

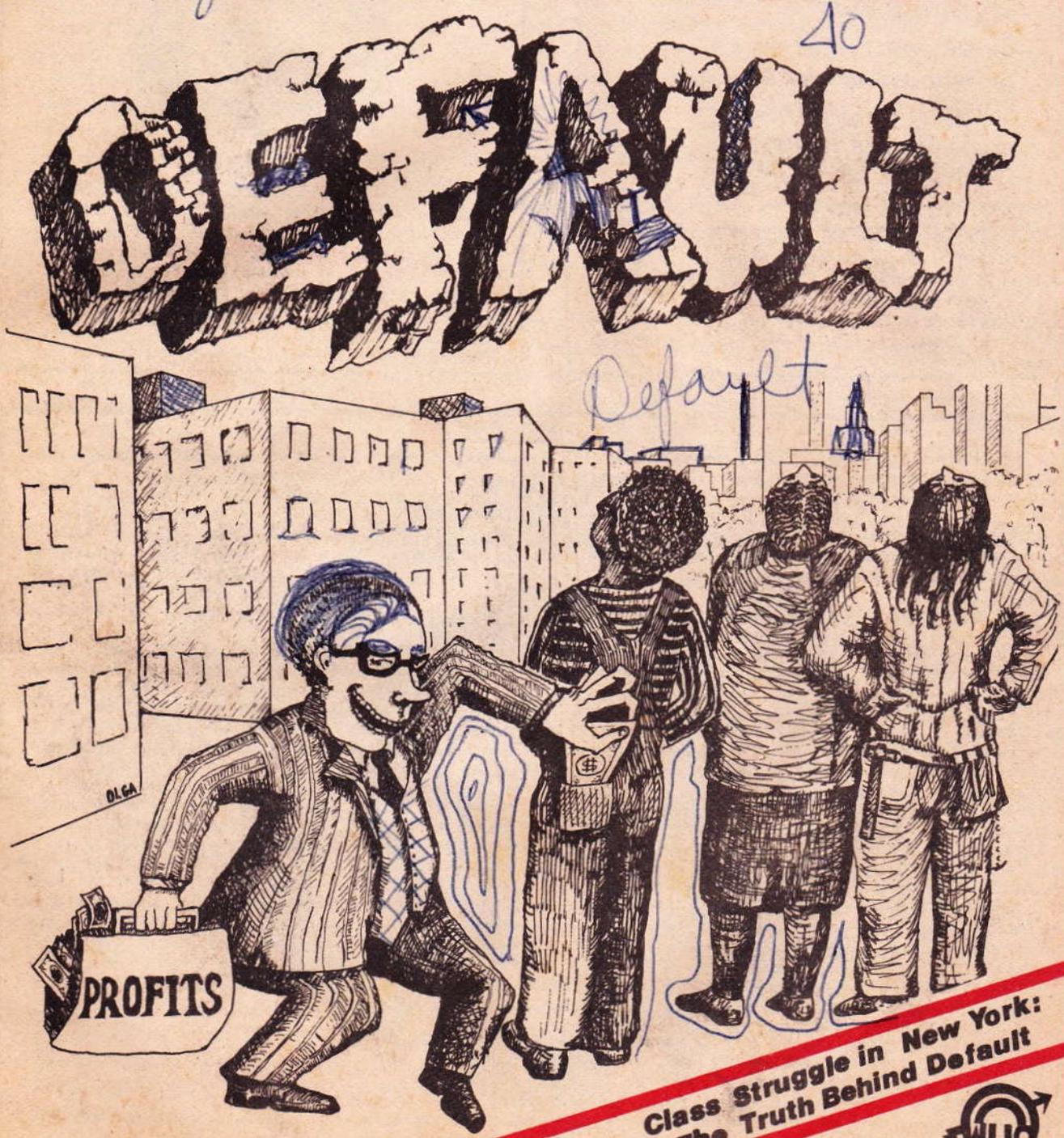
# OSAWATOMIE

WINTER 1975-76 NO. 4

John Brown Book Club reprint 35¢

WEATHER UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION

*Default Osawatomeie*



Class Struggle in New York:  
The Truth Behind Default



## CONTENTS

3 **WHERE WE STAND**

7 **CLASS STRUGGLE IN NY:**  
**The Truth Behind Default**

13 **FICTION: THE CLIFFS**

14 **FIREWORKS: John Brown**

16 **NO MORE BROKEN TREATIES**

18 **FIGHTING BACK**

24 **TOOLBOX: Surplus Value**

25 **YOUR JOB IS KILLING YOU**

28 **REVIEW: Labor Radical**

30 **EYE OF THE STORM:**  
**Armed Struggle & The SLA**



**OSAWATOMIE**

In 1856, at the Battle of Osawatimie, Kansas, John Brown and 30 other abolitionists, using guerrilla tactics, beat back an armed attack by 250 slavery supporters, who were trying to make Kansas a slave state. This was a turning point in the fight against slavery. For this, John Brown was given the name "Osawatimie" by his comrades.

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## WHO WE ARE

The Weather Underground Organization (WUO) is a revolutionary organization of communist women and men. We grew from the civil rights, anti-war and youth movements of the 1960's, in particular Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the group which called the first national protest against the Vietnam War in 1965, and became the largest radical youth organization of our time. The name of the organization comes from a line in "Subterranean Homesick Blues", a popular song in the last decade: "Don't look a weatherman to know which way the wind blows". In 1970 we made the decision to begin armed struggle and developed an underground organization. For five years the clandestine WUO has been hated and feared by the imperialist state.

In July 1974, we published Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism. To the best of our knowledge there are currently 30,000 copies of the book in circulation.

