

# Bulletin

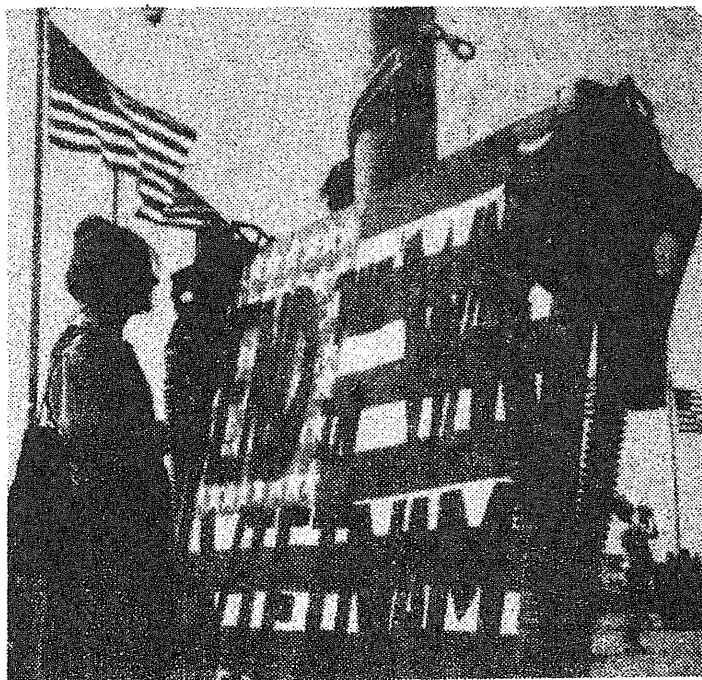
OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM

Vol. 2, No. 8

May 3, 1965

10 Cents

## AFTER THE MARCH



The buses have gone home carrying 20,000 students back to their campuses. LBJ has seen fit to return to the White House after being assured that the students had left. Before returning LBJ reiterated that there was to be no cessation in the bombings of North Vietnam -- not even a momentary pause. Such is the contemptuous way Johnson responded to a protest which undoubtedly reflected the true sentiments of millions of Americans.

It is now incumbent upon all participants in the April 17th March on Washington, all opponents of American imperialist policies in South East Asia and elsewhere, to take stock of the demonstration. What was its significance? How effective was its program and leadership? And, most important of all -- where do we go from here?

Clearly the demonstration was of great significance as a reflection of the deep concern of thousands of young people with the course of American foreign policy. That the United States

would unilaterally launch what is in effect an aggressive war against North Vietnam and even go so far as to use poison gases has unmasked the real character of the international policy of the ruling circles of this country for all to see.

The demonstration was in fact more than this. It was also a reflection of the growing radicalism of a new generation of American students. This was no purely liberal demonstration. The overwhelming mass of the participants were radical in their outlook. Most have had little or no connection with the existing socialist organizations--but they are curious, inquisitive, groping for radical answers to a problem they realize cannot be solved by voting for LBJ as perhaps many of them thought it could last Fall.

While the demonstration was largely a student one, there were other, minor but significant, forces present. Most important was the participation of Negro activists from the civil rights battle fronts in the South. It was an impressive sight to see these young Negroes in their overall uniforms who had only a day or two earlier been in Mississippi or Alabama. That these militants saw a connection between their own struggles in the South and the battle against U.S. imperialism in Asia is a sign of a broadening of political outlook, of the beginning of the development of a truly radical understanding.

Trade union participation was sadly very weak. This is another sign of the general weakness of American radicalism which for years now has neglected work among the working class. But still there were workers there--not only individual older radical workers, but small contingents from District 65 and Local 1199 of the Hospital workers.

#### A Strange Unreality

All in all there was a strange unreality to the entire demonstration. Thousands of young people went to the effort and expense to travel hundreds of miles to Washington to demonstrate about something that concerned them deeply. But when they got to Washington the affair almost took on the character of a picnic. People strolled around in the warm weather chatting with each other; hardly any singing or chanting was heard on the picket line in front of the White House; even the Nazis and fascists who demonstrated didn't seem to upset people; the speakers received only half-hearted applause; the march up the mall to the capitol was more of a stroll than anything else and once the capitol was reached people just turned around and went back to their buses; only a small number could be interested in a sit-in in front of the White House.

