

COME-UNITY

AUGUST 1972
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Intercommunal Survival Committee to Combat Fascism 1415 Stannage St. (525-4375)

CITY STRIKE SETTLED

On Tuesday, August 1, Berkeley's widely publicized and bitterly contested "garbage strike" came to an end. It lasted twenty-two days: long enough for the city to methodically attempt to disrupt the unity with which the four city employees' unions began the strike; long enough for the unions and the community to experience the power of common struggle; and long enough for everyone in Berkeley to see once again the bankruptcy of the city's present policies.

When the strike began in July, the city council immediately shrouded itself in secrecy. Not one council member came forth to speak publicly on the substantive issues of the strike while in private the council acted swiftly and with virtual unanimity to file an injunction against the city's employees to prevent them from striking. Only councilwoman Loni Hancock penetrated the city's self-imposed silence. She did not speak on the issues of the strike but marched on the picket line against the city's injunction and in support of city employees' right "to organize and strike, when necessary, for their needs."

The council had hoped that by approaching the strike silently and with disdain (during the first week of the strike the city's \$25,000 per year negotiator was allowed to take a four day vacation in Oregon!) the workers could be pressured into accepting the city's take it or leave it offer (a \$22.00 per month wage increase which was far below the union's demand of a 6.2% increase). There was hope also among council members that a week's worth of uncollected garbage would cause a reaction among Berkeley's already overtaxed working people; and with the help of the Berkeley Daily Gazette it seemed possible that a popular movement demanding an end to the strike could be mounted to bring added pressure to bear on the striking workers.

In fact, the conflict did produce a popular movement but it was not lead by the reactionary Gazette. It was a progressive movement of students and workers from the community in support of the



workers' demands. It was led by the Ad Hoc Committee on the strike which included among its sponsors: Bobby Seale of the Black Panther Party; Cec Levinson of ISCCF; George Banks, President of the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees and many others. A demonstration was called for Tuesday, July 25, when the city council's refusal to negotiate was to be fully examined by the community. It was no longer possible for the city to remain silent.

Again it was Councilwoman Hancock who stepped forth with an offer of support, this time for the union's first two demands: (1) Binding arbitration of labor-management grievances and (2) the "agency shop," a variation of the union shop that allows unions to collect dues from all

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WESTBRAE UNITED FRONT

There is a vacant lot in the northern part of our community that has become a focal point in the lives of the people who live there. As there are no parks in the area, this lot, enhanced by a stream and open field, provides the only natural playground for the community's children. As has happened time and time again, greedy developers viewed the lot as potential money in their pockets and proposed the building of 40 condominium units on the lot that would sell for \$27,000 apiece. (17 of these units would be in Berkeley, the remainder in Albany.) In response, the Westbrae Community mobilized itself and successfully blocked the developers.

It all started when the people in the neighborhood received notices that a public hearing was to be held before the Board of Adjustments on July 12 to see whether two developers, John Hatten (an architect) and Dr. Henry Eddington should be granted a use permit to begin construction on the condominiums. People began talking to each other and soon realized that something had to be done. The condominiums would mean that the neighborhood streets would become parking lots — that the creek that flows through the neighborhood would be cemented in — and the only play area for the neighborhood children would be destroyed. Leaflets and petitions appeared and a meeting was called.

The public hearing on July 12 resulted in a real victory for the newly formed organization. Over 75 people attended and after waiting two hours for the issue to come up on the agenda, the community people finally got a chance to speak. Stan Fukson, the new president of the association, summarized many of the technical and aesthetic reasons why the community was opposed to the development. A petition signed that afternoon by over 300 residents of the neighborhood opposing the development was presented to the board. (This petition represented over 95% of the residents affected by the development.) Many people then spoke specifically as to why they were against the development. Finally, at 12:20 a.m., the Board of Adjustments denied the permit to build!! The victory at the Board was just the beginning of the struggle to win community control over the vacant land.

Another meeting was held on July 20 to work out positive goals for the use of the land. Walt Tony, Director of the Berkeley Parks and Recreation Department, spoke on how to apply for a mini-park grant from HUD. John Grey of the Berkeley



Site of the proposed condominiums

Planning Department discussed in detail how the community could organize to have the area downzoned so as to prevent construction of the condominiums. It was decided that changing the zoning was a priority action. Therefore, a petition for zone change was circulated and presented to the Planning Commission on August 4.

