



## Chairwoman Fights Backroom Deal

The union and the bosses make a great team. They've gotten together at Cab Trans Garage in Brooklyn in an attempt to oust Jane Mt. Pleasant from her elected position as garage chairwoman. Jane was elected on a Rank & File ticket in last June's garage committee elections.

On Friday, May 16, union officials Rick, Mendez, and Eastman visited the garage in response to a warning slip given another committeeman. In their usual style, they refused to defend the committeeman, and instead suggested the boss fire Jane, saying "She gives you trouble, she gives us trouble. Why don't you fire her?"

While they were still in the garage, a petition mysteriously appeared calling for the removal of Jane as shop steward. The petition was pushed by two drivers, friends of the boss. The alliance was obvious: the boss and the union had a common enemy - Jane.



Jane Mt. Pleasant

Why is Jane a nuisance to both the boss and the union? The boss wants a shop steward who will stick up for his interests, not the interests of drivers and inside workers. The union is out to stamp out all opposition to their sell-out policies.

Jane's record is clear. She actively campaigned against the present contract with its dime and split commission (43% to 49%). In December, due to the abominable condition of the cabs, Jane helped organize a safety check. As much as possible, unsafe cabs were tagged and sent to the shop, rather than back on the streets where the boss wanted them.

When in January, the Aciernos (bosses at Cab Trans) started to sell off cabs to minis, the union had one solution, Jane had another. The union's solution was to try and save the bosses' profit by helping instigate a crackdown on low bookers. Jane, on the other hand, went to the drivers of the garage to organize a grass-roots fight against the sale of cabs. Two garage meetings were called in an attempt to come up with a strategy to deal with the loss of cabs and jobs. Ultimately, it was an unsuccessful

*continued on page 4*

## 55th ST. RESISTS RACIST FIRING



55th Street garage meeting.

When Union VP Elias Rick refused to fight the firing of a veteran black driver at 55th St. Garage, workers there began to prepare for their second walkout in four months. On June 6, Morris Miller was fired. Black, driving 16 years, 2½ with 55th St., father of 6 children, Morris Miller returned from a 7 week bout with a chronic back ailment that requires complete bed rest, only to be told "you don't work here anymore".

This was not the first time Morris' back had kept him from driving for a period of time. But it was his first absence since he filed a grievance accusing his boss of discriminating against black drivers, who day after day found themselves last on the shape-up no matter how early they came in. And it was his first absence since he helped build an Action Committee to work with the elected garage committee. And his first since he played a role in the March walk-out over Ross' firing.

### Rick Warns Committee

The boss didn't like that--nor the Union. In fact VP Rick told the committee that if they didn't drop the racism issue they'd be run out of the industry. But the racism issue was the key issue here. Miller was not fired because he was black. But the fact that he was black and had taken a strong role in uniting black, Spanish-speaking, and white workers in the garage made him a real target for the bosses. The one thing that really threatens the bosses power is the prospect of taxi workers overcoming the racial fears and misunderstandings between them. So while previous illnesses did not cost Morris his job, this one was being used to try to get rid of him.

That attempt was to fail. The word was spread about Morris' firing and a meeting was called Friday June 6. This was followed by 3 days of fruitless negotiations with the boss and Union VP Rick.

A meeting on Tuesday afternoon

*cont., p. 6.*

## Since The Last Issue

We're unhappy that it took us so long to get out this issue of the Hot Seat. Our last one came out in February but it seems like a year ago.

During these last few months Rank & File members have been questioning and discussing our work, and the frustrations many of us have felt. Rank & File has been an organized group in the taxi industry for just over four years, and often we're not sure what we're accomplishing. Our aim has always been to make the union really democratic, to struggle for liveable working conditions, and to give us all more control over our lives both on and off the job. Lately there has been a lot of disagreement within Rank & File about how to go about doing that. We'd like to explain to you some of these discussions. We hope you can give us your reactions and suggestions.

Within the last year many of us have been spending a lot of our time in our own garages. We've been trying to get to know people, to be of assistance when we could, to help fight for drivers' and inside workers' rights, and to help build a sense of solidarity among the workers in our garages.

We've had mixed results. For example, we were elected to garage committees in a bunch of garages, and at 55th St. and Dover we participated in wildcat strikes. Yet at other garages we have not been able to build that

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NEW YORK CITY TAXI and LIMOUSINE COMMISSION  
67 BEAVER STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10006  
TAXICAB DRIVER'S LICENSE

**EXPIRES MAY 31, 1975**

EDWARD  
BROWN  
38

RESTRICTIONS

**REVOKED**

**Chairman Loses License, p. 6**



# WHO WE ARE

The HOT SEAT is put out by the Taxi Rank & File Coalition. We are a growing group of drivers. While a few of us have been driving for a long time, most of us have come into the industry in the past three or four years. We are fighting within the union for a qualitatively better life for taxi workers. That means:

- 1) a decent income
- 2) a safe, comfortable, & healthy job
- 3) an end to all harassment.

A strong union would bring us closer to these goals. But what keeps us from these goals is too far reaching for even the strongest of unions. Will we ever get a decent income with skyrocketing inflation? How can we have a safe, comfortable, healthy job when all these things would take away from the bosses' profit? How can we end all harassment when the Taxi Commission was created by the bosses to harass us?

These things show that when the bosses profits come first, our needs often go unmet. Why is this so? Because it is the nature of the system we live under, capitalism. Therefore, we feel that our fight as taxi workers for a decent life goes beyond a bigger cut of the meter. We are working for a system where workers' needs come first and bosses' profits don't come at all. We are working for a system where workers make the decisions that control their lives. We are working for socialism. Although socialism is our end goal, we want to work with all taxi workers to get a better union and a better contract.

We try to put out the HOT SEAT about once a month to keep people informed about developments in the industry, in the union, and in the struggles of other working people.

Our decisions on which articles are included and on what they say are made by all the people working on the paper. We are bound only by the decisions of the Rank & File Coalition as a whole.

We would like very much to hear from the people who read the paper.

## Cruising Pickets Stop Taxi Scabs

MADISON, Wi.—There are no Yellow Cabs on the streets of Madison these days. Yellow Cab drivers, members of Teamsters 695, have been waging an effective strike here since their contract expired on March 31.

The company's offer had included a substantial wage cut, and revocation of the health plan. Drivers demanded a supplement to workman's compensation and more flexible schedules.

### CRUISING PICKETS

The striking drivers have maintained 24-hour picket lines at the main building as well as cruising squads of pickets. There has been nearly 100% attendance of strikers on the lines.

The company's attempts to recruit scabs have been remarkable unsuccessful. Most scabs were turned away at the lines; those that went out were followed by the cruising pickets and persuaded to return.

### TEAMSTERS FOR DEMOCRACY

Striking drivers maintained shifts at the bus station and airport, dissuading customers from riding with Yellow and offering free rides to elderly or sick customers.

The strike at Yellow is the result of years of work to organize the company. Much of the organizing was done by Teamsters for Democracy (TFD), a rank and file group in 695.

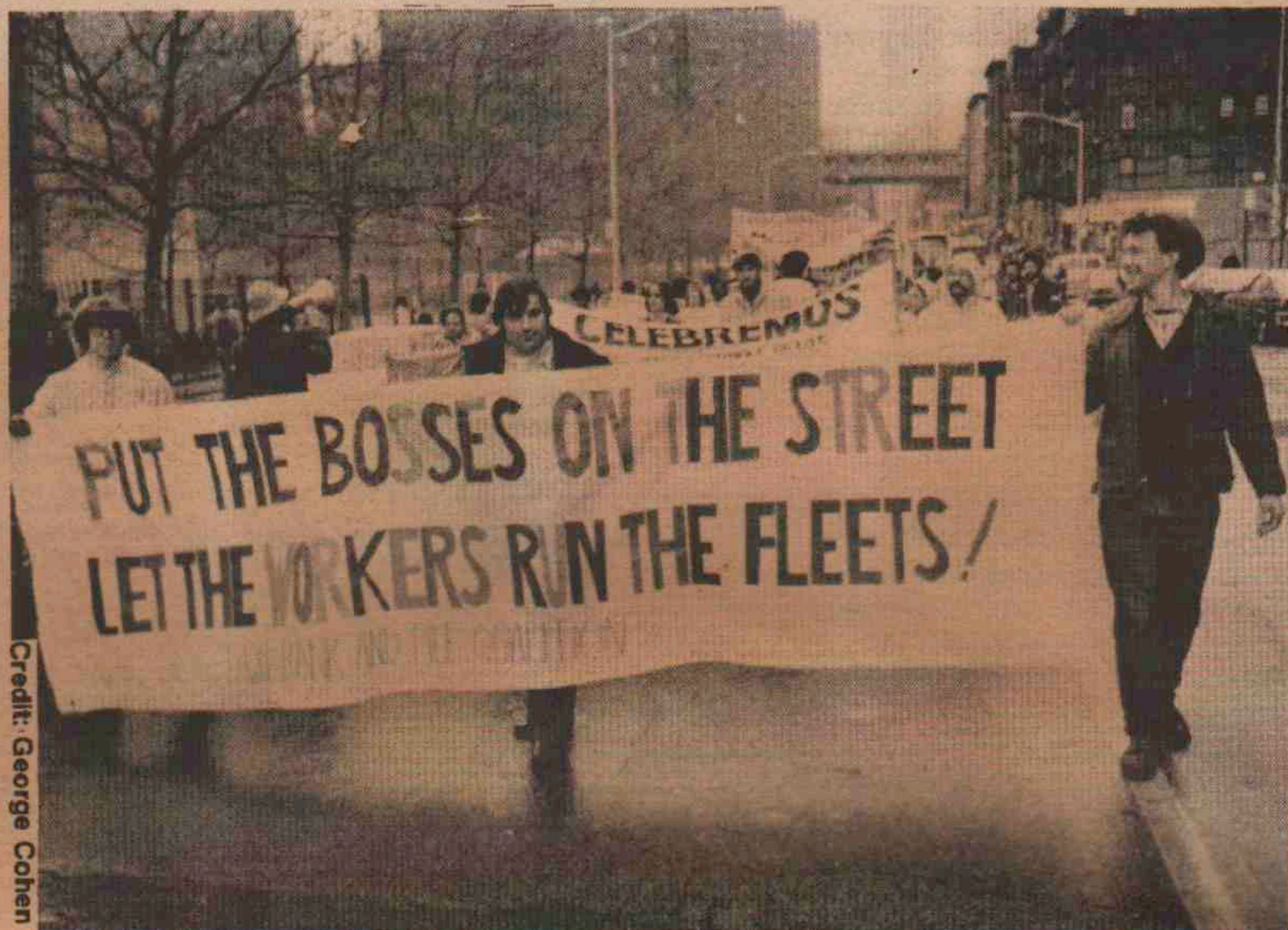
TFD was instrumental in bringing suit against the IBT when 695 was put into trusteeship two years ago. They were able to force the IBT to hold elections for leadership of the local. It is this kind of rank and file organization and militancy that has forced the bureaucrats of 695 to support the strike at Yellow.