Underlying this paradoxical situation was the political ambiguity of the entire affair--an ambiguity which the leadership did its best to perpetuate. On the one hand the March called clearly for the withdrawal of American troops from Vietnam. In line with this many of the participants in

the March viewed their participation as a gesture of solidarity with the National Liberation Front and its struggle against American imperialist domination of Southeast Asia. To this extent the demonstration was a radical demonstration against the policies of the U.S. ruling class and the class itself.

On the other hand were the slogans calling for unconditional negotiation and some even urging support to Johnson's hypocritical statement on negotiations. This aspect of the demonstration was strengthened especially by the speakers at the main rally. Both I.F. Stone and Senator Gruening of Alaska revealed themselves to be no more than advisors to the American State Department. Their theme was that negotiations and the formation of some kind of neutralist coalition government in South Vietnam were the most effective ways of preserving U.S. domination over South East Asia. Thus side by side marched those who asked only that the United States dominate South East Asia in a less openly bloody way and those who opposed the domination altogether. No wonder the demonstration lacked any real direction. No wonder Johnson could treat it with such contempt.

The role of the SDS leadership in relation to this contradiction is important to assess for SDS has emerged from this demonstration as an important student organization with the possibility open to it of real leadership of American radical students if it has a clear program around which to organize students. Clearly the SDS leadership itself tended toward the more militant stand of all-out opposition to American imperialism. But SDS wanted to have its "cake and" to eat it as well. They wanted support from the more "respectable" liberal "advisors" to LBJ like Gruening and Morse and their allies in the liberal and radical movements. So they compromised with these liberal forces and thus blunted the political impact of the demonstration.

#### Failure of the Socialists

The organized socialist groups at the demonstration were by and large as confused as the SDS leadership itself and incapable thus of really fighting for a more radical alternative. The Communist Party and the youth group which expresses its political line, the WEB DuBois Clubs, was to the right of the SDS leadership. Their whole aim was and is to transform a struggle against the Johnson administration into a vaguely pacifist and liberal hat-in-hand operation of petitioning the capitalists to be "more peaceful." What a criminal thing it was to see the Worker being sold with a front page cartoon showing the American voter shaking old LBJ and telling him "We voted for you to bring peace." The voter should have been shown shaking Gus Hall and taking him to task for suggesting that LBJ would bring anything more than he has brought--bombs and poison gas.

The Socialist Workers Party and the youth group

which expresses its political viewpoint, the Young Socialist Alliance, played no other role than that of support to the SDS leadership. They sold a special issue of the Young Socialist magazine which congratulated the SDS leadership for "standing up to" the adult peace and liberal groups. Lets face it--SDS did not really stand up to them; rather it compromised with them all along the line and thus took the impact out of the demonstration. Neither the Militant nor the Young Socialist raised the clear demand of "Hands off the Vietnam Revolution" and "Victory for the Vietcong." Only the BULLETIN OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM raised these demands and clearly exposed all attempts to sidetrack this headon conflict with imperialism.

The Workers World grouping and the youth group which expresses their political viewpoint, the Youth Against War and Fascism, did not do much better. Despite their evident desire to appear more militant and further to the left than everybody else, nothing could be farther from the truth. This is shown clearly when it comes to their attitude towards the leaderships in the Soviet Bloc countries. The United States has been able to carry out its unilateral aggression against North Vietnam precisely because the paralysis of the Soviet Bloc countries guaranteed to the U.S. that there would be no serious counteraction on the part of these countries. And this sadly has been the case. Certainly the USSR has been the main culprit in this. What a fantastic business! Now, after two months of indiscriminate bombing of another workers state the USSR is awaiting "further" signs of aggression on the part of the U.S. before undertaking its elementary responsibility to send all aid including volunteers to North Vietnam!

But China is also to blame. It was China which on the eve of the attacks on North Vietnam defined the limits of its security interests to be its own borders. Sadly it has maintained this in practice and done little to support North Vietnam outside of propaganda statements. The Workers World group has solidarized itself completely with the Chinese on this and offered no criticisms at all. Progressive Labor and the youth group reflecting its outlook, May 2nd Movement, have also whitewashed the Chinese failure.

