideas of political economy, which were ignored by the post-independence leaders of India as being old-fashioned and irrelevant to the 20th century, appear to me now not only highly relevant but essential to the solution of India's problems. Mahatma Gandhi was against mass production and distribution of goods because these are associated with concentration of economic and political power. He wanted a communitarian society with all sharing control over governing, producing and distributing processes. His model of self-sufficient, self-ruling villages was based on the concept that location of power nearer to the people is essential to prevent its possible abuses. Gandhiji's socio-economic thoughts, which were influenced by Ruskin, show three key elements: the good of the individual is contained in the good of all; all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work, therefore, a lawyer's work should have the same economic reward as the barber's; a life of labor is the life worth living. This is why Gandhiji advocated that both economically and otherwise the value of mental work should not be considered superior to manual work. He said that perpetuation of class and caste-ridden economy and polity would not end unless society recognizes that worth of every human being and the necessity of providing work and adequate compensation for work. Gandhiji wrote in the *Young India* of November 28, 1928, "Economic constitution of India, indeed of the world, should be such that no one should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make two ends meet. This ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of elementary necessities of life remain in the control of masses."

It is interesting to note that only about 15% of the people in India are affected in any significant manner by the national emergency. Only the rich, the middle class and the industrial employees, which make up the top 15%, enjoy some economic

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Drawing by LNS Womens Graphics Collective.



BY ROGER WILKE

LIBERIA TURNS A PROFIT FOR MANY AMERICAN COMPANIES

I was surprised and very pleased to see the article on Liberia by Edward Honnold in WIN (12/11/75). I thought perhaps a few more bits of information on Firestone, and on other US companies in Liberia, would interest WIN readers. Firestone's position in Liberia is of course not nearly as dominant now as it was before the advent of the steel companies.

In 1969 there were at least 43 US companies in Liberia. At least 19 of them had gross revenues that year larger than Liberia's 1968 Gross Domestic Product. Sixteen of them ranked in the top 200 of *Forbes* magazine's annual ranking. Six were in the top 20.

Liberia's iron mining industry is its largest industry in terms of capital investment and export value. Rubber is its largest in terms of employment and land area used. Two US steel companies, Bethlehem Steel and Republic Steel, share dominance of the iron mining industry with Swedish and West German companies. Three US rubber companies—Firestone, Goodrich, and Uniroyal—with another small American-owned company hold four of the six rubber concessions. (The other two are held by West German and Dutch interests.) The largest rubber concession, of course, is Firestone's.

Liberia is highly dependent on exports: in 1966 half of her Gross Domestic Product came from exports (4.3% of the US's came from exports). Liberia's exports depend heavily on just the two commodities, iron ore and rubber: together they made up 89% of her exports in 1967. Liberia's foreign trade depends on only a few countries: in

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1967 30% of Liberia's exports went to the US and 28% to West Germany.

Not only Liberia's foreign trade, but her government revenues, and the jobs and income of her wage workers (as yet a small percentage of the population), are very dependent on iron ore and rubber. Between 1951 and 1960 Firestone and the (then) only iron mine in the country paid an average of 40% of the government's total revenues; the new rubber and iron ore concessions since then can only have raised that percentage. In 1960 over 35% of the total wages of Liberia's wage workers was paid by foreign concessions (chiefly rubber and iron ore); in 1961 they employed about 42% of the total wage workers.

Another 10% of Liberia's government revenues came from ship registrations—Liberia is a "flag of convenience," and in 1973 had the world's largest merchant fleet. An American bank is Liberia's Maritime Administrator, or ship registrar.

Firestone's profits from its rubber plantations in Liberia are hard to ascertain, but here are some old figures on return on investment. Firestone's total investment in Liberian rubber from 1926 to 1961 was about \$30 million. Its total profits during the five years 1956-1960 were \$95 million; its after-tax profits were \$66 million, or about \$13 million a year. So for that five-year period alone, Firestone's return on its total investment was about 43% a year—in other words, Firestone was making back its 30-year investment once every 2½ years. In the late 1960's Firestone's total wage payments averaged \$4 million a year, or about 30% of its annual after-tax profits of a decade earlier. If labor is the largest part of its annual costs, you can imagine what Firestone's return on annual sales is.

According to US rubber industry analysts, Firestone holds the dominant industry position in natural rubber. This gives it a competitive edge over its rivals in the production of radial tires, which (at least in mid-1974) are 45% natural rubber, whereas conventional tires are only 22% natural rubber. (Some sort of metaphor about Americans' almost literally riding on the backs of Liberian rubber workers comes to mind here.) Firestone also supplies latex to the carpeting, garment, and dipped-goods industries, and sells a latex non-rubber polymer (natural latex is only about 35% rubber) to the adhesives industry.

Besides being the largest producer in Liberia, Firestone is the largest buyer of rubber there.

Most of the six foreign rubber concessions in the country buy rubber produced by Liberian rubber-growers (both big officials and small peasants alike). They are the Liberian rubber-growers' only market. Firestone, as the biggest buyer, has an interest in letting its arm be twisted "to adjust wages to the local scale," because that way it helps keep its suppliers' costs down, so it won't be faced with pressures to raise the prices it pays for local rubber.