The Planning Commission was so impressed with the number of people that desired the change in zoning that they began formal procedures to downzone the property to "R1-A." (Residential, single family dwelling.) This action effectively put a moratorium on all new developments. However, the problem of Mr. Hatten's and Dr. Eddington's development is still up in the air. It is unclear if the moratorium affects their plan.

Although the Berkeley Board of Adjustments turned down the developers request for 17 units, Hatten and Eddington appealed the board's decision at the Berkeley City Council and illegally asked for approval of 14 units rather than the original 17. The City Council sent them back to the Board of Adjustments with whom they will meet again sometime in September.

These actions have caused a temporary delay in assuring a complete people's victory. However, the forces of the people have been mobilized and will not be stopped. Community control of the land surrounding the creek will be the final result of the people's efforts.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE

PTA BLOCKS PARENT UNITY

During the last week of school, the Jefferson School PTA called an urgent meeting of parents and staff. Apparently, the PTA had failed to fulfill its responsibilities to elect officers for the following school year. In response to this crisis, we, the Concerned Jefferson Parents Steering Committee, came forward with a plan — elect an Executive Council that would collectively assume the leadership of the PTA. This would ensure that parents and staff would be contacted throughout the summer for the purpose of developing programs reflecting the needs of our children, programs that could be implemented immediately at the start of the Fall Term. Our proposal was accepted unanimously by all those present and a 7 member Executive Council was subsequently elected.

Only a week had passed when we were called to meet with Velma Bradley, District PTA President. At that meeting it was clearly established that we would not be permitted to function within the PTA because:

1. The PTA is required by its own constitution to cooperate with administration policies even if they work to the detriment of our children. (See last month's COME-UNITY for an explanation of the situation at Jefferson last year.)

2. Our election as an Executive Council was null and void because we had not conformed to PTA by-laws. (The PTA President is required by the by-laws to set up a nominating committee which is responsible for bringing to the PTA a list of candidates willing to run for office. They are nominated at one general PTA meeting and elected at the next.)

Furthermore, by voiding our election the District PTA ensured that:

1. The Jefferson PTA had justification to refuse to provide us with a current list of Jefferson parents (critical to the development of programs during the summer).

2. The previous PTA Council will continue to exist until such time as a new Council is elected. As of this writing, PTA officers have made no attempt to set up an election, thus guaranteeing their continued hold on PTA offices.

It is readily apparent that the PTA bureaucracy exists solely to serve its own needs and not the needs of our children.

The Concerned Jefferson Parents Steering Committee, obstructed by the PTA, has been forced to come up with new ways of establishing contact with Jefferson parents. We have been meeting with school staff members and are obtaining their class lists. At this time, we are relying on COME-UNITY to announce that on Thursday, August 17, at 8:00 p.m. there will be an open meeting of all parents and staff at the Lutheran Church on the corner of Rose Street and Chestnut (free child care will be provided). From this meeting and others in the future, a concrete set of programs will be drawn up that reflects the needs of our children. We will mobilize ourselves to put these programs in practice through the PTA or any other institution that should be responsive to our needs.

Our Spirit and Our Work can move mountains!
ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!
Concerned Jefferson Parents
Steering Committee

All Jefferson Parents & Staff MEETING:

Thursday, August 17, 1972

8:00 P.M.

**Luthern Church Of The Cross
1300 Rose**

continued

CITY STRIKE: Popular pressure fo



Photo by Louis Benainous

Comrade Bobby Seale of the Black Panther Party demanded a fair settlement for all four unions on strike

employees they represent including non-members of the union. She also announced her support for a cost of living wage boost — better than the city's take it or leave it offer though still less than the unions' demands. On the same day State Senators Moscone and Petris and East Bay Assemblyman Ken Meade urged the city to begin real talks, though they took no position on strike issues themselves.

Only a few hours before the Council met on July 25, Councilmen Bailey and Simmons added a new element to the by now wide-open discussion of the strike. In simultaneous statements, they asserted their support for a 15% raise for refuse collectors — much more than the unions' overall demand — but disavowed other city workers whom they characterized as overpaid. Their statements also bore down heavily on the fact that most refuse workers are Black while electricians belong to an old-line craft union with a long racist history. Overlooked in their statements were other underpaid city workers — such as Community Health Workers, also Black, and paid even less than refuse collectors. Finally, Bailey and Simmons warned, binding arbitration could be used to undermine the new city affirmative action hiring plan to end racist and sexist hiring and promotion practices. However Local 390's executive secretary, Paul Varacalli, had supported affirmative action at public hearings long before the strike began, and Locals 535 and 2077 — with large Third World and women memberships — were on record in favor of affirmative action. (Varacalli had agreed to include in a new contract, language specifically protecting affirmative action from being hindered by an arbitrator's decision.)