Clearly what is needed is something more than support to Senator Gruening and calls with greater or lesser degrees of militancy for a deal to "settle" the Southeast Asian "problem." What is needed is the building of a movement in the United States which sides uncompromisingly with the oppressed throughout the world and battles unstintingly against our own ruling class. It will be the oppressed of the world who will build a better future free of war and exploitation not the rulers of today with their bombs or with their wheeling and dealing. We are not interested in extricating the U.S. ruling class from a "difficult" situation in Asia but in extricating this parasitical formation from its stranglehold on the productive forces of much of the

world. We are not interested in the futile game of "defending" the workers states through appeals to the self-interests of those who clearly seek to destroy the workers states-- the capitalists. Rather the workers states must be defended by the extension of the revolution throughout the world.

Students can help in the process of building a movement which clearly understands the necessity of uncompromising struggle against capitalism. But they can do so only if they completely break with the compromisers and if they find a road to the decisive force in the United States and everywhere: the working class--black and white.

### SPECIAL REPORT ON PL'S FOUNDING CONVENTION

#### Whole Leadership Capitulates to Black Nationalism

#### But Healthy Signs of Dissent Are Present

The founding convention of the Progressive Labor Party, held in New York City from April 15th to 18th, was an important test for the militants who have been assembled in the Progressive Labor Movement over the past several years. The basic task was and is one of linking up with mass struggles and bringing to these struggles a revolutionary theory and political line.

It is clear from the basic statistics of the convention itself that Progressive Labor does not yet have the links with the mass movement which make the formation of a new revolutionary party (as opposed to the nucleus of such a party, which must of course always exist and be struggling for the creation of such a party) realistic. The formation of a new party was, from the organizational standpoint, premature. But more important is the qualitative political growth necessary in the building of a revolutionary party. This report will be devoted to an assessment of where PL stands in relation to this task after the founding convention of the PLP.

The discussion and the resolution on the Negro question coming forth from the convention are typical of the problems of P.L. The resolution identifies with black nationalism. While it maintains a much more critical line towards the established petty bourgeois leaderships than, for example, the SWP, and calls for a working class leadership of the Negro movement, it also views black and white revolutionaries as having to work separately for the foreseeable future. It does not relate the struggle in any but the most abstract way to the entire working class movement, and it ignores the Southern struggle and SNCC. A sure sign of the adaptation to the nationalist mood is an approach which permeates the SWP's views on the Negro question as well: the present situation of racial antagonism, to such a large extent fostered by the ruling class itself, is simply accep-

ted, instead of showing now how we can and must work to unite black and white workers. Abstractly correct long-range perspectives are combined with a nationalist outlook for the present and the foreseeable future. There are no connecting links. The maximum program, so to speak, is working class unity and struggle for socialism. The minimum program is black nationalism, independent struggle unrelated to the overall class struggle. Between the two programs there are no links.

### The Rosen of Yesterday

Milton Rosen, who was elected President of the PLP at the Convention, resisted the adaptation to nationalism last October, at a discussion meeting of the National Coordinating Committee of the PLM. At that time Rosen's comments included the following:

"...you have to start figuring out now how you are going to unite these forces (black and white workers), at least on a long range basis, and what steps have to be taken to overcome the obstacles to that unity today. I believe this is the difference between a working class revolutionary outlook and the others. No nationalist force is expressing these ideas today. We are critical of this...

"I don't think we have a national liberation movement in the U.S. today--although I've used the term as much as anybody else. I think it's just a mimicking of a term that's developed in the international movement, that seems on the surface appropos to the situation here. We used it because we don't have a clear position of our own and it sounds nice. Superficially you can make a case for it, but I don't believe it's what exists here at all. My own feeling is that what exists here is that the Negro question is fundamentally a class struggle, and is being motored in many respects by many national considerations.

-- "Now we all agree on one thing it seems to me--some people want two parties--but we all say that we should have a black movement--based on black working class strength. Well, what would be the demands of that movement. The demands wouldn't be "national liberation." That's baloney. They want jobs, better housing, better schools, and yes, a lot of people would identify with supporting national liberation movements in other countries, because they don't want to go and fight in the Congo, etc. That's not national liberation."

