

The ORGANIZER

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AFL-CIO: Business As Usual

by RON WHITEHORNE

In December the AFL-CIO held its national convention in Los Angeles. It was business as usual.

The 12th Convention in all its essentials was almost a carbon copy of the first one over 20 years ago. A few new names have been added to the 35 member executive council, but it remains a tiny club of white men. While one out of four AFL-CIO members are Black, only two Blacks are on the Executive Council and there are no women.

The picture of the 1,200 delegates isn't much different. While 20% of AFL-CIO union members are women, less than 2% of the delegates are females.

SAME OLD SONG AND DANCE

The labor leaders and Democratic Party hacks who dominate the podium at these affairs gave the same tired old speeches. On one side of their mouth the bureaucrats gently complain that the Democratic President and Congress are letting them down, while out of the other side they praise the Democratic Party as the party of the working people. The politicians come to reassure their labor backers that all is well. Like Fritz Mondale who told them, "We couldn't have won without you and we want to fulfill the trust and faith you demonstrated in us."

There was the usual hot air around the need to organize the unorganized, but the only concrete step taken was the creation of a division to focus on the organization of professional workers. While certainly a positive step, this was hardly adequate to the concerns of the millions in need of unions.

As always there was much talk about unemployment and job security. But instead of passing measures aimed at stopping runaway shops and launching a campaign for the shorter work week, at full pay, the convention passed a resolution calling for anti-import legislation, essentially arguing for the protection of US industry's right to reap record profits at the expense of workers both here and abroad.

The hardest hit by unemployment and recession are the oppressed nationalities and women. But here, again as usual, the AFL-CIO leadership maintained a shameful silence. Not surprising, given that some of the affiliated unions are in the forefront of the fight against affirmative action, supporting "the reverse discrimination" argument put forward in the Bakke case.

And there is always the ritual attack on communism, this time delivered by a Soviet "dissident", Vladimir Bokovsky. One Black delegate complained, "George Meany standing up there talking about Russia's oppression and human rights... what about the way he runs this convention?"

Finally there is Meany himself — the only President the AFL-CIO has ever known, now 83 years old. This convention ended like all the others with Meany's unopposed re-election. In a seconding speech Raymond Corbett, president of the New York AFL-CIO, asked, "Almighty God, our carpenter in Heaven, in his infinite wisdom, to allow our plumber from the sidewalks of New York to serve at least another decade, if not more." The convention loudly applauded.

THE AFL-CIO, AN OSTRICH WITH IT'S HEAD IN THE SAND

But in spite of appearances all is not well with the AFL-CIO. The labor federation has lost 767,000 members over the last two years, 400,000 of them women. The unions are on the defensive, facing the export of jobs to unorganized areas and well organized, heavily financed union-busting drive in their own back yard.

The AFL-CIO's legislative program is in a shambles as the Carter administration and Congress simply ignore the demands of labor. The unions outside the AFL-CIO, like the Teamsters and the UAW, are not faring much better.

The unions are in trouble because for years the labor chieftains have practiced



AFL-CIO leadership still limping along with the same old program. Although an aging George Meany is now using a cane, it is the AFL-CIO membership which has been handicapped by his policies.

a policy of scratching the backs of the monopoly corporations in the hopes that the employers would scratch back. The monopolists, happy with this sort of "moderation", rewarded these misleaders with privileges and praise. But for the rank and file workers all this policy ever won was a few crumbs. And now, given the deepening crisis of the capitalist economy, the employers are reluctant to make even minor concessions. Instead

they are on the offensive to take away the small gains made by organized labor.

The last few years have seen a sharpening attack on the standard of living of the working class — wages have not kept pace with inflation, the pace of work is faster and more dangerous and lay-offs have mounted. The modest gains of oppressed nationality and women workers have been the first to be sacrificed.

The union leadership has offered only token resistance to this growing attack. In 1976 they placed all their eggs in Jimmy Carter's basket, telling the ranks that electing a Democratic President and Congress would be our salvation. By the end of 1977 the bankruptcy of this position was clear for all to see.

THE FIGHT-BACK

In the face of these developments there is growing dissatisfaction among the rank and file. More and more this takes the form of an organized demand for change; for a militant fight in defense of the worker's economic interests, for an end to racial and sexual discrimination, for union democracy and for organizing the unorganized.

The bureaucracy, never a great respecter of union democracy has clamped down on the rank and file revolt as hard as George Meany chomps on his cigar, but the movement continues to grow in strength nevertheless.

It is this movement that offers the promise of a new brand of unionism. It is not George Meany and his discredited clique that represent the future of the trade union movement. Nor is it the so-called "young turks" like William Winksinger of the International Association of Machinists who serve up a dish with a liberal sprinkle of militant rhetoric and a dash of "social vision", but made from the same old ingredients of class collaborationism and bureaucratic suppression.

The future lies with the miners on strike in the coal fields, with steel workers fed up with no-strike agreements, with Black, Chicano, and Asian workers who are fighting for an end to Jim Crow practices in the building trades, with women in offices who don't buy the idea that they're working for pin money, with textile workers of J.P. Stevens who don't accept that the South can't be organized....These and many more workers in dozens of unions and industries are going to write a new chapter in the history of labor.

This issue of the *Organizer* takes a look at the key developments in the unions over the last year: the union-busting drive in the midwest, the growing movement to organize the unorganized, the major contract struggles of this last turbulent year and finally the gains in rank and file organization.

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Letters To The Editor...

Einstein Workers Need Union

I'm a worker at Albert Einstein Medical Center (Northern) and have been reading your paper for some time now. Your paper always stands on the side of the workers who are struggling for their rights and so I'm writing this letter to let you know that here at Einstein we have to do the same thing.

As you may or may not know, we have alot of problems here, because we don't have a union. We have to put up with everything that the hospital decides to do to us.

We make less money than union hospitals. For example at Daroff - which is part of Einstein, but is unionized - they earn an average of \$16 a week more than we do. Plus, we have no cost of living clause; we don't get time-and-a-half for working on holidays. Our benefits are inferior and our pension plan stinks. Only with a union do we ever stand a chance of improvement in these areas.

But being in a union is much more than making more money or having better benefits. For example, without a union the hospital can just about do anything that it wants to the workers. We have no protection against being fired or disciplined. If we want to upgrade into a better job there is no guarantee we will get it even if we have the experience or seniority.

There are lots of examples of people applying for those jobs and then seeing a boss' son or daughter or relative get the job. Around here it's who you know, not what you know. Without an ironclad procedure for seniority and upgrading, the door is wide open for discrimination by the hospital. Everyone knows that minority workers are hired into the lowest-paying, most menial jobs. The lack of a seniority and upgrading system means that Black and Spanish speaking workers are locked into these dead end jobs with no chance for advancement.

Being in the union can change all this -

the union can fight back against arbitrary suspensions and firing. With the union we would have a grievance procedure with the strength of all workers behind it making it difficult for the hospitals to just do as it pleases. With a strong and united membership, the union could fight discrimination in hiring and could challenge the racist upgrading system.

Without the union we will be divided and alone, it will be the individual worker against the administration. When this happens it is usually the administration which comes out on top. Hospital workers have got to understand that alone we are nothing; if we stick together then we can begin to make some changes.

The hospital administrations has used alot of tricks to keep people confused about the union and therefore dividing us as to where we should stand. But we should remember that it is only because of other hospitals being union that we have what we have today. The unionization of other hospitals has forced Einstein to grant raises, increase benefits and whatever else they may give us, but we are still behind those hospitals and don't have the job security that they have. And in these times job security is very important to all workers.

The administration also tries to keep us non-union by spreading rumors and lies about being in the union. They say if we get the union we will lose our jobs and have to pay union dues that eat up any raise you might get.

First of all, you can't lose your job because you join a union - it is against the law. And second, the union dues we would have to pay is a small price for what we would get in return, and that money would go to the union to carry out its job of defending our rights and protecting our interests.

We have to remember that the hospitals pay alot of money to people who only work to keep the union out and they

use alot of lies and deceit to trick the workers and keep us confused. If we listen to their rumors and tricks, we make it worthwhile for them to keep these anti-union hacks in business. Their one and only job is to keep the union out and keep the workers down.

Around here they treat the service workers like dirt. If you clean the hospital or transport patients or cook and deliver the food, then people look down at you. And its no accident that most service workers are Black. But we all pay for this racism - none of us have

any dignity or get any respect. Anybody can boss us around or say whatever they like to us and we have nothing to back us up if we fight back. The only way we can gain our dignity and get the respect we deserve is by organizing and joining the union.

For too long hospital workers have not received what they deserve. Hospitals are just like other industries - big money making corporations. Doctors get huge salaries, the hospitals make large profits and the people at the bottom get the crumbs. It is time we started to demand what we're worth, for without our services the others could not function. If we wanted to protect ourselves and get what we rightfully deserve, the first step towards this goal is to organize ourselves and join the union.

A concerned Einstein worker

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Philadelphia Workers' Organizing Committee

Who We Are



The PWOC is a Communist organization, basing itself on Marxism-Leninism, the principles of scientific socialism. We are an activist organization of Black and white, men and women workers who see the root causes of the day-to-day problems of working people as the capitalist system itself. We are committed to building a revolutionary working class movement that will overthrow the profit system and replace it with socialism.

We seek to replace the anarchy of capitalist production with a planned economy based on the needs of working people. We want to end the oppression of national minorities and women, and make equality a reality instead of the hypocritical slogan it has become in the mouths of the capitalist politicians. We work toward the replacement of the rule of the few - the

handful of monopolists -- by the rule of the many -- the working people.

The masses of people in the US have always fought back against their exploitation and today the movement in opposition to the monopolists are rapidly growing both in numbers and intensity. What is lacking is the kind of political leadership that can bring these movements together, deepen the consciousness of the masses, and build today's struggles into a decisive and victorious revolutionary assault against Capital.

To answer this need we must have a vanguard party of the working class, based on its most conscious and committed partisans, rooted in the mass movements of all sectors of American people and equipped with the political understanding capable of solving the strategic and tactical problems that present themselves on the difficult road to revolution.

The PWOC seeks, in conjunction with like-minded organizations and individuals throughout the US, to build such a party - a genuine Communist Party. The formation of such a party will be an important step forward in the struggle of the working class and all oppressed people to build a new world on the ashes of the old.

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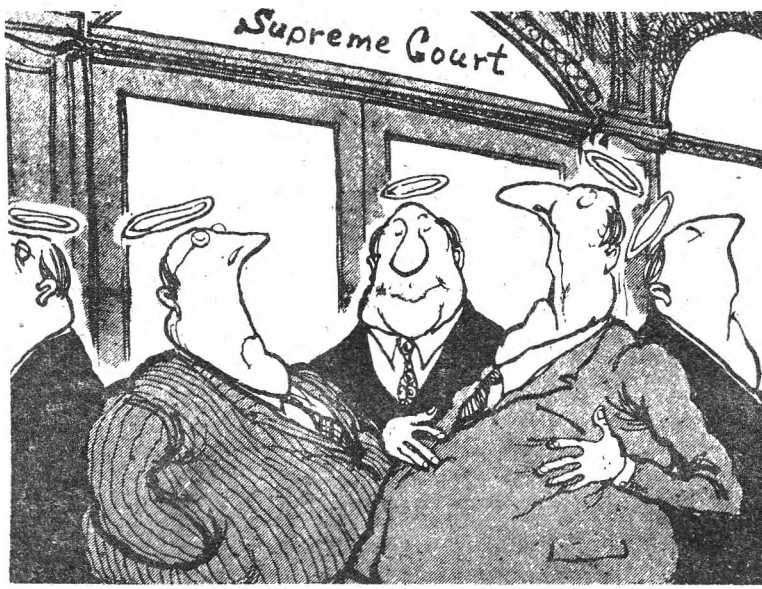
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Labor Round-up



If I were pregnant, I wouldn't expect maternity pay!

Court Hits Pregnant Workers Again

On December 6, in its most recent attack on the rights of pregnant workers, the Supreme Court ruled an employer's denial of sick leave pay for an absence due to pregnancy is not discrimination against women.

