

Breaking lock-step

The University Administration has recognized that "stop the world — I want to get off" feeling around campus.

Beginning Winter Term 1974, a student will be able to take a leave of absence from the University by completing a form and getting the approval of his college dean.

Under the policy now in effect, a student has had to take the drastic step of formally withdrawing from the University and risking the possibility of not being readmitted.

The forthcoming drop-out, drop-in policy is a welcome alternative. Sometimes, in a student's eyes,

education is a lock-step process of terms and credits and grade point averages. These students become restless, wondering if they are trapped in the wet cement of a major, and the remaining terms to graduation become something to be endured.

The need is not only a psychological one. As tuition, room and board costs continue to escalate, it becomes increasingly difficult for a student to pay the cost of his education. Taking a year off, working at a full-time job, a student earns enough to con-

tinue his education and gains experience and insight.

To a returning traveler, home is a new place. He notices more; there is a freshness to the routine. A leave of absence can spark the enthusiasm of many students who have been counting terms, checking off requirements, walking slow and stooped.

Drop-out, drop-in is not for everyone. It should be a last resort, to be considered with professional counselors. But it should exist. And the University should be thanked for that.



James J. Kilpatrick

Pay without jobs

President Nixon vetoed the minimum wage bill on September 6, and since then the welkin, as they say, has been ringing. He has been denounced at least 22 times a day, chiefly by liberal Democrats whose odd notion of how best to care for the poor is to herd them into housing projects and to keep them on welfare forever.

The President's veto, in my own view, was soundly reasoned. It ought to be sustained.

The pending bill would raise the federal minimum wage for most non-farm workers, which has been fixed at \$1.60 an hour since 1968, to \$2 on November 1 and to \$2.25 next July. The bill would extend coverage to domestic workers and to certain employees of state and local governments. Thousands of

workers in small retail and service establishments also would be affected.

Nixon's position is that these several provisions, on balance, "would do far more harm than good." He is not opposed to a substantial increase: The administration's own bill would raise the minimum wage to \$1.90 at once and to \$2.30 three years hence. But he argues convincingly that the adverse effects of an increase can be minimized by a more gradual and less sweeping approach.

The purpose of any increase in the minimum wage is to benefit the low-wage worker. Such a prospective benefit would prove illusory, if it were swallowed up in higher prices; or it could prove disastrous, if it resulted in the loss of a job.

Manifestly, the pending bill would be some contribution toward higher prices. The employer who is compelled to meet a 37.5 per cent increase for his minimum-wage workers over an eight-month period, and is further compelled to adjust other wages in order to maintain differentials, is bound to feel the impact in his labor costs. Yet proponents of the bill probably are correct in saying that the inflationary effect of the increases would be small. The best estimate is that the bill would add \$1.7 billion next year, or only 0.4 per cent, to total wages paid.

The more significant inquiry goes to the prospective effect of this bill in human terms: What about the marginal man or woman who "benefits" by being fired? This is not the sort of benefit that has great appeal. Yet Nixon is quite right in warning the well-intentioned sponsors of this legislation that this likely will be the consequence of their benevolence.

Consider the domestic household workers. The bill would fix their

minimum at \$1.80 an hour in November, \$2 next July and \$2.20 in July of 1975. An estimated 671,000 domestics now are paid less than \$1.80, and 700,000 are paid less than \$2. They are not mere tabulated figures in a statistical report: They are real live human beings, and it is idle oratory to complain that they are being "exploited" or that they are being paid "starvation wages." They are performing honest work at the very edges of the labor market and they earn something, at least, in self-respect.

Is it better for a domestic to earn, say, \$12 a day at \$1.50 an hour or to earn zero dollars a day — because there is no job — at \$2 an hour? To the 16-year-old cutting grass or to the elderly black maid in a small southern town, the question has fateful meaning. Such marginal workers have more to fear from their benefactors than from their oppressors.

The President also objects, on sound grounds, that it is unwise to extend federal wage controls to functions of state and local government not involved in federal aid. The number of such affected employees is small (only 74,000), but the principle is large. He also makes the realistic argument that the small retail and service establishments newly covered by the bill "are the very businesses least able to absorb sharp, sudden payroll increases." Such employers could meet the higher wage costs only by cutting back on jobs.