Thus we see that last October Rosen attempted to take certain national factors into consideration within what was a class framework. He resisted the adaptation to nationalism and the subordination of the class struggle of the

entire working class to a nationalist approach. Yet at the Convention Rosen shifted his position, even going so far as to accuse those who opposed the majority's line of white chauvinist tendencies.

The reason for this reversal is that the PL leadership, and Milt Rosen as much if not more than others, have slighted theoretical discussion and development. In trying to deal with PL's problems, the leadership has sought to evade sharp issues, to blur over differences, particularly on the political level, while seeking to make up for this by solving problems on an organizational level. In the belief that practical activity in the Negro struggle as elsewhere is all important, with theoretical and political development of the vanguard simply flowing automatically from this activity, important differences on the Negro question were compromised. The resolution gives a little to everyone, combining adaptation to black nationalism, adoption of the very same black liberation front concept which Milt Rosen resisted 6 months ago, with some correct but abstract statements on class struggle and socialism. Nationalism and class struggle are simply added to the resolution like parts of a recipe, instead of relating the two factors, taking nationalist moods into account but not adapting to them and showing the fundamentally class nature of the struggle. Readers should refer to the special BULLETIN on Black Nationalism, Vol. 2, No. 6, for a fuller exposition of what we consider the fundamentals of a correct approach.

It is important to note that there was a small but significant minority opinion which opposed the leadership on this adaptation to Black Nationalism. This opposition clearly fought for a class line on the Negro question and its views were received sympathetically by a far larger number of delegates than were willing to express their opposition through a vote against the leadership's resolution.

It makes us sad to record that overwhelmingly the Negro cadres of P, endorsed the Black Nationalist view. Progressive Labor could very well be faced with a serious loss of its Negro cadres if these cadres are not given a revolutionary class perspective. For Black Nationalism they do not need PL. It was particularly sad to note that no Negroes attended the trade union panel at the convention. This almost complete dichotomy between trade union and Negro work can only deeply damage both sectors of work.

As might be expected, the trade union discussion at the Convention suffered from this lack of relating the Negro and overall working class struggles. An overtly black nationalist line, a petty bourgeois ultra left approach, of seeing the unions simply as job trusts for white workers, was not interjected into the trade union discussion although it is held by some in P.L. However, it was bad enough that the trade union and Negro movements were viewed in a completely separate way. This static, undialectical way of viewing the mass movement harms trade union work as well as work in the



Negro movement.

On the other hand there was a real determination on the part of the leadership and members of PL to break away from the petty bourgeois milieu the organization has been sinking into and to establish serious roots in the mass movement. However, it will take more than a desire to do this to accomplish this difficult task. As both the disorientation on the Negro question and the lack of concreteness in the trade union discussion show, only a deepening of the theoretical understanding of the PL cadres will prepare these cadres for meaningful intervention in the mass movement.

### On the Organization Question

On the organizational level, the Convention adopted a Party Constitution. It is significant that the Conference deleted a reference to Trotskyism as objectively counterrevolutionary and passed a motion requesting the drawing up of a statement on Trotskyism and revisionism. It is healthy to have these questions seriously discussed or at least opened up for discussion, rather than accepting on faith pronouncements on Trotskyism which are reminiscent of the Stalin era, lacking even the barest argumentation and evidence.

Also positive was the Convention's action in adopting an amendment to distribute minority discussion material to the membership. It is also significant, however, and not healthy, that the Convention adopted what is in essence a ban on groupings and factions in the new party:

"Members and leaders have the right to dissent from decisions. Anyone having serious criticism, or who has been disciplined by a Party body, has the right to bring his criticism or appeal to a higher body up to and including the National Convention. However, no leader or member has the right to organize against any decision, and pending appeal all members shall be bound to support all decisions of bodies to which they are responsible.

"Groups having a discipline outside the Party -- factions and cliques -- shall not be tolerated. Persons engaged in these activities may be criticized, suspended or expelled by a club or an appropriate higher body."