### SPIRITS HIGH

The spirit remains high on the lines, even though the company has recently gone to court to try to get an injunction against the strike on the grounds of harassment of scabs.

A woman driver pointed out, "The real issue here isn't money. The owner has already lost more money from the strike than we wanted to begin with. That jerk would rather run this company into the ground than admit that he has to deal with us."

Another driver agreed, "The real issue in this strike is who runs the company. We know we do, and we're proving it." □



Credit: George Cohen

Taxi Rank and File marched in a spirited May Day demonstration with some 2,000 other workers through the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Some people came from as far away as Hartford, Connecticut. The march culminated in a rally at Tompkins Square Park where many speakers stressed the need for an aggressive workers' movement in the United States. Taxi Rank and File was one of the sponsoring organizations of the demonstration.

## LETTERS

### From Santa Barbara

Dear Sisters & Brothers of the Rank & File Coalition,

I want to thank you for sending me The Hot Seat and your proposal for the taxi industry—all very relevant to struggles I'm involved in here in Santa Barbara.

This is a very small town (pop. 80,000) and "our" Yellow Cab Co. has only 60 drivers. But a lot of the conditions described by you are similar to ours. The main difference, aside from scale, is that we have no union at all, and our Rank & File Committee has been hassling for a year trying to get one.

One person on our committee has been fired and we've had tremendous problems just convincing people that individualism doesn't work and we all need to get together to make changes. Also the contradictions aren't as clear here as they are in New York. This is a beautiful, relatively affluent, Mediterranean-type city; drivers come and go every week and the boss knows us all by first name—classically small town Peyton Place atmosphere. The boss is a "nice guy", gives everyone a pair of socks for Xmas every year, etc. He's only 28, and he's managed to convince most people that what's good for

the company (i.e., him) is good for them.

Keep up the good work. A lot of people here are trying to do similar work—in other areas and workplaces. We admire your straightforwardness and perseverance. I'm awed by the guts and energy it must take to drive a cab in NY and to struggle apparently with such persistence and clarity.

I think it's hard here, and we don't get robbed, we know a lot of our passengers by first name, the streets are wide and traffic isn't too bad, and we don't (yet) have to struggle against both the union crooks and the boss. Our main struggle is against individualism.

Love and Solidarity!

Becca Wilson

Santa Barbara Cabbies' Union  
Negotiating Committee

(at Yellow Cab for only a year. Previously a college student and newspaper writer. One of the 2 women cabbies).

P.S. You might be interested to know that the cabs we drive are 2-year old used cabs retired from the Ding-a-Ling Cab. Co. of NYC. (They're pieces of shit, needless to say). I think of you when I pull down the sun-visor and read the addresses for Bronx Zoo, Times Square, Grand Central, etc.

### From Madison

Reading you from Madison, Wisconsin. Yellow Cab here (one of four separate co.'s) has just gotten into Teamsters #695. This local was put in trusteeship 6 months ago. Our trustees resemble your Harry. Real sellout bastards. Wouldn't support us in a strike or negotiations.

Send us a couple of issues whenever they're printed. Like your news very much.

Solidarity-  
Jim Neely  
Madison, Wisc.

## Call or Write

TAXI RANK & FILE COALITION  
BOX 414  
OLD CHELSEA STATION  
N.Y.C., N.Y. 10011

BROOKLYN ..... 768-8871  
QUEENS ..... 768-6651  
MANHATTAN ..... 473-4625  
BRONX ..... 866-4544

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# LETTERS

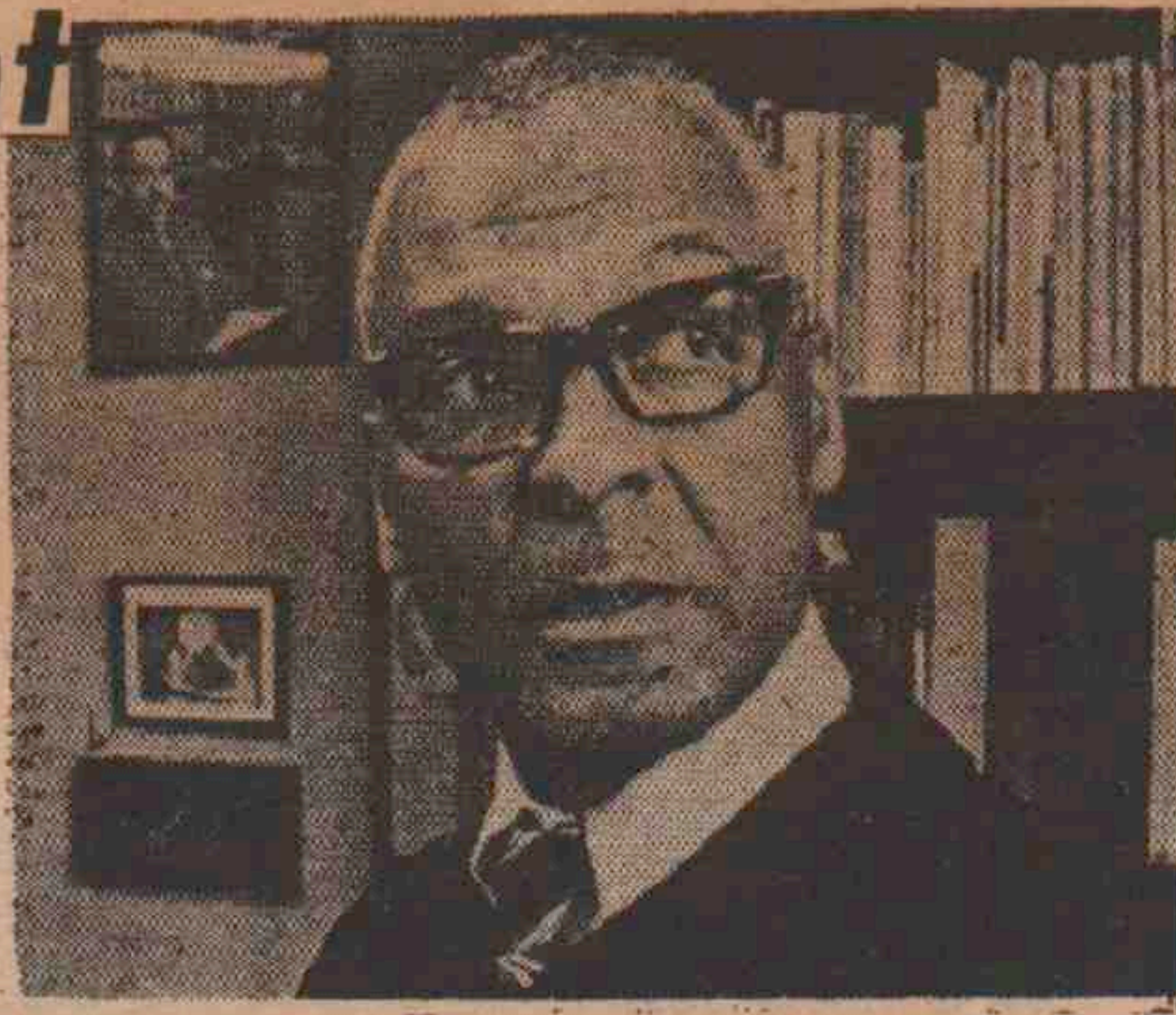
## On Judge Wright

### Blind Support?

Dear HOT SEAT,

Your continued and blind support for Judge Bruce Wright will win you no friends among the Minority People. Judge Wright took it on himself to correct the inequities he saw in the laws by his release of defendants who in some cases had created offenses against their own kind. I have talked with a great many minority people and none of them consider Judge Wright a friend. Mr. and Mrs. Harlem, South Bronx, Bed Stuy and other poor minority neighborhoods fear the kind of people Judge Wright was so lenient to. I think if you concentrated some of your editorials on the Utility and Landlord rip-offs that affect all people, you would be doing a worthwhile service. But to use a pseudo-liberal stance to defend a Judge who practices turnstile justice, and releases potential criminals to prey on the old, poor, and helpless is not my cup of tea.

Your paper has a good circulation and is beginning to be accepted even by the most conservative drivers, but the Judiciary is out of your field. People want law and order and to feel safe. Turnstile justice doesn't give them that feeling of safety. I am one of those minorities who don't accept Judge Wright's form of turn-em-loose justice. Suppose you had been



Judge Bruce Wright

mugged or stuck up, would you want to see the Perpetrator turned loose like he had done nothing?

Just two days ago my ex-landlord and his wife, who are in their eighties, were saved from murder by the quick thinking of a neighbor. When the cops walked in they had a gun at the head of each victim, because one of the holdup men was a neighbor known to the victims. They would have been killed had the cops not walked in. Could such potential killers have been trusted to Judge Wright's kind of leniency? Quit trying to win minorities over by supporting the wrong people.

Resp.

(Name withheld by request)

### This Is Justice?

Dear Hot Seat,

I just read your article on Judge Bruce Wright, and I'm afraid I just can't buy it. While driving a cab last summer, I assisted an elderly woman being mugged. When I interceded, the two suspects tried to slash my throat with a broken-off soda bottle. While I was fighting with them, the cops came and arrested them.

Who presided over the case but Judge Wright. He released the two suspects on No-Bail, after they told me that they would kill me if they ever got out. They skipped their bail (or lack of it) and I was forced to wait in court for

### One Out For Safety?

Dear Hot Seat,

I was reading "The Onion Field" by Joseph Wambaugh the other day, when a fact jumped off the page at me. It seems that in Los Angeles, while a robbery is taking place on a driver, there is a switch he can hit that shuts off one headlight, leaving the other one on, alerting other cabbies, the cops, or anyone who wants to help. With the death of Mario Torres Friday night, it seems to me that we have to do something, anything! to protect ourselves.

I'm a published writer and I'd like to do some research into other methods of protection for drivers and write the story. I agree with your policy of no by-lines. I just want to help. Please drop me a note and tell me if you think it's worth it. The Hot Seat is the most important publication this working man has ever read, and I want to help to continue its mission.

The best ever,  
B.A.L.

Sincerely,  
A.C.

five subsequent appearances, all of them without pay. If you call this "wiping out the injustices of the courtroom," then next time I'm voting for Tandoli instead of Rank & File.

Sincerely yours,  
J.F.M.

### In Reply

We're glad that we got the responses to our article on Bruce Wright in the last issue. As much as possible, we would like the pages of the HOT SEAT to be used to openly discuss the issues that affect taxi workers.

The responses point to the fact that crime always comes down the hardest on working class people, particularly in ghetto neighborhoods--people like cab drivers. It seems natural under these circumstances to want to make sure that anyone who commits a crime against us should be put immediately behind bars and kept there

But we'd like to make a comparison. Every cab driver knows what kind of justice the Taxi Commission deals out. It's a kangaroo court, with almost no chance of being found innocent. On top of that, the suspensions and fines are outrageous. It's very simple: if you're a cab driver, it's assumed that you are guilty.

The court system is not much different. Black and Hispanic people, and working class people in general, are herded through like so many cattle. If you fit into one of these categories, you are presumed to be guilty. A high bail is set, and those who can't afford it are locked up until trial--which could be many months away. But if you have money, you'll be out on bail immediately. It is this inequity that Bruce Wright was trying to correct.