The Weather Underground Organization is responsible for over 25 armed actions against the enemy. Eight of these were bombings directed against imperialist war and in support of the people of Indochina. This includes the attack on the Capitol in 1971, on the Pentagon in 1972 and on the State Department in 1975. Ten actions were directed against the repressive apparatus: courts, prisons, police, and in support of Black liberation. This includes attacks on N.Y. City Police Headquarters in 1970 and the California Department of Corrections following the assassination of George Jackson at San Quentin in 1971. One was a bombing of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, an action which was part of the freedom struggle of women. One was a bombing of the New York City branch of the Banco de Ponce, in militant support of striking cement workers in Puerto Rico. These actions were carried out in harmony with the demonstrations, marches and political activity of millions of people. Together they have resulted in approximately \$10 million damage to the imperialists and a significant blow to their arrogance. This is a bee sting against such a powerful enemy, but a bee sting whose strength is multiplied many times by the fact that these actions represent the early stages of sustained armed struggle led by a political organization.

Osawatimie, the revolutionary voice of the WUO, is guided by a commitment to struggle, a determination to fight the enemy, the certainty that we will see revolution in our lifetime, and a spirit of love for the exploited people of the world. In order to build a successful struggle, the people need strong organization and a revolutionary party.

The program of the Weather Underground Organization is:

- US imperialism out of the Third World. Independence for Puerto Rico.
- Peace. Oppose imperialist war and US intervention.
- Fight racism. Build an anti-racist base within the working class. Support self-determination for oppressed peoples.
- Struggle against sexism and for the freedom of women.
- Organize the working class. Fight for socialism. Power to the people.

In a single sentence, the program means this: Mobilize the exploited and oppressed people to wage the class struggle against US imperialism, the common enemy.

# FORD TO CITY: DROP DEAD

## Vows He'll Veto Any Bail-Out



President Ford gives his message at Washington's National Press Club yesterday.

# ABE SWINGS AX, 8,000 MAY GO

Abe, Care



# CITY AVOIDS DEFAULT BY HOURS AS TEACHERS RELENT, BUY BONDS; FINANCIAL MARKETS DISRUPTED



\$150-MILLION PACT

Union Move Follows Meeting of Carey and Shanker

of Anxiety on Brink of Default

For three or four days, the city's financial situation has been a matter of anxiety on the part of investors and the public. The city's financial situation has been a matter of anxiety on the part of investors and the public. The city's financial situation has been a matter of anxiety on the part of investors and the public.

# Beame Sets 8374 More Job Cuts

New York Post  
FORWARDED BY THE GREAT CENTRAL MAILING HOUSE OF THE UNITED STATES  
NEW YORK, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1974  
15 CENTS

# CUNY MAY CLOSE SIX COLLEGES

# CAREY IN D.C. TO GET THE WORD FORD DRAFTS N.Y. BANKRUPT PLAN

WEATHER  
Forecast:  
Partly cloudy,  
with showers  
and snow  
possible.

### Default 'Summit' Set by MAC, Gov



The summit... will be held... to discuss... the city's financial situation...

November 20, 1975

## CLASS STRUGGLE IN NEW YORK: The Truth Behind Default

A spectre is haunting the streets of New York, the spectre of default. Capitalist spokesmen in government and the media are whipping up hysteria: if the city defaults, they say, the subways may stop, the lights may dim, the sky may fall. But default is nothing more or less than the city's failure to pay its debts to the banks when those debts fall due. The banks will demand their money and try to squeeze it out of the people. But this is what they are already doing ruthlessly in the name of averting default. Default is strictly a business arrangement between the bankers and the government. The crisis, the squeeze on the people, is a life-and-death fight between the working class and the bankers and government. Fear of default has been drummed up to convince New Yorkers to accept any attacks on their living conditions. Mayor Beame announces 8000 more layoffs of city workers, closes 28 daycare centers and three senior citizens' centers and then appears triumphantly at a rally called to "save New York." The New York Times calls David Rockefeller a "great friend of New York" for opposing default. Whose friend? Not ours.

When Ford attacked New York City in a vicious speech, the Daily News headlined: "Ford to NYC; DROP DEAD." But Ford was not telling the bankers to drop dead: he assured them that even with a default their loans would be paid back in full. This happened in the 1930s when 48 cities with populations over 25,000 defaulted, including Ford's hometown of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Outside agencies took over the cities' finances, slashed wages and services and repaid the banks in full by 1938. In New York this was the infamous, secretly concluded Bankers' Agreement. This scam has been run before. Default is a con game run by the world's biggest con artists -- the US ruling class.

Ford and the bankers, Beame and the New York Times occasionally advocate different tactics but they completely agree that the poor must be forced to pay the cost. If Ford gives aid to the city, as appears likely, it will be because Beame and Carey have twisted the knife deep into the working class. From New York to San Juan, from Seattle to Detroit to Boston, the capitalists are trying to force the workers to bear the burden of this depression. Their program is massive layoffs, wage freezes, cutbacks in social services, more taxes on poor and working people. Their goal is to climb out of the crisis on the backs of the working class.

The government and media make this appear like the only choice. They are spending millions of dollars to convince the working class that less food, less

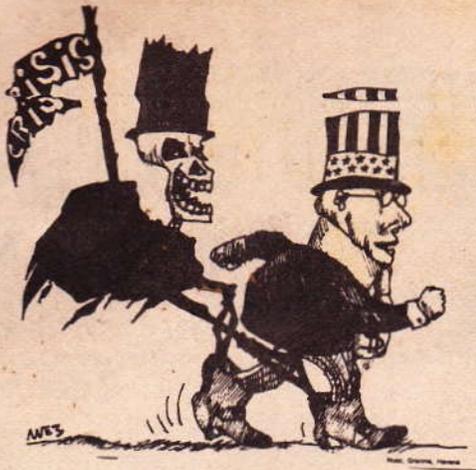
take-home pay, less education is in their own interests. Nowhere have the capitalists hinted that they might take home less profit. Never has Rockefeller suggested taxing his own Chase Manhattan Bank in order to balance New York's budget. The rulers' great fear is that the people will rise up and exact a price for these policies. Business Week, a good barometer of ruling-class opinion, puts this crudely: "If sanitation workers in Bedford-Stuyvesant do not get paid, they will drive their trucks right into the Citibank branch in that deteriorating neighborhood." This fear is not unfounded. Already, despite betrayals by union leaders, rank-and-file groups of workers are protesting layoffs. Third World groups are fighting the cutbacks which are devastating their communities. Students at the City University are staging sit-ins to save their schools. Hospital workers are beginning to join with poor and Third World communities to fight against the closing of city hospitals. This is the beginning of a wave of intense struggle which will sweep New York.



