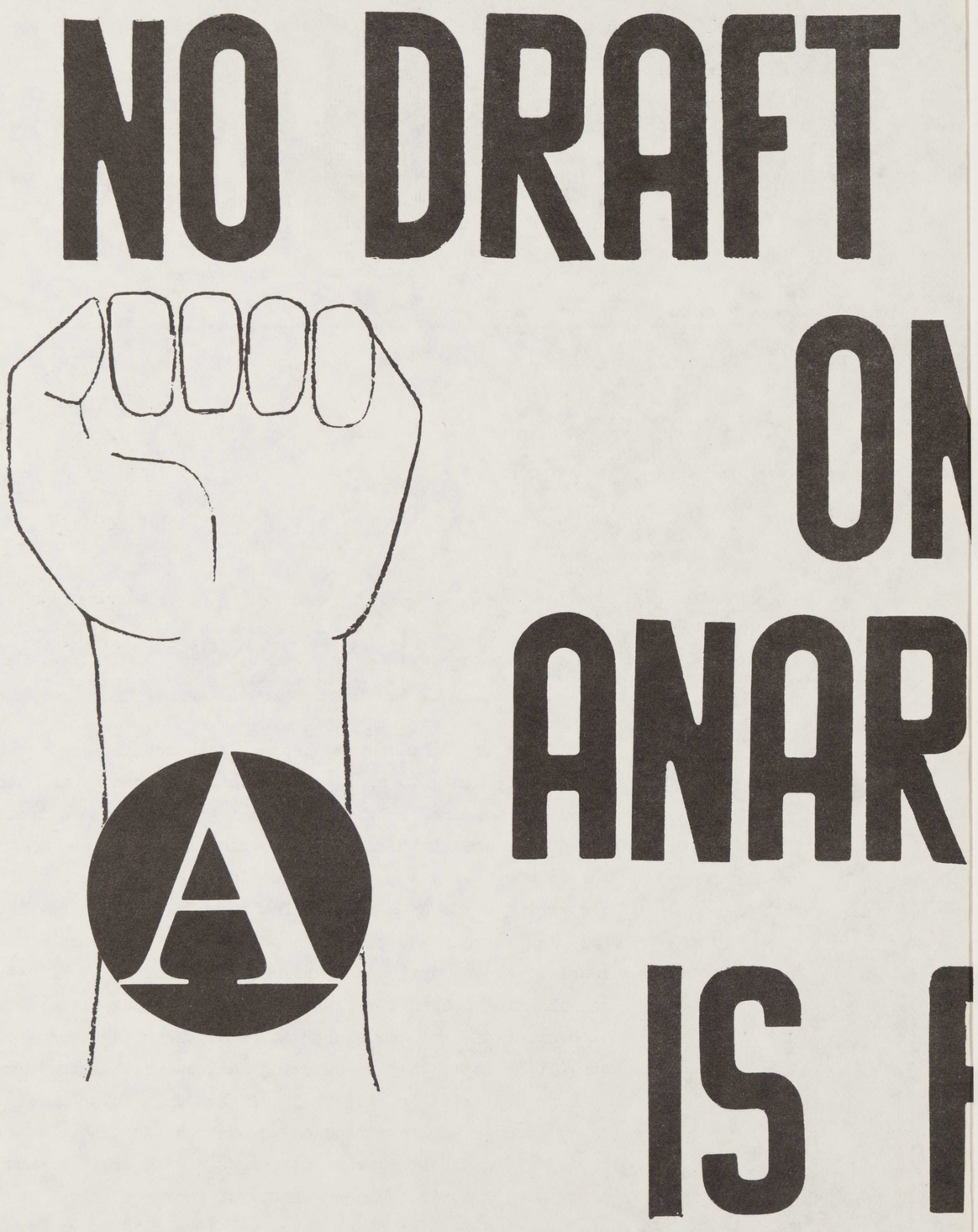

WORKER CONTROL: part 1

The newspapers are filled with the facts: U.S. Steel Corp. announces the closing of 16 factories, throwing 13,000 people out of work. Jones & Laughlin closes its Youngstown, Ohio, steel plant, putting 1,400 on the unemployed rolls. At Ambridge, Pa., 1,500 lose jobs as the world's largest structural steel fabricating plant shuts down. Lykes Corp. lays off 4,100 workers. In November GM closed its Lordstown assembly plant putting 1,400 out of work. Chrysler, an international giant controlled from Detroit, is collapsing even with government help. Ford is feeling none too good.

We all agree: productivity in the United States is falling; inflation and industrial pollution are rising; industrial management cares nothing for the worker or the problems of the environment; and relations between the work force and the hierarchy of management and ownership are bad — as always.

We also all agree on the solution to what are massive national problems: worker control or self-management and the stable, democratic world that can be created by it. But we are heavily locked into the mistakes of the past, and worker control and workplace democracy remain solutions difficult to achieve.

It looks like a labor problem or perhaps (in the minds of many) just an economic one. But essentially the refusal to allow people to make their own decisions or control their own lives is a cultural one. In our present mode of making judgements and decisions — where the struggle for dominance, the worship of authority, are so constant — the managers and executives have been programed to take the "short view", to scramble for what appears to be a gain. Carter Goodrich, in his classic 1926 study of coal miners, made reference to the myth of efficiency and this whole peculiar condition:

"It is often said that modern society has chosen efficiency in production rather than richness in working life. In actual fact, society makes no choices as such, and the countless individual decisions out of which have come mass production as efficient as that at Ford's and jobs as dull as those at Ford's have most of them been made without the slightest reference to the quality of working life that would result ... They are made on the basis of figures of output and cost and profit for the immediate business in the immediate future."

A lack of concern for human worth and

(continued on page 4)

THE REVOLTING WORLD

AFGHANISTAN - Mountain tribesmen here continue to resist the introduction of state socialism at Soviet [sic] bayonet point. These hard-to-please shepherds have opposed past Afghan governments with the same vigor as their grandfathers, often using the same weapons and tactics, battled British imperialism at the turn of this century. By virtue of their resistance to any state system or central control, these guerillas are the natural allies of anarchists everywhere, however uncomprehending we may be of their culture. (Let there be two, three, many Vietnams!?)

TURKEY - Contrary to some reports (Washington Post, Feb. 6), Turkey is not 'slipping into anarchy'. In a front page article, the idea of anarchy is loosley equated with chaos and violence. In fact, Turkey is split by a variety of military factions, each competing for control of the state. The goal of anarchism, on the other hand, is the development of uncoerced, peaceful, harmonious, and cooperative relations between all people, essential to which is the dissolution of the state. We will welcome news of genuine anarchy in Turkey or elsewhere, but for now, hold the champagne.

EUROPE - (Dublin, 4. Dec.) A new convention directed against "terrorism" [sic] in Europe was signed by justice ministers of the nine European Economic Community member states. According to the new document, intended to implement the Strasbourg convention of 1977, member states agree to the extradition of foreigners who are fugitives as a result of politically motivated actions. The refusal of the ministers to recognize the further need for political asylum from fellow members would appear to be an expression of self-satisfaction with regard to the progress of "human rights" in Europe.

In related developments last year, France denied refugee status to Basque guerillas on its territory, and deported two Italians accused of involvment in the execution of Aldo no-Moro.

The new convention is a further step to toward the creation of a common European judicial system, which itself is an element in the long-term EEC goal of a supra-national state.

— Ernst Staatsfeind