The Constitution in effect substitutes "criticism and self-criticism" for the right to form factions. But this is not adequate. As we have discussed before (Vol. 2 No. 7 and Bulletin Supplement) a revolutionary party cannot develop and never has developed without struggle inside the party and this struggle is impossible without the right



to form factions. We must have a progressive resolution of the struggle between Marxism and alien trends and class currents which find their way into working class parties and even dominate these parties at times. But this successful struggle is only possible if factions are permitted, as they were in Lenin's Bolshevik Party under all but extreme conditions of civil war and isolation. No one, of course, is asking or should ask for the right to take internal differences outside the organization or the right to disregard and violate the decisions of the majority.

There is a contradiction between the ban on factions and the decision allowing for the distribution of minority views, as well as a general attitude at the Convention of a certain genuine welcoming of discussion and even dissent. Unfortunately, however, the dominant attitude is one of seeking to solve political problems by organizational means. While PL certainly needed a more centralized organization than the kind preceding the convention, it also needed and still needs a firm commitment to internal democracy, including the freedom for organized dissent, within the party. The struggle is not taken outside the organization, but it must be allowed to develop inside the organization and assume organized form at certain times (pre-convention discussion periods). This need not and should not paralyze the organization; whereas banning factions does paralyze the organization, in a political sense.

Here again we see a non-Marxist, an empirical and eclectic approach. The theory and nature of the revolutionary party is not simply a collection of rules and elementary structure. It is something that must develop as part of the class struggle and the construction of the vanguard party itself. But here again we see PL looking at this question in a formal way, not seeing democratic centralism as a living concept, but as a dogma, and a dogma which is misrepresented and misstated, at that.

### Neglect of Theory

In summary, we see the same fundamental problem wherever we turn. Although PL could have taken some very serious steps backward which it did not take, it is wavering on the basic tasks at hand, the Negro movement, the trade unions, and the construction of the party. In the present context we must remember that not to move forward is in effect to move backward.

It is also important to note that not a single discussion of international events reached the floor of the convention. Any revolutionary party which is serious about its aims must find the time, no matter how crowded the schedule, to give proper emphasis to the international movement. The slighting of international discussion goes hand in hand with the slighting of theoretical discussion in general.

PL must of course concern itself with international developments, in the advanced countries as well as the colonial and ex-colonial sphere. While Challenge has generally taken a multi-class approach in its reporting on developments in Asia, Africa and Latin America, PL has not confronted the basic questions of the nature of the colonial revolution and its development in such countries as Algeria.

The basic problem is the divorcing of theory and practice combined with the neglect of theoretical development. PL's practical work is suffering and will suffer more and more if this non-Marxist approach is not corrected.

#### SPECIAL REPORT FROM ENGLAND

##### Young Socialists Launch Revolutionary Battle

February 27 and 28 marked a massive step along the road to socialism in Britain. The Fifth Annual Conference of the Young Socialists, held in Morecambe on those days, was like no other in the history of the Young Socialists; and more than that, it was unique in the history of British working class youth. More than 1,000 youth from all over Britain and fraternal delegates from the adult trade union movement, Old Age Pensioners' Associations, and delegates from fraternal organizations in Europe and America crowded into the Winter Gardens at Morecambe for the Conference.

The Morecambe Conference was unique in that it was the first conference called by the National Committee Majority of the Young Socialists since their expulsion from the social-democratic Labour Party. The Labour Government did everything in its power to stop the Conference from taking place. They called upon the Mayor of Morecambe to refuse the facilities in his town to the Young Socialists; on the BBC radio and television they called upon the youth not to attend the "unofficial" conference, and for adult workers to refuse to support it. However, the youth and representatives of the adult movement responded to the call of a new leadership: that of the Young Socialists supported and strengthened by the Socialist Labour League.

The Times of Monday, March 1 found the discipline of the Conference "almost frightening", and the Daily Telegraph found it "alarming." And well they might. The young workers who attended the Young Socialist Conference were probably, some of them, the same ones whose anger and frustration at living and working conditions in capitalist Britain overflowed in the riots at Clacton and Margate last year. They were the youth who struggle to buy motor bikes on Hire Purchase -- and curse the Labour Government for driving up the interest rates. They are the ones the police hound about the housing projects, who have no place to go and no money to spend if they did. They are the apprentices whose basic wage is 2/19/6 (7 or 8

dollars) when they leave school, and who are forced to live at home on their low wages, hounded by parents who were themselves disillusioned by the sellout of the Labour Government under MacDonald in 1931. These parents often warn the youth against the Young Socialists; fear and demoralization make them wary of the new movement. The young workers in Britain today are free of the cynicism that haunts their parents' generation. They come around the Young Socialists, and very soon they realize that the Young Socialists is the only organization which demands decent recreational facilities for youth, an end to rising prices, wages and working conditions that are fit for human beings, an end to conscription and police brutality, and replacement of the corrupt sell-out Labour Government by an alternative leadership which the YS itself is training.