Most of the key proponents of the bill unceasingly proclaim themselves, in their political campaigns, as friends of the poor, the blacks, the young and the working women of our society. It is a curious act of friendship, I submit, to hold out to these constituents the prospect of higher pay — but no work.

Conspiracy: the latest vicious assault against democratic rights

By JAMES M. CORY
for the Penn State Young Socialists

The Watergate hearings are far from over, and the growing mass of connected and related scandals, intrigues and conspiracies would very likely occupy the front pages of both the capitalist and working-class press for years to come if history did not promise to intervene with much more shattering and fundamental developments in the immediate future.

Watergate obviously foreshadows those developments, spelling out in the clearest possible way that this society has reached the stage in which the ruling class can no longer possibly rule in its accustomed ways while denying to the broad masses of working people the ability to live in the old ways.

The industrialists and their political representatives have quite consciously pulled the stoppers out on inflation, knowing full well that this will quickly erode the standard of living that the American working class has won for itself since the Second World War. The ruling classes of the advanced countries of Western Europe are now moving very openly toward Bonapartist forms of rule. Fascist movements, basing themselves on the distraught and hapless middle classes, have developed quite massively in France and especially in Italy.

The so-called "I.R.A. bombings" carried out daily in London are more likely to be the work of the police themselves rather than the I.R.A., as the notorious Littlejohn affair has revealed. The bombings are deliberately designed to create an atmosphere in London and all across England in which Scotland Yard can round up leftists at random. The brutal (not suicide!) of Dr. Allende speaks volumes concerning the

ultimate intentions of these armed criminals of the state.

Students of the Pennsylvania State University now find themselves the victims of the same sort of conspiracies and intrigues, quite related and even as perfidious. The disgusting and outrageous attempts of the local FBI (which, certain newspapers have recently revealed, has nationally been funding the fascist "Minuteman" group for a number of years!) in cahoots with the Campus Patrol to intimidate and muzzle supporters of left-wing organizations is not at all unrelated to the Nixon clique's attempts at constructing a police state.

While the Young Socialists have conducted their activities on the campus (and off of it) in a completely open manner, with absolutely nothing to hide from anyone, the despicable agents of the FBI and the Campus Patrol conspire behind closed and locked doors, in the dark of the night, with half-deranged informers (as the Gainesville 8 trial demonstrated) and sinister electronic devices, to steal away the democratic rights which the Constitution supposedly guarantees.

Stormer "apologizes" for being; (very willfully!) ignorant of an ordinance concerning the right to distribute political material which has been on the books for years! Only a fool can fail to see Stormer's real motives.

The FBI arrogantly has "no comment" for The Daily Collegian when it inquires as to whether or not this goon squad for the financial interests is investigating individuals associated with the YS. Because of course it is! Employers, landlords, roommates, etc. are contacted in an effort to isolate and intimidate militants. Phones are tapped, comrades are followed in cars.

At the Young Socialists' summer camp (held for both

educational and recreational purposes) in Canada, bugging devices were discovered in the main meeting halls. Planes manned by provincial policemen flew menacingly overhead. The police threatened to search the camp, looking for a "stolen car" (which eventually became a "stolen trailer") and admitting that they had been sent by the request of the U.S. government.

The capitalist system is dying. All democratic rights are being scrapped by a desperate government fighting for its very life. There are no "conspiracies" on the left. It is the paid and armed partisans of this dying system who are the real conspirators.

The leaders of the labor movement must immediately convene an emergency Congress of Labor, open to all sections of the working class. The tasks of this Congress will be twofold. The first item of business must of course be the removal of Nixon through general strike action. Only the labor movement has the power to do this. The second, and just as pressing, order of business must be the establishment of a Labor Party. Such a party must necessarily be politically responsible to the rank and file members of the unions. It must have a socialist program for the expropriation of the financial and corporate magnates without compensation and the transfer of all control of the productive forces (mines, mills, factories, ships, etc.) into the hands of the workers themselves.

These tasks will not and can not be accomplished by conspiracies, but rather by the most massive movement of the working class. Such a movement is imminent. The working class is waking up to the government's vicious attacks against democratic rights and against the worker's very hard-won standards of living. And we have the fullest confidence that the working class will not much longer tolerate the presence of the vile gang of police conspirators.

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