



# ON THE LINE

published by the Workers Solidarity Alliance—New York Area Group

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25¢

## HELLO THERE .... WE' RE BACK !

After several years of not publishing, "ON THE LINE" is back!

For those of you who remember "ON THE LINE", you will recall that we were published by the Libertarian Workers Group. Since that time there have been some changes.

The L.W.G. became the New York Area affiliate of the Workers Solidarity Alliance (W.S.A.). The W.S.A., like the LWG before it, is a working class anarchist organization. The W.S.A. is a national organization of anarchist workers organized around the concepts listed elsewhere. For a copy of the W.S.A.'s "Where We Stand", write to us at the address listed elsewhere.

"ON THE LINE" will be a practical, hard hitting revolutionary workers newsletter.

"O T L" will strive to publish original material on what's happening in the shops, offices and communities throughout the Metropolitan area. If you have a story or an original cartoon, by all means, send it in to us. We want "O T L" to serve as a voice and contact point for ordinary workers who believe that only through collective action our own strength and unity can a new and free Stateless society be won.

We would like to see "OIL" help develop links between various workers and community struggles.

If you like what you have read, help distribute "ON THE LINE" on your job or in your community.

Unlike other publications, we're not supported by any political parties or wealthy backers. This publication is supported wholly by wage workers such as yourself. So if this publication interests you, dip into your pocket and subscribe. The success of this publication depends on you.

If you share our views or if you have any questions, we meet every Monday night at 7:00 P.M. at 339 LAFAYETTE STREET, ROOM 202, NY, NY, 10012. Our telephone number 212-505-6590. Anarchist literature always for sale.

Finally, we welcome any comments or criticisms you may have of "OIL". Please share your thoughts with us. Thanks.

In solidarity,

WORKERS SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE- N.Y.

## HEALTH CARE ILLS

by Rex Morgan

Hospital workers who have money in the 1199 Credit Union might want to think about keeping it under the mattress instead. It seems the State Banking Department has cited the Credit Union for a number of violations, and some members have reported getting stall jobs when they wanted to make withdrawals. Think about it.

Meanwhile, the new election in Local 1199 called by the Department of Labor hasn't slowed President Doris Turner's goons down very much. They still are harassing rank-and-file oppositionists with all their usual fanaticism. The Labor Dept. is doing almost nothing to stop this. Word is that International President Al Heaps and the AFL-CIO boys in Washington sort of "suggested" to the Labor Dept. that they not come down too hard on Turner and Co.

The Unity & Progress group and some other folks got together recently and formed a Save Our Union coalition. They had a convention to nominate a slate to run in the next union elections which was very well attended and well put together. There are some good points in their program, and of course, next to Turner, anyone would look good. Still, we have to ask if there wasn't some basic flaw in the union's structure and orientation that helped create a Doris Turner. Maybe we need to do more than just change leaders, maybe we need to rebuild the whole damn labor movement from the bottom-up.





## THE LAST SHARECROPPERS

by Bruce Traven

If you had a job where you were expected to work 12 hours a day, had no paid vacation at all, got no overtime or holiday pay, no social security or workers' compensation, virtually no medical coverage or hospitalization and were constantly treated like shit by everybody, what would you make of it? It sounds like a sharecropper in Mississippi during the Depression. But in reality this is a fair and accurate description of the working conditions of most New York City cab drivers!

For starters, it costs about \$200 to get a license. First there is the \$50 annual license fee, then you must have a medical exam at your own expense, and have your picture taken, but the capper is the \$150 for 3 days of cab driving school. This must rank with the truly great achievements of bureaucratic insanity. You are expected to learn the 6000 miles of N.Y.C. streets in 3 days in a classroom! This from people who have probably never read a map in their lives. The learning, such as it is, takes place on the streets, as it always has.

If you apply by yourself, you can expect to receive your license in about a month, if you're lucky. Most drivers get their license with the "help" of a fleet company where they have applied for a job. This way, with luck, you can start work about 10 days after applying. The catch is that you have to work for them for 30 working days before you can get another job. That's right, if you don't want to blow your \$200 and you want to keep driving a cab you are their indentured slave for 6 weeks. You thought this sort of thing was illegal? So did I! But it's the Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC) rule, and their rule is law.

Dealing with the TLC is like something out of the pages of Kafka. There is no presumption of innocence, you are guilty unless you can prove otherwise, and it's damn hard

to do so! The result is that any drunken slob can get in your cab and order you around and if you refuse to obey him you run the real risk of losing your license. The rule book (over 150 rules) even says that if a passenger refuses to pay his fare you must let him walk away. Try walking out of Macy's with a \$2 item and see what happens. But it's OK to do it to a cabby!