We are not saying that if all judges were like Bruce Wright crime would go away. That's obviously not true. Crime is deeply rooted in our society--in the inhuman conditions people are forced to live in, in prisons that breed more crime. Crime is not going to be eliminated until the whole system is overturned.

Judge Wright was trying to fight the racism which he saw in the court system. Undoubtedly, he made some mistakes. But we believe that he was removed, not for his mistakes, but because he fought for an equitable system of justice. We believe that he should be supported.



"I never worry too much about being fair-minded, because I know that in the end justice always triumphs."



## Since The Last Issue (cont.)

kind of strength. And at some of our "strong" garages we have seen that strength which had been built up over a period of time disintegrate. Furthermore it has become increasingly difficult for Rank & File to organize any activity on a city-wide basis.

Many times our efforts seemed to fail because of a lack of active support from our fellow workers. And we're not sure why. This uncertainty, combined with our frustrations, laid the groundwork for the discussions we've been having.

Those discussions touched on many points—the kind of meetings that Rank & File has, the age and racial composition of most of our members, drivers' and inside workers' fears about the fact that we call for socialism, etc. Few of the questions were resolved with any finality. But we have made some decisions about what we're going to do over the next few months. Firstly, we intend to continue concentrating on our own garages. That means, for all of us, a determined effort to get to know people and to be of assistance to them. Beyond that, there are several possibi-

lities. For some of us it means fighting on every occasion for the full rights of all workers within the garage. For others, it means using every occasion to publicly challenge the bosses' right to make a profit off our labor. And for still others it means trying to organize cultural activities that will help break down the divisions and fears that exist among us.

These alternatives emerged from discussion of the 'best' strategy for work in garages. Very few of us thought we could finally choose one or the other exclusively.

### Necessity For Socialism

The second decision we have made is that, as a group, we will continue to speak about the necessity for socialism in the taxi industry and everywhere

else. When we first arrived at that decision a year and a half ago, it was largely because of our inability to offer solutions to the problems and outrages of this industry within the context of bosses and profits. We came up with a proposal then that called for municipalization of the taxi industry coupled with taxi workers' control of our own jobs. Recently several members of Rank & File questioned the wisdom of holding to that position. They argued that making socialism one of our organizational goals has made it difficult for many taxi workers to work with us.

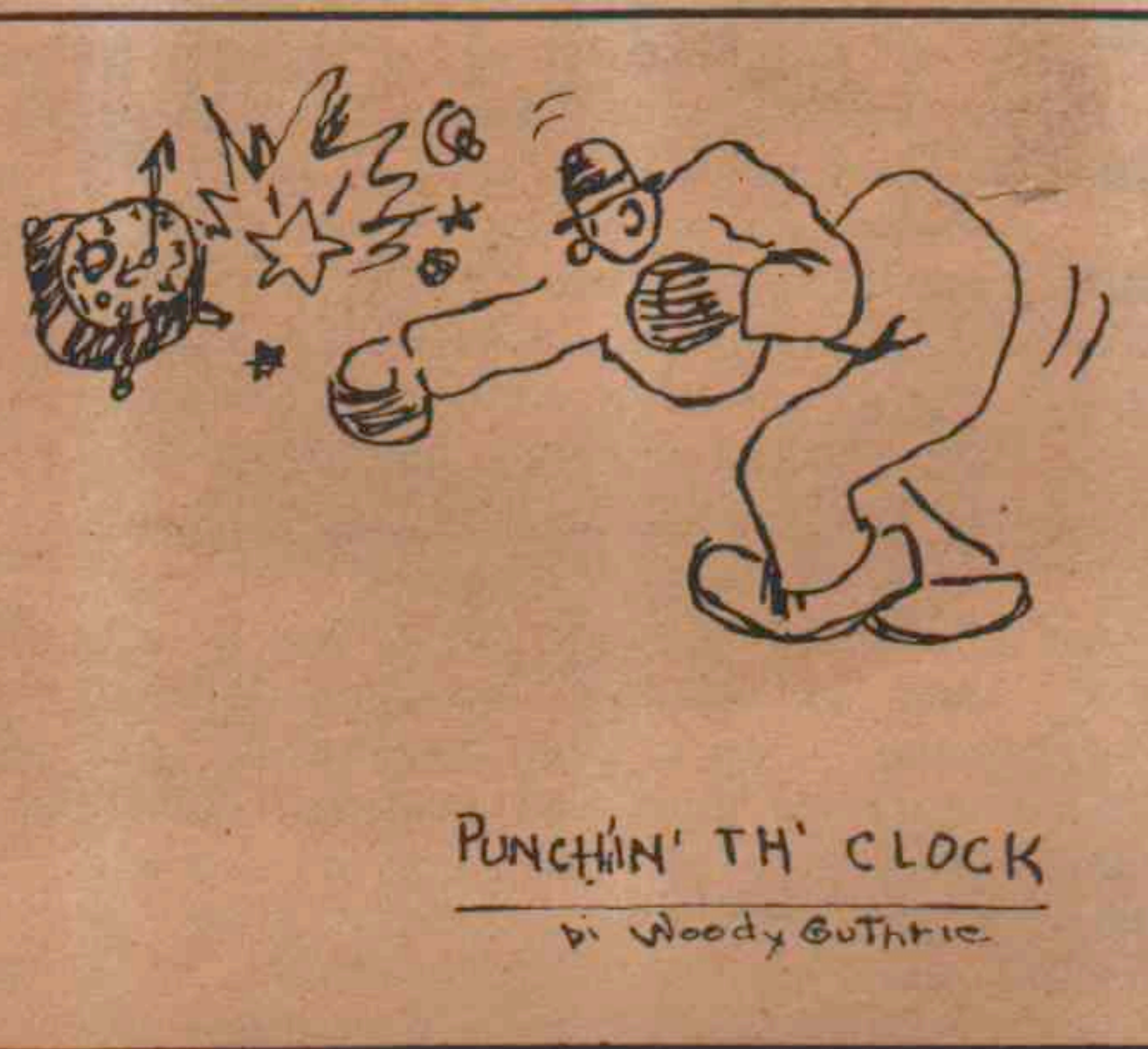
On the other hand, many Rank & File members feel that the main problem with the labor movement has always been that it accepted the logic that the boss had a right to make a profit from our labor. And when you accept that, you accept the bosses' right to fire people arbitrarily, to harass us over bookings, to decide how many cents-per-mile is good enough, etc. Therefore, they believe, the key to a strong union movement is to reject the bosses' rights and to struggle for socialism.

Many of these differences are still being worked out. We would like to encourage all taxi workers to let us know what they think about these issues.

## Threat To Us All

A concerted attack appears to be underway around the city against members of the Taxi Rank & File Coalition, focusing on Rank & File shop stewards and garage committee people. The bosses and the union bureaucrats seem to be cooperating well (as usual) in this effort, which has included firings, suspensions, threats, red-baiting, and sexist attacks against a Rank & File chairwoman. While these attacks have created problems for individual drivers, and for Rank & File as an organization, they are a threat to all taxiworkers. By concentrating on garages where militant shop committees and a growing organization of workers have threatened the uneasy peace that the bosses and union have maintained at our expense, the powers-that-be in the taxi industry are telling us to keep quiet or watch out. Rank & File does not intend to keep quiet, and we ask for the support and participation of all taxiworkers in stopping these attacks, and, ultimately, in taking power away from the bosses and the bureaucrats.

*In the following section, we use the word "blacklisting." We don't like the word since it implies negative thoughts about blackness and we feel that it is used to reinforce prejudices against black people. Unfortunately, we don't know another word to describe the events involved.*



PUNCHIN' TH' CLOCK

by Woody Guthrie

### "You're Hired-You're Fired"

Blacklisting, a favorite union busting technique of bosses the world over, is back in the taxi industry. It's being used in an updated, subtle, and particularly nasty way. Tom Robbins, former shop steward at Dover, has found it impossible to work in the taxi industry since he was fired from Dover in March (see accompanying article). After being turned down by 25 garages (one garage, M&S, hired him but fired him before he started working, saying they were "full up"), Robbins finally got a job through the union at Penn St. in Brooklyn. After two weeks he was fired for taking off one week-end, even though he'd phoned in and gotten an OK to do it. The union then sent him to Taxi Maintenance in the Bronx, which fired him after a week. Then he went to Carrick in Queens. They fired him after three days, saying "We don't have to give you a reason." It's an agonizing process, being fired by garage after garage before the thirty day probationary period is up. The bosses are no doubt hoping this technique will allow them to get around the anti-blacklisting laws, leaving them free to get rid of anyone who gets too troublesome for them and their buddies at the union office. We can't allow that to happen.

## Chairwoman (cont.)

fight, as many cabs were and are still being sold. But her refusal to cooperate with the boss, and her exposure of the union's refusal to deal with this critical city-wide issue made Jane a target for both the boss and the union.

Also, as a result of a complaint filed by Jane at the N.L.R.B. taxi workers can pass out literature not only in garage waiting rooms (a right established two years ago by driver Bill Orleans) but wherever drivers congregate in the garage.

The pressure to sign the petition against Jane was heavy. Some drivers were threatened outright by the boss' stooges. At one point they were taking names of people who refused to sign, and showing them to the boss.

This petition seems to be a build up for the Union's Executive Council to vote Jane out of office. Then Acierno and the union leaders could get together and appoint a new chairperson of their choice.

In spite of the pressure there is a solid core of workers in the garage who understand exactly what's going on, and who's behind it. They have refused to sign the petition and are solidly supporting Jane. It will be a hard fight. If the union and the boss can work together in Cab Trans to remove a militant shop steward, taxi workers in the city have a tough struggle ahead.





# Dover Chairman Sacked

On March 12, Tom Robbins, shop chairman at Dover garage, was fired. Four other drivers, including Dover's three committeemen, received one week suspensions. All five drivers were members of the Taxi Rank & File Coalition.

The "Impartial" Arbitrator, Eric Schmertz, after two months of stalling, gave the green light to Dover boss Gerry Cunningham (also head of the fleetowners' organization) to discipline the five drivers because of a 15 minute safety check which occurred last November (See Hot Seat #33 for details). Schmertz resigned his post right after handing down the decision.

