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REPEAL THE TIP TAX

REPEAL THE TIP-TAX!

Waitresses Protest I.R.S. Robbery

BIRMINGHAM, ALA., June, 1983 — Waitresses, waiters and other service workers have organized a strong and vocal protest against the new tip-tax allocation law which is draining food service workers of any take-home income. In Birmingham, workers organized the Service Workers Against the 8% Tip-Tax (SWATT-8%) and over 30 members picketed in front of the Federal Courthouse demanding the repeal of this outrageous bill. The picket was sponsored by SWATT-8% and the TUAL. Birmingham Mayor Richard Arrington also participated. Protest representatives turned in 1600 petition signatures against the tip-tax to Alabama Congressman Ben Erdreich's office.

The waitresses have also been guests on several radio talk shows. Ms. Cathy Scott appeared on Channel 6 TV. She told the viewers, "We want to get this law repealed. They're picking on the poor to pay for the rich. If they didn't have us, they wouldn't have restaurants. A lot of us think that it is the restaurant's place to pay our wages. The customers should not have to feel like they should have to tip us if they don't want to."

Many waitresses have been harassed and threatened by their employers. Shoney's Big Boy Restaurants have ejected SWATT-8% representatives from their stores. Several area employers have threatened to fire workers who attend the popular SWATT-8% meetings. Those who have been vocal in their opposition to the tip-tax have had their hours cut. The TUAL has committed its resources to defend those service workers who are disciplined or fired for their organizational activities.

The waitresses have been extremely well organized and disciplined. They have now collected over 2,500 signatures, distributed thousands of leaflets and have continued to hold well-attended, regular meetings. After all, it is the service workers who keep the restaurants open and make the owners wealthy. Were it not for the food service workers, there would be no restaurants. The TUAL supports the efforts of SWATT-8% and will continue to fight to insure that all service workers are guaranteed a living wage.

Waitresses Protest I.R.S. Robbery **BIRMINGHAM, ALA.,** June, 1983

Tax Protest Makes Headway Independent Of The Government and Rich Politicians

BIRMINGHAM, ALA. — The efforts of the Service Workers Against the 8% Tip-Tax (SWATT-8%) have already borne some fruit. The public protests have forced some politicians to mouth support for the waitresses' efforts. A number of different political forces are mobilized against the service workers.

The Republicans raised over a half million dollars to lobby for the bill. The National Association of Manufacturers and the National Restaurants Association pushed for the tip-tax. Reagan had the backing of Ted Kennedy and Tip O'Neill who called for bipartisan support for the total tip-tax package.

Certain Democratic politicians have tried to take steam out of the SWATT-8% movement by promising to move to repeal the law. However, when it comes down to action, these so-called liberals only want to alter the language of the bill or lower the tax allocation by a percent or two. The results still leave the waitresses short on their paychecks. These capitalist politicians are not in favor of repealing the total tip-tax law.

The capitalist press has also slandered the tip-tax protest movement by comparing the waitresses to low-life criminal elements. The news has run false reports about waitresses failing to report thousands of dollars in tips each month. The newspapers have even accused key organizers of tax fraud in an attempt to have them audited.

The local Libertarian Party also tried to wreck the SWATT-8% effort but was voted out of a general meeting when its tax program was exposed as social fascist. The Libertarians oppose **all** public programs and benefits for working people, such as unemployment compensation and food stamps.

The Libertarians were backed up by the "Socialist" Workers Party (in fact, socialist in words, capitalist in deeds). The police-infiltrated SWP pleaded to keep the Libertarians in, as well as to draw the Ku Klux Klan into the movement. But the waitresses, the majority of whom are white, opposed these racist, chauvinist organizations and took a firm stand for unity and equality between Black and white workers.

The waitresses have made gains because they have not been side-tracked by all these opportunist political forces that oppose them. They have remained steadfast in their demand to repeal the tip-tax and keep their movement under the control of class-conscious workers.

Waitresses Speak Out

Amy: **We've been trying to have meetings every Sunday. We've picketed in front of the Federal Courthouse and we gave Ben Erdreich's office our petitions and we had approximately 1,600 names on it. I've been waitressing for about 35-40 years. This tip-tax is the most disgusting thing I've ever seen.**

Jean: **I think th;at this a great effort that we are putting forward. I think that we must all stick together and get everyone to come out with us. This is a serious matter.**

Local Waitress: **I quit claiming my tip because when I did, I received nothing but a check stub. I didn't know that I was going to be down here, but I'm glad I am.**

Carla: **I feel like we're getting things on the road and I feel that we're going to get something out of it if we continue. I've been doing this for 24 years. My mother is a waitress, my daughter is a waitress, my sister is a waitress. This is the worst thing that has ever happened to us in all the years I have been waitressing.**

Carol: **It's not fair because customers will have an $84 check and leave a $3 tip and I have to pay tax on $7 when they only left $3. I've had several $0.00 paychecks plus I still owe the government also. I'm having to work two jobs.**

Martha: **I owe them $14 for two weeks work. My family is not doing very good. I think that the protest is good and we should keep on doing it. More power to us!**

Nancy: **I took out a loan that I was paying off with my paycheck. Now without getting a paycheck it is very hard to scrape around to pay it back. I have a family to feed and it's tough to get by. I have to take on extra days every time I can. I think that the protest is wonderful. I think that the ladies involved are doing a wonderful job. I wish more people were involved.**

Tony, the husband of a picketing waitress: **If you stay with it, the protest will solve some problems. You'll get attention. Other husbands should come down and get with us.**

Harriet: **I think this protest is great. We've got to keep it up. I have three grandchildren I'm supporting. We've got to fight and fight.**

Niece of one waitress: **They need to keep the protest going. I've been helping my aunt write letters to the congressmen. We're going to be back.**

Joy: **I think it was a great success. We have faith in ourselves. We're not through fighting.**

Excerpts of Greetings to Birmingham Tip-Tax Protest

Dear TUAL,

Received your package of petitions and was so happy to receive them. You all really put hard work and a lot of sweat into getting them and you can be sure that they will be going to Washington, D.C. The fight will not end on May 16. It has just begun and so has our work. This will end only when this law is repealed.

For too long, we have been degraded, overworked and underpaid. We work for less than minimum wage. We have no benefits, no vacation. We work long hours. From our customers and yes, even some of our employers we are harassed, treated like we don't exist. We have to be the doctor, lawyer, babysitter, maid and yes some have to even take the abuse of the men customers.

There will be some who don't agree with us and will try to fight us every inch of the way. But just remember we are strong and proud of what we do. We can't sit back and wait for someone else to start things going. We have to get off our hands and **all** band together and **all** work together. There are millions of us. No one said it would be easy. If you want and believe in something hard enough then you stand up and must be counted and fight all the harder. We have taken the first step. We might get knocked down a few times but that's no reason to stop. You pick yourself up and fight all the harder and take the next step.

Are you all willing to stand up and be counted? **I am.**

Your Friend,
Marge DeRycke

Founder, SWETT (Save Waitresses/Waiters Earning Tip-Tax) Rochester, New York