Liberia had seven commercial banks in 1968 (not three). Three are US-owned, and another is partially US-owned. The only wholly Liberian-owned bank has a correspondent-bank relationship with a US bank, the Chemical Bank of New York. Citicorp (First National City Bank of New York) owns the Bank of Monrovia; Chase Manhattan owns a branch in Monrovia; Bankers Trust shares its ownership of a bank with Mediobanca (a major Italian bank); and the International Bank (not the IBRD, but a private company) owns 80% of another bank. The Bank of Monrovia is the largest and most important one. It is the official depository of the Liberian government; it performs fiscal agent functions for the government; and it was in 1962 the largest domestic creditor of the government, holding 11.6% of the national debt. Not bad, even for a Citicorp subsidiary.

Other countries are also important in Liberia. West Germans and Swedes, whose companies are just about as important as US companies in the iron mining industry, make up the bulk of the expatriate management of the mines. Italian and Israeli firms dominate construction. Retailing is chiefly in the hands of small Lebanese family firms, as well as a few large West German firms. Transportation (mostly taxis and buses) is in the hands of Islamic Africans, most of whom are probably not Liberian. The vast majority of cars and buses, by the way, are Japanese and West German imports. And most retail goods seem to be, not American, but cheap Far Eastern and European goods. I mention these facts because I want to emphasize that it is not particular companies at fault here, or just the US. A great many companies, from a great many countries (including those nice Swedes and those worker-participating Germans), are involved in the exploitation of the Third World. It is a world-wide system, and Firestone is just one example from one country.



BEATING THE SYSTEM BY BICYCLE

ED ARSZMAN

The lowly, humble bicycle is the vehicle of the European working class. In truth, the class struggle in America is very much reflected in our attitude toward bicycles and cars. Whether or not we will ever have an egalitarian society, whether or not the poor will ever be able to escape their poverty depends on whether or not our society is imaginative enough to foster bicycling or whether it is corrupt enough to continue with cars.

Look at it this way. Our capitalist-oriented society oppresses people in many powerful but subtle ways. The police force, the prison system, and the draft are but the crudest and most obvious forms of oppression. Capitalism could hardly stop at that. A much more subtle yet pervasive form of oppression lies in the structure and design of our cities and in the transport systems that make our cities work.

I learned something about the plight of the urban poor from first hand experience. I worked for more than a year as a placement interviewer for the state employment agency in central Indiana where I live. It was my job to find jobs for other people in the sprawled out, decentralized city of Indianapolis—a town as symptomatic of the transportation problem as any I have ever found.

One thing I learned rather quickly in the employment service: most jobs in today's America require the job applicant to own a car. Employers will insist on it even in cases where a car is absolutely unrelated to the work on the job itself.

I remember once talking to the personnel manager of a factory offering \$2.50 an hour jobs. These were simple machine operator occupations involving no blue print reading or special skills. At that wage level the employer could not ask for much. What is more, the factory was located within ten blocks of the downtown area; it was on

Ed Arszman recently made a "Bike for Jobs" cross-country bicycle trip. He is a founder and coordinator of The Committee for Zero Automobile Growth, PO Box 44666, Indianapolis, IN 45204.

a bus line; and I thought that surely a person without a car could get a job here. Yet the personnel manager of this particular factory wanted to interview job applicants who had cars. He preferred them, he said, because he thought they were more reliable in showing up for work. And this job category started out at \$2.50 per hour—with overtime workers maybe could take home \$90 a week! You could possibly feed a car on such a salary, but you could never raise a family, especially not a family and an automobile combined.

That is how the system works. If you are poor and born in the ghetto, if your father cannot buy you a car because he's never had the money to buy one for himself, then you just never really get started in the system. Without a car you don't work, and without work you can't get a car. Unless you steal one. And that usually brings you up against the other repressive institutions of this society—the police and the prison system.

So it is that the oppression of a capitalist society takes on many subtle forms—even the form of automobiles. A car-orientated society means high unemployment rates for the central city poor and high crime rates as well. It also means decayed central cities, urban renewal projects that are tearing up the land (for highrise apartments and freeways), and an affluent middle class that feels all the more secure in its opulence because it lives ten miles out from the city in suburbs that are lily white.

And the bicycle? Well, the bicycle is the vehicle of the people. Almost anyone can own a bike. I bought a very serviceable Schwinn 3-speed once for a mere \$10. Honestly, it was one of the better bicycles I have owned.

Furthermore, the bicycle is the most readily available alternative to the car. Though the weather and the terrain can be hazards, basically a bicycle can go anywhere a car can go and a few other places besides.

Finally, the bicycle is the most nearly perfect antithesis to the automobile yet developed. Cars are universally noted for their gaseous pollution; bicycles produce none. Cars guzzle gas and involve the consumption of enormous quantities of natural minerals. Bicycles consume little of either commodity.

Indeed, the automobile is capitalist America's foremost product—the industrial Moloch for which we rip off natural resources from much of the third world. The bicycle is, on the other hand, actually the third world's answer to transportation, the essential common carrier of the people in China, India, and Vietnam.

It is significant, I think that in the last great confrontation between America, Inc. and the peoples of the third world—I'm speaking about the war in Vietnam—the Americans used motor cars, trucks, personnel carriers, helicopters, and all kinds of heavily mechanized equipment. The Vietnamese resistance used bicycles primarily, and the people on bicycles won. To their everlasting credit they won.