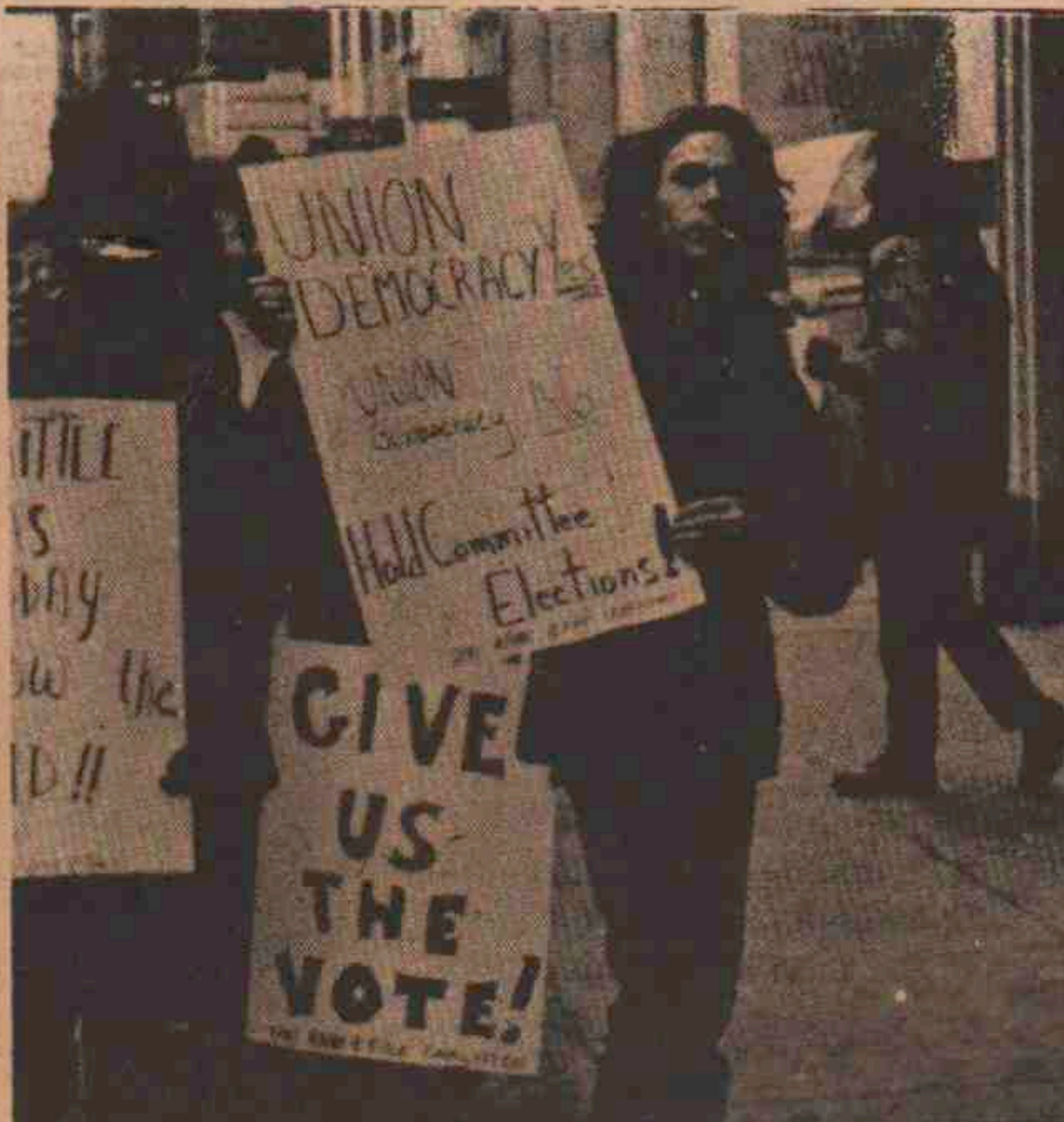
No Union worth anything would allow a shop chairperson to be fired. But the bureaucrats at 3036 have shown from the beginning that they had no use for Robbins or the other threatened drivers. And Vice President Elias Rick directed hostile comments at the drivers throughout the arbitration proceedings. So, while the union's lawyer presented an adequate defense, as was required, the arbitrator was getting the clear signal that the Union was not behind the people it was supposed to be defending. Combined with whatever behind-the-scenes conversations were going on, this totally undercut the strength of the drivers' case.

## Two Month Delay

The two month delay before a decision was reached affected the whole garage. The urgency of the case faded. Details slipped from people's minds. New drivers came in who knew nothing of what had happened. All this made it harder to mobilize support when the decision finally came down.

Most everyone thought that the arbitrator's decision, and the subsequent firing and suspensions, were outrageous. It was clear that the firing of Robbins, who had been an active and militant chairman, was an attack on the whole garage.

On the other hand, many people felt that the safety-check over which Robbins had been fired, while not grounds for discharge, had been a mistake. Some felt they didn't want to walk out in defense of a mistake. The fact that the union wouldn't back a strike intimidated some people. Others, while willing to strike, had questions whether a strike could win.



Dover ex-chairman Tom Robbins demands that the union hold committee elections. (February, 1974)

A strike meeting was called, with a few days' advance notice to spread the word and give everyone a chance to think about it. About 45 people turned out. All were angry and determined but it was clear that it was not enough for a winning strike. It was a sad realization, yet rather than becoming demoralized, people felt that everyone had to work a lot harder to get drivers in the garage together. About 25 people constituted themselves into an Action Committee determined to build a strong organization at Dover, capable of fighting for drivers' rights and of preventing similar outrages in the future.

## Action Committee

The Action Committee has continued to meet and do work. Several newsletters have come out and the Action Committee gave a party for Dover workers.

Soon after Robbins was fired, a group of Dover drivers went up to the

union to demand an election for a new shop steward, and to get the union to act on a backlog of grievences. They were met first by about 25 goons and then by VP Elias Rick who refused to talk to anyone other than the garage committee.

In the following weeks, the remaining members of the garage committee attempted to handle grievences, but Cunningham claimed he didn't have to deal with them because Rick was acting chairman (this was news to Dover workers), and he only had to deal with the chairman. Rick would not give a clear answer as to whether he was acting shop steward, but he refused to support the right of Dover's committeemen to handle grievences. He told them he had orders not to "take anymore bullshit" from them and that the next time they wanted to see him they should make an appointment. He said he'd get around to appointing a new chairperson someday and wouldn't allow an election.

A new shop steward has finally been appointed. He's Don Goodwin, a night-line driver at Dover. While he's not the total yes man for the bosses and the union that most people expected, he's not someone who's shown much interest in doing anything about problems in the garage. But the real question isn't whether Goodwin can do a good job, but whether the union should have the right to select Dover's shop steward, bypassing two elected committeemen in the process. Furthermore, the union didn't know Goodwin from any other driver, and the only way they could have gotten his name was from the bosses. So the real question is: Who should select Dover's chairperson, the bosses or the workers?

## Bosses' Strategy

Cunningham's strategy seems clear. By firing Robbins and ignoring the garage committee, he's trying to intimidate Dover workers and undermine the strength they've developed over the past year. New checkers and a new chairman will keep things below the boiling point. And cooperative union bureaucrats will guarantee that if things do boil over, Dover workers will have nothing backing them up.

For the moment things do appear calm. Robbins' firing and blacklisting have made people hesitant to struggle, and the new cabs have improved the job a bit. So people are content to let things ride for a while. Yet more people are active in the garage than ever before, and are determined to make some changes. Dover workers have suffered a defeat. But they're going to be a lot better prepared for future battles.



Dover boss, Gerald Cunningham, left, and Elias Rick, union vice-boss, right.

When the decision was announced, all sides went into action. VPs Rick and Mendez showed up to have a powwow with Cunningham. Next day a sign appeared in the dispatching window signed by the two vice-presidents. It warned drivers that work stoppages were illegal and that anyone participating in one could be discharged.

But drivers were talking strike.



Dover drivers collect money for a leaflet explaining the history of the firings.



## 55th St. (cont.)

decided to pull Wednesday's night line and have a rally/meeting Wednesday afternoon.

Wednesday morning signs went up and arriving drivers were informed of the situation. The boss asked Committeeman Larry Guinchard to take the signs down and asked if he was ready to go to work. When he replied no on both counts he was fired for condoning a work stoppage. The signs stayed in view.

At about 2:00 VPs Rick and Zarr showed up to say that an arbitration had been set for the next day for both Miller and Guinchard, and that the Arbitrator, now Vincent McDonnell, had ordered everyone back to work.

At about 2:30, as more night drivers began arriving, another meeting was called at 5:00 PM, and after much discussion it was decided to put off action until after the arbitration.

At the arbitration next day, Guinchard was reinstated by McDonnell, who said he wanted to get to the bottom of the Miller firing before looking into the walkout.

Over a dozen 55th drivers showed up at the arbitration. Morris Miller testified that he had indeed told the boss he was out because of his back, and that was corroborated by committeeman Morty Cohen who had overheard the conversation. Other drivers gave testimony that demonstrated a pattern of discrimination against Miller. Some said they themselves had taken off for weeks or months without asking permission, for reasons less serious than illness, and had gone right back to work when they returned with no problem. Others testified that when they had been convicted of first-time flag-ups at the Taxi Commission, the boss had not suspended them at all, while he had tried to suspend Miller 30 days. Other incidents were brought out, including Miller's exposure of the manager in a lie in front of other drivers, and his grievance about discrimination against blacks.

The testimony must have been persuasive, and the concern of other drivers impressive, for Friday McDonnell ordered Morris Miller re-instated. But Monday the whole garage committee and four other drivers were notified that they were working under protest and that the boss reserved the right to bring grievances against them for the walkout.

So far nothing has happened.

## March Walkout

Both the Miller incident and the March walkout were triggered by the Union's unwillingness to oppose firings or to process a wide variety of other grievances. As far back as December '74 the Garage Committee complained to the 55th St boss "manager" about lack of heat in the garage, lack of winter uniforms and raingear for inside workers, failure to pay breakdown and call-in pay, discrimination against black drivers in dispatching and against Spanish-speaking drivers in hiring, and a list of other violations of the contract.

Discussion with the boss for two months brought no results. VPs Ric

the grievances. Tension began to build at the garage.

Then came the Ross incident. David Ross was asked to take two other 55th St. drivers to a nearby garage for cars, and given 95¢ credit on his trip card. But the ride came to \$1.05, and at the end of the day Ross refused to turn in the extra dime, or as he put it, refused to give the boss an "advance". For that Ross was fired, the boss taking the stand that Ross had less than 30 days at 55th St and, as a probationary driver, could be fired for any reason or no reason.

The Ross firing, coming on top of the firing of a black driver who had been active in building a garage "Action Committee", and these coming on top of Union inaction on the other grievances, brought the garage to the boiling point.

### Garage meeting

On Wednesday March 12 a garage meeting decided on a plan of action. Reconvening at 3AM Thursday they explained the situation to day drivers as they came to work, and got their agreement not to drive until David Ross was rehired. In the course of the day, drivers added the demand that all past grievances be dealt with, that there be no reprisals for taking part in the walk-out, and that the day be counted towards bonus, vacation, and Health Plan credit. VP Rick, already discredited by his indifference to garage grievances, sent word that the Union would not come down until drivers were back to work.

The 'Impartial' Arbitrator of the taxi industry sent a telegram saying the walkout was in violation of the contract and he would uphold the boss's right to fire anyone participating. The drivers stayed out: no signs, no picket line, just a lot of drivers hanging around waiting for the Union to come down and do its job. But only 4 cars of the 87 car fleet left the garage.