The case involved was Satty v. Nashville Gas Co. The company placed Mrs. Satty on a mandatory maternity leave without sick pay. When she returned to work, she was stripped of all accumulated seniority and put on the bottom of the seniority list. She was rehired at a temporary job at a lower rate of pay and was unable to bid on permanent jobs because of her low seniority. When the temporary job ended, she was fired.

The Court ruled that it was discrimination to strip Mrs. Satty of her seniority, but not discrimination to deny her disability benefits during her absence. This ruling reaffirms last December's decision in the case of Gilbert v. General Electric Co. where the Court ruled that GE's exclusion of pregnancy from its disability plan was not based on sex. In these decisions, the Court is maintaining that the 1964 Civil Rights Act does not consider pregnancy-related discrimination to be sex discrimination.

Forty-five % of all women are in the labor force full time today, 80% of whom will become pregnant during their working lives. More and more women are entering the work force because one family member's income is just not enough, and no pay for the period of the disability will be a severe blow to the families of working mothers. This is only multiplied for the woman who is single or divorced.

Several class action suits in the last year have fought discrimination against pregnant workers on a case by case basis with varying results. But in each case the Gilbert case was cited as basis for denying disability benefits for pregnancy.

The Campaign to End Discrimination against Pregnant Workers, a 300 group coalition which is headed up by the AFL-CIO executive council with much representation from organized labor, is clear that "discrimination against pregnant people is discrimination against women alone...The prohibition of pregnancy-related discrimination is essential to the ultimate equality of women in the workplace." The coalition won Senate approval in September for legislation outlawing discrimination against pregnant workers, but it is expected that more conservative representatives will fight harder to weaken the House version of the bill.

It's important that this battle be fought legislatively and through the courts, but even more important at the bargaining table. There is no law now which prevents contracts between unions and corporations from specifying that pregnancy leave include sick pay, and the failure to take up this demand has led, in part, to the present problem.

IUE, in its negotiations with GE, Westinghouse, RCA, and others, did not make this a contractual priority, even while they were fighting it in court! It is the responsibility of unions to educate and organize the membership around this demand. Like every other right working people have won, this too will have to be the result of the organized and united effort of working people.

Union takes up tax fight

Union members are leading the fight against property tax increases in Montgomery County with plans to make the fight against the property tax system state wide. Already they have succeeded in forcing county officials to grant nearly 90% of requests of reduced assessments. Of the 19,720 homeowners who went through the appeal process, 17,539 were granted reduced assessments. Approximately 15% of homeowners in the county filed appeals; the national average is only 3%.

The tax protest was ignited when members of Local 155 of the United Electrical, Radio, and Machine Workers of America (UE) who owned homes in Montgomery County realized that county officials were increasing the assessments on residential properties, but lowering the assessments on commercial and industrial properties. Not content to let gains fought so hard for on the picket line be eroded through increased property taxes, Local 155 revitalized its strike committee and took to the streets with flyers urging homeowners to appeal their assessments. In the words of Ron Dean, Local 155 President, "It's the old story — shift the taxes from the rich bosses to the average guy, to us, the workers."

Local 155 members spread the call for appeals at county hearings, and at protest meetings they helped organize, and county offices were flooded with appeals. Together with senior citizens and taxpayers associations, UE, the Steelworkers, Rubberworkers, and other unions kept up the pressure on county officials during the appeals process. A well-attended rally on the steps of the county courthouse heard speakers vow a tax strike if the politicians didn't respond to the people's protest.

Having won lower assessments, the union and homeowners didn't stop there. They are now attending townships and county budget meetings and hearings to oppose any increase in property mill rate. "We also plan to take this to the state legislators to get the whole property tax system overturned. Property taxes should be replaced by a state income tax based on people's ability to pay," said Dean.

Local 155's efforts are a good example of what unions should be doing both on and off the job — fighting for the interests of the workers. The UE has a history as a militant and democratic union. It is one of the few unions that remains true to the spirit of the early CIO which gave it its birth.



UE LOCAL 155 PROTESTS PROPERTY TAXES.

Attacks on OSHA Continue

A federal appeals court has ruled invalid the OSHA regulation that gives workers the right to refuse to work a job which might cause serious injury or death.

The case that resulted in this decision involved Jim Simpson, an iron worker at the Daniel Construction Co., whose job was fitting into place heavy steel beams

with the help of a crane. One day when Simpson and the rest of the crew were working 150 feet up, the wind grew so strong that they feared for their lives. When they came down, the foreman ordered them back up, and Simpson refused. He was fired.

When the court ruled that the OSHA regulation was invalid, they were saying that Simpson had to risk death to keep his job. This regulation is potentially the most powerful right of workers in the OSHA law since it gives workers directly effected the right to stop production until the hazard is removed. But federal courts have been cutting it with limits and conditions, and now eliminating it altogether.

Without this right, Simpson would have to file an emergency request for an immediate OSHA inspection — then go back to work and wait for the inspector to arrive and then file in federal court to get an injunction to allow Simpson to stop working. In most cases, where death is not imminent, it could be months before an inspection is made and years before a company is cited, fined, and the hazard corrected. The average fine is not even enough to make a company bat an eye, and unlike workers and unions, companies have the right to appeal.

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Marston learns the rules of the game

by RON WHITEHORNE

As Philadelphians dug themselves out of the worst blizzard in 20 years, US attorney David Marston met with his boss, Attorney General Griffin Bell. The reception was as icy as the weather outside.

Bell told Marston he was through. Bell bluntly explained that the reason for dumping Marston was "the political system pure and simple."

This "political system" calls for a changing of the guard when one party replaces another. Appointed government positions are the spoils of election victory to be divided out among the friends of the winning party. As City Council President George Schwartz explained: "This is the name of the game and the way it's always been done."

Attorney General Bell told Marston that he personally favors doing away with the spoils system and basing appointments purely on merit, but "the people aren't ready" for such a change.

Another feature of this "political system" is that the party in power always tries to cover up its own corruption. It was this principle, more than anything else, which led to Marston's removal. As a Republican with no political ties to the ruling Democratic machine, Marston was free to go after the wheeler-dealers. And he did just that.

In his short term of office, his investigations brought down the powerful speaker of the House in Harrisburg, Herbert Fineman, and toppled South Philadelphia boss, State Senator Buddy Cianfrani. Congressmen Joshua Eilberg and Daniel Flood appeared to be next on the list. The Democratic machine was gored, and before more heads could roll, it moved to get Marston out.

POLITICIANS EXPOSE THEMSELVES

In their not-very-delicate maneuvering to put Marston on the street, the Democratic Party politicians reached a new high in cynicism and hypocrisy.

First there was Jimmy Carter, who ran on a platform of basing federal attorney appointments on merit and not politics, trying to explain to the Washington Press corps why he had agreed "to expedite the removal of Marston" at the request of Congressman Eilberg. Did Carter know that Eilberg was under investigation? "Gee Whiz, Gosh, No!" Carter in effect replied. Yet Marston angrily claimed that the Justice Department was fully aware of his investigation. Either Carter is ignorant to the point of incompetence or he is lying through his hat.

Here in Philadelphia, speaking without the aid of a lie detector, Frank Rizzo offered his reaction. "I wouldn't know Marston if I fell over him", Rizzo said. "I have no interest because I have no corrupt politicians in my administration."

Yet a month earlier, "disinterested" Frank Rizzo called a special press conference to denounce Marston's investigation of police abuse as part of a "leftist-liberal conspiracy" to destroy the city. And earlier still, two Rizzo associates, Augustine Salivitti, urban renewal director, and James J. O'Neil, Rizzo campaign manager, were indicted by Marston on charges of corruption.

Meanwhile, at his vacation spot in the lush Caribe Hilton in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Joshua Eilberg flatly denied there was any connection between his efforts to dump Marston and the investigation against him. The Marston investigation alleges that Eilberg took kickbacks through his law firm in return for helping Hahnemann Hospital get loans from state and federal agencies to finance construction of a new wing. But Eilberg told reporters, "I will buy you a dinner if you can find any way I represented Hahnemann Hospital."

THE GREASED PALM OF EILBERG

This isn't the first time Josh Eilberg has been accused of backroom deals and influence peddling. Twice in 1975 Eilberg



Marston vs. Bell

angrily denied charges that he had tried to wangle a parole for convicted city Commissioner Maurice Osser. When a letter surfaced, written by Eilberg to the US Parole Board on behalf of Osser, Eilberg admitted he had been "wrong".

Three times Eilberg has been accused of taking "improper payments," a polite term for bribes. In 1972, Eilberg was slapped on the wrist by a Senate Committee for doing favors for a mail order firm, the National Liberty Corporation, in return for a \$3,200 legal fee. Eilberg said, "I wouldn't do it over again."

In 1975 the FBI and the Justice Department had Eilberg under investigation for taking illegal campaign contributions from the Lehigh Valley Co-operative Farmers, but no charges were filed.

Again in 1975, the head of an engineering firm testified that he had given Eilberg a \$5,000 cash bribe to get a contract at Temple University in 1966. Fortunately for Eilberg, the statute of limitations on this offense had run out and

he could not be prosecuted. With this kind of track record, Eilberg better get ready to buy some dinners.

POLITICS, CAPITALIST STYLE

Naturally, the Republican Party is out to get all the mileage it can out of the Marston affair and the revelations of Democratic corruption. But few will take the Party of Watergate very seriously as an advocate of honest government!

The liberals and high-minded civic types, like Wilbur Bourne Ruthrauff, Chairman of the Committee of Seventy, are most concerned with "lost public confidence in the integrity and fairness...of government officials."

But Judge Bell and George Schwartz are more on the mark. This is the way the game of politics, capitalist style, is played and always has been. Schwartz innocently gave us some good advice when he said, "I don't see anything wrong, unless you say let's change the rules of the game and start out new." That's *exactly* what we should do!

Bell workers and consumers pay... again



Ma Bell's got a brand new bag. Look up that phone number you need in your thick, old phone directory. You say the dog ate your directory. Well then you're going to have to pay.

That's right. After February 12 all information calls after the first three will cost 10 cents a piece. This rate hike will cost the consumers plenty and it will hit Bell workers even harder.

Bell officials expect a big drop in use of the 411 information service. Elsewhere, following the 10 cent increase, information traffic fell off as much as 80%. Bell plans to dump thousands of information operators on the street now that it has its rate increase. Two hundred and fifty operators were laid off in Atlanta following the hike. In St. Louis 400 part timers lost their job.

Here in Philadelphia the Bell Workers Rank and File Committee has been fighting the rate increase. Last February as a result of agitation by the committee, Bell management posted a memo promising that there would be no layoffs of permanent information operators if they won the rate hike.

To get around this Bell simply classified all its hires for information operators as temporary workers. And now Bell is even ignoring its promise to keep all permanent operators on the job. Company spokesmen have said that they will keep "good" temporaries and lay off "bad" permanent operators. By signalling that the layoffs will be based on "job performance" rather than seniority the company is aiming at dividing permanent from temporary operators.

The threat of layoffs has been accompanied by a stepping up of harassment. One operator estimated that over half the 411 operators have been placed on special "work performance" or absentee

programs, where their work is carefully monitored.

Just recently a woman with four years experience was fired after being placed on one of these programs. With no seniority system, a weak grievance procedure and a massive layoff right around the corner, the employers are out to get rid of "troublemakers." Given Bell's history of racism, Black workers will be special targets of this company offensive.

The Operators Union, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), has not offered any resistance to these attacks. Last year's new contract failed to win a seniority system that could protect workers from arbitrary harassment and layoffs. In spite of pressure from the rank and file the union has refused to call a meeting to plan ways to fight the effects of the rate hike.

Bell has tried to justify its rate increase with a big advertising campaign that stresses how they are working to keep costs down. They are keeping costs down all right, but who is pocketing the savings. The consumers sure aren't. They're going to be paying bigger monthly bills. The workers sure aren't. Many of them will be standing on unemployment lines. Bell will pocket these savings in the form of bigger profits, an estimated \$11 million more per year. With profits already near the \$400 million mark, somehow it just doesn't seem right.

BUDD: an equal opportunity employer?

by S. BUNTING

Many workers at Budd Co.'s Red Lion plant know stories like these:

A Black press operator with ten years seniority, who manages an auto repair garage as a second job, applies for a position as a truck mechanic but is told there are no openings. While his application is still on file, two white workers are hired into that classification.