As the council meeting itself got under way it was clear that the initiative in the strike had shifted. The Ad Hoc Committee with support from the Black Panther Party was asserting the leadership of which the city council was incapable. Where the city tended to view the wage demands of the workers as "inflationary" and their demands for binding arbitration and an agency shop as "illegal," the Ad Hoc Committee found that the workers demand for a 6.2% wage increase was commensurate with increases won by city employees in Oakland and Hayward and that binding arbitration and an agency shop are basic rights of labor "without which working people are reduced to humble petitioners for their needs in a world where living costs rise with inexorable steadiness."

forced the negotiations to open

The Ad Hoc Committee also exposed the narrowness of the city's economic perspective by pointing out that wage increases for city employees by no means required increasing the property tax rate — an argument which the city used to beef up its "inflationary" claim — instead, the Ad Hoc Committee argued for a readjustment of the tax base itself:

"As of now, Berkeley is still a company town for the University, which drains services and removes valuable land from the tax rolls. In a company town, the town serves the company's interests. The solution is to make the company — in this case the University, supported by massive infusions of Federal and State money — serve the town's interests."

The bloated Berkeley Police budget which has risen from 1.6 million in 1965 to a projected 4.2 million in 1972 was also cited as a clear example of the kind of inflationary policy which the city council has not seen fit to curb. Not a single police department request for funds has been turned down by the council in the past seven years despite continued widespread protests throughout the city concerning both the size of the police budget and its application.

The Ad Hoc Committee went on to call for a comprehensive personnel policy that will express a unity of interest between the people and the city employees.

1. A residency requirement for future employees will insure that we cannot face raids on the budget by workers with no stake in the city's fiscal stability.
2. A serious affirmative action program will insure that Berkeley's payroll truly reflects the composition of the city and will bring the needs of city workers into line with the needs of Black and Brown people, women, and other oppressed groups.
3. A far-reaching program of child care for city employees will make the benefits of an open personnel policy available to all.

The massive turnout at City Hall on July 25 demonstrated widespread support in the community for the Ad Hoc Committee's program and leadership in supporting the striking unions. The city council was compelled to announce that talks with union representatives would begin the next day. Popular pressure — the power of the people — had forced the negotiations to open.

The fact that the striking workers, without pay for over three weeks, settled a week later for less



"Binding arbitration and an agency shop are basic rights of labor without which working people are reduced to humble petitioners..."

than what they had demanded, does not represent a victory for narrow city government — instead the development of the strike as a whole and in particular the development of unity around a concrete program to deal with the needs of Berkeley's city employees represents the seeds of a far reaching victory for the progressive forces in Berkeley. That victory is not far off.

FREE BIKE REPAIRS

Comrades:

Now you don't have to wait until your money ship comes in to get your bicycles fixed. I.S.C.C.F. now operates a FREE bicycle clinic for anyone who can't afford the rip-off prices or can't handle the me! me! money consciousness of the "fill my pockets" bike dealers — most of whom purposely push junk (cheap, crummy bicycles built to break down) on the people.

So folks, push, pedal, carry or cart those broken beauties to the place where bicycles are buddies and not commodities. We sure could use any spare parts or unwanted bicycles, no matter how decrepit they look to you. The more spare parts we accumulate, the less we have to buy. Our goal is a bicycle recycling center, fixing broken bicycles and recycling odd parts into working wonders and distributing them FREE to the people.

If you don't have a bicycle, working or otherwise, or any spare parts, you might have spare tools or time. Anyway, if you want a bicycle you're entitled to it, so come on in and visit us and we'll put down your name and get you one as soon as we can.

We're just getting started, so be patient — and remember, we run off your energy, so come in and watch and we'll show you how to do it yourself. The bicycle mechanic doesn't live at the center but you can get in touch with him — John Justice — either through the center 525-4375 or at 653-4767.

If you can't get your bicycle to us, maybe we can get us to you.

Power to the Pedalers
Ride On

Come-Unity wishes to thank Brother John Justice for his article and for all the creative energy he's put into the People's Free Bike Program.



A PARK -- AT LAST

A year of struggle, a year of building unity around a common need, a year of working together has paid off. HUD (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development) has granted funding for a park in the vacant lot at the corner of Berkeley Way and West Street.