Then came a phonecall from the Arbitrator, Eric Schmertz, and there followed 3-way negotiations between him, the boss, and the garage committee in consultation with the drivers. The Arbitrator agreed to hear all the garage grievances the next day; the boss agreed to no reprisals; and the drivers agreed to



While drivers at 55th Street garage were meeting and deciding what to do, camera-shy Elias Rick, Union V.P., showed up but obviously had a lot to hide his face about. Instead of helping the drivers, his business was holding private meetings with Howie Paris, garage manager.



55th Street drivers during a garage meeting.

go back to work, though some favored staying out until the grievances were settled, not just heard by the Arbitrator.

There is no room here to describe in detail the affectionate scene when at this point VPs Rick and Mendez finally showed up, only to find a settlement had been reached without them. This pitiful pair could do no more than continue to sputter that the strike was illegal and suffer that special contempt and abuse that workers reserve for sellouts and scabs.

A lot of drivers learned something about their union leaders that day.

Next day they learned more about their boss and about arbitrators. The boss, despite his pledge of no reprisals, tried to fire 12 drivers including the whole committee for the walkout. The Arbitrator, despite his promise to arbitrate all grievances, heard only the firing cases, saying he didn't have time for any of the others and not even setting another date for them. While he held the boss to his no-reprisals pledge, he let him fire David Ross for that dime. As if the bosses don't take enough of our dimes already!

## Commission Pulls Chair

One fine spring day Columbia Chairman Ed Brown, a member of the Watchdog Committee, was told by his boss that a Columbia driver had telephoned that he was having trouble at the Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC) and was about to have his license taken away. Brown gathered up two committeemen, Leo Lazarus and Charlie Brosakas, and raced down to Beaver St. It turned out however, that the driver had called not from the Taxi Commission but from the Motor Vehicle Adjudication Bureau on 26th St. and Park. So the stage was set for what should have stayed a comedy of errors.

Never having seen the driver Brown was asking about, the TLC might well have thought Brown was out of his mind or out to make trouble. Brown, hearing everyone deny they knew anything about a driver his own boss said was down there, thought he was being jerked around. But what with the contempt the TLC shows for drivers in general, and the suspicion drivers have of the TLC, a misunderstanding could not simply remain a misunderstanding.

As the three committeemen were bounced from one office to another, their TLC security guard escort began to badmouth them and taxi drivers in general. Brown, who has a sharp tongue himself, apparently said something that brought laughter and merriment to the drivers who heard it, and embarrassment to the Guard-- and the badmouthing turned to talk of fighting. But the talk remained talk and the three were ushered to the next office in their search without further incident. The



# Radios And Racism

This article was submitted by a driver from Brooklyn.

The installation of radios (Minutemen) in 300 NYC yellow cabs, regardless of the drawbacks associated with having to turn in the other half of the out-of-town fare, etc., can be viewed as progressive.

In the Taxi business, where one's livelihood depends on countless "chance" situations from day to day, the radio provides, as it was well put by one driver, "an edge that does not necessarily work all the time but it's an edge." The fundamental worth (economic) of the radio is its consistency especially on weekends and during the summer, which with rare exceptions involve less of a hard drive for a fare. Another advantage of the radio is the communication it provides in any kind of emergency. Lastly, the radio is a source of aid not only to us as cab drivers, but to people on the street who may be in need of help.

We owe the radios primarily to the efforts of a one-time cab driver, Mr. Jim Gillen, whose contribution I hereby respectfully acknowledge. There is however another side to this issue, which is being promoted by Mr. Gillen himself, which causes me, a Black driver, a great deal of uneasiness, and is thus a side I am decidedly opposed to.

This other side of the radio issue first came to my attention after the death of one of our ranks, Morris Rader in a hold-up in Harlem. He was a white cab driver from Brooklyn. Most of us who drive a radio cab, including some non-radio cabs and owner drivers, formed a long line of close to 500 cabs driving from downtown Brook-

lyn to the funeral home to pay our respects and give our condolences to the family. The following day two suspects, were held, two Black youths of ages 13 & 16 (not sure about the ages). This was followed by strong urgings on the part of Mr. Gillen that they be given either "life imprisonment" or the "death penalty", and he subsequently asked for a demonstration of radio cabs supporting these aims, which did materialize.

I declined to participate in any such demonstration and made it known to those at the base that I disagreed with their views. I disagree primarily because I view our fellow cab driver and the youths held as suspects in his slaying as victims of the same system.

Approximately a week later or less my views were borne out. I attended

another funeral, another wake, this time in Brownsville of yet another 13 year old Black youth named Claude Reese killed by a white cop named Frank Bosco while preparing a basement for a "sweet sixteen" party. A year before, Clifford Glover, Black, 10 years old, was shot in Queens by another white cop named Shea. The officers involved in these shootings today are free!

This is what is so disturbing about Mr. Gillen's strong support for closer ties between the police and the radio cab structure, to the extent that we now receive the police paper in our garages, to the extent that we are now described as "the eyes and ears of the police department." Even though such a statement is well out of place in the taxi world (no loss to us), I would much rather be described and attempt to live up to the notion that WE ARE THE EYES AND EARS AND SUPPORTERS OF



500 drivers join their cabs to form caravan in memory of Morris Rader.

## Knife; Man Loses License

Guard remained outside.

When the TLC official left that office to get some information, the Guard appeared at the door, and when Brown opened the door for him he saw the Guard had a knife in his hand. Brown grabbed a chair to hold him off yelling "That man has a knife, that man has a knife!" The official returned and told the Guard to disappear. He was joined by another official who had the nerve to tell Brown not to "be physical" when he left.

When they got downstairs, they stopped a patrol car and had the Guard ar-

rested and booked. The TLC then made countercharges against Brown. Both were released on their own recognizance and their next hearings are in Criminal Court June 6.

Meanwhile the TLC ordered Brown to appear before its own kangaroo-court hearing where it charged him with assaulting the Guard, fraudulently representing a driver without authorization by the Union, and with the TLC's favorite catch-all rule, #101, "conduct against the best interests of the public."

At the TLC hearing, Brown's boss confirmed that he had in fact given Brown the wrong information in telling him the Columbia driver had called from the TLC. The two committeemen with Brown testified that the Guard had drawn his knife without provocation.

Yet, Brown was found guilty, and by a TLC Hearing Officer who even refused to identify himself except by the number "0096."

Brown and his lawyer feel confident of reversing #0096, either on appeal within the TLC or to the courts. But meanwhile Brown's license has been revoked, and he was fined \$100.

It seems to us that when the attitude at the TLC is such that an employee feels free to pull a knife for nothing more than being talked back to by a driver he has insulted, something has to be changed there. And when that employee is kept on while the driver he has abused is deprived of his license and livelihood, that change has to be pretty far-reaching.

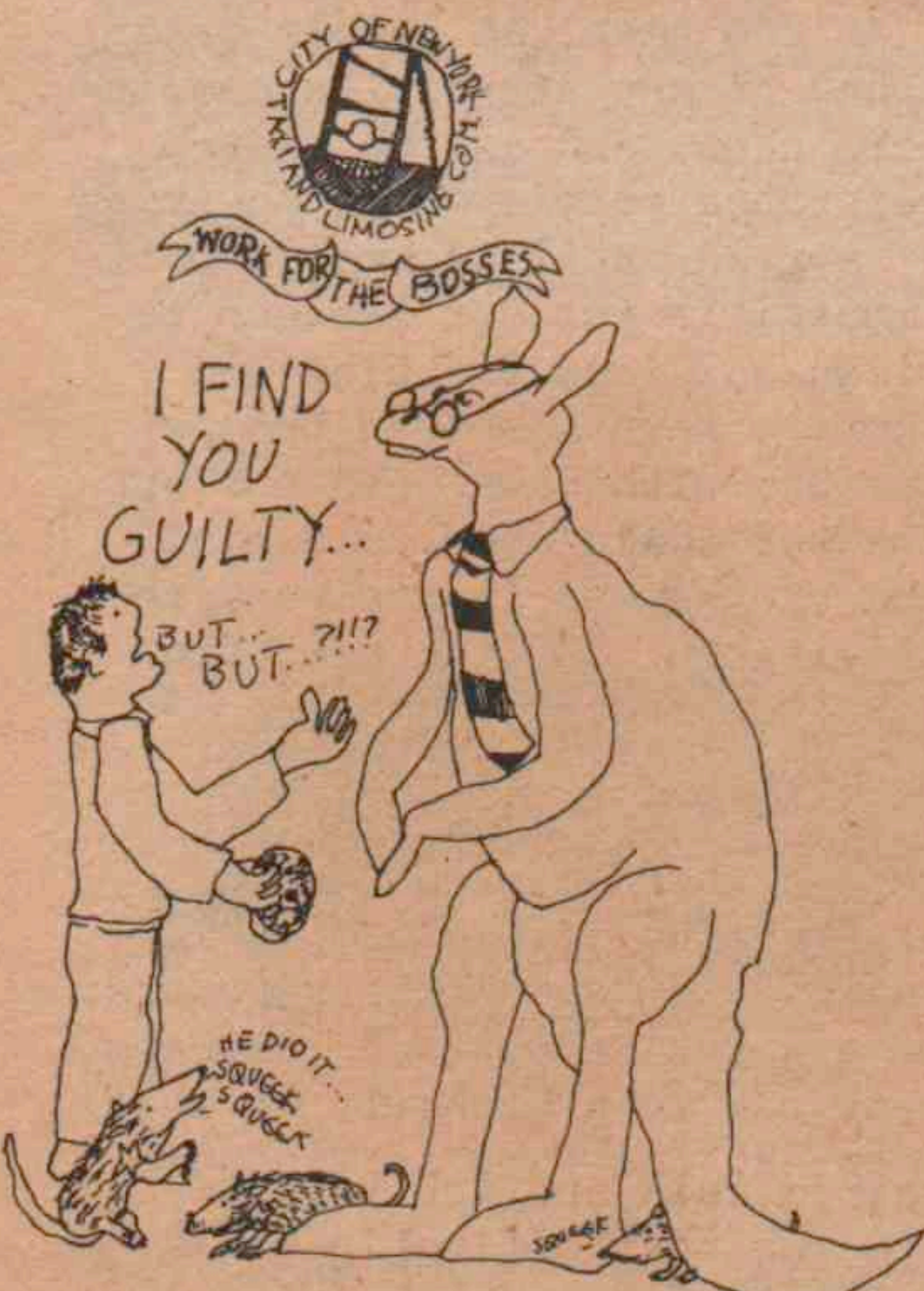
Such a change is not going to come overnight and not just by asking for it. Rank & File has cooperated with the Watchdog Committee in two demonstrations at the TLC, primarily in support of Brown, but also around other demands.

### THE STRUGGLE OF THE PEOPLE.

This latter statement can not be equated, does not in any way mean the same as the first. It was the police in Selma and Montgomery who turned dogs loose on Blacks struggling for civil rights and trampled them with horses and simultaneously beat them with nightsticks. It was the police in defense of the rich classes, who did not knock as they broke into our homes and our communities, killing and wounding countless of our people in New York, Watts, Chicago, Detroit, and Buffalo in 1966-68. It was the Police again at Jackson State Mississippi who shot black students there and weeks later the National Guard followed suit at Kent State killing and wounding white students. Remember ATTICA? Again the police, this time under undisguised order from their boss Rockefeller who ordered the massacre of unarmed Black and Puerto Rican prisoners.