A Black worker with vocational training and job experience in welding is hired into the press shop although hiring is going on in the more skilled welding jobs in the railcar division. He is refused an opportunity to try out for these jobs.

Unfortunately, these cases are all too commonplace. When they occur, the story gets passed around by word of mouth, but often nothing else comes of it. Many workers are cynical about fighting racial discrimination through the grievance procedure because of loopholes which make it difficult to prove. Others just aren't aware of their rights.

SYSTEMATIC RACISM

The figures back up the argument that these cases are not just isolated instances, but part of a systematic pattern in Budd's personnel policy. According to the statistics of the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the most current figures available (January, 1975) show that the skilled trades are 91% white, while laborers, the government classification for the least skilled, heaviest work, are 58% Black. Overall employment at the Red Lion plant was 65% white at the time these figures were compiled.

In surveying the opinions of Red Lion workers we found that few of them gave their union, UAW Local 92, high marks for dealing with racial discrimination in the plant. Local 92, like all UAW Locals, is required by the international constitution to have a Fair Practices and Anti-Discrimination Committee, but few of the workers we talked to were even aware

that such a committee existed.

One worker put the blame on the international leadership itself, which only gives lip service to fighting racism and discrimination. "They'll march in Alabama before the TV cameras," he noted, "but you can see where they're really at by checking out the proportion of Blacks in the skilled trades in just about any UAW plant in the country. It's the same story everywhere."

AN UPHILL BATTLE

Another said that he thought there was a lot that an active Fair Practices Committee could do, "They could be more aggressive about how the company handles upgrading, for instance. As it is now, it's up to the individual who is being discriminated against to fight an uphill battle, first within the union and then against the company."

One white worker who said that he had "been around for a good many years" said he thought the union could do more. "I know some guys don't like to admit it," he said, "but everyone can see what's going on. I, for one, think the union should bring it out in the open and make sure everyone gets a fair shake."

"When the company gets away with discrimination, some of the white guys think the company is doing them a favor, and the Black guys get bitter. It hurts the union. Sooner or later, the company is going to call in its favors, and that's when the crunch comes. Budd only looks out for Budd...period."

A Black forklift operator said the key to beating discrimination was a militant attitude on the part of the union and education of the rank and file. "You can write grievance on top of grievance. You can go to court and get lawyers... sometimes it helps, but you're really playing the company's game."

"Hey, if management knows that we are serious about this, that we will stick



cpf

together to deal with it, they are going to back off. But to get to that point, everybody has to be clear that this racism bit isn't helping any of us, and that the union is going to back us up."

Most of the workers we spoke to said that the company's racism centered around channeling Black workers into certain job classifications and then keeping them there by making it difficult to upgrade or get into the apprenticeship program.

STEPS TO END RACIST PRACTICES

The first step in creating fair upgrading opportunities is an adequate system of publicizing job openings. In the last contract, Local 92 was successful in winning postings of job openings in the plant. But several workers complained that the notices are posted in only one location in the plant and that jobs are listed by title only. They suggested that job descriptions and qualifications should be included and that the notices should be posted in each department.

A key problem in the contract language in regard to upgrading is the section that states that upgrading should be based on seniority and *ability*. The company often uses "ability" as a loophole to promote whoever it wants by failing to adequately train individuals in new jobs or by unfair testing or trial procedures.

A press operator with 25 years seniority argued that the great majority of workers are capable of doing any job if they are given reasonable training. He supported contract language that emphasized that upgrading be based primarily on seniority. To ensure a fair training process he said that it should be supervised by shop stewards and the Fair Practices Committee of the union.

In-plant job postings and upgrading by seniority were both demands raised by the Blue Ribbon Group, a rank and file caucus in the union, during the contract negotiations in the fall of 1976. In addition, the Blue Ribbon Group called for seniority and job-related testing for entry into the apprenticeship program with reclaimable seniority during layoffs.

SYSTEM DISCOURAGES UPGRADING

A member of the caucus explained that the present seniority system discourages workers from upgrading from production or service jobs into the skilled trades. Workers going from production into the skilled trades must start from scratch in

seniority. They are then more vulnerable to layoffs.

If they return to production to avoid being laid off in the skilled trades, they lose all the seniority accumulated in the trades. In a place like Budd, where layoffs occur frequently, the loss of seniority can mean months and even years out on the street. There are few workers willing to take such a gamble.

"Reclaimable seniority" would allow workers who have upgraded into the skilled trades to keep their seniority and recall rights even if they bump back into their previous job during a layoff in the skilled trades.

The problem of seniority rights and bumping during layoffs has been a hot issue at Red Lion recently. As we noted in the previous issue of the *Organizer*, for years management has been interfering with the seniority rights of workers by manipulating tests and trial periods in the assembly departments.

Whenever such abuses occur, management's racism and the desire to pit worker against worker is at the root. Again, the way to attack this problem is for the union to insist on management's obligation to honor seniority rights by providing proper training and tryout periods.

These measures would go a long way to making the upgrading and bumping procedures fair and just for everybody and thus would be of benefit to white workers as well as Black.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION NEEDED

But what of the Black workers who have been victimized over the years by the company's racism — doesn't the company owe them something? Here the union's Fair Practices Committee could play an important role in initiating an affirmative action plan to make up for past discriminatory practices.

One way to do this would be to give Black workers who had previously failed out under discriminatory procedures first chance at an upgrade after a non-discriminatory procedure had been established. Anyone who succeeded in qualifying for the upgrade should receive back pay to the time of their original application for the job.

This would be a way of partially, at least, redressing past injustices suffered at the hands of the company without displacing other workers from their jobs.



January 15 marked the anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. In many workplaces, workers have won the right to celebrate Dr. King's birthday as a legal holiday. While Black people recognize this day, King's birthday should be honored by working people of all nationalities.

King, as a leader of the civil rights movement of the 1960's, stood with the Black people during the long struggle to abolish segregation and Jim Crow laws. But King's struggle and that of the Black people did not end with the passage of civil rights legislation in 1964.

King viewed that poor and working people of all nationalities had more in common than they had dividing them. An example of this view was the organizing of the "poor people's march" on Washington, DC, in which organizing was extended beyond the Black community to include the oppressed of all nationalities. The organizing King was engaged in at the time of his death, supporting the struggle of sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, was an example for us today: the need to build unity between the workers' movement and the movements of the oppressed nationalities.

Rank and file rebellion growing in basic industries

by DUANE CALHOUN

Most of us have had the experience of sitting around with a few friends at work, griping about our union officials latest sellout to the company. Whether it's George Meany, Frank Fitzsimmons, or one of their junior partners that infest many locals, the complaints are the same: weak contracts, knuckling under on grievances, members gavelled into silence at meetings, discrimination against minorities and women, union leaders with salaries and expense accounts that match those of their buddies in the corporate boardrooms.

Too often these discussions end with the remark, "And there's not a damn thing you can do about it." But plenty of workers are doing something about it.

In 1977 thousands of ordinary union members organized and took action to make their unions stronger and more effective. This rank and file movement continues to grow in size and in its understanding of what it will take to really turn things around.

There remains much to learn and plenty of weaknesses to overcome. The movement is fragmented and largely locally based. Its scope is too narrow; it generally focuses on economic issues or union democracy to the exclusion of political questions. Too often it lacks consolidation around a program representing the interests of the ranks, leaving it open to being used by individuals who place their own careers above the needs of the workers. And finally, the movement's understanding of racism and sexism as forces that divide and weaken the whole working class is limited and uneven.

But a look at major developments in the rank and file movement shows that it is gaining the maturity to overcome these obstacles.

THE AUTO WORKERS

From New Jersey to California, autoworkers have organized locally, and one national organization exists which is seeking to bring together all these scattered rank and file forces. The several year old United National Caucus (UNC) voices many of the most urgent demands of the ranks, calling for the short work week at full pay, no forced overtime, the right to strike over grievances, and the hiring of minorities into the skilled trades. The UNC also rejects reliance on the Democratic Party and calls for labor to organize a new party.

Last May at the UAW convention, the UNC led a campaign to alter the union constitution to allow direct election of top union officers by the membership. 32 locals, representing over 150,000 members, brought resolutions favoring this proposal to the convention.

The measure fell short after UAW President Fraser delayed discussion of the resolution till the last day of the convention and then managed to block a roll call vote. But this near success shows the power of national coordination and organization. The UNC, along with some independent rank and file groups, plans a conference early this year to broaden and strengthen the organization. Greater involvement of Black and production workers is critical for the UNC which historically has been weakest with these workers.

There are two national rank and file organizations in the Teamsters union: the Professional Drivers Council (PROD) and the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU). PROD started out as a Ralph Nader project on truck safety, but has be-



Members of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) rally outside Teamster headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Worker's power

come a 5000 member organization fighting corruption and undemocratic practices in the Teamsters. Most of PROD's activities consist of political lobbying in Washington, running candidates in local elections, and filing lawsuits against the abuses of the International officers.

The TDU held its second national convention last October in Cleveland, representing 2000 members in over 15 states. The TDU platform goes much further than PROD's, including demands for an end to race and sex discrimination in hiring and promotion, and the right to strike. Pete Camarata, a loading dock steward from Jimmy Hoffa's home Local 299 in Detroit and an officer of TDU, polled almost 30% of the vote in a three-way race for local vice-president last December. For a national caucus less than two years old, in a union famous for goon-squad repression of dissent, the TDU's strength is impressive.

STRUGGLE IN STEEL

Under I.W. Abel the trend toward collaboration with the employers in the Steelworkers reached a new high point. The Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA) was signed, giving up the right to strike in favor of binding arbitration in contract bargaining. This signalled the union's cooperation with the steel magnates in increasing productivity and thus eliminating jobs. But rank and file resistance is also at a high point in the union. Last year Ed Sadlowski's campaign for USWA president was the broadest, best-organized challenge to the labor bureaucracy to date.

Sادلowski, district director for the Chicago-Gary region, pulled 42% of the vote (238,000) running on a platform against the Experimental Negotiating Agreement, cooperating with the productivity drive and the corrupt Abel-McBride leadership.

But in the long run, even more important than the election itself was the spur the campaign gave to rank and file organization. Shortly after winning District Director in 1974, Sadlowski and his supporters formed Steelworkers Fight Back (SFB). SFB organized against the no-strike agreement in steel, getting hundreds of locals to pass resolutions against it. SFB also circulated petitions in the mills demanding that steelworkers get the right to vote on their contracts.

The Sadlowski campaign had some serious weaknesses. A Sadlowski staffer summed up their attitude toward the contest, saying, "When you think you're going to win, you don't take risks". This kind of "realism" led Sadlowski to play down important issues, most particularly

the question of racism in job promotions and assignments in the steel mills. This shortsightedness prevented the campaign from being a step toward solid Black-white unity.

Largely because of these weaknesses, there are also both national and local Black caucuses in the USWA. The Ad Hoc Committee of Concerned Steelworkers, a national Black caucus first organized in the 60's has focussed on getting more Black representation in the Steelworkers Union, and on eliminating racist dual seniority systems in the mills.

One of the many local Black caucuses in steel is STRUTS - Stop the Rampage of Unfair Treatment at South Works - at US Steel's South Chicago Works. A STRUTS member put their case this way, "Sure, in all areas there is a token Black here and there -- including unions and companies. But if you look at the broader picture, tokenism is progress for the few. It paints a false picture of progress for the many."

Far from being anti-white worker, STRUTS has a policy of taking up the grievances of "progressive, fair-minded white workers" along with fighting for the rights of Black workers. The real key to unity is for the white workers to take up the fight for equality and not leave this burden solely on the shoulders of Black workers.

The United IBEW Workers of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1031 in Chicago is another rank and file organization waging a fight against racism. This local of 16,000 members is one of the largest in the country, made up mostly of workers from small electrical and metal-working shops in the Chicago area, including large numbers of Spanish-speaking and Black workers as well as women.

When the United IBEW Workers began, its main focus was the fight against discrimination in job assignments and the demand for more Black and Spanish speaking union representatives. Last April, the caucus ran candidates for union office on a platform that also included cuts in officer's salaries, election of stewards, and contracts printed in Spanish and English.

