

Letter From Farah Workers

EXPOSE CHAUVINISM OF REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY

The following letter was received by the Revolutionary Cause from the workers of the Farah Manufacturing Company in El Paso, Texas. These workers from the heartland of the southwest were involved, many of them as leadership, in the bitter two year Farah Strike which they won in 1974. This victory marked a blow against imperialist national oppression of the Chicano people, and was a signal victory for the entire working class in that an oppressed section of their class won the right to unionize in an area kept forcibly unorganized for years. This letter was signed by 17 workers -- all of them were active in the strike.

For several years we have been calling attention to the opportunism and national chauvinism of the "Revolutionary Communist Party", (even when it was still known as the Revolutionary Union). We have tried to show how this chauvinism flows from their whole view (their line) of the national question in the era of imperialism -- their complete liquidation of that question. Their line, their chauvinism, can only mean disunity for the working class -- no matter how hard they YELL for unity, and declare it to be an accomplished fact. Their stand aids only our enemy. We think that this letter from the Farah Workers is a revealing exposure of the truth of what we have been saying, and goes to show that social-props will sometimes even don the cloak of "communism".

COMPANERAS Y COMPANEROS.

We are a group of former Farah strikers, who were independently more ACTIVE from the Union leadership. We sought the help of all groups regardless of their political beliefs. Which in return, caused us to be called "radicals or red baited" by the Union bureaucrats. Nevertheless, we established ourselves as leaders in the strike. We maintain many contacts with the workers movement, which the Union was very strongly opposed to. When any of these groups needed any information about our struggle, all they had to do was contact our group.

When different organizations or groups involved in the working class struggle wanted speakers about the Farah struggle they contacted our group. This was very hard, of course, because of the Union's policy in opposition to our independent activities. During the course of our struggle we sent out information such as photographs taken in the early walk-out of the Farah plants taken by the workers themselves. Also we sent home-made movies of the actual walkout. We also sent out information of how the company was using its influence to provoke mass arrests, injunctions against us by the police and judges. We organized a strikers relief fund independent from the Union officials. This fund helped out strikers with their payments on their rent and utilities, also for the emergency medical bills that were piling up.

Some of the other sources that we gave were also films of the other people that were struggling for social justice here in El Paso.

During the course of our struggle we enforced the idea that the Chicano striker especially the women, should participate and take the leadership of the Union, because of course, almost 85% of the strikers were women. Our group started to participate in alot of cold hardships that were taking place during the time of the strike. Some of the activities were "police brutality", the 16th of September Independence March, protest marches against the oppressive, housing conditions in our barrios. Also the March in Commemoration of the Chicano Moratorium of L.A. in which "Ruben Salazar", a former El Pasoan reporter was murdered. Throughout the strike we have always tried to raise the political consciousness of the strikers by linking up our struggle with the struggle of the workers, oppressed nationalities and students. All these things we did were something new in El Paso. Worker demonstrating alongside student and community organizers.

We believe in giving credit and credit is due to the RU (RCP), For setting up Farah Strike Support Committees. They maintained the flow of information about our struggle for 22 long months. Also they sent money to the Farah Distress Fund. The fund which was controlled by the strikers themselves. They also sponsored speaking tours for Farah Strikers throughout the country. But we would

(Continued on p. 6)

FARAH

(Continued from page 4)

also like to thank the other people and groups who participated in the support, communities and from other support communities throughout the U.S.A. We also thank the people who walked the Farah Boycott picket lines supporting us regardless of which organization was sponsoring the event.

Throughout those 22 long and sacrificing months, the idea of making a film became popular. The RU (RCP) told our group that some film company wanted to make a movie about our struggle. It was during the summer of '73 that some people who the RU said were the Single Spark Film Company, came to El Paso to shoot some film. We provided them with all the interviews for the film and we gladly cooperated in making the arrangements for the film. We also provided the film makers with housing for two weeks. They stayed with the mother of a member of our group of which both were strikers. The majority of the strikers were reluctant to appear in the film because the Union had said we shouldn't cooperate with this group because they were going to use us for their own benefits. Nevertheless we worked hard to get the cooperation of our fellow strikers to speak of their experiences in the plant and of the strike. We worked hard on this project because members of our group, women and men were told by members of the RU (RCP) and the film company that we would have a copy of the film for our group to keep and show here in El Paso. We were also proud to work on this film because our struggle, unity, suffering would be recorded and it would be to the benefit of the Chicano working class and the working class in general. This film could be valuable in organizing the workers into a strong rank and file group and furthering the cause to make the Union more democratic.