No, the memory of my brothers is still fresh: I do not welcome any close ties with the police, since the police as a collective unit have never shown themselves to be supporters of the struggle of the people. In the event of any confrontation with our bosses, may it be for better wages or better working conditions, we may rest assured the police will not be protecting our interests. Wherever you see a picket line of striking workers you will find the police between them and their objective. It has never been the role of the police to act in our interest nor do I foresee it as such.

To sum up, Mr. Gillen's position on this latter issue is the only dull edge of the radio which must be sharpened by the collective efforts of the rank and file.





People of Dien Binh village with the help of Liberation Army Soldier dig a canal to bring water to their crops. (June 1975)



## The War Is Over!

The war is over in Vietnam.

Really over, at last. And Rank & File feels like celebrating, exulting.

But how do you celebrate an "American defeat" in a way that can be understood by fellow Americans, fellow workers, fellow drivers? How do you avoid the impression that for some obscure or perverse reason we are mindlessly and bitterly against our own country and its values, rebels only for the sake of being rebels?

To start with, it seems one should like one's own government to act towards other countries so as to help their people as well as our own: to help governments that help their people, and not to help governments that hurt their people. Of course, "the people" is a vague phrase—everyone claims to act in the interests of "the people", and in many places "the people" don't have much to say about it. But it seems that in Vietnam "the people" had a lot to do with the way this war turned out, and it seems that pretty consistently they supported the forces we opposed and opposed the side we supported.

### Arms And Supplies

Take the question of arms and supplies: Saigon had them dumped in its lap by the plane and the boatload. But when the guerillas began getting help from the North their supplies had to be carried on people's backs or slung on bicycles and pushed through jungles and mountains for 500 miles. It took people to do that.

Their supplies found their way into the hands of fighters who used them. Our supplies, as often as not, found their way into the hands of traders who

sold them, usually on the black market, but frequently to the enemy itself. Their side seemed really concerned with what they called "liberation." Our side seemed concerned with what we call loot.

Given the supplies, who used them, and how? Their side relied on Vietnamese to do the fighting. "Our side" had to throw in an assortment of Australians, Koreans, and Turks and half a million Americans. In Vietnam, that's not exactly "the people."

And how did the civilians react? Remember how time after time they always knew when "we" were coming, and we never knew when they were coming? How they were always warned and could disappear, while we were just watched as we marched over their mines and blew ourselves up? That was "the people" in 1000 villages and hamlets, showing which side they were really on.

But even from the beginning, our struggle for the "hearts and minds of the people" was more a slogan for home consumption than a reality in the fields and hamlets of Vietnam.

In the early '60s the Saigon government, on American advice, began fencing in its villages, not so much to keep the guerillas out as to keep the people in: to prevent them from joining the insurgency or bringing it supplies and information. When that did not work whole villages were forcibly relocated to other parts of the country where the villagers were strangers and relatively helpless. And when they kept filtering back to their own homes those homes were burnt, and the fields around them too. "The people", whose support we were supposed to be winning, were starved out of the countryside where they were hard to control and driven into the cities and the refugee camps where they could be guarded.

### Villages Resist

As more and more villages resisted this forced relocation and destruction, whole regions were declared "free fire zones" where anything that moved was bombed or strafed. Crops were poisoned, irrigated land was pocked with bomb craters, forests defoliated. A government intent on winning hearts and minds would have promptly punished at least the officers responsible for the massacre at My Lai-- not necessarily out of any higher morality, but because one massacre undercuts years of propaganda and thousands of pieces of candy given to Vietnamese children. But the My Lais went unpunished, and all pretense was gone. These were tactics not for winning hearts and minds but for breaking wills and breaking bodies.

## An Open Letter To George Meany

Dear George,

Sorry the mailman woke you up, but I had a horrible dream last night, and thought you should hear about it. New York has a TV commercial where this guy called Jerry is asked "What's the Story, Jerry?" Jerry then proceeds to tell the people that his store sells to Civil Service and Union members only. Just show your union card and you're in. Clear? In my dream I dreamt that I went to this store to buy a toilet seat to use as a frame for a picture of the President of our Union, Harry Van Arsdale. I was greeted by a smiling sales clerk who asked if I was a city employee. I said no, I was a union member. He asked to see my union card and when I showed him the card he let out a yell and called three guys who picked me up and threw me out the door. He then threw the card at me. I



AFL-CIO PRESIDENT MEANY AT EASE IN FLORIDA

told him, while brushing myself off, that I was a paid up union member and that was my union. "Union?" he screamed, "you call that a union? Beat it, bum!" The union I belonged to was the NYC Taxi Drivers Union, Local 3036 AFL-CIO. I woke up in a sweat, and, unable to go back to sleep, decided to write you of my dream, also about conditions in the union that are no dream.

You may have the news of an experiment going on, teaching a monkey how to communicate with humans using sign language. Reports are sensational. If and when the monk graduates, how about substituting him for Harry? I'm sure no one would notice the difference.

So long, Georgie, nice talking to you.

signed: an old timer

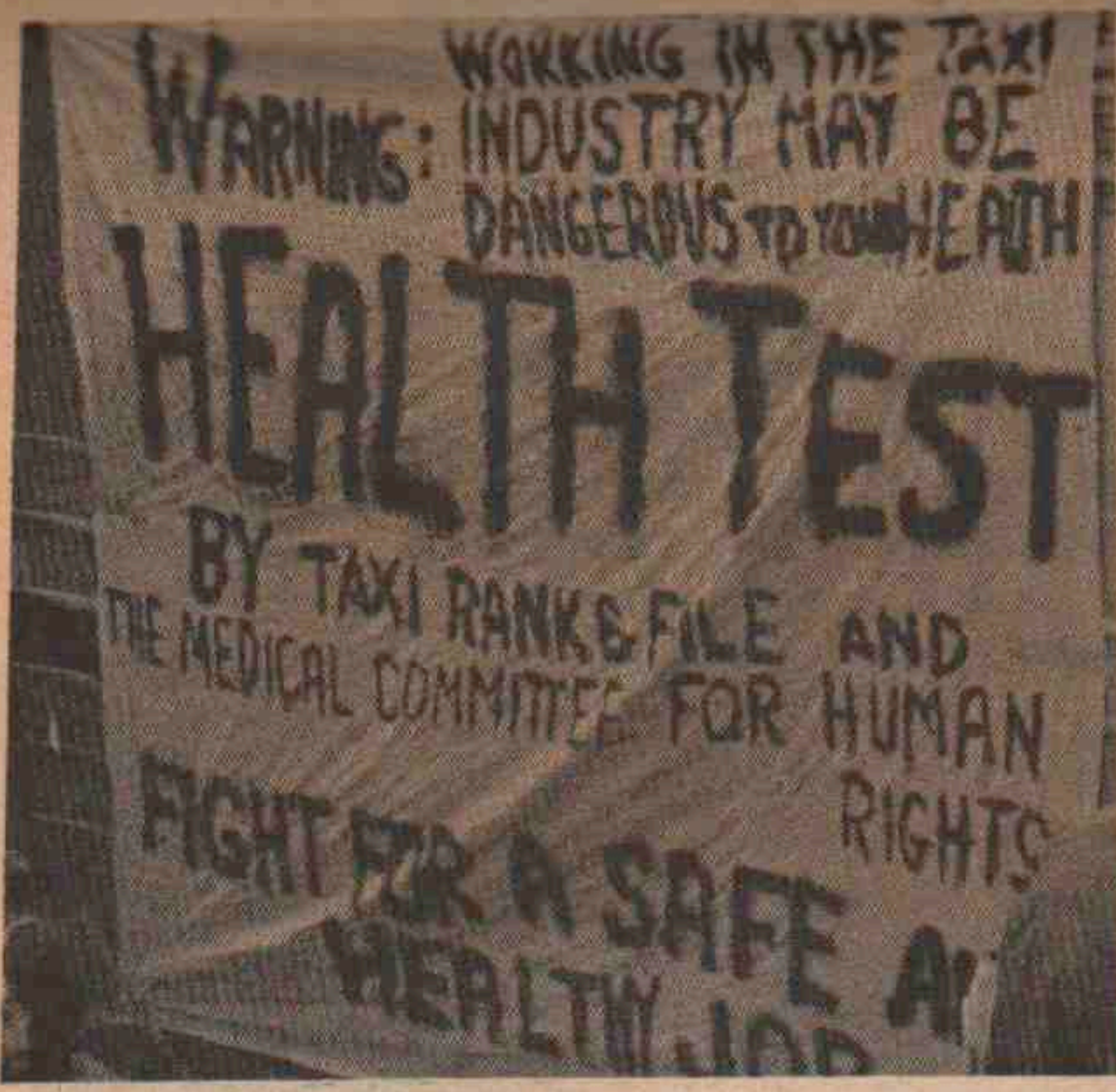
They succeeded only in stiffening the resistance, both in Vietnam and in the U.S. As the American people gradually learned of the atrocities committed in their name, and as the Vietnamese resistance persisted, opposition to the war spread until it became politically impossible for our leaders to keep American soldiers fighting and bombing there. When American troops and pilots were withdrawn, and the outcome of the war again came to depend on just the Vietnamese themselves, the end was inevitable. At the next big push, the Saigon regime crumbled.

As we approach our bicentennial, we're reminded of a friend's remark some years ago when American troops were still fighting in Vietnam. "In '76," he said, "we fought the redcoats. In '67, we are the redcoats." Perhaps if Americans can look honestly at what has been done in our name in Vietnam we can feel relief at another defeat of modern redcoats, even though those redcoats were "us."



Over 50,000 people gathered in Central Park to celebrate the end of the war in Viet Nam on May 11, 1975. (Credit: LNS)





As we reported in the last issue, taxi-driving might be causing widespread high blood pressure among drivers. When the Rank & File Health Committee tested drivers at Cab Trans and Eden (Flushing), for a wide variety of health problems, we found that about 40% had high blood pressure. That's almost three times the national average. After we found the same high percentage at Ann Service, we decided to concentrate on testing blood pressure. So we went to RAMP in the Bronx, and there again found about 40% of the drivers tested had high blood pressure.

These results are not just figures on paper. They mean that cabdriving is endangering the lives of all of us who drive. High blood pressure is one of the most important causes of heart

attacks. Think back over the last few years and remember how many drivers in your garage have died from heart attacks.

We think these health tests have started to show us something really important. But we don't have enough information yet. So we're going to continue testing for high blood pressure at garages throughout the city. If you'd like us to come to your garage, give us a call at 768-6651 or 643-1591.

In the meantime, if you want to get your blood pressure checked, you can go to your own doctor, to any city health station, or to the clinic of any hospital.