Their slate was representative of the workers in the plants, including three white skilled tradesmen, two women production workers, and three Black workers. Despite being narrowly defeated in the election, United IBEW Workers continues to organize and grow.

The most powerful rank and file revolt in 1977 developed in the United Mine Work-

ers. A rank and file caucus called Miners for Democracy had run its candidate (retired miner Arnold Miller) for president in 1972, and won. Many reforms promised during the MFD campaign were implemented. But soon after the victory, MFD dissolved, and Miller began to back down from the coal companies.

Abandoned by their leadership, the miners resorted to more and more wildcat strikes to force the operators to live up to the contract. Wildcats in the coal fields accounted for one quarter of all the strikes in the US in 1976.

The biggest rebellion broke out in July 1977, when 90,000 coal miners walked out on "unauthorized" strike against cutbacks in their health benefits. This ten week wildcat involved well over half the union miners in the eastern soft coal fields. The miners eventually went back to work on Miller's promise to force the coal operators to re-open the contract and put more money in the health fund. The operators refused, and the demand for restoration of the benefit cuts has been a major one in the coal strike that began December 6th.

Rank and file miners have played an independent role in the strike as well. Before the strike began, a rank and file group called the Miners Right to Strike Committee collected 7000 signatures on a pledge to "vote no" unless the new contract included the right of locals to strike over grievances, restoration of benefit cuts, and better safety rules and pension benefits.

The Right to Strike Committee and thousands of other rank and filers, including many local and district union officials, have also been active in shutting down non-union mines during the strike, and keeping them down in spite of court injunctions and jailings. About half of the non-union mines have been shut down by determined mass picketing.

Unfortunately, this revolt has not organized itself to contest the top offices in the UMW. Organized rank and file forces were not a direct factor in the three way race last year which saw the reelection of Arnold Miller. Less than half the miners voted. Perhaps because of disillusionment with Miller, many activists counterpose direct action to participation in union elections. But both are going to be necessary if miners are to win.

DON'T GRIPE, ORGANIZE!

The employers and their friends in the labor bureaucracy want us to think we are powerless -- that "we can't do a damn thing". But as these few examples show, it's a lie. We can and we are moving. That's the New Year's message we should spread.



Organizing drives picking up steam

by JENNY QUINN

—In Oakland, California, clerical workers at Blue Cross ended eight years of attempting to bring in a union with a 63% yes vote for Local 29 of the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU). It took a 94-day strike to win the first contract.

—In North Carolina and several other southern states, textile workers at JP Stevens made major strides in their 14-year struggle for union recognition. NLRB and Supreme Court rulings, nationwide boycotts and demonstrations at Stevens' headquarters in New York all spoke of forward motion in that long and militant fight.

—Farmworkers in Arizona's citrus groves and onion fields won historic victories when growers were forced to the bargaining table, first with the Maricopa County Organizing Project, and then with the United Farmworkers (AFL-CIO). Thousands of strikers stood firm against police harassment, arrests, deportation and intimidation.

—Teamsters in the Eastern, Central and Southern jurisdictions launched an intensive campaign to organize Overnite, the most rapidly growing overland carrier in the US. The impetus for the drive came from rank and file Teamsters, many active in Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

—Hospital and Health Care Workers Union 1199 organized several thousand RNs in the Northeast, and has branched out to organize other service and clerical workers in major cities throughout the Northeast.

—The United Furniture Workers of America, whose membership shrank as shops went south in the last three decades, has launched a major offensive in response to rank and file organizing by furniture workers of the Charles Mfg. Co. in Kentucky, Alabama, Tennessee, and North Carolina. They see tackling Charles as a major first step toward organizing furniture workers throughout the South.

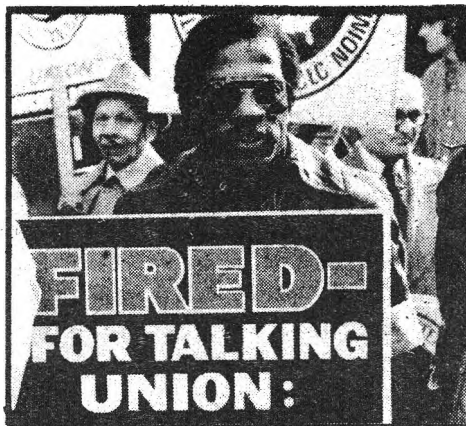
These examples represent a dynamic and growing movement by rank and file workers to demand union representation. But they represent only a minute fraction of the unorganized workforce. In the US today, 81% of the laboring population is unorganized. That figure has risen steadily over the last decade, and despite some successful organizing in the past several years, the figure continues to rise. In order to understand the real struggle of the unorganized worker, it is important to look at just why he or she is unorganized. What are the current obstacles to organizing?

The overwhelming majority of organizing drives taking place today are in workplaces that are predominantly Black, Chicano or other national minority, and or predominantly female. Many of the drives in light industry and agriculture are centered regionally in the South and Southwest. Many of the drives involving a majority of women workers are in the traditionally non-union areas of clerical, health and service, and are regionally centered in the heavily unionized cities of the Northeast, and the more highly unionized cities in the West.

There are several reasons for these developments. The last great wave of unionization, before World War 2, centered in the major industrial areas of the Northeast, Midwest, and large northwestern cities. Since that time, the corporations have evacuated many factories and moved operations either to the previously non-industrial South or out of the country altogether. At the same time, city master plans for many of these previously heavily industrialized areas have developed financial centers to cope with the massive paper flow of the banks and large corporations.

Modernization of clerical work has meant factory-like processing of paperwork formerly done by a few skilled workers. The accountant and head clerk have been replaced by massive computers, who now lord it over 35% of the female workforce.

Meanwhile, back on the ranch, the family farm of the earlier part of the century has been driven out by large agribusiness conglomerates — monopoly corporations on the range. Food production has been changed so that we now have a rural working class, which is mostly Black and Latino.



CORPORATIONS FIGHT ORGANIZATION

While the unorganized are on the move, the corporations are using every power at their command to stop unionization. There are twenty open shop states with so-called "right to work" laws. Taft-Hartley restricts mass picketing, and local courts and police do the bidding of the employers. Company propaganda spreads racism and sexism in order to divide the workers. Finally the leadership of the international unions is all too often timid and conciliatory in the face of the aggressive anti-unionism of the companies. Nevertheless, unorganized rank and file workers are making headway against these obstacles.

Take the workers at the Charles Mfg. Co. Black and white, young and old, men and women are learning to fight as a unit in small cities in the traditional bastion of racism, Alabama. They are forced by the company's tactics to coordinate efforts with workers in other cities, towns, and states. They are forging a militant and united rank and file that has kicked the behind of the UFWA leadership and

forced it to provide funds, organizers, and contacts with other internationals to aid in the organizing.

JP Stevens is another example. As one white woman worker said, "Before the election, they tried to pit the Blacks against the whites, they tried to make us think it was going to be a Black union. But they were just trying to get the white people not to join the union. It didn't work. People are smarter than they think they are."

The struggle to unionize JP Stevens illustrates the dilemma of both the unorganized and the union leaderships. Traditionally, bureaucratic unions like the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) favor labor "peace" and avoid strikes and militant organizing drives like the plague. But the loss of union membership to the unorganized South, and the threat these open shops pose to those still organized have forced the Amalgamated to take action.

Still, a lifetime of chairwarming creates habits that are hard to overcome. The ACTWU leadership, while it wants to see the organization of the South, fears rank and file initiative and a fight with the employers. It prefers to rely on safe tactics and focus the struggle in the courtroom rather than on the shop floor.

While national boycotts, used with great success against the Farah Co. earlier, and presently being employed against JP Stevens are important and must be supported, they cannot be substituted for aggressive organizing.

The gap between rank and file militancy and union leadership timidity was underlined at Farah. Rank and file workers there struck the main plant while ACTWU organizers argued that a strike was at least two years away. Without the militancy of the ranks the strike never would have been won. Rank and file initiative as opposed to reliance on the leadership of the international unions is the key to winning the battle to organize the unorganized.

This is the lesson of a strike by Blue Cross clerical workers in Oakland, California, as well. The union leaders have traditionally seen the predominantly female clerical workforce as unorganizable, and this attitude has largely been a self-fulfilling prophecy. At Blue Cross, after four unsuccessful organizing drives characterized by bureaucratic bungling and inaction, the rank and file took matters into their own hands.

Local 29 of the OPEIU, which had mistled earlier drives, was reorganized. A new leadership hired four women clerical workers as organizers. Prior drives had used male organizers with no clerical experience. An organizing committee drawn from the rank and file took real leadership in the strike. While earlier drives had tried to get the clerical workers to sign up with the union by giving away record albums, this time the union organized mass lunch time rallies to talk union. These tactics enabled the union to sign up 63% of the workers.

But it took a 94 day strike, in which Oakland cops busted picket lines and arrested strikers, to convince Blue Cross that the union had come in to stay. The Blue Cross drive exposes the myth that women, especially women clerical workers, won't fight and can't win. The slogan of the Blue Cross workers was "This is the year" and they proved right.

But for most unorganized workers, 1977 was not the year. Millions of workers remain unorganized and ignored. Others tried and failed, overwhelmed by employer resistance or betrayed by indifferent union leaderships. But the victories of the unorganized point the way forward and the growth and militancy of the movement of the unorganized promises that 1978 will be the year for even more workers who need unions.

Union busting in the Midwest

by JOE LEWANDOWSKI

This is the Action Eye Camera. We are taking you to the Midwest where we are on the scene as the big, bad wolf is just outside the doors of the AFL-CIO house built of straw, the Teamster house built of mud, and the United Auto Workers house built of aluminum foil.

We have with us today the three little pigs who have helped build these sturdy structures of unionism. To my right I have Mr. Meany Pig of the AFL-CIO. Mr. Meany, does it bother you that only 19% of the US workforce is organized into unions? "Tsk, Tsk, it's a terrible thing. But fortunately our union members, even as few as they are, are able to provide me with a comfortable six-figure salary."

To the right of Mr. Meany Pig, with his hands in the pension fund, we have Mr. Fitzsimmons Pig. Mr. Fitzsimmons, there have been numerous reports of top members of your union being associated with organized crime and many rank and filers complain about the dictatorial practices of the international union: what do you have to say to these charges? "Well, as my great friend Dick Nixon said, 'I am not a crook'. And even though the rank and file doesn't get to vote for me, I doubt if they would even want to."

And slightly to the left of Mr. Meany Pig we find Mr. Fraser Pig of the UAW. Mr. Fraser, that wolf outside looks pretty vicious. Is he really as mean as he looks? "Well, don't let those big fangs fool you, they're just dentures. I know because the wolf and I go to the same cocktail parties and after a few drinks he always takes out his fangs, puts his big paw around me, and says, 'You're my kind of pig'. Once you get to know the wolf, you'll find that he's just a big, playful puppy."

And now we move outside to see what the wolf thinks of the three pigs. Mr. Wolf, you seem to be doing some sort of breathing exercises. . . what is it, some kind of yoga? "No, but you're welcome to watch....HUFF, HUFF....PUFF, PUFF....BLOOOOW!!"

For thousands of workers in the Midwest and across the country, the wolf is at the door. The wolf they are facing is a nationally coordinated campaign to break their unions and pass open shop or so-called "right to work" legislation in key states.

Union busting is nothing new. It is not unusual to see unions busted in small shops, or in cases similar to the housekeepers at the University of Pennsylvania, in which the unions are usually small and politically powerless. But the current situation in the Midwest is new because the union busting which is occurring there is a carefully planned attack designed to cripple trade unions across the United States.

UNION BUSTING PATTERN

The pattern is the same everywhere. The companies that are involved often attack one plant at a time so that they can continue their production in other facilities. They provoke a strike by making a ridiculous contract offer, often attacking seniority rights and demanding other take-aways. They then try to maintain production by bringing in scab labor, often from out-of-town or out-of state.

When the scabs are met with physical resistance on the picket line, the companies go to the courts and get injunctions to limit picketing. Strike leaders are arrested, heavy fines are levied and newspaper headlines scream about labor violence. Union locals often get bogged down in a sea of court injunctions, contempt of court convictions, and damage suits.