Ride a bike and support the revolution!

Witness the most important felony I have personally ever committed:

Our marriage, like our courtship, has been conventional. It was love at first sight when we met at the elevator just outside the sixth-floor tearoom of the Atlanta YMCA. Ernest was a fashion coordinator for a local department store, I a state college professor from 100 miles away, deep in the peach and pecan orchards. One of us Black, the other white; both native Southerners. We commuted every weekend for five months. Our friends weren't surprised when we decided to marry.

We would have wasted our time to send an announcement to the local papers. Besides, the bank employees spread the word just as effectively when we took out a joint account. Our wedding it-

Louie Crew has published over 80 items recently, in *Christian Century*, *Harper's*, *Saturday Review*, and scores of collegiate and literary magazines. He is an editor of *NOTE and Integrity*, and is listed in *Leaders of Black America*. This paper was originally read 7/12/75 at a symposium on victimless crimes held at U. of South Florida, St. Petersburg.

Hiding Within Straight Society

By Louie Crew

self was private, just the two of us and the Holy Spirit. Parents, though loving, would not have welcomed the occasion, and our priest had no Episcopal authority (or desire) to officiate. Two apartment neighbors, historians, sent a bottle of champagne; a psychologist friend dropped in earlier to propose a toast; others sent welcoming tokens.

We unloaded the heavier gear from the car before beginning the ceremony. Then we carried each other across the threshold (a neat trick, really) into the dining room, where the table was set with two wine glasses from Woolworth's, one lone and lighted red candle instead of our customary two green ones, a vase with one early narcissus (after all, I am an English professor!), and an open Book of Common Prayer. We read the service nervously, its fearsome bidding and pledges. The words woman and wife translated readily as spouse, man, husband, Person. All took only about ten minutes.

One could be too quick to sentimentalize a few details, such as our bed, a 200-year-old four-poster built by the slave ancestor of one of us for the free ancestor of the other. Perhaps we were fulfilling their dream? Or Dr. King's dream...?

But we find day-to-day living too difficult for us to negotiate other people's dreams: we work at living our own dream, a dream no different from the dream of many other couples, a dream of a home with much love to bridge our separateness.

Even at the risk of wrongly seeming to speak for all Gays, a people much too numerous and beautifully diverse to be locked into only one dream, I stress first the personal note mainly because we Gay felons are typically viewed not as persons, but as numbers or objects for manipulation. The distance gained by third person pronouns is the space the law uses to institutionalize the hostile feelings of the majority, while at the same time freeing the majority from the discomfort of taking responsibility for the personal and human consequences of those hostile feelings.

There are, by the stingiest of nonGay estimates, between 15-25 million Americans who have a major portion of our sexual arousal and response with members of the same sex. All action in response to such natural arousal, however, is a felony in 39 states. (The eleven who have repealed such laws are California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, New Mexico,

North Dakota, Ohio and Oregon.) Furthermore, even to suggest the possibility of acting on such arousal (as in the seemingly innocuous statement to a friend, "You turn me on; let's get together") is in most of these states deemed "solicitation to commit an immoral act" and subject to criminal prosecution.

The consequences of these antiGay laws (or "Sodomy statutes" as you call them) cannot be measured in the admittedly low number of arrests and convictions actually sought, but in the effectiveness of the laws in thus institutionalizing the taboo perceived by the majority. In jobs and housing, for example, an admitted felon, whether convicted or not, has no clout in claiming her civil rights. Hence, there is monumental pressure on Gay persons to "pass," to pretend (often even to ourselves) that we are not really Gay. Thereby many of us affirm our second-class citizenship and make mockery of our "freedom of association," relegating "freedom" to the criminal underground which the law thus creates, with its threats of blackmail and concomitant abuse.

Furthermore, understanding parents of Gay children (and there are damn few parents who know how to understand, much less love, their Gay children!) are placed under the formidable burden of knowing how to counsel their children to integrate their Gay sexuality with their whole personhood and still protect them from the severest disenfranchisement effected by the law.

Because of the illegal status of Gay relations, Gay persons are denied positive visibility throughout our culture, particularly on the media and in the institutions of Church and higher education. Contrary to fact, all achievers are presumed to be heterosexual, and Gays are denied ready access to knowledge of our extensive contributions to history and to this society. Gay children (and we are all children of our more than 40 million nonGay parents, as we have not yet developed means of reproduction!) are thus denied access to the kinds of positive models that will help us grow up as healthy Gays, while there is not one shred of convincing evidence that such censorship has ever kept even one Gay child from growing up Gay.

One consequence of our long hiding in the heterosexual society is that we Gays know much more about nonGays than nonGays know about us. As an outsider, I see much in the hetero world of which I disapprove: your burgeoning divorce rate, for example; your millions of loveless families still hanging together; your raging sexism; your high incidence of violence in sexuality; your pleasure in commercializing your brand of sexuality. My husband and I do not want to "smell clean" for Lifebouy; nor do we want to be on your Geritol ads! Yet it would never occur to us to illegalize your affectional preferences or even to deprive one hetero person of our respect because of what we disapprove in another hetero person. Yet such legal and social maneuvers are your oppression of us and of our people by the millions daily. Your laws are madness and your behavior is inhumane to the extreme. I pray that you may find deliverance.