**New York Post**  
NEW YORK, MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1975  
 28 Cents



**Final Job Cuts  
May Total 50,000**



GRANMA/HAVONA

### THE CAUSES OF THE CRISIS

"The US economy stands atop a mountain of debt \$2.5 trillion high -- a mountain built of all the cars and houses, all the factories and machines that have made this the biggest, richest economy in the history of the world. The US is the Debt Economy without peer. It has the biggest lenders, the biggest borrowers, the most sophisticated financial system. The numbers are so vast that they simply numb the mind: \$1 trillion in corporate debt, \$600 billion in mortgage debt, \$200 billion in state and local government debt, \$200 billion in consumer debt, \$500 billion in US government debt. To fuel nearly three decades of postwar economic boom at home and export it abroad, this nation has borrowed an average of \$200 million a day, each and every day, since the close of World War II."

Business Week  
October 12, 1974

The chickens are coming home to roost for US imperialism. New York is the tip of an iceberg of crisis. Far from being the result of misguided policies of a few elected officials, New York's mess has its roots in the general nature of capitalism and in the particulars of this economic crisis.

Capitalism is an irrational system

wracked by internal contradictions which it cannot resolve. Among these are its built-in tendency to stagnate which has led to severe downturns in the US economy every ten years or so since capitalism began. The capitalists have countered with so-called "Keynesian economics" -- tremendous spending for war, pump-priming the economy through imperialist expansion, deficit spending (borrowing) and constant government jiggling with the economy. But these policies have only created new crises without ending the old ones. Look at the Vietnam War: \$200 billion was spent on napalm, anti-personnel weapons, B-52s and tiger cages. This spending helped kick off the present crisis. Lyndon Johnson decided in 1965 to go for broke and finance the war through deficit spending rather than raise taxes and risk even greater domestic rebellions. Not only did this increase inflation and lead to a monetary crisis but the US lost the war -- a setback which has reversed the tide of US expansion and generated a long-range crisis in the US economy.

The present situation is the worst since the Great Depression. This time the downturn is accompanied by soaring prices and astronomical debt. Between July 1974 and June 1975 25,000 corporations went bankrupt. Five of the ten largest bankruptcies ever occurred in the last year, capped by the collapse of the W.T. Grant retail store chain, the second largest US business failure in history (after the Penn Central Railroad collapse in 1970). Eleven banks have gone under between January and October of 1975, and last year saw the two largest bank failures ever in the US (Franklin National in New York and US National in San Diego). The big banks are not immune to this crisis. The crisis is real and long-term and will inevitably affect their ability to keep increasing their precious rates of profit. But the banking giants are taking full advantage of the crisis to swallow up the smaller banks and twist the knife in deeper into the working class to reap great profits. Citicorp (the parent corporation of First National City Bank), second largest in the country, had a record profit increase of 23% in 1974, making it the most profitable bank in the world.

Far from being the result of misguided policies of a few elected officials, New York's mess has its roots in the general nature of capitalism and in the particulars of this economic crisis.

Chemical Bank enjoyed a 32% profit rise. J.P. Morgan and Co. was up 24%.

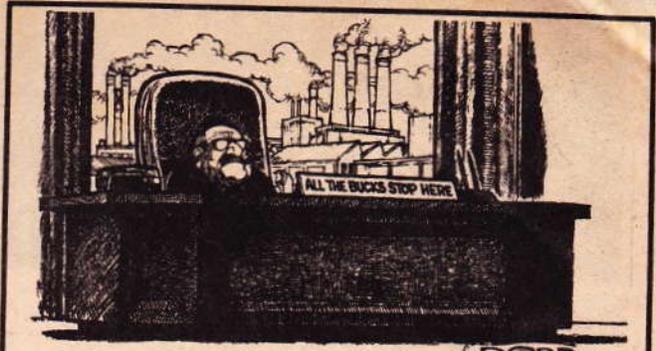
As the economic crisis worsens and some corporations are unable to repay bank loans, the banks have put the squeeze on state, city and local governments. Municipal bonds are tax-exempt and backed up by city taxes whose collection is enforced by law. This is the reason why \$1.25 billion of the major New York banks' \$9.2 billion in outstanding loans are in New York City notes and bonds. 28.7% of their capital is in city and state notes. In 1974 alone bank profits from New York City bonds amounted to half a billion dollars.

When the bankers now turn around and charge the people of New York with being spendthrifts, they are rewriting history and disguising the tremendous profits they have made from the city's spending.

Is New York out of money? Go to the corner of 5th Avenue and 57th Street and decide for yourself. It is one of the richest cities in the world. New York is the Rome of the US empire, the financial capital of imperialism. It is the commercial center of the US, the hub of the media and publishing industries. One hundred of the top 500 corporations are based here.

These corporations have profited for years off the labor of workers who come to New York searching for jobs and a way to survive. From Europe at the turn of the century, from the Black Belt in the South after World Wars I and II, from Puerto Rico and the rest of Latin America today, low-paid workers have come and built and maintained the city and provided its culture, its heart and its soul. During the 60s the people fought militantly for integration and community control of education, open admissions to city universities and decent welfare standards. City workers organized and fought for higher wages and humane work conditions. These were all gains won through struggle. Now the capitalists are telling these people, "The crisis is your fault. The small gains you won will have to go. This is the only way to avert default." For the capitalists this is the way out. But we say that the banks and the corporations should pay for their own crisis.

We will have to force them to do this. Over years of running the city and getting rich off it, they have placed the burden of maintaining it on the workers. The sales tax, which hits poor and working people the hardest, has soared up, but the corporations have been granted tax breaks and much of New York's richest real estate has been left untaxed. 35% of all property in New York City is tax-exempt, including that of the biggest property-owners like the Catholic Church, Columbia University and the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. Quasi-government agencies known as Auth-



ROBB

FAT PENSIONS?