### Labour Leaders Betray

As the trade gap widens and the British ruling class finds itself unable to compete on the world capitalist market without automation on a massive scale, their need to attack the working class increases every day. The right-wing Labour leaders have before them the task of lulling the workers before the storm, "easing in" an economic policy which spells wage freeze for working people, increased production and profits for the bosses. The capitalist crisis is so great that the true position of every leader and fake leader of the working class is revealed. On the one hand, trying desperately to hide from the workers the Tory attack which is in store for them, we find the Labour Government and right wing union bureaucrats, the Communist Party with its cowardly acceptance and fake criticism of Labour's policies, and the Pabloites whose tactic of deep deep entry has finally swallowed them up in a maze of excuses and apologies for Labour's treachery.

On the other hand we find only the Young Socialists and their ally, the Socialist Labour League. The first resolution of the Young Socialist Conference, passed unanimously, calls for an Emergency Labour Party Conference to be held before Callaghan (Chancellor of the Exchequer) can force his infamous budget upon the workers. It calls for a Conference in which the workers who struggled to build the Labour Party, the members of the Party who have fought for it relentlessly over the decades because they believed it would bring them socialism, can now pass judgment upon the treacherous bureaucrats who prostrate themselves before the banks and monopolies. Before the General Election the Young Socialists called, "Labour to Power--pledged to socialist policies." Now we say to the right-wing leaders, "You've had your chance. Get Out."

When the Labour Government failed the workers this time, there was something new in the cards, something unique in the history of Great Britain: an alternative leadership developing and strengthening itself in campaigns based upon the

real needs of the workers, and gaining strength in the clear and conscious battle to destroy the workers' enemies.

### Labour Turns on the Poor

An example of this kind of fight is to be found in the Old Age Pensioners campaign. Wilson promised to raise the pension (British equivalent of Social Security) from a miserly three pounds 17/6 (about \$9.00) to four pounds 10/0. This was before the election. The pensioners have yet to see the increase, and as a result hundreds have died this winter because the prices of fuel and food have risen while pensions have stayed the same.

Why has the Labour Government failed to raise the pension? George Brown, second in command, let the secret out by accident and was censured by his colleagues. "The banks won't allow it." The Young Socialists answer: "Whose banks, the bosses' or ours? Nationalize the banks!"

This and all the other resolutions passed at the Morecambe Conference, the Conference at which the young workers of Britain saw no need for riots and vandalism because all around them were comrades and allies, this resolution embodies one command to the social-democracy. As a weapon for exposing their treachery before the eyes of the workers and beginning the work which will destroy them we say, "Break from the bourgeoisie, take the power!" If the Labour leaders refuse we will see them replaced, not by the Tories as before, but by the leaders we are training.

### CALIFORNIA'S JAILS: VIEW FROM THE INSIDE

(The author is awaiting sentencing after having convicted for the "crime" he describes below. 73 Negroes have been hired as a direct result of these demonstrations, and demonstrations have since ceased at the Oakland Tribune. But William Knowland still runs Oakland. And through his influence on the Regents he is attempting to run the University of California and crush the Free Speech Movement.)

Last December 13th a group of demonstrators, including myself, sat down in front of the entrance of the Oakland Tribune. About 350 other people were picketing. We were protesting not just the Jim Crow hiring practices of the Tribune but also the fact that its owner, William Knowland, runs Alameda County. So at three o'clock we sat down in front of the gate that the trucks pull out of and joined hands. Knowland came out and told us that we were obstructing the progress of business. While he was still talking, we yelled: "Knowland is a Paper Tiger." He huffed and puffed. Then the police chief of Oakland came out and told us to move. They began dragging us to the paddy wagons. As I was being dragged I saw another demonstrator with four

cops on top of him and one of the cops was banging his head on the ground. A photographer who took pictures of this beating had his camera taken away and himself was arrested.