20 million commit civil disobedience every year just by being gay. Photo by Lana Reeves.





HEADS AND TALES is an occasional column for essays of human liberation and personal experience. Should you care to write about where your head is at, please limit your contribution to 800 words.

BOB PINKUS

I once believed that one needed to use force to end oppression. Later, when I examined that premise it seemed that though it might be valid in certain cases on a practical basis, in the basic sense it represented a contradiction. For how could one really teach others to cease the use of force by the use of force?

Finally I realized that if in one's day to day actions one were an oppressor, whether of humans for profit or power, or of animals for food or clothing, then one would expect that oppression would become the rule of life. Oppressors in fact must expect not only to oppress but to be oppressed.

If one could abandon oppression and live in peace and harmony with one's neighbors, not interfering with their lives, not eating or wearing them, perhaps one could change one's relations with everyone, could build a better world.

At this point vegetarianism became meaningful to me and I became a vegetarian. I have been one since. Many, I suspect, have become vegetarians for similar or identical reasons. We need to build a world of love in which power is not the motivation for life. To build such a world will require that each of us in day to day life live a life of love. To live without taking life seems to be the basic beginning for a compassionate world's creation.

For many vegetarians the knowledge that one need not kill animals to live is enough of a reason to become vegetarian and to help to spread the word. For others the realization that one can live on less than 1/2 the 2,000 lbs. of grain required by an American flesh-eater these days if one consumes one's food directly rather than inefficiently via animals gives one reason enough in a world of hungry people to become vegetarian and to spread the word. For some compassion begins with the self, the realization that better health is possible on a natural vegetarian diet is motivation from which to grow into other forms of compassion. Still others realize that a vegetarian diet costs less and thus enables us to do more with what money we

may have than fatten the profits of the agribiz giants.

A statement that the state, the church, the corporation, the organization, does not belong interfering in one's life is meaningful. In essence the realization that all of these institutions are creations of humanity on a power trip is important. Change in the basic concept of what humanity is about is what is needed if these manifestations of the present power-mad self-image are to be changed. To change that conception of self one needs to change one's thoughts, one's words, one's deeds. Gandhi called for Ahimsa—non-violence—in all of these aspects of one's life. Putting that on a practical level vegetarianism is a first and easily attainable step for anyone. It does not require forceful action, demonstrations, bombings, petitions... for anyone can become a vegetarian simply by switching one's diet. No one's permission is required to change except one's own. In this way we will have demonstrated an essential truth to ourselves, a truth of non-violence by affirming our basic harmless natures as human beings. It is this reassertion of humanity's basic goodness which is necessary if humanity is to overcome the traps of avarice, murder and other power trips which go hand in hand with flesh eating.

Yes, there are good people who are still tied to the habit of eating animals, or even people, in some parts of our world. But these people could become even better people if they would bury their hatchets, make their swords into ploughshares and take the daggers off their belts. In fact the belts themselves need not be made of the skins of murdered animals. If we can abandon murder in daily life perhaps we can come closer to that utopia of love and compassion which we all really want. Vegetarianism is a primary and meaningful step in that directions.

CONTACT:

There are many reasons for vegetarianism and there are many vegetarian journals which can help one to understand them. North American Vegetarians, 501 Old Harding Highway, Malaga, NJ 08328 publishes *Vegetarian Voice* and offers autonomous affiliation to any vegetarian group ready to affiliate.

Vegetarian World, published from suite 216, 8235 Santa Monica Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90046 offers diversified news to vegetarians and membership in a Vegetarian Book Club as well as subscriptions to this quarterly newspaper of broad ranging interest.

The Vegetarian Review & Digest published from Box 211, Haverford, Pennsylvania 19041 is a new vegetarian newspaper published on a quarterly basis which gives news of interest to vegetarians and others and publishes the thoughts of vegetarians and vegetarian groups. Subscriptions are available.

The 1976 North American vegetarian convention will be held for eight days in early August in Ithaca, New York, hosted by the North American Vegetarians of Malaga, NJ 08328.

CHANGES

PROTESTS AGAINST US INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA HELD IN NEW YORK AND DC

Demonstrations in New York and Washington, DC drew hundreds of people to protest US intervention in Angola January 17 and 19.

In New York an enthusiastic, multi-national crowd of 1,200, marched over a mile in subfreezing weather to a rally in a building off Union Square. The demonstrators attracted many followers on the way and people waved in support from windows on the route.

Speakers at the rally, included Maritza Arrastia of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, Dennis Serrette, president of the New York Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Paul Irish of the MPLA Solidarity Committee in New York, Nick DeFreigas of Youth Against War and Fascism and others.

Upwards of 400 people demonstrated in Washington, DC two days later to demand an end to US intervention in Angola. The January 19 protest was timed to coincide with the beginning of the final debate in the House of Representatives that would cut off all funds for CIA activities involving Angola except for those intended for "intelligence gathering."

The demonstrators converged on the Capitol steps at noon and heard speeches from Judge William Booth, president of the American Committee on Africa; congressional representative Bella Abzug; activist Cora Weiss and others.

"In phrases reminiscent of the immoral and unpopular war in Indochina, the Administration has said that our purpose in Angola is 'to help people to defend themselves'" organizers of the demonstration said in a press conference earlier in the morning.