DC 37, AFSCME, the union which represents 110,000 city employees, says that the average pension in the union is \$3,900 per year. With Social Security, that might be brought up to \$6,000. Let President Ford or Treasury Secretary William Simon try to live on that.

FAT PROFITS!

The following shows the increase in bank profits for 1974 over 1973.

First National City	up 23%
Chemical Bank	up 32%
J.P. Morgan and Co.	up 24%
Manufacturers Hanover Trust	up 26%

cities are also tax-exempt although they reap huge profits for the banks and other large investors. The Port Authority is a case in point: it owns the single largest piece of untaxed real estate, the World Trade Center, which would bring in \$40 million per year if taxed. It also owns city bridges and tunnels which charge \$1.50 for cars. This money does not go back to the city but is reinvested in the authority.

Real estate is systematically under-assessed in New York. This is the government's strategy to attract business to the city. Once assessed, the property owners may still appeal for a reduction. Last year such reductions amounted to \$21 million. Morgan Guaranty Trust got a \$250,000 assessment reduction on its Wall Street building; the New York Stock Exchange got a \$200,000 reduction. Macy's Department Store has not been reassessed since the 1930s.

New York's slum landlords also make a killing. They collect rents and don't pay taxes while letting their buildings run down. Eventually the city takes over the buildings for non-payment of taxes by which time the properties are burnt-out shells. The city is currently owed \$502 million in delinquent property taxes from the last three years. Since the city leaders are unwilling to raise taxes on the big corporations to make up for the loss in revenue, they turned to massive borrowing from the banks to meet the city expenses.

All pretense of democratic government was tossed away as the iron grip of the ruling class tightened, and the non-elected Rohatyn and non-elected Big MAC took over the running of the city's finances.

When the nationwide recession of 1969-70 hit, New York was devastated. The flight of business from the city which had been going on since World War II accelerated. Since June 1969 over 502,000 jobs have been lost, 13% of all the jobs in NY in 1969. In 1970, Nixon intensified the crisis by cutting back on federal aid. Ford has continued this with new reductions in the food stamp program and an end to federal rent subsidies for welfare recipients.

In 1969 the city began to rely more and more heavily on short-term notes (loans to be repaid in a year) in order to meet its bills. Soon it was borrowing to repay previous debts and the volume of short-term debt hit \$4 billion. During this time, the banks were raising interest rates to guarantee high profits in an inflationary period. New York was charged especially high rates: in July 1974 NY was told to pay 7.9% on a bond issue while other cities were being charged around 5%. This demand came from the same bankers who are now bemoaning New York's financial plight. The banks knew that their loans were getting riskier and raised the interest rates to insure fast profits. The result is that the city's repayment of interest and principal on the loans jumped from \$470 million in 1964 to \$1.8 billion today. This is 1/6 of the city budget! \$1.8 billion which could go to schools, housing, parks, daycare -- is going instead straight into the bankers' vaults. The banks rode New York to the brink of disaster and then pulled up short, demanding a guarantee on their loans.

#### TAKEOVER

In March, the New York crisis leapt onto the front pages when the banks refused to buy \$500 million in short-term notes. While the city was finally able to get a loan, the big banks issued a stern warning that harsh measures had to be taken to balance the city budget.

On June 10th, the state legislature created the Municipal Assistance Corporation, appropriately dubbed Big MAC by New Yorkers. In Governor Carey's words, "Very decisive measures were called for. Across the board cuts, tighter management and fiscal responsibility are the only solutions to the crisis." Big MAC's most powerful members are Felix Rohatyn, a partner in the Lazard-Freres investment banking firm, a board member of ITT and the architect of the Lockheed bailout in 1970; and William Ellinghaus, the president of New York Telephone. Big MAC was given the job of overseeing the city budget and making decisions about nearly all the city's financial operations. Big MAC was empowered to sell \$3 billion in long-term bonds to meet the city's debts through the end of 1975. These bonds would pay their owners 11% a year in interest and the city guaranteed that this money would come from its sales and stock transfer tax. The city was, in effect, handed over to the naked control of the banks. Mayor Beame and all the other elected New York City officials were thus stripped of power. Beame protested meekly but was whipped into line in a series of meetings with David Rockefeller and the heads of the Citibank and Morgan Guaranty Trust. All pretense of democratic government was tossed away as the iron grip of the ruling class tightened and the non-elected Rohatyn and non-elected Big MAC took over the running of the city's finances.

But the banks demanded still more, holding out for a complete restructuring of city services and financing. The state set up a new Emergency Financial Control Board to supercede Big MAC. Sitting on the board are the Governor and the State Controller, the Mayor and the City Controller, Ellinghaus from New York Telephone, David Margolis, the president of Colt Industries, and Albert Casey, the president of American Airlines.



They have total power over the city budget and have enforced the harshest cuts so far:

-- Layoffs of city workers have already reached 39,000 with the total likely to hit over 50,000 by the year's end. Many of these workers are Black and Puerto Rican. For example almost 70% of the Third World teachers were laid off last June.

-- Garbage collection has been reduced by 1/2 in some neighborhoods, creating a growing health hazard.

-- Eight fire companies have been closed, mainly in Black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods. In October, two people died in a South Bronx fire when fire-trucks arrived late. The firehouse in the neighborhood had been shut down by the budget cuts.

-- One hospital has already been shut, and many have been forced to reduce their services and shorten emergency room hours. Several others will close down soon. Fifty outpatient clinics have been shut, eliminating family planning, baby health, venereal disease and dental services.

-- Twenty schools are closing and plans to build more than a dozen new schools have been shelved. One-fifth of classroom teachers have been laid off. The school day has also been shortened.

-- In Queens, cutbacks in the library budget will mean six closings. The closing branches are located in Black and Puerto Rican neighborhoods.

-- City employees have had wage increases nullified, and those making over \$14,000 per year have been forced to accept a three-year wage freeze.

-- The City University budget has been cut by \$157 million. Open admissions, one of the great gains of the student struggles of the 60s, is being threatened.