At the City Jail a Sergeant Sutter looked at us and said: "OK. Let's get the slobs with the beards first." In theory he was supposed to ask us for a statement. He took me into a small room and said: "OK, you prick, ain't no one going to say I didn't give you your constitutional right, you bearded bastard." Then he began typing what was supposed to be my statement. I told him his statement was not my statement. Finally Sergeant Sutter gave me a piece of paper on which to write a statement. I wrote out that I had been threatened with assault, been called derogatory names, and that I wished to lodge a complaint against Sergeant Sutter.

He looked at it and then tore it up. "It's because of you SOBs my kid might get killed", he yelled at me. He finally typed up a statement which said, "I was sitting in at the Tribune, etc. etc." I refused to sign it. He slapped me. Later we were all put into one big dorm, about 45 people, most of them doing time for traffic violations, all misdemeanors, some of them were petty theft. We had a bologna sandwich; that was our dinner. And the next day we ate all three meals, all of us, which consisted of a bowl of mush with no sugar for breakfast, for lunch potatoes, some sort of macaroni and some sort of a sandwich for dinner.

### We Talked of Revolution

Sunday we ate three meals, our spirits were kind of high, we sang freedom songs, Of all the prisoners we spoke to, none of them criticized us; many were receptive. They were 50% Negro, 25% white, and 25% Mexican. On Sunday night I stood up on the bed and spoke for about 15 minutes on injustice. The guard came in while I was still standing. The guard yelled out "Who's making all that noise in here, who's talking?" I said, "this is free speech, and I was talking about the revolution." He said, "We don't care about the revolution in here but the next time you say a word we're going to throw you into the hole." "Well, that's your reality," I said. They left and a new prisoner was admitted, so I said, "Hi, are you going to join the revolution? We're holding an informal rally in the morning and you're cordially invited." He motioned me to the back. I said, "No, we run this jail. This is our jail; it is the people's jail and we're going to tear it down because we don't need jails; free people don't need jails."

That night I made a motion to the other fellows -- there were 11 of us in all -- that we go on a fast. And we spoke about it for awhile, and we finally agreed. The food was terrible as it was, anyway, and we thought this might be an effective way of gaining public attention. Also one of the fellows had a very bad headache and asked for an aspirin

and was told he had to be an epileptic to get an aspirin. We also wanted to protest this.

We decided we wouldn't want to be bailed out because we felt that this too often was the case for civil rights struggles where people go to jail for 5 or 6 hours. Before they go to jail they want to know when they are going to be bailed out. But this isn't how jails are and how criminals are treated and we didn't want one person in the community donating \$80,000 or whatever the fee would have been for our bail. Bail for me was set for \$1,400 and the charges were disturbing the peace, resisting arrest, failure to disperse at the scene of a riot, creating a public nuisance, and some other charge. (To me it looked like the police were the only ones rioting.)

We wanted the community to bail us out and if possible to raise the whole bail and not be bonded out. We didn't know if this would be possible or not, we wanted to give it a try. We felt you can't go speak to the community about freedom, equality, and justice, but you can speak to them about 11 people in jail. Concrete issues, not abstract issues.

We mingled with the prisoners and we felt a part of them and they felt a part with us. It wasn't like a kick where you get busted for eight hours. We were part of the oppressed now. In the room adjoining the court we sang freedom songs, "No more judges over me," "Before I'll be a slave I'll be buried in my grave," "Good news, freedom's coming," and "Karl Marx knew freedom's coming."

The deputy came in and said the court is in session and the judge can hear you and is getting very angry. He said he would postpone the trial to 2:00 if we didn't shut up. They postponed the trial to 2:00 and then it was postponed until Wednesday. All they did was read a list of charges off and our lawyer said not guilty on all counts, and we went back to the cells.

About 3 other prisoners in the 45 prisoner dorms yelled with us "Viva La Revolution". It was a real good feeling of solidarity. You get the feeling you want to hug these guys. We had been fasting for 24 hours by then and were getting hungry. We were looking at LOOK magazines in there. Two prisoners sneaked out of their dorms and brought us sandwiches. We refused to eat them but felt gratified they had done this and might have gotten in trouble for doing it. They had TV cameras and microphones on us all the time. We tried to explain to the guards watching the cameras that they were prisoners just like us...