# WANTED

VOLUNTEERS TO WORK ON TAXI RANK & FILE HEALTH COMMITTEE - DOING BLOOD PRESSURE TESTING & RESEARCH ON HEALTH HAZARDS OF TAXI WORK - NO EXPERIENCE NEEDED CALL 499-9341 or 643-1591

# Hackin' Around

I've been driving a hack for two years, I've worked for Eden/Flushing, Cadet, EN (the worst) and Jackson (remember Jackson? sold to minis). I've gone down 7th Ave. and up 8th at least once for every dime deducted off my bookings. I've waited at Kennedy for four hours to return to midtown empty. I've driven from Sheepshead Bay to Manhattan empty, probably because no one could afford the ridiculously high rate. Driven cars that would barely go, and breathed fumes that I thought would choke me, from the cab as well as the nicotine addicts who ride in the back seat. And two Thursdays ago, on my 22nd birthday, I worked the first time for 49%. Yes all those nights, 195 of them, sweating for fares, watching airport lines, feeling my back breaking every time I hit a pothole with a two year old shock between us—all those nights Harry and my bosses have sat on their asses as friends, friends in agreement that my comission be reduced.

You get a fare from midtown to 178th and Broadway ( a lucky one). You decide not to wait at uptown Port Authority because you don't know the Bronx that well anyway. You come down Broadway. At 125th St still nothing. But hope lies ahead because you're nearing Columbia University—and there's always West End Ave. beyond. At 93rd and West End a driver cuts you off and you lose a fare. Still nothing. You continue down West End. You begin to think—why no business? why does nobody want a taxi? Then you think, it's so expensive—after all, you probably wouldn't take one yourself. And you realize only 5 short years ago the fare was half of what it is today. And you realize you get a little more than half the calls you did five short years ago. You realize the boss is getting an extra 10-15 dollars a shift while your tips have been sliced in half or worse. And you remember that Harry was the one who negotiated the 48% fare hike, destroying your income and the quality of your life. Bosses' profits are up; we are making less and less. Our union president is responsible for this outrage.

## More On the Sale of Mini-Fleets

The reasons fleetowners are selling to minifleets may be quite the opposite of those advanced in the last HOT SEAT. There is no disputing the HOT SEAT's main point, that "for every two medallions sold, four or five taxiworkers are put out of work." But its explanation of why medallions are being sold may be faulty.

The HOT SEAT article, "Minis Menace Jobs," argued as follows: "Over the past few years our bosses have manufactured huge productivity increases in the taxi industry...with a whole arsenal of gimmicks...Increased productivity has meant that the bosses can cut costs by selling medallions to minifleets...and bring in just as much revenue while risking less real capital and reducing expenses....As long as productivity goes up and profits are satisfactory, sales...will continue."

But productivity is not profits. Drivers' productivity (bookings) may be increased, but if costs go up even more then profits will shrink or even turn into losses. Our bosses say that is what has happened to them.

The HOT SEAT article, however, suggests that they are snowing us, that for most of them productivity has outstripped costs and pushed up profits. But then why would the fleetowners be selling these increasingly profitable medallions? It seems somewhat self-defeating to "cut costs" by selling the geese that are laying larger and larger golden eggs.

And if it is mainly in the larger fleets that productivity is outstripping costs, if the big fleetowners are doing "better than ever", then why aren't these larger fleets snapping up whatever medallions they can get rather than letting them go to minis?

No: the continuing sale of fleet medallions to minifleets is one fact that lends weight to the fleetowners' claim that they are losing money, not increasing profits. Of course we know that the fleetowners have always cried

poverty, all the way back from their tropical vacations. We need not believe what they say—nor what their lawyers say, nor their accountants, nor the politicians they have supported over the years—but we cannot just explain away what they are doing: selling their means of making money!

Of course there has always been some buying and selling of taxi fleets and parts of fleets for individual and personal reasons. But while some fleets changed hands and others divided or merged, the fleet industry as a whole stayed pretty much the same size:



what one owner wanted to sell, another was ready to buy.

But now all that seems to have changed. Many fleetowners want to sell and few want to buy. The industry is being shaped not only by random ups and downs in the private lives and fortunes of individual fleetowners, but by some force, by some development which has prodded fleetowners as a group to unload about 25% of their medallions.

Since they have not been able to find enough buyers among themselves, they have taken steps which have transformed the structure of the entire taxi industry. They have found customers among drivers who think they have a bargain in buying what amounts to an own-

er/driver medallion at fleet medallion prices. While the law forbids sale of fleet medallions to owner/drivers, that law is being circumvented by the sale of pairs of fleet medallions to pairs of drivers who incorporate solely so they can call their two cabs a fleet: a "minifleet."

But this poses another question: if the fleets are looking to get out of the business, why are the minis looking to break into it? If the fleets, with all their economies of size and organization, are really losing money, how can the minifleets hope to make a go of it? We will have some thoughts on this in our next issue. Meanwhile we'd like to hear your ideas too—including thoughts from the minis.



# May Day Celebration

The Mayday Festival held in Prospect Park on May 17 (the raindate) was a day of sun and laughter and green grass, children playing, picnic lunches, theatre, music, volley ball, frisbee playing, soccer--people coming together in celebration of May 1, 1886--the day rank and file workers in the U.S. conducted a general strike to support their fight for the 8 hour day. Our Festival was a socialist celebration of the culture, history, spirit, and love of all working people in N.Y.C.

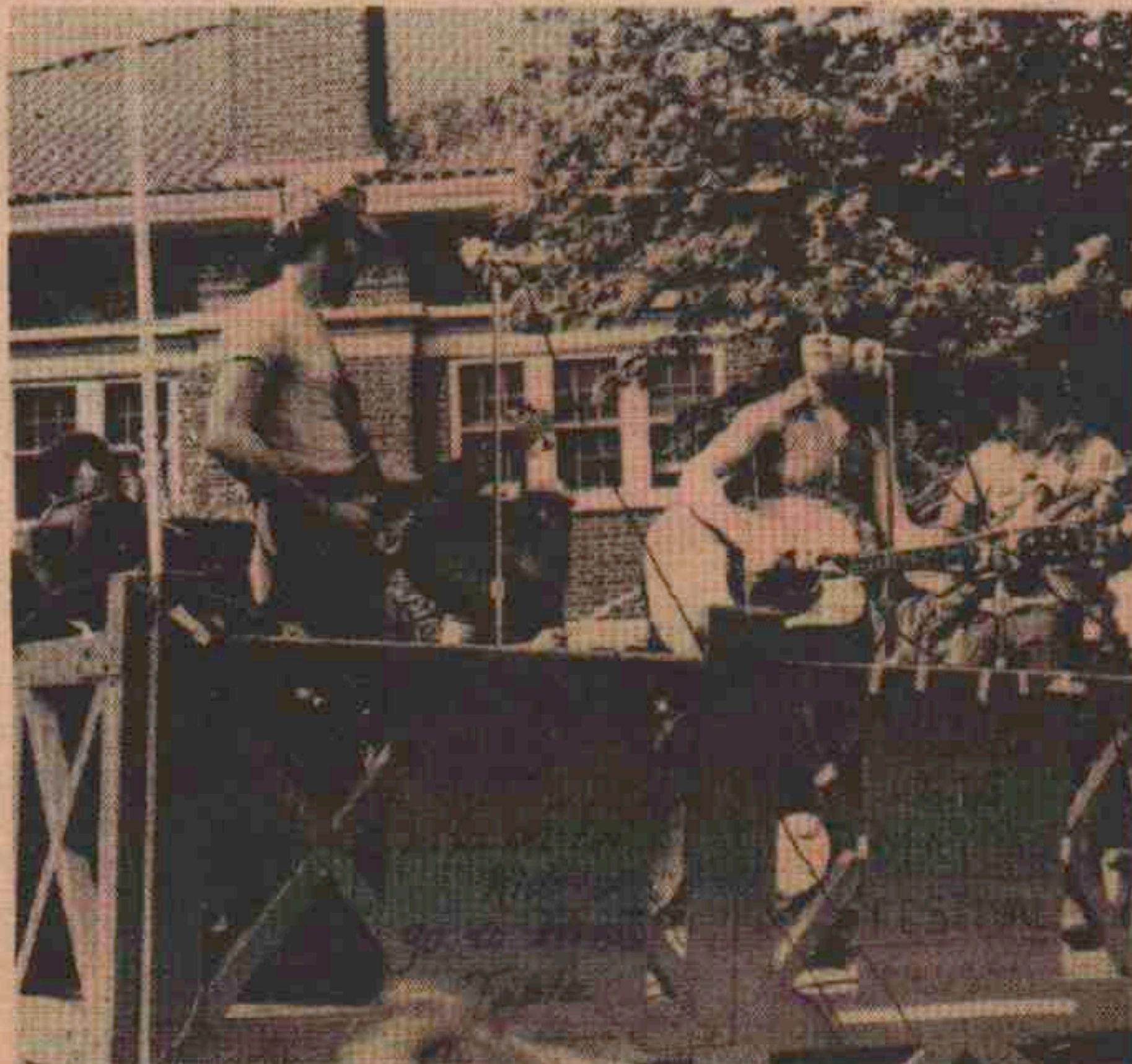
Booths with literature on day-care, housing, the elderly, racism, labor struggles, and struggles in other countries informed people of the

current and past struggles of working people. A health test unit staffed by nurses and doctors tested for blood pressure and diabetes.

Theatre groups performed with the audience booing the villains (the bosses) and cheering the peoples' heroes and heroines.

Many children created a collective mural painting set up by Taxi Rank and File Coalition.

Our celebration of Mayday was a sunny beginning for the bringing together of the various parts of our lives, the laughing, the talking, the playing, the thinking, that goes into building our collective future.



CREDIT: LNS Women's Graphics

## Forest

A strange series of events began in January at Forest Maintenance in Brooklyn. It started on a Monday when Peter Russell, on the committee at Forest and a member of Rank and File, asked for call-in pay for Saturday, when he had called the garage, was told to come in, and then sent home. The boss gave him \$12 on the spot, and then told him not to bother showing up the next day, since the previous Saturday he hadn't come to work or called.

The Shop Chairman, Hy Herszkowitz told him he should forget the \$12 and work the next day. Instead, Peter decided to file a grievance on the basis that ten days was too long for the boss to wait to enforce discipline.

Union VP Sam Eastman was at first reluctant to press the grievance, because it would "set a precedent." But someone must have talked to him, because next time the issue was discussed with him he said that the Union was taking it to arbitration, because if the arbitrator found in Russell's favor, it would "set a precedent."

Clear?

It's now June and nothing's happened. The Union is still sitting on the grievance.



Some of the many things happening at the May Day Celebration. (From top left counter-clockwise): The Human Condition sings, a karate demonstration by a group from the N.Y. Women's School, face painting, Mass Transit Street Theater, New Haven Street & Children's Theater, mural painting.

**RANK & FILE SUMMER MEETINGS** Tues. July 8<sup>TH</sup> Aug. 5<sup>TH</sup>  
 Church of All Nations  
 9 2<sup>ND</sup> Ave (off Houston)  
 CALL: 7:30 PM  
 Bronx 866-4544  
 Queens 768-6651  
 Bklyn 768-8871  
 Manhattan 473-4625

## Cordi

Lenny Fine, shop chairman at Cordi Garage and Brooklyn boro rep, refused to allow a driver to put up a poster announcing the May Day Celebration on the unused portion of the Union bulletin board. After ripping one down he strongly objected to the placement of this poster anywhere else in the garage.