If the company is successful in maintaining production they can usually count on winning the strike and keeping the scab labor. The next step is to hold a vote to decertify the union.

Of course, this pattern is no coincidence. Union busting is big business these days. There are union busting consulting firms, union busting seminars and security agencies which specialize in protecting scabs. There is a national 'Right-to-Work' Committee, financed and run by top corporate brass,

which sets union busting targets, orchestrates anti-labor media campaigns, and coordinates lobbying efforts and grass root campaigns to pass "open shop" legislation.

"RIGHT TO WORK" TARGETS

There are now 20 so-called "right-to-work" states, most of them in the South and Southwest. In these states union membership is restricted to those employees who actually vote for the union or sign union cards. In a situation in which only a fraction of the workplace belongs to a union, it is fairly easy for a company to put down a strike or break a union.

The 'Right-to-Work' Committee has now targeted five midwestern states for massive three year campaigns to throw out union-shop legislation. If they are successful, half of the states in the country will be open shop states, including key areas in the industrial heartland of the US.

The implications for workers here and across the US are serious. It means that industry here will have even more options to consider when they decide to move to anti-union states. The midwestern states could be particularly attractive because they offer transportation advantages, a pool of skilled industrial workers and easy accessibility to already developed sister industries. This development will not only throw thousands of us out of jobs, but will also pave the way for more anti-labor legislation in other states.

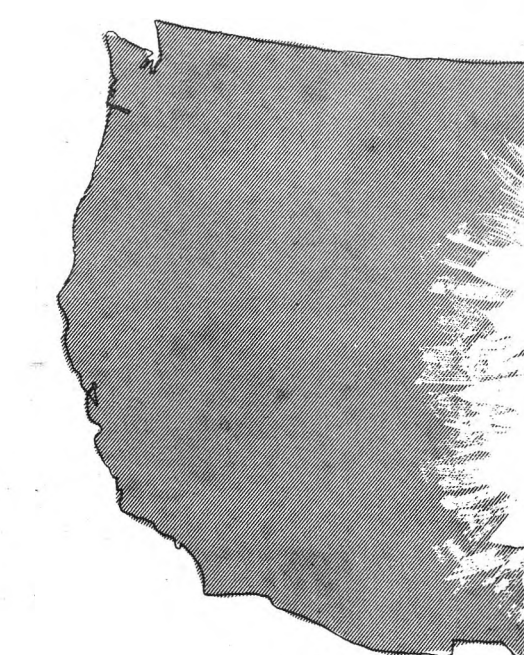
WHY THIS ATTACK?

Why is this happening now and what can we do about it? The economic crisis that is now plaguing the international capitalist economy is at the root of the current attack. The monopolies are out to get back the profits they lost in the last recession. Inflation and more intense international competition threaten them with the loss of markets. To maintain their profit rates, the monopolies are out to make the working class pay for the economic crisis. They're out to cut labor costs. To get away with it they have to break the power of the workers' first line of defense, their unions. This is why they have mounted the most vicious attack on the trade union movement in 30 years.

Over the three decades in which the largest international unions have been preaching the gospel of "labor peace" and "partners in production", the union movement has grown weak and flabby. It is riddled with corruption at the highest levels. It is divided into hundreds of little kingdoms of petty power and privilege. It has allowed its membership to be divided by racism and sexism and has time and again even encouraged those divisions. It has tied its political destiny to the Democratic Party, a party financed and run by the monopoly corporations.

And now the workers are paying the price. If you have any doubt, ask the workers at the Coors Brewery in Colorado, the Iowa Beef strikers, the Hussmann Refrigeration workers in St. Louis, the Essex workers in Elwood, Ind. The workers at all of these places have fought valiant battles.

They've gotten their heads busted by cops, their houses firebombed by company goons; they've been to jail in the defense of their jobs and their unions. They have found that



the international unions they have thought of all their lives as towering fortresses of strength are in reality houses of straw, mud, and aluminum foil. In every case the international union was either not capable or was unwilling to deliver the goods when the chips were down.

But this is not a requiem for the trade union movement in this country. A new generation

Missouri,

Workers in Missouri have been backed into a corner and are now fighting for the very life of unionism in that state:

* *The National Right-to-Work Committee, a reactionary anti-union organization financed by monopoly corporations, has targeted Missouri as the major focus for a massive campaign to ban the union shop.*

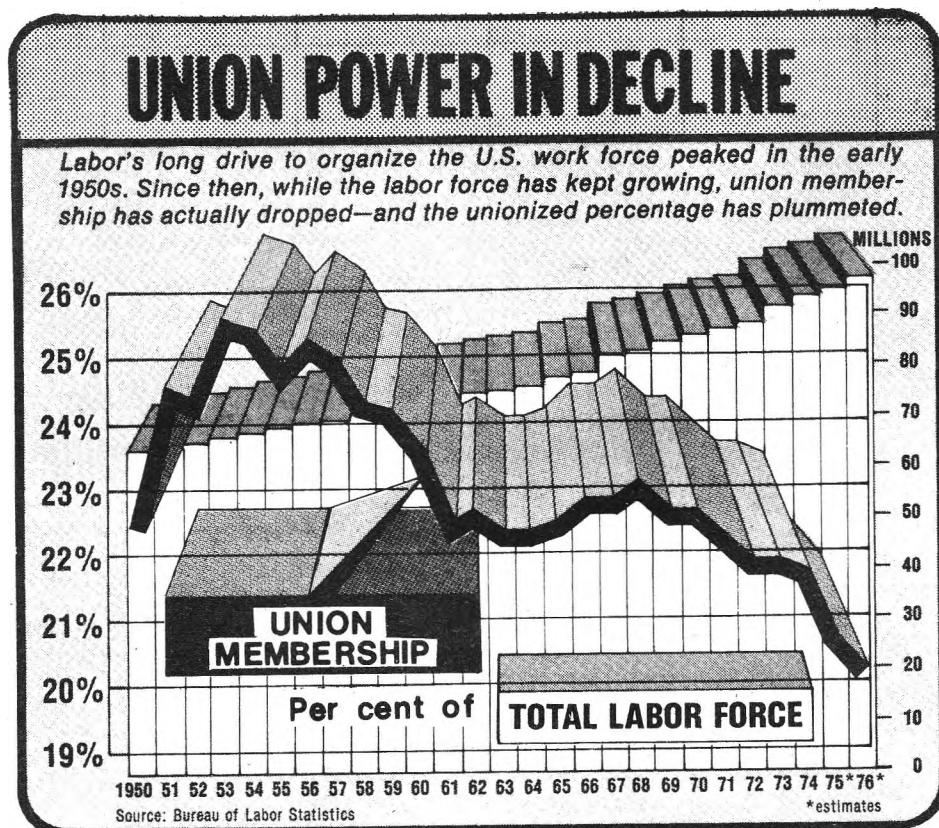
A public opinion firm, hired by the Right-to-Work Committee, has made two million phone calls around the state to gauge public sentiment toward an open shop law. The questions asked in the poll are phrased to promote confusion about the term "right-to-work". Many people are led to think that it means "the right to hold a job." Using such tactics, the Right-to-Work Committee has been able to solicit thousands of volunteers to aid their cause. Similar tactics were employed in Louisiana, the 20th state to enact open shop legislation.

Union leaders, jarred by the seriousness of the threat, have joined together to form a United Labor Committee to fight the attack.

* *Strikers at the Hussman Refrigerator Co. in St. Louis have been replaced by 1,500 scabs in an effort to break their union. Two months after the United Steelworkers Union (USW) Local 13889 walked out last May, Pet Inc., the monopoly which owns the refrigeration plant, began hiring the scabs who now operate the plant. Negotiations broke off in late August.*

The rank and file have stubbornly and militantly battled for their jobs, but they face tremendous odds. The strikers have had to cope with mass arrests for picketing, court injunctions and lukewarm backing from their international union leadership.

On August 1, police arrested more than 100 strikers and supporters for violating a temporary restraining order against mass picketing. Two supporters of the strike who pleaded not guilty and stood trial were sentenced to 60 days and five months.



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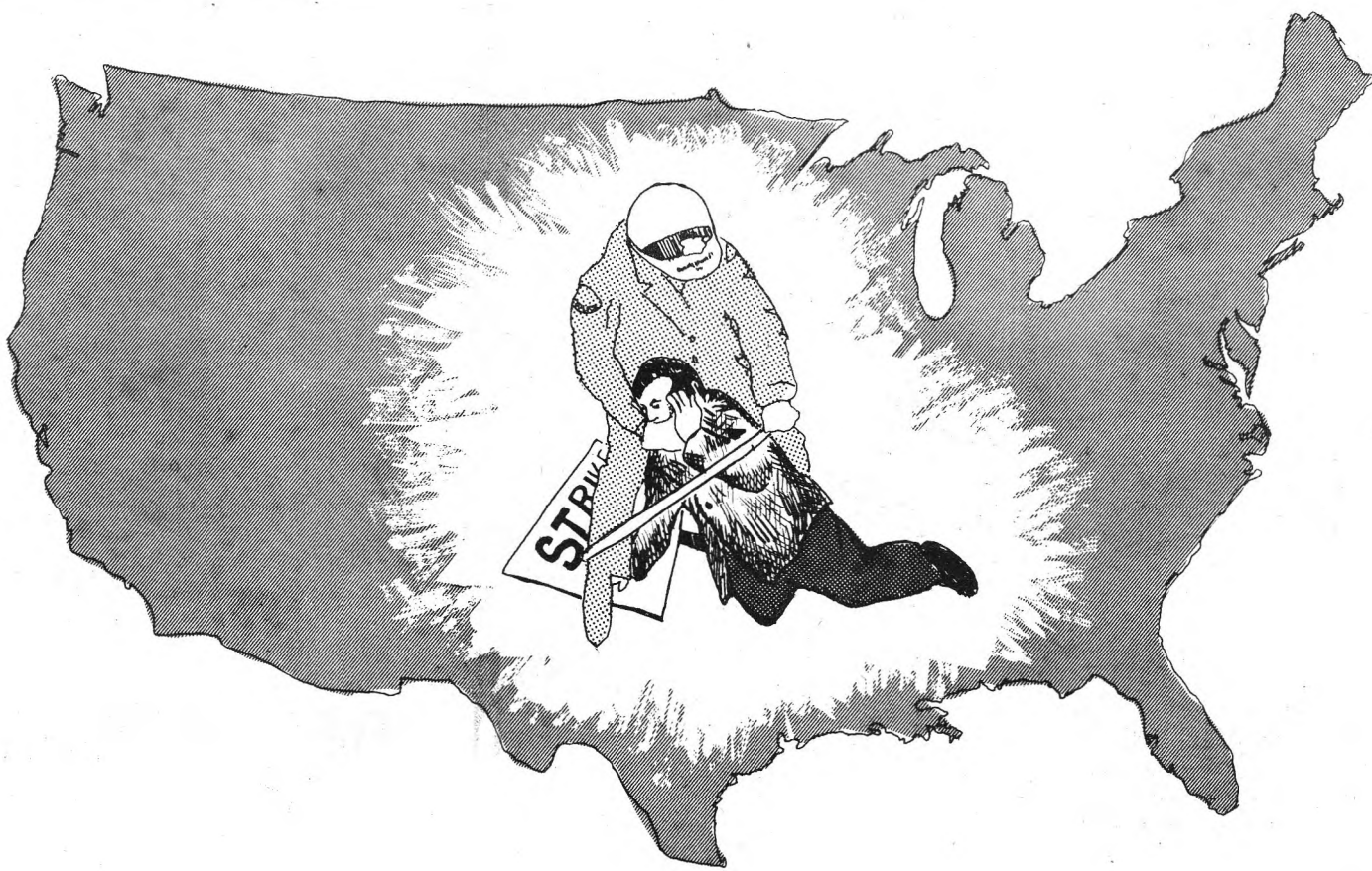
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Why is this happening now and what can we do about it? The economic crisis that is now plaguing the international capitalist economy is at the root of the current attack. The monopolies are out to get back the profits they lost in the last recession. Inflation and more intense international competition threaten them with the loss of markets. To maintain their profit rates, the monopolies are out to make the working class pay for the economic crisis. They're out to cut labor costs. To get away with it they have to break the power of the workers' first line of defense, their unions. This is why they have mounted the most vicious attack on the trade union movement in 30 years.