"And yet when the people of Angola were fighting to free themselves from Portuguese colonialism the United States gave the [Portuguese] Salazar and Caetano regimes invaluable

THE DEATH OF PAUL ROBESON

Paul Robeson, singer, athlete, scholar, social philosopher and political activist died on Friday, January 23 at the age of 77.

Universally acclaimed as a brilliant actor and powerful vocalist, Robeson was hounded from a successful career on stage and screen by McCarthy era attacks on his political convictions. Throughout his career Robeson vigorously fought racial discrimination and publicly embraced socialism.

Though he denied being a member of the Communist Party, his unabashed admiration for the Soviet Union and his refusal to compromise his political and social beliefs resulted in many of his appearances being cancelled. Vigilantes attacked a crowd waiting outside one of his concerts in Peekskill, NY in August, 1949. Joe McCarthy attacked him numerous times in his Senate Committee.

Despite the harsh treatment he received in the United States, he was still widely acclaimed during professional tours in Europe. He moved to London in 1958 and though he claimed at the time: "I don't want any overtones of suggestion that I am deserting the country of my birth," many felt he left in bitterness over his treatment by white Americans.

Robeson remained in England until 1963 when he returned to New York. —WIN

political and economic support, thus assisting them to retain their African colonies. What the US is now doing is a continuation of the same policy, seeking to prevent the people of Angola from reaching true independence."

The House will be voting on the Angola amendment to the Defense Appropriations Bill within a few days. The Amendment already passed in the Senate in a 54-22 vote in mid-December, a clear expression of opposition to mounting US covert action in Angola.

But the amendment has substantial loopholes. In addition to allowing funds for "intelligence gathering" activities, it doesn't affect the \$27-35 million already spent in the last seven months nor the \$6-9 million already allotted for Angola but not yet spent.

Nevertheless, demonstrators on Capitol Hill felt the amendment is a first and important step and will continue to push for a total end to US intervention in Angola. —LNS

2 HELD 8 MONTHS FOR CONTEMPT

Two activists, Ellen Grusse and Terri Turgeon, who refused to cooperate with a federal grand jury, were freed Dec. 19 from Niantic State Prison in Connecticut after serving eight months for contempt. The grand jury had been seeking information on the whereabouts of Susan Saxe and Katherine Power.

Saxe and Power were alleged accomplices in two politically motivated bank robberies during the mass protests in 1970 against the government escalation of the war in Indochina. A police officer was killed during the Boston, Mass., holdup. Saxe was arrested last year after five years as a fugitive. Power remains underground. Federal grand juries such as the one in Connecticut have been used as a weapon to harass activists in the women's movement with whom, the government charges, Saxe and Power sought refuge.

Grusse and Turgeon were freed after a nationwide campaign against such grand jury harassment. The campaign, involving many feminist organizations and activists, was organized by the New York-based Grand Jury Project. The project is currently calling for increased pressure for the release of a third prisoner, Jill Raymond, who has been held in a Kentucky prison for over a year for her refusal to cooperate with a similar grand jury.

One of the focuses of the project is on the illegality of the government's use of grand juries to harass women, minorities and the left. Under current practices, if recipients of grand jury subpoenas exercise their constitutional right to remain silent, they often face prison for the length of the grand jury.

Letters demanding freedom for Jill Raymond should be addressed to Eldon Webb, Acting US Attorney, Federal Building, Lexington, Ky. 40501.

— The Guardian

LESBIAN MOTHER SUIT

Mary Jo Risher, a lesbian mother, has lost custody of her nine-year-old son as a result of a decision passed down by a domestic relations court jury. Risher's attorney attempted to prohibit the defendant's sexual preference from being made an issue in the case, but the motion was denied by Judge Owen Chrisman.

Risher has had custody of her two sons, Jimmy, 17, and Richard, 9, since 1971 when she and her husband were divorced. Last summer Jimmy left his mother's home to live with his father who subsequently filed suit to gain custody of Richard on the grounds that the boys' mother was unfit because of her homosexuality.

During the custody trial Mary Jo Risher testified in the presence of a jury of ten men and two women that her love for Ann Foreman, with whom she had been living for two years, does not interfere with her ability to raise Richard. Attorney Aglaia Mauzy told the jury that Risher was a "warm, loving mother" who provided a "good, clean environment."

The case is being appealed. For more information contact: The Mary Jo Risher Fund, c/o Dallas County NOW, PO Box 12431, Dallas, TX 45225.

— Majority Report

DEMONSTRATIONS ON MARTIN LUTHER KING'S BIRTHDAY FOCUS ON JOBS, BUSING & POLICE BRUTALITY

January 15, 1976 saw demonstrations across the country commemorating the birthday of Martin Luther King, and addressing many of the current political and economic problems facing Americans, and particularly black Americans.

Many cities and states officially recognized King's birthday, including New York, New Jersey, St. Louis and Chicago. There were marches in Memphis, Tennessee, where King was murdered in 1968 while leading a sanitation workers strike, and in Montgomery, Alabama where he led a bus boycott twenty years ago. Three cities—Atlanta, Georgia, Louisville, Kentucky, and Columbia, South Carolina—saw particularly large demonstrations.