Tuesday was a long day. I requested to make a phone call in the morning and the evening and was denied both times. This was a 48 hour fast now and we were really getting hungry and it was hard to look at LOOK magazine, at all the

food in there.

One difficulty we had during our stay in jail was that we had no contact with the outside. I requested a phone call on Wednesday and my request was denied, no reason given. Nearly all prisoners are allowed two phone calls a day. So we had no idea whether the news of our hunger strike was out -- we had been fasting 65 hours.

#### They Took Us to Santa Rita Prison

Then suddenly they took us to a room with a hundred other prisoners and fingerprinted us and we were told that we were being taken to Santa Rita prison. The other prisoners had their breakfast: a bowl of mush. In the bus to Santa Rita we saw the letters FSM had written all over it -- the police had used this bus to carry the students arrested at the University of California. I added to the inscriptions on the ceiling: "Freedom Now -- For Everybody."

All our clothes were taken off at Santa Rita prison. They gave us blue suits two or three sizes too big. Next they sprayed us with DDT. The seven of us were put in a cell seven feet by nine feet. It had two benches, a sink, a toilet. We were all able to fit in, but there was not enough room to sit down. Instead of a ceiling, there was a wire mesh like a cage. Outside there were fire hoses every 10 feet to control riots. It was kind of cold; there were no blankets.

After 74 hours without eating we decided to end our hunger strike. We were beginning to get kind of screwed up upstairs, not having heard from anyone outside for 2½ days, not knowing whether this was doing any good or not.

Another search...all our clothes taken off. We were going through a dehumanizing process, getting dressed, getting undressed, getting dressed, undressed... Our new cells also had wire mesh ceilings. The lights were on all the time; prisoners were only allowed four hours a week outside their cells. The cell is where you ate all your meals, went to the bathroom and slept. We were not allowed to go outdoors. During the free four hours we were only permitted to go to the Day Room where there was a shower and we could shave. There was also a small library -- filled with love stories and biographies of George Washington.

#### 99% of Prisoners Were Poor People

The prisoners here were about 60% Negro, 15% Mexican, and the rest white. 99% seemed to be poor people. The crimes were petty theft largely. One kid was there because he had stolen a 10¢ Coca Cola bottle. His bail wasn't too high, but he had no money and he was a Mexican. He had not yet been sentenced, although he had already been in a maximum security jail for 25 days and permitted to leave his cell four



hours a week. Another man, named J. Kaiser, had already been in Santa Rita for 13½ months without having been sentenced -- the bail had been set too high for him ever to raise it. He wasn't permitted to make phone calls outside either. He was another one whom the law says is innocent until proven guilty but was treated as though convicted. The atmosphere bred a pathy among the prisoners. Their faces showed a kind of withdrawal...

Not By Bread Alone

We found "Not By Bread Alone" in the library, so now we had something to read. We started smoking up a storm, using newspaper to roll our cigarettes in. We started communicating again with the prisoners with yells: "Freedom Now", "Viva la Revolucion", "Cuba para Cubanos", and "Mexicans and Cubans are Brothers". A lot of the prisoners answered back with our yells and made up their own. We would yell out, "What do you guys want?"; Some answered "Freedom" but most answered "to get the hell out of here", which I guess is the same thing in a way.

Because of the yelling we were threatened with our mail privileges being taken away. I was told I would be sent to the "hole" if the yelling started again. While the guard announced that to me the other prisoners yelled: "Let's riot-- let's tear the jail down." Then we were all threatened with no supper because a spoon was missing from lunch. Someone from a cell yelled: "I got the spoon.:" Then from our cell we yelled: "We got the spoon". From about 15 other cells the same yell came out. Then the guard said: "All right, you guys ain't going to get your mail tonight and no mail is going out tonight."

After one week we were released. We learned that the letters we sent from prison had not been mailed. Our bail had been raised by the Negro community in nickels and dimes. They had found out how we had been fighting the Tribune's discriminatory hiring practices and against Knowland.

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