-- Transit fares increased from 35¢ to 50¢ with another 10¢ increase expected in a year. Far fewer people can afford the subways. The number of passengers has dropped drastically.

-- The capital budget, which funds construction of schools, sewers, hospitals, mass transit, etc. has been reduced by \$390 million. This means fewer construction jobs, no new water tunnel, no new street lighting projects, a halt to construction of two new mass transit lines.

-- There will be no new construction of low and middle-income housing. This will result in a loss of 72,000 planned units over the next three years.

-- The welfare appropriation will be frozen at its present level for at least the next three years. Several thousand welfare workers have been laid off and many clients will be cut as "ineligible".

These cuts have been pushed through in the name of averting default. But now the bankers say that even these cuts have not solved the problem. More stringent measures and federal aid are required.

They have appealed to the federal government to back NYC debts, hoping for a guarantee that loans to NYC will be repaid out of federal funds. As part of this appeal, Carey, Beame and Robatyn have talked about laying off 30,000 more workers and are now appropriating \$3.7 billion of union pension funds to buy Big NYC bonds. These are the vultures who the NY Times calls the "friends of New York."

OLD PEOPLE IN STRUGGLE

On October 22, after Beame had threatened to close 43 senior citizens' centers, 12,000 old people marched on City Hall. The demonstrators were militant and spirited and carried banners saying, "Don't try to bury us, We're not dead yet," and "Bail out the elderly, not Lockheed."

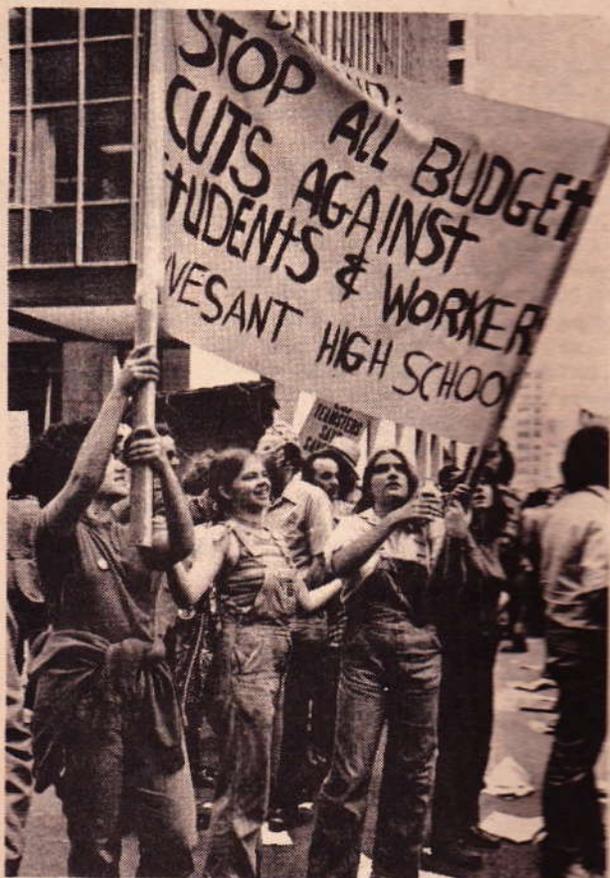
The demonstration was organized on short notice and involved people from all parts of the city. Speakers denounced the banks and expressed solidarity with laid-off workers and others hit by the cutbacks. On November 15, Beame announced that three senior citizens' centers would be closed. In attacking the elderly, Beame is playing with fire.



The whole time Ford refused to aid the city he made sure to cushion the blow for bankers who were worried about not being paid off. The Ford default plan was always backed with a Federal Reserve Bank promise to "discount" the banks' bad municipal debts at a better rate than they could be sold on the present market. When he read this plan, Walter Wriston, chairman of Citicorp, said, "We can live with that." Ford also called in the heads of New York's police and fire unions to assure them that they would keep their jobs if they kept order after default. These arch-racists and reactionaries were overjoyed and promised their full support.

Ford's plan is not much different from any of the bills in Congress to save New York. All involve more of the same -- layoffs, cutbacks, squeeze -- only now under federal control. Ford has been desperately covering his right flank, looking over his shoulder at Ronald Reagan, posing as the country boy from Grand Rapids slugging it out with the spendthrifts from New York, using the situation to his political advantage in the upcoming election year. Underneath his pose is an ugly appeal to racism and anti-semitism and an attempt to turn the working class outside New York away from their class brothers and sisters in the city.

Default is strictly a business arrangement between the bankers and the government. The crisis, the squeeze on the people, is a life-and-death fight between the working class and the bankers and government.



fund into the bankers' hands. John De Lury of the Sanitation Union compromised away the power of the Sanitmens' wildcat. These actions have exposed the union bureaucrats as sell-outs. For those who care to see, these actions have revealed once again their racism. A swelling movement can be built among the rank-and-file for strong action against the banks and for linking the demands of city workers with those of parents, old people, welfare recipients and community groups. Whether these connections are fought for will determine the effectiveness of the coming struggle.

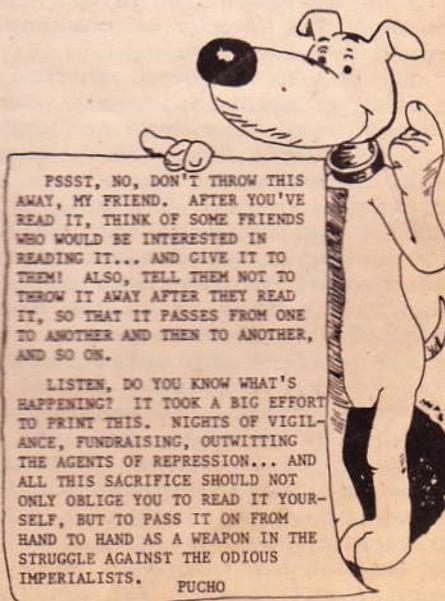
The rulers will squeeze all they can unless the fight back grows. It was Frederick Douglass who said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand." Sit-ins, demonstrations, rank-and-file militancy, class solidarity are our historical weapons and we must use them now. Voluntary days off, payless Fridays, and other solutions, while generous in spirit, are exactly what the bosses want. While the media spreads confusion, organizers have to clear the air, break through all false consciousness and mobilize the fight.