Obviously what we cabbies need is a union! Well, we have one, or at least we have to pay dues to one in order to work. Most cabbies, these days, do what is called leasing. They pay a flat fee for the cab and whatever they take in is theirs to keep. This makes them "independent contractors" which is why we have none of the benefits mentioned above. However, in addition to dues, they must pay \$2 a day into the Union Benefit Fund in order to work. Last year this fund took in approximately \$800,000, had \$400,000 in "administrative expenses" and paid out only \$45,000 in benefits. The union doesn't even negotiate what the lease fee will be, so the owners can charge whatever they can get. Some union this is!

Even the sharecroppers formed a real union back in the 1930's, and it gave the Southern landowners and their cronies quite a scare. Maybe it's time us "new sharecroppers" did the same for the fleet bosses, THE TLC, and the so-called "union".





## DISTRICT 65 ROUND UP

As the busy season draws to a close at one of District 65, U.A.W.'s largest textile shops there are many lessons to be learned. This season we got taste of what the new up and coming management has in store for us in the months and years ahead.

The new "Yuppie" Vice President for Manufacturing has attempted to take a hard line attitude towards us. The days of the boss cracking the whip are back again in this shop.

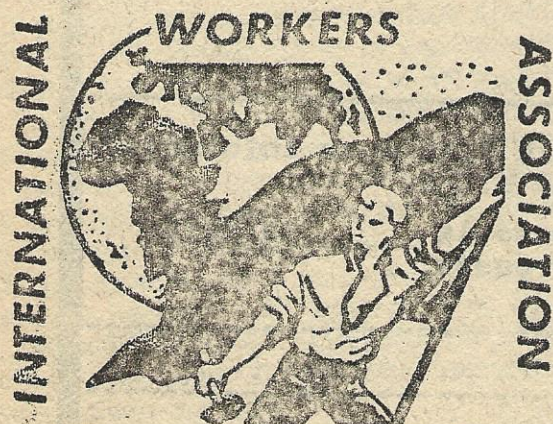
The workers have responded in various ways, though this response has been generally individualized.

Currently workers are not sticking together, rather they seem to be pulling apart along racial and ethnic lines. Such disunity among the workers only aides the bosses in the efforts to gain greater productivity out of the shop and in their efforts to create a robotized un-united workforce. Shop unity across all departmental, racial and ethnic lines is the key to holding the bosses at bay.

Next year the bosses have indicated that they will unveil some sort of productivity scheme. This would take the place of the sometimes-on, sometimes-off "bonus" system.

The shop committee, on behalf of all the workers, recently won some separate improvements above what the other shops covered by the Textile Converters Association and Association of Uptown Converters have in their contracts. Our shop is covered by the T.C.A. master contract. We were able to pull this off only because of the rapid and profitable expansion on the part of the firm. The threat of job actions also aided us in our quest for improvements.

— 65 TEXTILE WORKER



**For a World  
Without  
Fear and Terror**

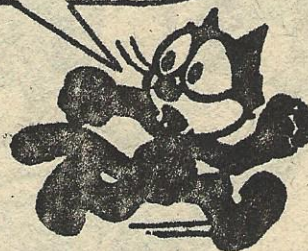
DAM, 8-10 Great Ancoats Street, Manchester.

## MESSANGER ORGANIZATION FORMED

by Rough Rider

The Independent Couriers Association (ICA) was formed in the Spring of 1984 to battle N.Y. City plans to license bike messengers and make us wear uniforms. The ICA is open to a all couriers (foot, truck, bike, etc.) and is concerned with all messenger problems, whether it be a lack of workers' compensation, potholes, minimum wages, and so on. We have regular meetings (the 1st Wednesday of every month) and publish a newsletter. Check us out--ICA, PO Box 20255, London Terrace Sta., N.Y., NY, 10011. You can also leave messages for us with the Workers Solidarity Alliance at (212) 505-6590.

DID SOMEONE MENTION  
DIRECT ACTION?