Atlanta—"We marched to demand jobs, full employment," said one of the organizers of the Atlanta march, which drew some 20,000 people in a parade that stretched for nearly two miles.

"It was the thinking of Coretta King and many of us who worked with Dr. King, that if he had lived, in light of the economic situation in this country, he would have had us take no other focus than that of jobs. So we used his birthday as a springboard to speak to one of the most pressing and relevant issues in the nation—unemployment."

The march began at the Ebenezer Baptist Church where King was once pastor, and ended in downtown Atlanta. Speakers at the rally included Atlanta mayor Maynard Jackson, the mayors of New York, Detroit and Gary, Indiana, and Coretta King.

Louisville—"In Louisville, busing was the issue," said a Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) organizer about the January 15 demonstration there.

Some 2,500 people led by black activist Dick Gregory and members of the SCLC marched one mile to the Louisville federal courthouse. Later the demonstrators held a rally in a local church.

Throughout the fall there was much violent white opposition to

school desegregation in the city. In early September hundreds were arrested and dozens injured when anti-busing forces burned buses and broke store windows.

"I think the march was a show of strength," continued the SCLC organizer, "to show that black people in Louisville feel that the buses must roll for each black person there to receive a quality education."

Columbia—An estimated 10,000 South Carolinians came out in Columbia, the capital, January 15 in what many described as the largest civil rights demonstration in the state's history. Of major concern to many marchers was police brutality and in particular, the fatal shootings of eight black people by white policemen in the state in just over a year.

"We are here because we are tired of the indignities we have suffered because of bigotry, ignorance, racism and greed," said one speaker, Rev. Matthew D. McCollom, president of the Southern Conference of the NAACP.

— LNS

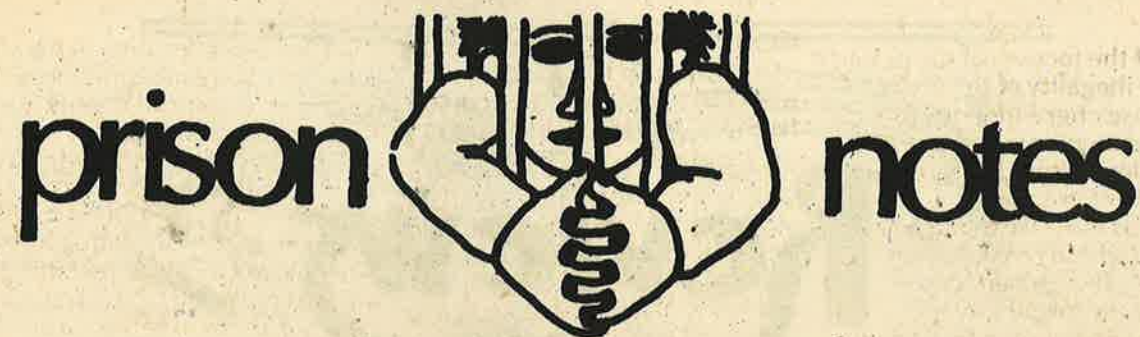
NATIVE HAWAIIANS MOVE TO TAKE BACK ISLAND

Thirty native Hawaiians demanding the return of the island of Kahoolawe—now used as a Navy bombing range—"invaded" the island in early January on a fleet of sailboats.

The 30, without weapons, sailed from Maui, eight miles away, after hearing that the government was delaying consideration of whether to return Kahoolawe for a year while a "feasibility" study was being conducted. Some of the native Hawaiians are members of the Hawaiian Coalition of Native Claims. A groups called the ALOHA (Aboriginal Lands of Hawaiian Ancestry) has been demanding the return of the island since 1973 as part of a billion dollar reparations program to native Hawaiians.

Two of the 30 native Hawaiians stayed on the island for two days before they could be hunted down by the navy and Coast Guard. The two were cited for trespassing, but as yet no formal charges have been filed.

— The Guardian



The proposed draft registration day of March 31 has been temporarily postponed. If and when such an event occurs there will be resistance, including some who will refuse to register for any type of conscription. A special issue of the *Catholic Agitator* on "Choosing Alternatives" presents thoughts about resisting the draft by Bruce Baechler, a nonregistrant now serving a 26-month prison sentence, Dave Lumien, and the writer of this column, who refused to register during World War II. The good people who publish the *Agitator* have printed several thousand extra copies for distribution. If you would like to distribute some, write to the *Catholic Agitator*, Ammon Hennacy House of Hospitality, 605 North Cummings St., Los Angeles, California 90033.

Martin Sostre, according to Marlene Nadle writing in the *Village Voice*, is as intransigent as ever, despite many years in prison, some of them in solitary confinement. Recently Sostre said in an interview, "Oppressors count on terror to make people submit. They don't know what to do when it doesn't work. They have no defense against nonsubmission. It louses up the machine." That, of course, lies at the heart of active nonviolence as a method for dealing with oppression. It is good to know that Sostre plans to continue his work for human rights for prisoners and others who are victimized by our social order.