A community demonstration in Chelsea this Fall cut through the lies and nailed the real issue when 200 marchers took to the streets, chanting:

Hey, hey, what do you say?  
Why not make the bankers pay?

#### CONCLUSION

The opening blows have been struck in the New York City war. The rulers have hit hard, causing great misery. The people are regrouping, striking back in many creative ways, searching for unity and strength. Municipal workers are under attack. The union's leadership has already knuckled under. The city is gambling on its ability to divide the higher-paid workers with seniority from the lower-paid, white from Black and Puerto Rican. The union leadership has been eager to oblige. Victor Gotbaum of AFSCME sold out the Black and Puerto Rican members by refusing to fight against the layoffs. Albert Shanker of the United Federation of Teachers did the same in the teachers' strike by demanding the rehiring of a few teachers while letting go the much larger number of Black and Puerto Rican teachers. He went a step further when he delivered the union's pension



## BERKELEY TEACHERS STRIKE

Last April teachers in Berkeley reached agreement on a new contract with the Berkeley Board of Education. Facing an anticipated \$2 million deficit in the Board's budget, the teachers agreed to a contract with no increase in wages and benefits, but with a promise from the Board for no layoffs and a commitment to maintain and upgrade special programs like ethnic studies and alternative schools. Then in June the School Board "discovered" the deficit would reach \$4 million and it called on the teachers to renegotiate the contract. When the teachers refused, the Board, using emergency powers, unilaterally cut teachers' wages 2½%, eliminated certain medical benefits, and dramatically reduced school programs and services such as nurse and library services. No negotiations were held over the summer, and on September 2, the day before school opened, the teachers voted 707 to 123 to strike to restore the April agreement.

Berkeley's schools were integrated without violence 5 years ago, and are considered a model integrated school system. But racism still pervades the schools. Within integrated schools, tracking begins at an early age. In many early grades there are separate reading groups for Black and white kids. In the high schools the advanced math and English classes are almost 100% white. Sometimes teachers pass Third World students on to the next grade without having taught them the material, thereby institutionalizing a system of non-education. For these reasons there is a lot of mistrust between Black and other Third World parents and the teachers; parents were not inclined to support the teachers' demands. In addition, many Third World parents were afraid that if the teachers won, the money to pay their wages would come from the special school programs they had struggled for. They also feared that if the board had to lay off teachers after the strike, it would be the more recently hired Third World teachers.

The teachers' leadership was initially divided over the importance of organizing support in the community, and as a result they did very little. The School Board, on the other hand, sent letters to parents and held numerous parent and community meetings over the summer where they described the finan-

cial crisis as irresolvable and attacked the teachers for irresponsibility and not caring about the children. The first day of school was chaos as many parents, convinced that the strike was against their interests, brought their kids to schools which were surrounded by picket lines and staffed by non-union "teachers" hired by the Board at \$50 to \$55 per day.

### WHO IS ALBERT SHANKER?

Albert Shanker is an enemy of the people, a class collaborator posing as a leader of working people. He is vice president of the AFL-CIO, close ally and likely successor to George Meany. Shanker wields his powerful position as head of the United Federation of Teachers to:

-- Support the war in Vietnam. Teachers were purged from his "unity caucus" in the American Federation of Teachers for publicly demanding that the AFT take a position against the Vietnam War.

-- Steer the United Federation of Teachers toward virulent anti-communism to mobilize labor support for US foreign policy and red-baiting.

-- Support unlimited arms to Israel, even if it means a war in the Middle East, and whip up terror and hatred of Arab peoples among New York's Jews.

-- Attack community control of schools by New York's Black and Puerto Rican communities. Shanker became a national figure as the leader of a racist teachers' strike in 1968 which Black parents called a strike against their children. Under cover of teachers' rights and job security he organized whites in New York against the Black community.

-- Sell out the teachers. In September's New York teachers' strike Shanker gladly accepted the layoffs of 70% of the Black and Puerto Rican teachers, reaching a sweetheart settlement with the Board of Education which gave nothing at all to the schoolchildren or any but the highest-paid teachers.

Berkeley Teacher



ON STRIKE!

During the next few days some parents and teachers met and began to organize community support for the strike. An independent Community Desk was set up in the strike headquarters. Over the next days and weeks meetings were held throughout Berkeley, in homes and churches, where parents and radical teachers urged support for the demands -- no cuts in wages or educational programs -- and talked about building a movement of parents and teachers to fight against racism and for decent education.

One important victory was the establishment of alternative site education classes for the children of working parents who otherwise would have had to break the strike and take their kids to school. These classes, held in the parks, were initially opposed by many in the strike leadership as a drain on the energy of strikers who should be on the picket lines, but the organizers were able to convince teachers to participate. This clear demonstration by some teachers of support for the parents helped build community support for the strike. After two weeks less than 2000 of Berkeley's 14,000 public school students were still crossing the picket lines into school.

Classified workers (the mainly Third World bus drivers, cafeteria and custodial workers) split 50-50 over the strike, voting by a small margin not to strike themselves. Although the Board had also cut their wages over the summer, they feared their jobs would be threatened if the Board had to meet the teachers' demands. "They'll never fire the teachers," said one janitor, "but I can be replaced easily." This feeling reflected their experience of the year before, when their strike against the Board was ignored and their picket line crossed by the teachers. This year, because the classified workers stayed on the job, the school board was able to keep the schools open. This was a defeat for the teachers and resulted directly from their lack of solidarity the year before.