Over the three decades in which the largest international unions have been preaching the gospel of "labor peace" and "partners in production", the union movement has grown weak and flabby. It is riddled with corruption at the highest levels. It is divided into hundreds of little kingdoms of petty power and privilege. It has allowed its membership to be divided by racism and sexism and has time and again even encouraged those divisions. It has tied its political destiny to the Democratic Party, a party financed and run by the monopoly corporations.

And now the workers are paying the price. If you have any doubt, ask the workers at the Coors Brewery in Colorado, the Iowa Beef strikers, the Hussmann Refrigeration workers in St. Louis, the Essex workers in Elwood, Ind. The workers at all of these places have fought valiant battles.

They've gotten their heads busted by cops, their houses firebombed by company goons; they've been to jail in the defense of their jobs and their unions. They have found that



the international unions they have thought of all their lives as towering fortresses of strength are in reality houses of straw, mud, and aluminum foil. In every case the international union was either not capable or was unwilling to deliver the goods when the chips were down.

But this is not a requiem for the trade union movement in this country. A new generation

of rank and file fighters are being born in these struggles. The presence of rank and file movements are already making a significant impact in the Mineworkers, Steelworkers, Autoworkers and Teamster unions. It is the threat of a rank and file revolt which is moving union bureaucrats out of their easy chairs for the first time in years.

It is rank and file activists who are carrying

on the boycotts against J.P. Stevens, Pet foods, Coors beer and Iowa Beef products. It is the men and women on the shop floor who are turning out to support their striking brothers and sisters on the picket lines.

The trade union movement that is coming to birth out of these struggles in these grey days will know a wolf when it sees one, and will know how to deal with it.

Missouri, the front line

Workers in Missouri have been backed into a corner and are now fighting for the very life of unionism in that state:

* *The National Right-to-Work Committee, a reactionary anti-union organization financed by monopoly corporations, has targeted Missouri as the major focus for a massive campaign to ban the union shop.*

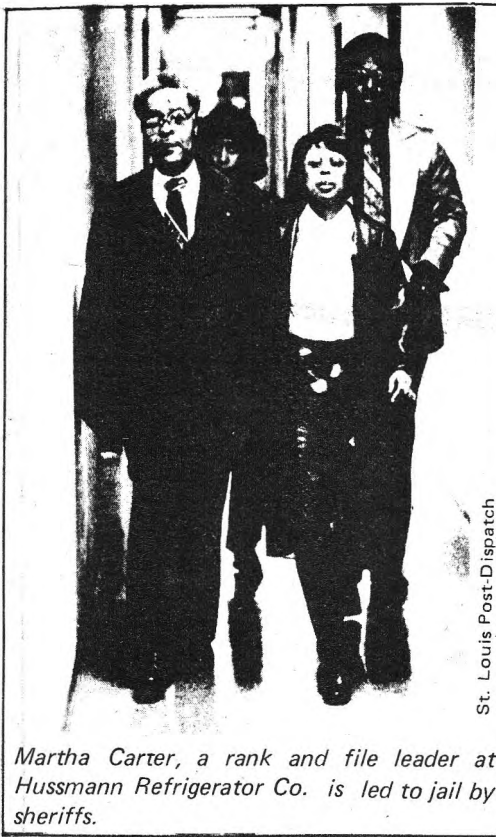
A public opinion firm, hired by the Right-to-Work Committee, has made two million phone calls around the state to gauge public sentiment toward an open shop law. The questions asked in the poll are phrased to promote confusion about the term "right-to-work". Many people are led to think that it means "the right to hold a job." Using such tactics, the Right-to-Work Committee has been able to solicit thousands of volunteers to aid their cause. Similar tactics were employed in Louisiana, the 20th state to enact open shop legislation.

Union leaders, jarred by the seriousness of the threat, have joined together to form a United Labor Committee to fight the attack.

* *Strikers at the Hussman Refrigerator Co. in St. Louis have been replaced by 1,500 scabs in an effort to break their union. Two months after the United Steelworkers Union (USW) Local 13889 walked out last May, Pet Inc., the monopoly which owns the refrigeration plant, began hiring the scabs who now operate the plant. Negotiations broke off in late August.*

The rank and file have stubbornly and militantly battled for their jobs, but they face tremendous odds. The strikers have had to cope with mass arrests for picketing, court injunctions and lukewarm backing from their international union leadership.

On August 1, police arrested more than 100 strikers and supporters for violating a temporary restraining order against mass picketing. Two supporters of the strike who pleaded not guilty and stood trial were sentenced to 60 days and five months.



Martha Carter, a rank and file leader at Hussmann Refrigerator Co. is led to jail by sheriffs.

The Hussmann strikers need your support because they have no intention of giving up the fight. As one striker walking the picket-line put it, "They want to starve us out and break the union, but they're not going to succeed. We went out 1,500 strong and that's the only way we'll go back."

* *Teamsters Local 133 in St. Louis is still fighting to overturn contempt of court convictions and a \$50,000 fine levelled against it during a three month strike in the spring of 1976.*

The union, which represents about 600 beer delivery truck drivers, was involved in a militant struggle to maintain their right-to-strike over grievances. During the course of the strike, 72 members were arrested for mass picketing and attempting to dissuade scabs from taking their jobs. Due primarily to pressure from the courts and the threat of being put into receivership, the union had to settle for a grievance procedure that limited their right-to-strike.

An appeal to the Missouri State Supreme Court has recently been turned down, but the union plans to continue its appeals to the US Supreme Court. The union membership has passed a resolution, "to provide legal protection for every union member in the state of Missouri to prevent a return to the infamous and dreaded 'government by injunction' tactics of employers and their over-friendly judges during the labor-management battles of the 1930's and, at the same time, to keep judges the hell out of our constitutional right to strike, to assemble, and to speak freely."

* *In August, Overnite Trucking Co., a non-union employer from Richmond, Va., expanded its operations into St. Louis posing a major threat to the Teamster local which represents over-the-road truckers. Overnite, which has never been unionized, opened its shop stating that they had "absolutely no intention of unionizing or of leaving St. Louis." In October the Teamsters announced a national campaign to organize the 3,400 Overnite truckers and declared it their "Number one priority."*

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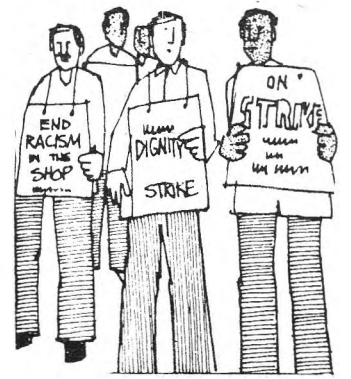
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Coors, brewed with scab labor



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The Joseph Coors Brewing Co., one of the most vicious enemies of organized labor, and one of the most blatantly racist corporations in the United States, is winning a major victory in Colorado that could well have national impact.

On April 5, 1977, 1500 members of Bottle, Can and Brewery Workers Local 366 voted to strike rather than to lose their seniority system and undergo such degrading practices as lie detector tests and physical exams which the company wanted to be able to administer at their will.

UNION SHOP THE ISSUE

The company virtually admitted that the strike was provoked in order to bust the union when it announced May 9 that the main issue was the union shop. In December of the previous year, the company had challenged the union's right of representation, a measure the company is permitted to take under the weak Colorado state labor laws. With 98% of the eligible workforce voting, the union received the support of 92.4% of the workers.

Undeterred by the enormous pro-union sentiment, Coors set out to break the union through their tried and true methods of strike-busting. Coors workers have historically been divided into as many as 15 different craft unions which the company has been systematically picking off over 18 years. If the Brewery Workers Union is broken, Coors will have succeeded in destroying every union in the plant.

Coors is the largest employer in the state of Colorado and it has exercised its political power through the state legislature and the courts to make union busting a fairly simple matter. Through the use of court injunctions, Coors has succeeded in limiting pickets so that some 500 scabs can enter the plant.

Demoralized by the odds they face, as many as 1000 striking workers have returned to their jobs without a contract and without a union. The union basically has been reduced to an "unofficial" bargaining agent trying to return the remaining 500 strikers to work.

Throughout the strike the union and its supporters have been carrying on an educational campaign to expose the racist, sexist, and reactionary nature of the Coors dynasty.

Of 1500 Coors workers only 10% are Chicano, Black, Asian or Native American—all hired under government pressure since 1969. Women make up less than 4% of the workforce. All are concentrated in the lowest paying, most difficult classifications. In addition, the union has revealed that Joseph Coors is one of the central figures in the national 'Right to Work' Committee and one of its principal financial backers.

The union and its supporters have initiated a boycott of Coors Beer throughout the West which has had a substantial impact on Coors sales. The latest figures reveal that Coors has sold 2.5 million fewer barrels in 1977 than it had predicted.

the front line



Martha Carter, a rank and file leader at Hussmann Refrigerator Co. is led to jail by sheriffs.

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Eleven more strikers were convicted on Dec. 8 for violating a court order regulating picketing. Nine were given suspended sentences, but Leon Reeves, recording secretary of the Local, and Martha Carter, a rank and file activist, were sentenced to 20 days in jail.

The convicted strikers issued a statement saying, "Some of us strikers used to think that the courts were impartial, that you could get a fair trial. What we see is that the courts, the police and the companies are working hand in hand to break this strike."

Strikers have initiated a boycott of Pet Inc. products which has received the support of the Greater St. Louis Labor Council and which may be backed nationally by the AFL-CIO. The Pet boycott affects a local liquor store chain, the Stuckey Restaurant chain, and a variety of food products from applesauce (Musselman's) to salad dressing, potato chips, evaporated and condensed milk and breakfast foods.

Bosses out to butcher Iowa Beef



The 2,400 strikers at the Iowa Beef Processors plant in Dakota City, Iowa, will soon mark the first anniversary of their struggle with one of the largest companies in the meat packing industry. The walkout began Feb. 26 of last year when the members of Local 222 of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmens Union rejected a company offer of takeaways.

In response to the strike, the company has formed a dummy corporation — "Farm Products" — with a company union, and has maintained production with scab labor.

Scabs were met by militant mass picketing until police attacked the lines on March 9. Since then there has been a court injunction to limit picketing to four people per gate. When other Iowa Beef plants were struck in sympathy with the Dakota City Workers, the courts slapped the international union with a \$2.4 million fine.

AUTOMATION HITS WORKERS

The strike is of primary significance for workers in the meatcutting industry. By em-

ploying highly automated processing methods, Iowa Beef has risen to the top of the industry in just 15 years. Workers in Iowa Beef plants often work 60 hour weeks, processing some 180 cattle per hour on the automated butchering lines at wages a dollar an hour less than the industry average.

Automated production at large non-union shops like Iowa Beef have cut sharply into employment and have weakened union shops throughout the meatpacking industry. Unions have already been broken at a Packerland plant in Chipewa Falls, Wisconsin, and at seven packinghouses in Milwaukee.

The International Union of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America has declared the Iowa Beef strike its number one priority and has organized a national boycott of scab-produced meat. The union is asking its members and consumers to boycott all meat with the following inspection numbers: Denison Iowa 245, Fort Dodge Iowa 245A, 245B, 245C, 245D, 245E, 245G, 292A, 2923, 9268, 1502.

**"These boots are
made for walking..."**



workers CONTRACTS '77

by ANNA GOLD

In 1977 the rank and file workers were ready to walk, no doubt about it. Longshoremens hung their hooks up, aerospace workers locked their tool boxes, teachers closed their books and iron ore workers put on their picketing clothes. Telephone workers wore T shirts that said, "I'm Mad as Hell and I'm not Going to Take it Anymore." Twelve major and many more local contracts were negotiated, and the rank and file sentiment was pretty uniform — we've been stomped on for too long, it's time to fight back.

But as the results of the negotiations show, determination and anger aren't enough to insure a victory. As part of their determination to recover their recession losses, the corporations tried to force the acceptance of take-away contracts. The workers were ready to meet this assault head on, but conciliation of the employers remained the watchword of the union leaderships.