## ADVERTISEMENTS

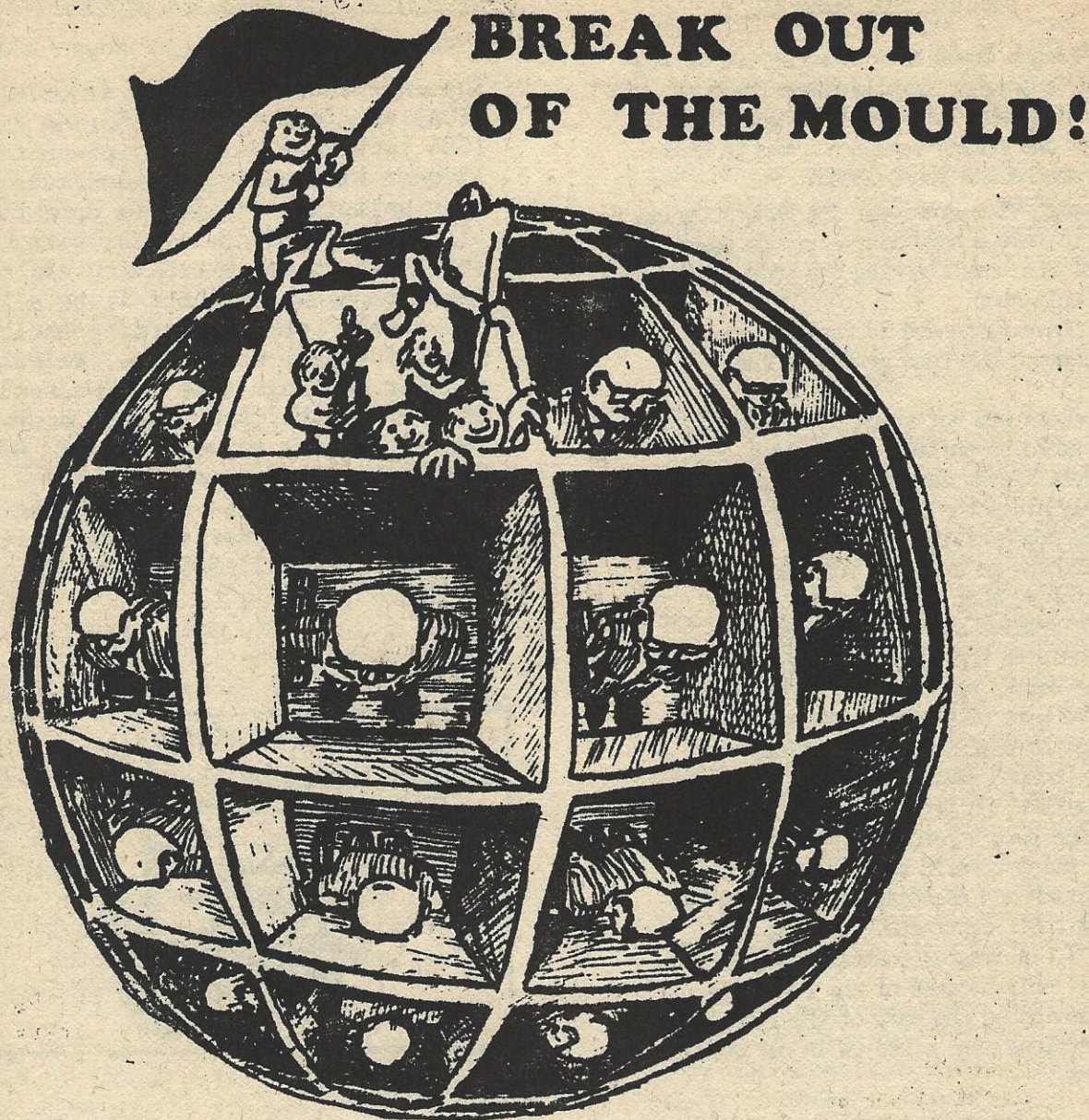
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Book Club, 339 Lafayette St., Room 202, NYC  
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"ideas & action" quarterly magazine of  
the Workers Solidarity Alliance.

Current issue includes: PINK COLLAR WORKERS,  
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WOMEN & THE TRADE UNIONS as well as other articles  
pertaining to sexual politics and workers struggles.

"ideas & action" available thru NY W.S.A.





W.S.A. is a workers organization that stands for direct action and solidarity, and direct rank-and-file management of their own struggles. We see the development of a workers movement self-managed by the rank-and-file as the means to create a new society based on collective management of the economy by all working people. W.S.A. is the U.S. section of the International Workers Association. For more information about W.S.A., write to: Workers Solidarity Alliance New York Area Group, 339 Lafayette St. Room 202, New York, NY 10012.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like more information on the W.S.A.

\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is \_\_\_\_\_ to help cover costs.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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