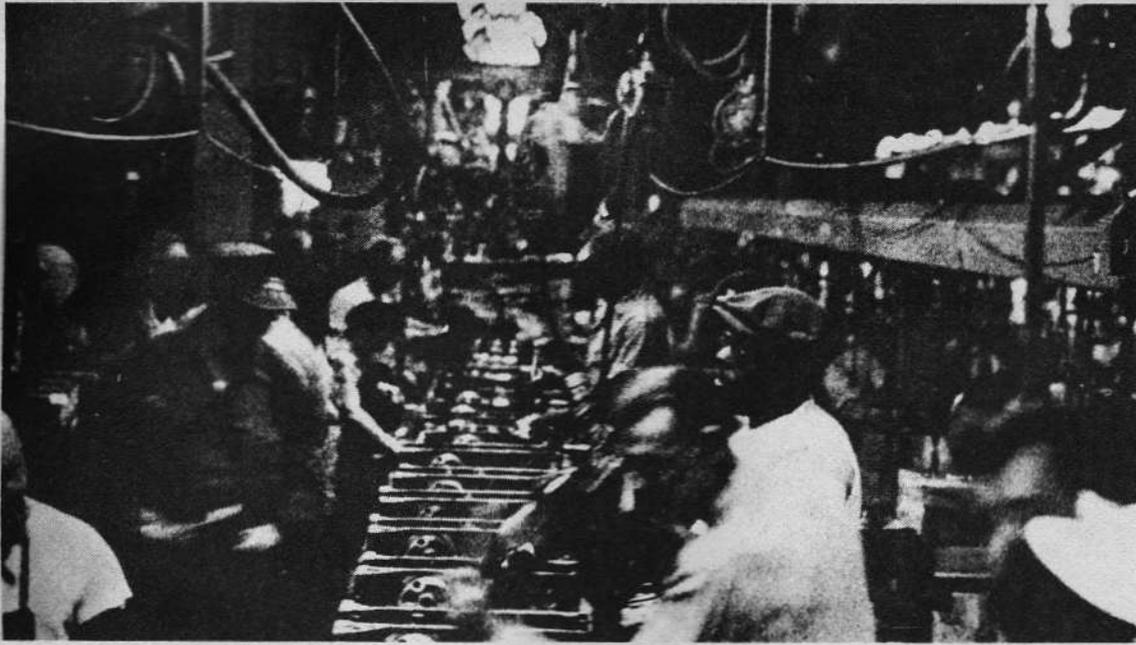
The struggle against racism was never openly engaged during the strike, but it played a key role as the strike progressed. Early on, some teachers proposed that the Board raise the funds to make up the 24% wage cut by eliminating the ethnic studies program. After protest from parents and many teachers this proposal was withdrawn. And late in September, when Albert Shanker was visiting the Bay Area, the Berkeley Federation of Teachers decided not to invite him to speak because many opposed him and knew his reputation as a notorious racist would cost them support in the community.

After a month, although there was still much mistrust of the strike, support for the teachers had grown among classified workers and in the Berkeley community. In early October, after 33 days on the picket lines, the teachers finally went back to work, while a mediation board evaluates the Board's finances and prepares recommendations. The teachers are guaranteed there will be no wage cut, and they say they will strike again if any important programs are eliminated.

A Third World teachers' caucus was formed during the strike and may continue to meet. Radical forces among the teachers gained strength as everyone saw the need for unity with other workers, parents and the community. And through forums and other ongoing groups parents are continuing to deepen their role in the educational system in Berkeley.

For teachers the struggle against racism remains critical. The real progress made in building unity among parents and teachers during the strike will be lost if the struggle for education is not continued. Unless racism in the schools and the community is consciously fought and teachers actively make the struggle and demands of other workers in the school system their own, unity in the struggle will not be possible.





ROBERT FRANK, THE AMERICANS

## **YOUR JOB IS KILLING YOU!**

"You're going to die -- and your job is what's killing you!" This is the bitter truth for people working in the US. The big industries scrambling for profit do their best to keep this fact hidden. But the rules and risks on the job are set by the company.

Unsafe working conditions, speed-ups, cut corners lead to industrial accidents in mines and forests where workers bring out raw materials, in factories and construction where goods are manufactured. Every working day, 65 people are killed, 8500 are disabled, and 27,000 injured in industrial accidents.

In addition, over 100,000 people die annually from job-related diseases ranging from byssinosis in textile workers to pesticide poisoning in farmworkers -- a condition that has recently placed farm labor as the second most hazardous job category in the US.

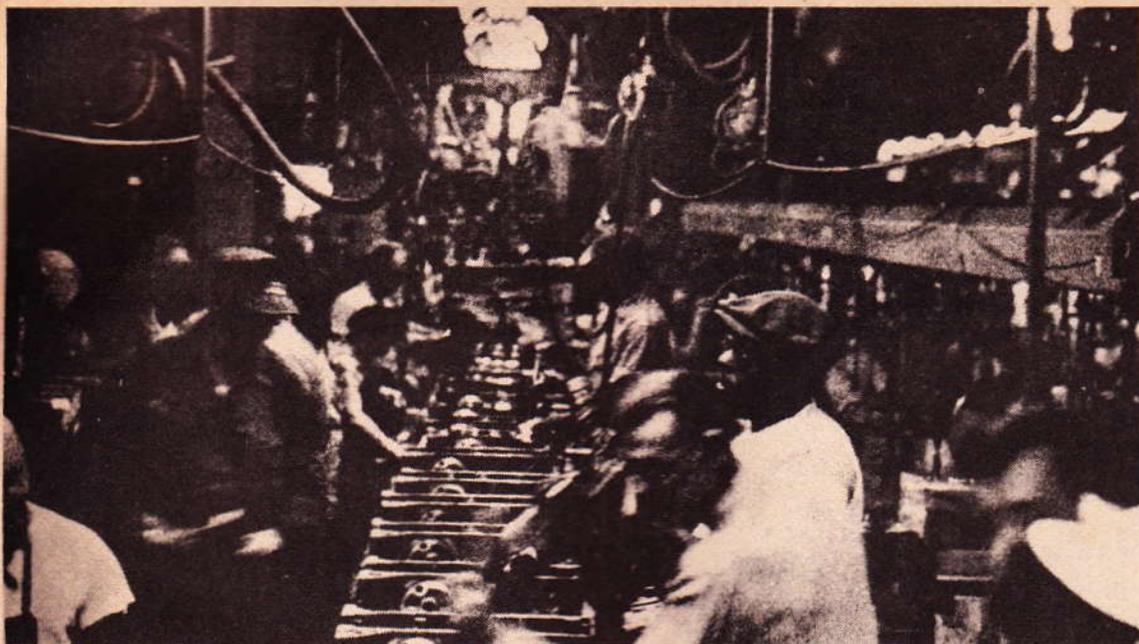
But beyond this, there are countless other health hazards which amount to slow violence against working people.