Why did Lenny Fine care so much about the beauty of Boss Joe Dunn's walls when he does not seem concerned about the condition of the drivers' bathroom and waiting room?

Maybe he was afraid that if cab-drivers go to a working class festival they might become more aware that their interests and those of Lenny Fine just don't jibe.

In an informal poll of Cordi drivers it was found that they would prefer a clean bathroom to a clean bulletin board.







# SECCIÓN EN ESPAÑOL

## Y de la Unión...

Parece que esté montado una campaña coordinada en contra de miembros de Rank y File en varios sitios, enfocándose especialmente a los "shop stewards" y los comiteros. Los jefes de los garajes y los burocratas de la Unión están bien aliados en este esfuerzo que incluye botar a choferes, suspensiones, amenazas, llamándoles comunistas, y ataques a una "shop steward" despreciándole por ser mujer. Un vicepresidente de la Unión, Elias Rick, por unos meses amenazaba que "A ustedes los vamos a botar, uno por uno." Es él que lleva el papel principal en este esfuerzo.

Empezaron en el garaje Dover. El jefe, Gerald Cunningham, es presidente de la organización de dueños de flotas. Después de una lucha que duraba cuatro meses, al shop steward de Dover, miembro de Rank y File, le quitaron el trabajo. A cuatro choferes más (todos miembros de rank y File) también les suspendieron, y apuntaron un nuevo shop steward quien les conviene más al jefe y a la Unión.

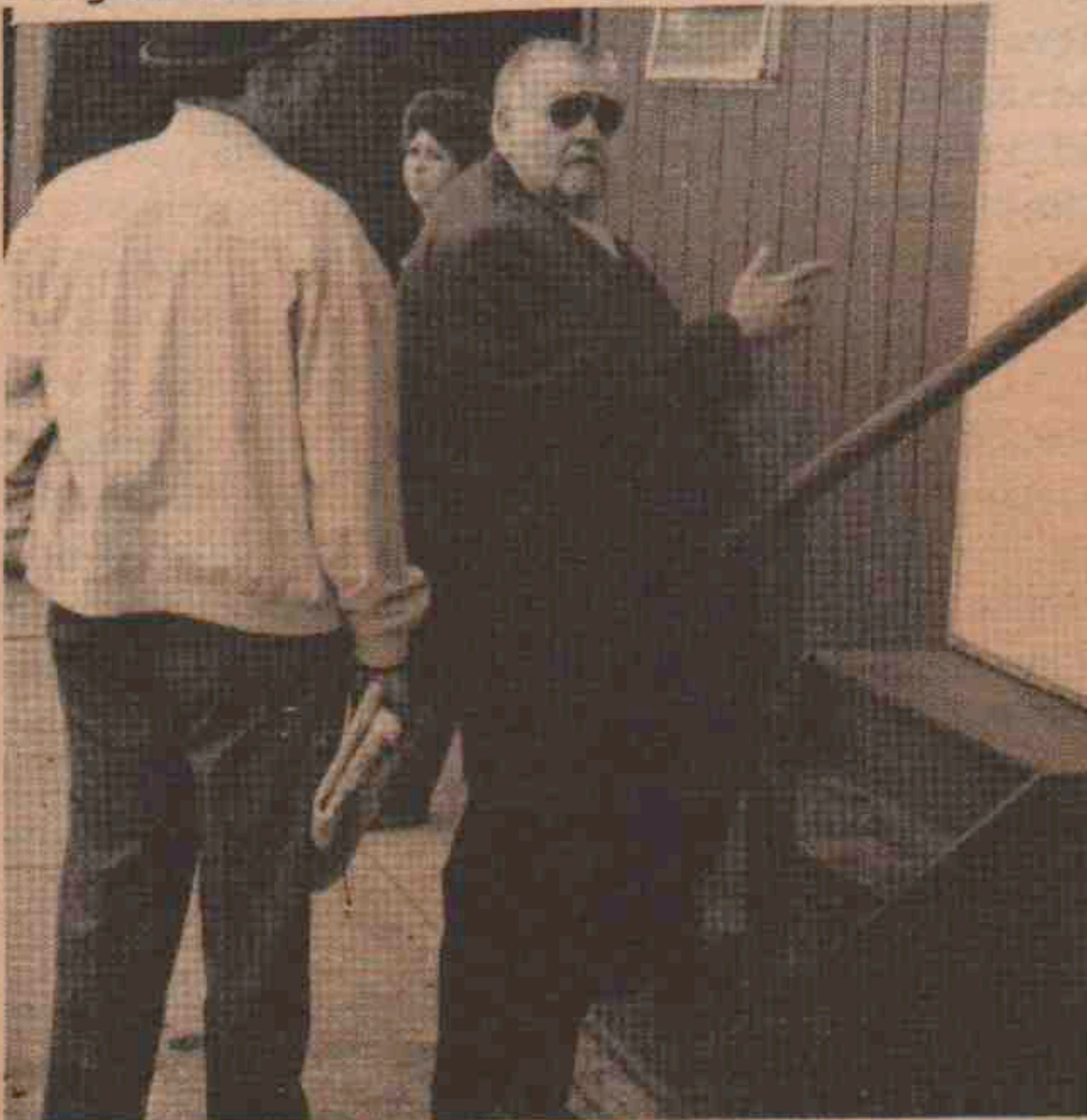
En el Cab Trans, en Brooklyn, el jefe y la Unión han tomado la iniciativa en pasar una petición en contra de la shop steward, otra miembro de Rank y File. La Unión amenazó sacarla de su posición.

En el garaje Eden (Flushing), botaron a un miembro ranquifilista del comité del garaje por no trabajar unas semanas a pesar de que había sido enfermo.

Estos ataques hacia nosotros crean problemas no solamente para Ranquifilistas, sino para todos choferes de taxi. Ya que se dirigen los ataques a los garajes en donde comités luchadores están organizados en contra de la paz engañadora de los jefes y la Unión — una paz pagada de nuestros bolsillos — los poderosos de taxi nos avisan: "Que se calle la boca o tengan cuidado."

Pero no nos vamos a callar la boca, y buscamos el apoyo de todos taxistas para parar estos ataques y para quitarles el poder de los poderosos.

En esta página está contado otro suceso que revela que la TLC también es parte de una alianza en contra no solamente de los de Rank y File, sino de cualquier obrero enfrentándose fuertemente con las injusticias de la industria taxi.



Al Vice-Presidente Elias P. Rick, no le gustan choferes que abren la boca.

Por Ayudar a un Chofer

## ATACAN AL SAMARITANO BUENO



Un día tranquilo en la primavera el jefe del garaje Columbia le dijo al "shop steward" Ed Brown que un chofer del garaje había llamado por teléfono diciendo que le estaban molestando en la oficina de la Comisión de Taxi y Limosina (TLC), y que estaban en punto de quitarle su licencia. Brown, miembro del Comité Watchdog, cogió a dos choferes del comité del garaje, Leo Lazarus (de Rank y File) y Charlie Brosakas (otro Watchdog), y los tres corrieron a la calle Beaver. No sabían que de hecho el taxista molestado había llamado no de la Comisión sino del Bureau de Juicios Vehiculares en la calle 26 Este. Así empezó lo que debería quedado una comedia y nada más.

Ya que la gente de la TLC no habían visto el taxista a quien Brown buscaba, tenían que creer que Brown era un puro loco o que el mismo estaba tratando de fomentar un lío. Brown, al encontrar que todos negaron haber visto el taxista nombrado por su propio jefe, por supuesto creyó que le estaban tratando de bobo. Con el desprecio de la TLC hacia taxistas, y los sospechos de choferes hacia la TLC, no podía quedar esto un mero malentendimiento.

### Palabras agudas y agudos puntos

Mientras que pasaban los tres de una oficina a otra, un policía privado de la TLC que les acompañaba empezó hablar mal de ellos y de taxistas en general. Parece que Brown siempre listo y agudo, dijo algo que le picó al camarrón y hizo reírse los taxistas presentes. El hablar mal se ponía en hablar de puños, pero nadie no hizo nada más que hablar, y los tres entraron a la próxima oficina, todavía buscando el pobrecito taxista misterioso. El policía se quedó afuera.

Cuando el oficinista de este último sitio salió buscando información, apareció a la puerta este mismo policía, ahora con un cuchillo en la mano. Brown brincó p'atras cogiendo una silla para defenderse gritando "Ese hombre tiene un cuchillo!" Volvió el oficinista entonces y dijo al policía que se desapareciera. Vino otro oficinista diciéndole a Brown que él, Brown, no debe usar violencia.

Los tres comiteros bajaron a la calle cogieron a un policía de la ciudad y hicieron que arestraran al policía de la TLC. La TLC en seguida hicieron que le arestraran a Brown. Fueron los dos a la corte y les dejaron a salir sin fianza, hasta el juicio que se realiza en el día

6 de junio.

Luego la TLC ordenó que Brown se presentara delante de su propia cortucha, acusándole de asalto a un policía, de representar un taxista sin autoridad de la Unión, y, debajo de la regla favorita de la TLC, el #101, de "comportamiento en contra del bienestar público."

En la presentación delante de la TLC el jefe del garaje Columbia confirmó que de hecho le había dado a Brown información equivocada por haber dicho que el taxista llamó de la TLC. Los dos compañeros de Brown testificaron que el policía sacó un cuchillo sin provocación. A pesar de todo eso, pronunciaron a Brown "culpable." El mismo juez de la TLC rehuzo de dar su nombre, identificándose solamente con el número "0096."

Brown y su abogado tienen confianza de revolver la decisión de "0096" o por apelación dentro de la TLC o en la corte del estado. Pero mientras tanto revocaron la licencia y le sacaron una multa de \$100.

La Unión, por su parte, rehuzó a defender a Brown. El vicepresidente Elias Rick actualmente se goza de su situación, y amenazó a Leo Lazarus, compañero de Brown, que éste sería el próximo acusado por el TLC.

### Que se debe hacer

Bien, nadie puede disputar que si la TLC deja a sus propios empleados sacar cuchillos por nada más que unas palabras en contestación a un insulto, algo se tiene que cambiar. Y cuando tal empleado está mantenido en trabajo mientras al chofer abusado le quitan la licencia y no permiten que él se gane la vida, el cambio debe ser profundo.

Tal cambio no se puede lograr de la noche a la mañana, y no vendrá por el mero pedirlo. Rank y File, junto con el Comité "Watchdog", ha participado en dos protestaciones pequeñas a la TLC apoyando al hermano Brown, demandando que esté terminado el molestar a choferes y negando el derecho de la TLC de gobernar la industria taxi sin representantes de los obreros.

Además, ambos grupos demandan que la TLC no permitan que las flotas venden mas taxis, y que no suban mas las tarifas: ni el público ni nosotros choferes lo podemos soportar más.

Se están planeando protestas más grandes, y nos estamos examinando el estado legal de los procesos y las acciones de la TLC. Creemos que los choferes no aguantamos más que las cosas siguen así!