"The way they ran this strike, it was like fighting with one hand tied behind your back," explained one longshoreman. If the contracts that labor signs with management are a barometer of the balance of forces between them, the picture is a grim one for the workers.

RANK AND FILE DEMANDS

The demands of the rank and file were consistent from industry to industry. Top on the list was job security — through some kind of guaranteed annual income, a shorter work week, incentives for early retirement, firm seniority provisions eliminating separate seniority tracks, and an end to the farming out of jobs to non-union workers. Substantial wage and pension increases were equally important. Third, the need for strong health and safety protections was on the forefront of many workers' minds, particularly workers in the mines, coke ovens and shipyards. In a number of industries the workers have seen this demand as directly linked to the need for the right to strike.

Finally, in every industry there is growing recognition of the need for radical measures to attack discrimination against national minority and women workers. This includes eliminating separate seniority tracks, upgrading the pay scales on the lower grades, adopting an aggressive affirmative action plan, and assuring full maternity benefits.

WORKERS LOSE OUT

How did the workers fare with these and other urgent demands? When I.W. Abel prepared to negotiate the steel contract there was a great deal of talk about the need to win a guaranteed annual income to protect workers from the current job

drain. "The only thing we got that's guaranteed was more insecurity," was the feeling of the majority of local heads who voted the contract down on the first vote.

As Abel rammed the contract through on the second vote, the comments of Balanoff, director-elect of the huge Chicago-Gary area District 31 echoed in many minds: working under the Experimental Negotiating Agreement is like "trying to swim the Atlantic Ocean with lead boots on." (The ENA commits steelworkers to binding arbitration to resolve all disputed issues for 10 years.)

Job security was central in the strike of longshoremens on the East Coast as well, as they sought to take the loopholes out of their Guaranteed Annual Income provisions. Automation has cut ILA membership in half since 1960. After a 60-day selective strike aimed only at containerized ships, longshoremens went back to work with a contract which did not make the Guaranteed Income provisions ironclad, and which went no further in protecting their jobs from non-union workers hired to unpack containers.

The phone and garment contracts were no better on this issue. The disastrous men's clothing contract allows for a reopener in January around the question of permitting companies to import non-union goods.

ORE WORKERS STRIKE BUT LOSE

Where wages were the central issue workers didn't fare much better. The iron ore workers, who make an average of \$2 to \$4 an hour less than steel workers in the mills, are a good example. The 12,000 worker iron ore strike was the first major strike against the steel monopolies and was the longest major strike in steel labor history. The final contract, which did not win parity with the workers in the mills and fell significantly short in almost every area, was ratified only after Steelworker President McBride broke the solidarity of the negotiating committee by disbanding it and ordering locals to vote independently of each other.

Far from making any advances in winning the shorter work week, many of the contracts maintained the practice of forced overtime. Health and safety provisions remained universally weak. Coke oven workers, who are predominantly national minority workers and who face constant danger, had demanded that the new steel contract guarantee that their wage level be maintained when they are transferred from an unsafe job, but this demand was dropped by the negotiators.

Finally, few advances were made in the struggle to end discrimination against

national minority and women workers. The phone company contract left the large female-male wage differential intact by failing to change the present job classification system or upgrade the bottom jobs. Though some progress was made, the IAM contract with Boeing did not eliminate the company's right to retain workers out of the line of seniority, which has led to flagrant racism and sexism in past practice. While disability benefits for pregnancy were won in both phone and IAM contracts, there were no significant steps towards affirmative action made.

LABOR MOVEMENT IN CRISIS

At best, then, workers managed to hold the line in their contracts of 1977. The negotiations illustrate well the present crisis in the labor movement today. The monopoly capitalists are determined to recoup their losses by taking them out of the workers' pockets, and to do so they are attempting to break the power of the unions.

The union leaderships are finding that their conciliatory policies bring forth fewer and fewer concessions. Their marriage to the Democratic Party has brought nothing but crumbs for the average worker. Their continued insistence on gentlemanly negotiations and reliance on legislative lobbying has left the class unarmed. Few unions made any real strike preparations, and often the leadership had to be dragged into a strike kicking and screaming.

What is important about the situation however, is the growing militancy in the ranks. When the International Longshoremens' Association called its selective strike, workers in New Orleans protested

such a halfhearted measure by closing the whole port down. They complied with the selective strike only after the International stepped in and took control of the local. Abel received the go-ahead on the steel contract from the local presidents only with great difficulty.

In Hawaii 7,000 sugar workers forced the ILWU leadership to call a strike after a nine month contract extension had already expired.

Finally, many observers believe that the iron ore strike was directed as much against the Experimental Negotiating Agreement as against the rotten contract offer. The corporations questioned the legality of the strike in terms of the ENA, but McBride was compelled to sanction the strike when the 80 member rank and file elected negotiating committee rejected his initial proposal.

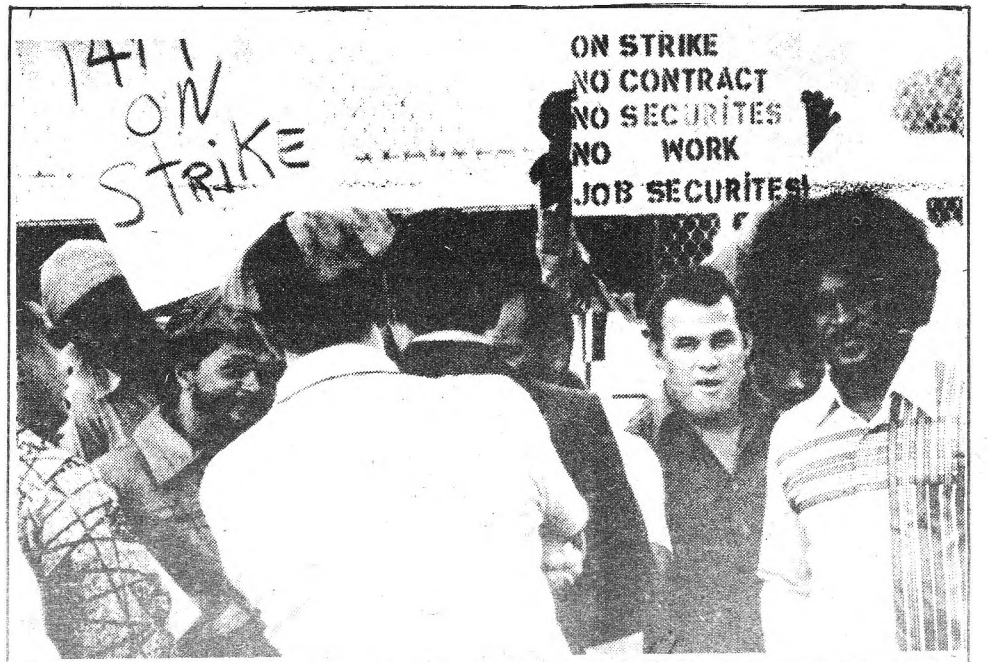
RANKS LACK ORGANIZATION

Universally the major weakness of the rank and file forces is its lack of organization. While the majority of the contracts are negotiated on a nationwide basis against multinational corporations, most rank and file groups are small and local and are therefore neither able to consistently influence the leadership of their international union nor maintain the kind of strength necessary to hold out to US Steel, Boeing or AT&T.

This same fragmentation exists between the different unions, even within the same industry. When the ILWU, representing the western longshoremens, struck containerized ships in solidarity with the eastern strike, they were ordered back to work by the courts, and their own contract bound them to obey the order.

The issues raised in the contract struggles of the last year are the concerns of virtually all workers. Job security, an end to discrimination, a decent standard of living...these things cannot be won by collective bargaining alone. They will require political action by a movement that understands that workers, regardless of what industry they work in, are a class and have to organize as such.

When the workers movement develops class-wide organization and understanding it will then be able to shift the balance of power with the monopolists in its own direction and our contracts will look alot different. This is the lesson of the contract struggles of 1977 and the real, if uneven, growth of the rank and file movement shows that this lesson is not being lost on the workers. This last year the working class did a lot of walking — mostly in place — but the song they are singing to the corporations is getting louder: "These boots are made for walking...one of these days these boots are gonna walk all over you."



New Orleans dock workers on strike. One longshoreman said, "The way they ran this strike, it was like fighting with one hand tied behind your back."

Stop Banking on Racism



by MICHAEL SIMMONS

The struggle in southern Africa has the potential to be to the 70's what Vietnam was to the 60's. However, contrary to Vietnam, we do not have American soldiers to bring home. Instead, we are faced with bringing the dollars home. This is because the United States, with its NATO allies of France, Great Britain, and West Germany, are the financiers of apartheid.

The total export and import of the US and South Africa is \$2.2 billion. The total investment of American corporations in South Africa is \$1.7 billion. American corporations finance their South African enterprises through bank loans from American banks. Many of these and other banks make loans directly to the South African government. All loans for South Africa are guaranteed by the Export-Import bank, a federally controlled institution.

Currently, we have heard people such as Andrew Young and OIC director Leon Sullivan suggest that American economic involvement in South Africa

can be a leverage for change. If we examine the record, we come up with a different conclusion.

Since the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, American investments have tripled in South Africa. American banks have loaned over \$770 million to South Africa since the Soweto uprising in 1976. As we can see, with the recent bannings, arrests and continued violence of the South African government, things are getting worse in South Africa.

Indeed, we should realize that American corporate and financial institutions are in South Africa to benefit from the system of apartheid that provides over 19% rate of profit in comparison to an average of 11-12% in other countries.

BANKS POLICIES RACIST AT HOME

If we want to know the attitudes of banks on racism we should look to their policies in this country. Invariably, many people have found that banks making loans to South Africa also have racist

lending patterns in this country. One can see correlations of redlining, lack of low interest money for school systems, public hospitals, social service institutions and personal loans. Moreover, the domestic sexist and anti-trade union practices of banks also are carried over into South Africa.

The need to link the struggle against racism in South Africa with the struggle against racism in this country is being addressed by the National Committee to Oppose Bank Loans to South Africa (COBLSA). COBLSA, which is over a year old, is trying to get banks not to make any loans to South Africa or to corporations in South Africa. Should banks refuse to discontinue the policy, COBLSA has a strategy of withdrawal.

This strategy includes writing banks you have reason to believe are doing business

in South Africa, followed up by a meeting to encourage bank withdrawal from South Africa. The final step is to get people, religious institutions, trade unions, universities to withdraw their accounts should the bank refuse to stop making loans.

The recent elections in South Africa and the result of the Steven Biko inquest are indications that the South African government does not plan to concede the most minimal rights to the Black majority. Moreover, it is also clear that violent repression, under the guise of law, will continue to be the main weapon of the South African government. A successful campaign to stop US loans to South Africa will play a significant role in thwarting the South African government and move towards a just society in South Africa.

Commemorate Sharpeville Massacre

A commemoration of the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 in South Africa will be held on March 18 at the Zion Baptist Church, Broad and Venango Sts.

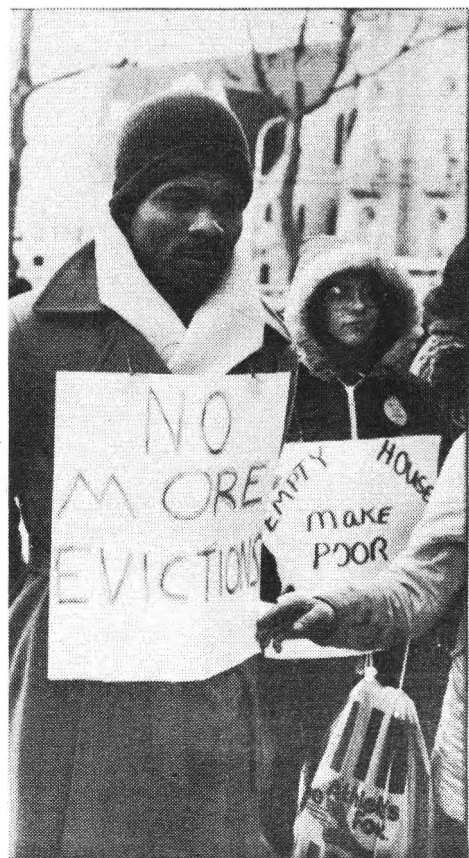
The full-day and evening program will start at 10:30 AM and will feature workshops, films, seminars and cultural presentations. Childcare will be provided all day and dinner will be served in the evening.