This lot has been the focus of community action since May 31, 1971. On that memorable Sunday, 50 of us got together and cleared the land of broken glass and brambles that had made the lot — the only playground for children in the area — a hazardous place to play. In the weeks that followed, community people worked to collect over 300 signatures on a petition that demanded the city purchase the lot and develop a park. In previous issues, COME-UNITY has taken you on a

step-by-step trip through the bureaucratic process by which city officials play games with our lives. It is enough to say here that the meetings, the petitions, the struggles have resulted in a people's victory and we have only each other to thank for it.

Now that funding has been received, the city is negotiating for the purchase of the lot. When this is finalized, we must again state clearly what WE want in OUR park. We are the only ones who are capable of expressing what our needs are. We know what we asked for. It will soon be time to DEMAND that we get our TOT LOT, an open GRASSY AREA for baseball, etc., the barbeque pits and other facilities WE want.

For information on future meeting times and places, call the ISCCF Community Center 525-4375 or contact the ISCCF organizer in your area.

FROM US TO US

Washing Machine — almost new (2 years old) — rinse water doesn't drain. Will sell to anyone who can fix it — \$10. Call Mrs. Care, 525-0980, 1218 Evelyn.

1962 Chevrolet — 4-door Impala. Runs good, \$65 or best offer. Call Elmo Foster, 658-4742. Cash only.

FREE — One year old Lab. Shep. Completely house trained. All shots. Berkeley license. To good home. We must move. Call Gale, 524-6187.

MUSIC LESSONS — Likes kids. Have been very successful with beginners. Clarinet, Sax. \$4.00/hour. Call Dave, 525-4375.

European-type bike — 16" wheels, blue \$5. Steve Castro, 525-9138.

House, Yard, Basement cleaning. Call Michael A. Duke, 845-6745. Free estimate, commercial and residential.

For Sale — Crib, mattress, sheet — \$12.00 other baby furniture \$1 and \$2. (If you can't afford what you need, call anyway.) Ruth 527-2906.



FREE WANT ADS



Over 100 signatures and numerous telephone calls and talks with the City Traffic Engineers have made this yield sign at the intersection of Cornell and Camelia a reality. Only through the efforts of the people of the surrounding neighborhood could a corner, that for years has been the scene of many, many accidents, now be made safe for the people.

All Power to the People

The purpose of the Intercommunal Committee to Combat Fascism (ISCCF) is to fight repression on all levels through the implementation of its guideline, Survival Through Service to the People. The economy of our country is deteriorating and living is becoming more difficult for all poor people. Existing institutions do not meet the needs of the people but serve the interests of the few who own and run them. Services that are necessary for health and survival (medical care, decent housing) are provided on the basis of who can pay for them, not who needs them. They are the privilege of the rich, not — as they should be — the

right of all.

The ISCCF Community Center at 1415 Stannage St. hopes to provide a structured vehicle through which our community can organize itself to implement programs which will meet our needs and to gain control of existing institutions in order to make them serve us. The Center belongs to the people and is open 24 hours a day. Several free programs, described below, are in operation and others are being planned. By unifying around our needs, we build our community and strengthen ourselves.

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**COMMUNITY
CENTER**



FREE MEDICAL AID STATION — Trained medics are on call 24 hours a day to come to your house in case of emergency or to treat you at the clinic.

FIRST AID MEDICAL CLASSES — We are conducting classes in first aid, health care, drug abuse, and overdose treatment. Many minor accidents and illnesses can be treated at home, avoiding exorbitant doctors' fees. If you are interested in signing up for these classes, call the Center.

POISON CONTROL PROGRAM — In a community with many children, poisoning is a serious problem. When poisoning occurs, you may call the Center 24 hours a day and immediately receive instruction on the proper treatment.

FREE PLUMBING AND MAINTENANCE — Home maintenance problems are a plague in poor communities. ISCCF has a cadre of people trained in basic plumbing skills who can service most

common house problems.

FREE FILMS — Every Sunday evening at 8, there is a film showing at the Center. These films deal with the struggles of people throughout the world to survive against U.S. oppression.

CHILD CARE — We are operating a program at the Center for children 3-6 years old, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE FILE — We must build our community by helping each other and relying on our own resources. We have compiled a file of persons with specific skills who are willing to make their talents available to the rest of the community.

FREE WINDOW REPLACEMENT SERVICE — Most common household windows can be replaced completely free while large or unusual glass can be obtained at a substantial discount and installed free.