The December, 1975 issue of *NEPA News* includes an excellent article on the rights of parolees which calls attention to *Morrissey v. Brewer*, a federal court decision which grants anyone facing parole revocation a right to two hearings, a preliminary and a final hearing, and also spells out the rights and

proceedings which should govern such hearings. The article is based on a forthcoming publication of the American Friends Service Committee. Those wishing more information should contact: David Collins, AFSC, 48 Inman St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

In a landmark ruling, Federal Judge Frank M. Johnson stated that imprisonment in Alabama's overcrowded prisons constitutes cruel and unusual punishment as prohibited by the eighth amendment to the Constitution. Judge Johnson refused to accept the excuse of lack of funds as adequate reason for the terrible prison conditions. He issued forty-four guidelines which constitute minimum standards if Alabama is to adhere to the Constitution, and gave Governor George C. Wallace and other state officials six months to put the guidelines into effect. According to the *New York Times*, the judge noted that "rampant violence and [a] jungle atmosphere" exist throughout Alabama's penal system, and commented that any person entering those prisons had "no chance of leaving the institution with a more positive or constructive attitude than the one he or she brought in."

The answer of several Ohio legislators to overcrowding in the prisons is to propose a constitutional amendment providing \$250 million in bonds to build new prisons and youth detention facilities. Such a measure would only compound the problem. Columnist William Raspberry recently noted that nearly half the cost of crime was for supporting a criminal justice system and commented: "And what do we get for those outlays? Virtually nothing. Not crime reduction, not rehabilitation, not safety." At a time

when taxpayers are increasingly demanding an accounting for their money, the waste and negative results inherent in our prison system should be exposed whenever possible.

The United Prisoner's Rights Movement in Canada organized and carried out two very successful demonstrations during the end-of-the-year holiday season. On Christmas day, 1975, despite a 20 below temperature, one thousand demonstrators marched around Parthenais Prison in Montreal to draw attention to the "indignities, frustrations and shocking treatment" taking place inside the walls. Another similar sized group demonstrated in front of the women's section of Tanguay Prison for the same reason and in the same freezing temperature. The very fine leaflet they distributed quotes officials on the uselessness of prisons, raises questions about Canada's prisons which must be answered in 1976, and points out that tax money spent on prisons is wasted and personal safety lessened.

French philosopher, psychiatrist and historian, Michel Foucault, expressed an interesting view of the role of prisons in an interview first published in *Le Monde*, and partly reprinted on the Op Ed page of the *New York Times*. Among other things, Foucault said:

"Lawbreaking is not an accident, a more or less unavoidable imperfection. Rather, it is a positive element of the functioning of society. Its role is part of a general strategy. Every legislative arrangement sets up privileged and profitable areas where the law can be violated, others where it can be ignored, and others where infractions are sanctioned."

— Larry Gara

Reviews

CRYER & FORD Gretchen Cryer and Nancy Ford / RCA Records

When a woman no longer needs to be defensive and feel angry, the fever of her personal struggle has broken. She can be free to express loneliness, to need love, and to be just a bit proud that she came through the pain and frustration without sacrificing the vulnerability that makes her human. And she can revel in the joy of her new independence. Gretchen Cryer and Nancy Ford write for the women who have reached this plateau.

The political awareness of Cryer and Ford has always been a cut above that of most commercial composers and playwrights. An early Off-Broadway production, "Now Is the Time for All Good Men," dealt sensitively with the problems of a CO returning to a small town in the Midwest after serving time in prison. (The hero was undoubtedly modeled after Cryer's brother, Peter Kiger, who is well-known for his activism to both WIN readers and assorted law enforcement officers who contributed to his record of 30-odd arrests.)

Another Off-Broadway success of Cryer and Ford was "The Last Sweet Days of Isaac," two one-act satires that poke fun at the search for the "meaning of life," "meaningful relationships" which can be spawned and consummated in a stalled elevator, and civil disobedients who understand neither the situation they were protesting nor the gravity of their own acts.

That both these productions played to large and diverse audiences is evidence of Cryer and Ford's good feel for the public's tolerance level. Hopefully their first album as a duo will not only find its audience also, but will introduce some women to the idea that independence is the best trip to take.

The songs in this album deal with relationships of one kind or another between a man and a woman. One, probably to a former lover, "Long Time Gone," contains the theme of the album:

"I've learned to love another
But loving's not the same
I take it with a grain of salt
I'm keeping my own name..."*

The idea of maintaining distance in a relationship is developed further in "You Can Never Know My Mind":

"Oh I've been around—
Got the map of the country on my face
Highways of broken promises
Crossroads where things were left behind
Oh I've been around—
I've done and I've been done to
And I don't trust that anyone
Can ever know my mind..."*

The treasure among these unusual "love" songs is "Do Whatcha Gotta Do to Make Yourself Happy." It's a story of a woman and her younger lover. While its lyrics and production are not as rich as those of Dory Previn's similar "Lemon Haired Ladies," neither does it convey the sadness and desperation usually found in Previn's songs. Rather, it promotes the idea that it is the young man who is the lucky half of the partnership, the one who must guard against his "hot stuff growing cold." It often seems that eloquence comes easier to those writing of sorrow, but Cryer manages to avoid the Norman Vincent Peale quality that pervades many songs of affirmation by injecting a delicate humor into her tale:

"How will I break it to my mother
He's younger than my very youngest brother
I guess I'll have to tell her when it's all said and done
She didn't lose a daughter, she just got a grandson!"*

The other love songs are interesting melodically, but largely repetitions of the same theme. Cryer and Ford make a beautiful sound together, one which distinguishes even the most pedestrian of the songs; and all the melodies are new and lively. The album is orchestrated heavily: because I had previously heard them perform only to piano accompaniment, it took a while for me to hear the bass, percussion, drums, etc. as anything but a detraction, but after listening to the songs a dozen or so times, the lush background seems to enhance rather than diminish.