One of the parts of the movie that fills the strikers with emotion and brings memories of the long suffering is the part which shows the actual walkout. This part was filmed by two strikers with their movie cameras. These two films were given to the RU (RCP) and later converted from 8mm

(continued on p.8)

FARAH

(Continued from page 6)

for the Farah strike film. These two strikers were very reluctant to part with their home movies. They told us that we didn't need anybody from the outside to make a movie about our struggle, that we could make one ourselves. But our group convinced them that this movie was going to be a 16mm film and besides that, we didn't have the money or the know-how to make a 16mm film. Only after that we told them that this group, the RU, had promised us a copy of the film so that we could continue to organize the strikers into a strong rank and file did they part with their films.

There was a good working relation between RU and our group, up until the time the RU started to send their people down to El Paso to stay. They started to visit our people in our group without the leaders of the

group knowing anything about it. When we heard about the RU visiting our members, at first we said maybe they are trying to show our members how to organize our group better. But we started to hear complaints from our members that the RU members were ordering them to do things they didn't want to do. For example calling meetings without the leaders being present, trying to get members to sell their papers at the unemployment lines, pushing our members to read material that they could not understand. Which caused a women member to say that the RU was trying to shove things down our throats. Our members also asked in a meeting of our group if the RU was here to take over our group.

Our group was a very closed one. We worked hard with all our members trying to understand each other. Even after the strike was over we

(Continued on page 10)

FARAH

(Continued from p. 8)

felt we were a strong group. Even though we won the strike, the company continued, even now, to try and break our Union. The company fired the most militant leaders in our group and has layed off many members of the Union. Also the company has cut our wages because we cannot meet the high quotas. This caused some members of our group to become demoralized. But what made it even worse was when we found out that we were not going to get a copy of our film. We also found out, to our surprise, that the RU was promoting their organization in the film. This was never agreed upon. It caused our members to say that this movie was to be about our strike, we never agreed to make a movie promoting the RU (RCP).

It has been over a year since the film was finished. We have made efforts to obtain a copy of the film from the RU (RCP) members in El Paso. They told us they don't know anything about it and the fight is between the film company (Single Spark Film Company) and our group. We asked them how can this be when in the film all they do is promote the RU (RCP). We asked if we could buy a copy of the film and they told us that the RU was not going to sell it to just any group. So our group told the RU (RCP) and one of the film makers in San Francisco, that we withdrew our permission for them to use our interviews and the actual films of the walkout. We appeal to the honest elements in the RU (RCP) to try and correct the wrong that has been done. If you have been led to believe that we are members of any political group well, we are not. At present we maintain our independence within the working class movement. Our group is still active. We work under the name of "Unidad Para Siempre". Our goals include working to build a strong rank and file movement for a democratic union and to educate Chicano workers of our proud history of resistance to exploitation. Also to teach Chicano working class history.

Our demands to the RU (RCP) and the Single Spark Film Company are to correct the film to the way it was originally agreed upon and also an official response from the RU (RCP) leadership.

We appeal to all groups in the

3) Although our history as revolutionary nationalists provided the basis for our "left" deviation to develop, our early history as communists was marked by economism and the belittling of theory, and was bound to have its impact, especially in the face of inexperience and the lack of the correct cadre training.

We can only root out our errors by first seeking the historical and social conditions which give rise to them. Secondly, we must systematically TRAIN our cadres to carry out their tasks as communists -- HOW to raise the questions of socialism and the Party and HOW to organize the struggle so that the masses learn from their own experience of the necessity for their communist party and for socialist revolution. Lacking this training, our youth and inexperience, in combination with our "turn" from the "left", our history and social conditions were almost bound to lead to some type of right errors in our work

A second crucial right error committed during the strike was our failure to do consistent and all-sided exposure of the RCP. A failure to do this left many workers (particularly the least politically developed) seeing no major differences



working class, Chicano and student movements to help us obtain our right to our recorded struggle (Film). We appeal to you to put pressure on the RU (RCP) in your local area and to get other people involved to expose this wrong and to demand a response from the RU (RCP) leaders to our two demands.

It is bad enough that we as a national minority have been exploited and deceived by the boss and politicians. But it is even worse when it is done to us by people who call themselves REVOLUTIONARIES.