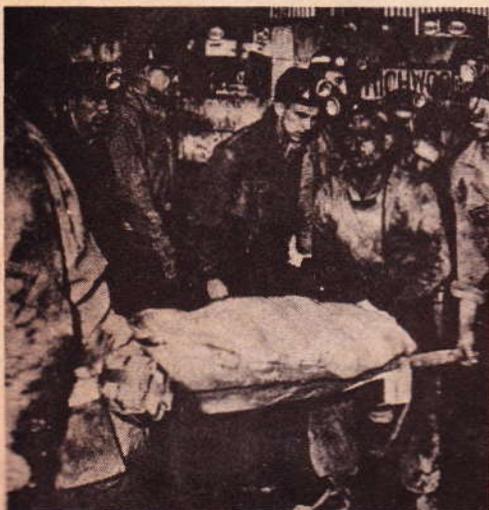
SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE



SWEATSHOPS IN THE SUN



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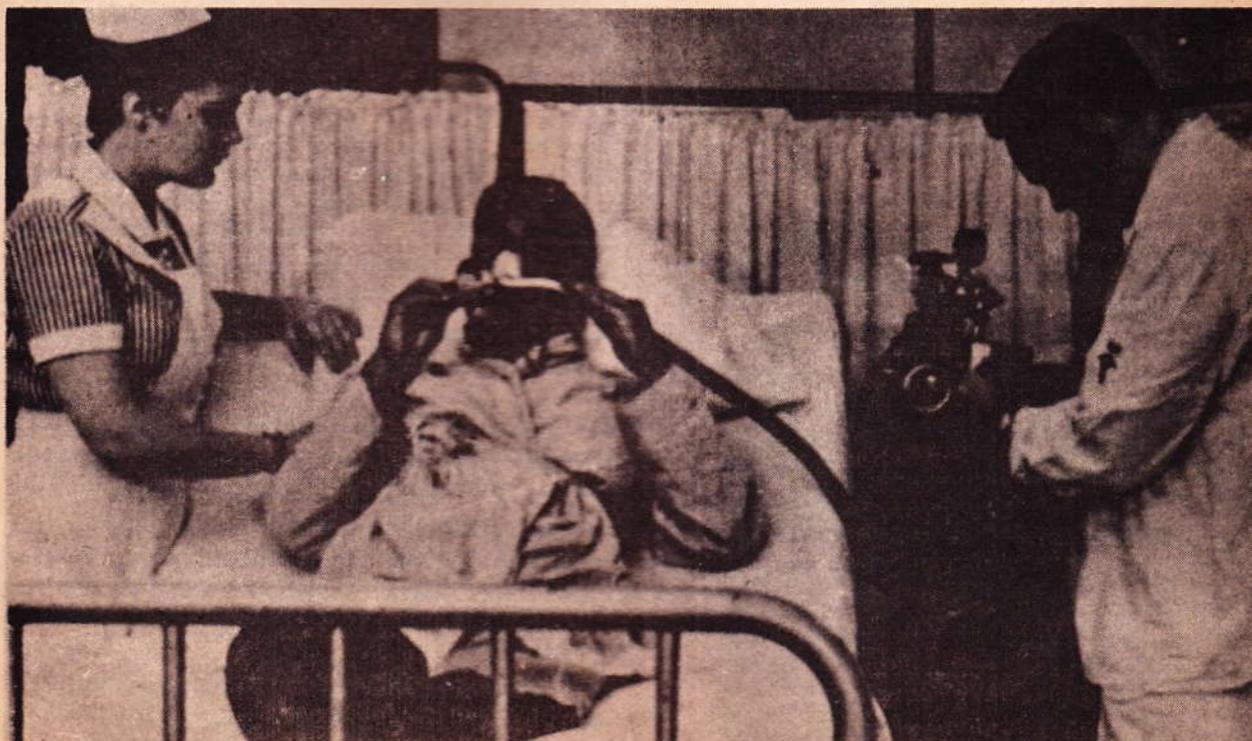
COUNTRY WOMEN

A painful gripping in the chest, unable to breathe. "I could inhale short breaths, but I couldn't exhale. I was just gasping and gulping air."

This is the experience of a Chicago meat-wrapper, brought on by conditions of work. Meat in supermarkets is wrapped in polyvinyl chloride (PVC) which is cut with a hot wire to speed up the work. The hot wire and hot-pad sealer decompose the PVC into dangerous components, including particles of vinyl chloride (which causes cancer) and gases of carbon monoxide, hydrochloric acid, and phosgene (banned as a poisonous gas in World War I).

The meatwrappers are the lowest rank of the meatcutters in the supermarkets, and are given the least consideration in union matters. The majority of meatwrappers are women.

Doctors in the emergency room at Harbor General Hospital in Torrance, Cal., noted three cases of women who sought help for asthma conditions that appeared only during hours they worked wrapping meat. They published their observations and meatwrappers around the country recognized the symptoms. They began to document and add up the evidence.





The meatwrappers are demanding a work situation oriented to human beings -- better ventilation, different materials for wrapping.

Polyvinyl chloride producers like Borden and Goodyear have been on the spot because of the high amount of liver cancer caused by vinyl chloride in employees and neighbors of PVC plants.

They are also under attack from consumers because vinyl chloride seeps into food packaged in PVC plastic.

These companies are putting up millions of dollars for research to argue that PVC does not harm meatwrappers.



From the capitalist point of view, as Karl Marx pointed out, "a quick succession of unhealthy and short-lived generations will keep the labor market as well supplied as a series of vigorous and long-lived generations."