My favorite cut on the album happens to be the only one that doesn't focus on a relationship. "Hang on to the Good Times" is a mother's advice to her daughter. The tune is one I find myself humming as frequently as I hum. The simplicity of the lyrics bely their importance. O, to be sent off to face life with a sense of affirmation! This kind of philosophy is where Christian parents in the Midwest and Jewish ones in the East show their real differences.

The flashes of insight in Cryer and Ford's first album, along with the more sophisticated songs from their shows, are a promise of some real accomplished music by them and for women in the near future. As they begin to deal with aspects of women's lives other than our relationships with men, their songs will herald the full joy of the freedom that replaces the anger of oppression. —Wendy Schwartz

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THE FOOD CO-OP HANDBOOK The Co-op Handbook Collective / Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston / 1975 / pbk \$4.95

Food co-ops can be the crossroads of a whole series of social conditions and resolutions in a community: high prices circumvented by collective buying; hierarchy replaced by collective decision making; alienation by real change. In many ways, co-operatives can bring into focus the visions of alternatives to capitalism we've kept in our minds. In the modern corporate state, we're fortunate to have an expanding movement of people who are consciously coming together to work collectively. But sometimes co-ops are at once sophisticated in systems and production, and diluted in politics. More movement people need to examine this broad-based social model not only to feed themselves more economically, but to develop skills in building a decentralized alternative to capitalist production and distribution.

The many people participating in the new co-ops are beginning to control the quality and distribution of their food. Yet there seems to be little development of the political identity of co-ops. Large co-ops can have economic impact, but are usually politically ineffectual. Small co-ops can be anywhere politically and may drift in economic obscurity. In both cases, new input seems needed to gauge whether co-ops are duplicating oppressive forms, or leading to a liberating society.

People who participate in co-ops are dealing with a variety of problems that develop their communities politically. To accelerate this political growth and to ensure that grass roots control does not evaporate into political blandness, co-ops could use two things: a lot more people who are oriented towards political dialogue rather than consumerism, and information about where co-ops are at and what their potential is.

The Co-Op Handbook, written by a four person research and writing collective gives an extremely complete account of collective food distribution. It is

A PERSONAL VIEW OF INDIA'S CRISIS continued from page 10.

prosperity. The benefits from the state of emergency, namely, that inflation is controlled, crime is down, strikes are banned, discipline in factories and offices is improved, the trains run on time, all these touch primarily the lives of upper classes. No doubt they have lost some political privileges but they continue to have economic security as long as they don't step out of line or criticize the government. With a show of authoritarian force, and by making the threat to the sovereignty of the country an issue, the government has quickly lined up support from the influential sections of

an easily read reference/study work that should help co-op people and political activists understand the many aspects and styles of food co-ops. Profits above supporting the writing collective for its past work will be used for a national co-operative education fund.

The book tackles each major step of food co-op organizing and draws upon the experiences of many co-op activists to illustrate a variety of possible co-operative alternatives and ramifications. If a co-op intends to stay small, the Handbook people suggest it hook up with other small (and large) co-ops into federations. All will do better economically, remain autonomous, and develop politically as well. The Handbook also emphasizes how organizing urban food co-ops can be the first step in developing neighborhood unity in dealing with the oppression of landlords and politicians.

At times the organizing methods outline in the Handbook seem politically ambivalent. The writers seem to suggest that co-op organizers are most valuable as aloof manipulators, seldom connected to the communities they organize. In addition, the contradiction of a hierarchy of activists which often exists in co-ops should have been further examined.

There exist historical examples of people in self-sufficient co-operative/collective situations. An examination of the possible forms of co-operative exchange of labor or material would have been valuable in expanding the political vision of co-ops.

The book collective's ability to effectively communicate a vast amount of information to almost anyone involved to any degree in co-op work makes the book extremely valuable. Included are excellent sections on physical space, membership, logistics, finances and organizing, as well as the political aspects of nutrition, decision-making, and sexism. Most chapters deal quite specifically with real co-op problems, and close with reference sources. Appendices contain regional contacts for co-op federations, organic farming groups, and a national co-operative directory.

A theme that the Handbook collective develops is that co-ops should be open to everyone, and that the co-op premise, a member-owned and controlled operation, will become the catalyst for consciousness development as people see what they can accomplish together. If questions of political direction receive more immediate attention by co-op members and others, we all may better understand the non-hierarchical potential of the co-operative form.

—Stephe Prieston

the society. For the bottom 85%, or the overwhelming majority of the Indian people, nothing has really been changed by the proclamation of emergency. But the act of taking away the basic rights of citizens, who are not yet aware of their potential, cannot be condoned unless it is a temporary measure which is sincerely taken by the government for the purpose of accelerating the process of human development. Also, we must not forget that the dreadful efficiency of totalitarianism is always less in instilling new convictions, and more in destroying the capacity of the individual to form independent convictions.

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