The South African play by Black artists, "SIZWE BANZI IS DEAD" will be presented at the Annenberg Center on Friday evening, March 3 at 8 PM. The play is a benefit for the Peoples' Fund and is being co-sponsored by two member groups, the United Peoples' Campaign Against Apartheid and Racism (UPCAAR) and the Namibia Action Group.

Tickets for the play are being sold for \$8.00 and \$12.00. A discussion and reception will follow the performance. For more information, contact the Peoples' Fund at 1427 Walnut Street, LO 3 0636.

Tenants Confront City Council

The struggle for decent and safe housing is growing in the poor and working class neighborhoods in the city. Encouraged by the success of Milton Street's Walk-In Homesteading Program and other neighborhood victories around Community Development funds, community organizations have been stepping up their campaign around the housing issue.



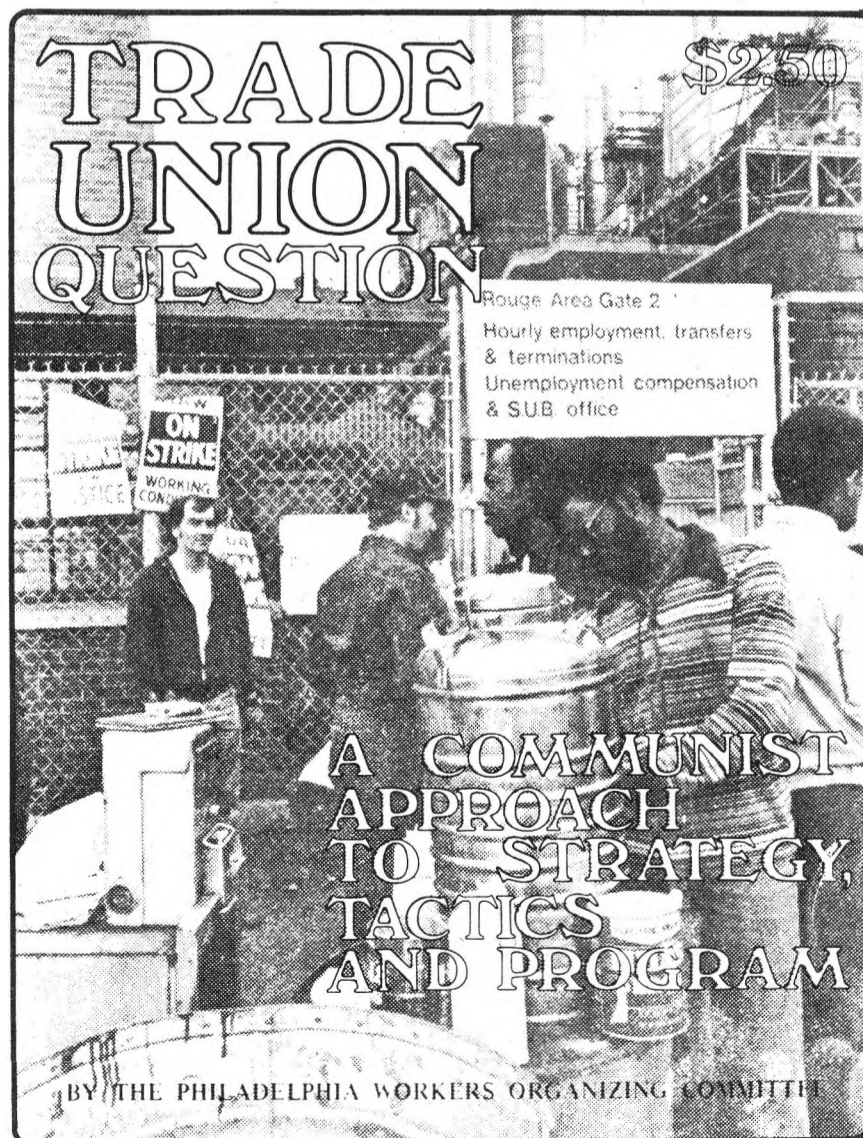
Organizer photo

On Thursday, January 26, two separate actions took place at City Hall. On the north side of City Hall approximately 50 Black and white residents of West Philadelphia demonstrated in support of two "walk-in homestead" families arrested for moving in and repairing vacant HUD owned properties. As "Walk-In" programs continue to spring up around the city, people are beginning to see positive effects; as a result, community support is growing.

The other action took place in City Council and was focused on the Philadelphia Housing Authority (PHA). PHA is by far Philadelphia's biggest slumlord, with most of their thousands of units in violation of housing codes and unsafe. Close to 50 Black, Puerto Rican and white PHA tenants were at City Council to support Councilman Cecil Moore's bill to investigate PHA.

Moore, however, did not introduce the bill as promised, and Council chambers erupted. The tenants stormed out of City Council chambers exchanging words with various Council members. They marched to Moore's office where they were joined by the West Philadelphia protestors. When Moore returned from Council, he apologized to the tenants and promised that the bill would be introduced "even if I have to sleep here in my office to finish it in time." The PHA struggle is expected to grow in the upcoming months with tenants organizing all over the city.

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third in a series

Political line and party-building

by CLAY NEWLIN

In the second article of our critique of the Proletarian Unity League's (PUL) book, *Two, Three, Many Parties of a New Type?*, we pointed out that their party-building strategy makes an unwarranted concession to the ultra-left trend. By failing to see the essential task of party formation as the forging of the vanguard relation in embryo, but rather reducing it to a question of uniting Marxist-Leninists, PUL adopts the perspective of the dogmatists.

In their discussion of how to wage the ideological struggle for the rectification of the communist movement, PUL compounds this error. Attempting to avoid the pitfalls of sectarian debate that have characterized much of our history — particularly in the past few years — they advocate the subordination of contention around political line to the struggle over organizational line. "In our circumstances," they write, "... struggle over political line (must) be subordinated to the fight against 'left' opportunism in party-building line." (*Two, Three, Many Parties*, p. 48; emphasis in original)

At first glance, there may appear to be nothing wrong with this statement. It is certainly true that the struggle for a correct line on party-building must receive central focus in the overall struggle against the ultra-left line. Those who do not carry their critique of dogmatism through to criticism of the voluntarist line on party-building are indeed doomed to repeating the errors of the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist).

WHAT IS A PARTY-BUILDING LINE?

Unfortunately, PUL is saying more than this. Their use of the phrase "party-building line" serves to obscure more than it reveals. Most Marxist-Leninists would take party-building line to include the ideological, political and organizational aspects. The ideological component would express the proletariat's general outlook on the need for and the nature of the vanguard party.

The political component would sum up the main tasks for building such a party, identify the forces that can bring it about, and outline a strategy for unifying those forces. And the organizational component would set forth the concrete organizational steps that would have to be traversed in order to develop such a party.

For PUL, however, "party-building line", reduces itself to a question of organizational line. While at times their book, in typical ambiguity, seems to approach the broader conception outlined above, for the most part what is called "party-building line" is the line of various forces on organizational questions.

This is particularly the case when they discuss the relationship of "party-building line" to political line. For example, consider the following discussion of the present state of our movement:

"Debate over political or ideological line among the major groupings has given way to organizational initiatives aimed at consolidating parties around existing political lines... Instead of further theoretical struggle, the drafting of party programs and other efforts allegedly directed at 'reaching broad unity among

Marxist-Leninists' around the particular political lines of particular organizations have become the order of the day.

"The formation of parties by vote of the membership of former leagues, unions, and other organizations is the dominant line among the organized forces. The most acute struggles of the communist movement today center on this passage between ideological and organizational unity..."

"If the struggle at the organizational level has this pivotal importance, then we need to take line on organizational matters as the main focus of the fight for the Party... Unless the communist movement concentrates on its weaknesses at the organizational level, it risks confining itself to a covey of propaganda sects at the margin of the working class movement. In other words, party-building line is the key in the struggle for the Party at this time" (Ibid. pg. 44)

Thus for PUL the burning question facing our movement is that of how to effect a "passage between ideological and organizational unity". That means that we must concentrate our struggle "at the organizational level".

WHAT BASIS OF UNITY?

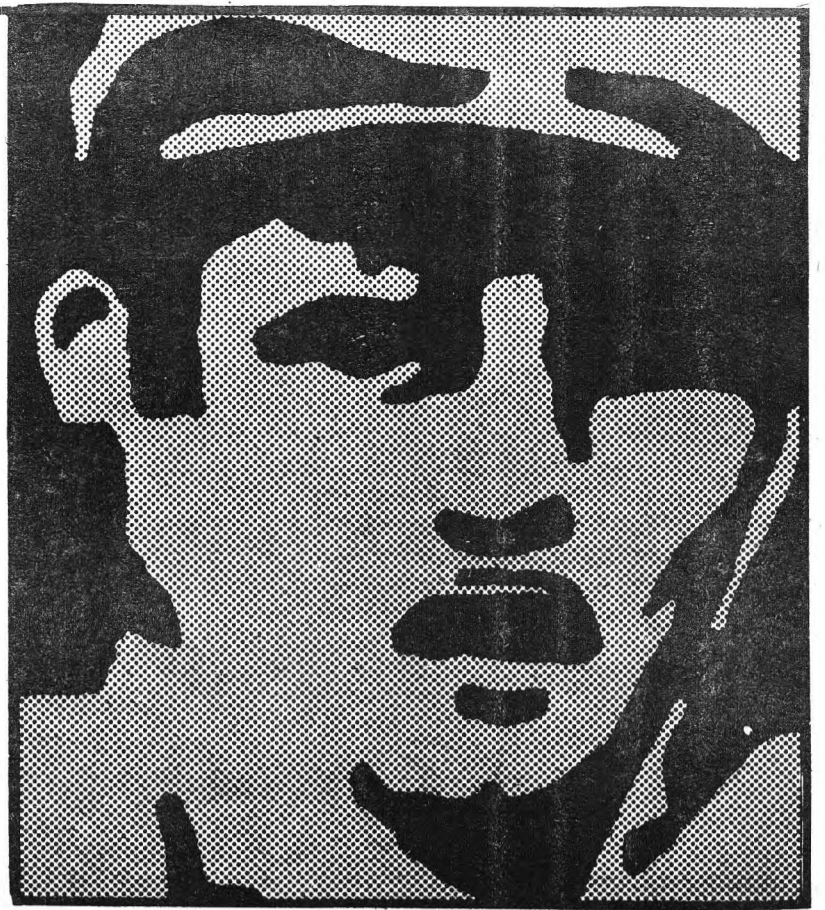
Now it would be hard to argue that the burning question facing party-builders is not that of how to make the transition between ideological and organizational unity. Generally speaking, it is true that broad unity exists on the ideological level. Marxist-Leninists are agreed on the most fundamental principles of scientific socialism (e.g., dialectical and historical materialism, class struggle as the engine of development in all class society, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the vanguard party, proletarian internationalism, etc.), even if we often cannot agree on their concrete application in the US. While our concrete assessment of the communist movement differs from theirs, PUL is also correct that "sufficient ideological struggle has occurred to serve as a base for much greater unity than exists today." (Ibid. p. 37)

However, PUL is incorrect to imply that effecting a transition from ideological to organizational unity necessarily implies that we must concentrate our struggle on organizational questions. As we will see later in this article, unity on the organizational level becomes possible only after unity on the political level has been thoroughly prepared.

PUL's arguments that efforts to rectify our movement must subordinate the political to the organizational are extremely weak. Basically, they make three points. First, they call attention to the fact that disorganization and disunity are damaging to our theoretical work and undermine our ability to fuse ourselves to the working class. Undoubtedly fragmentation has both these effects, but then it would in any period of party-building. In and of itself, this argument does not indicate that organizational line is key.

AN INCORRECT ASSUMPTION

Their second argument is that the initiatives of the largest organizations in the party-building movement are concentrated on organizational line. This is true. But these initiatives rest on an important



assumption: sufficient unity on program, strategy and tactics for the US revolution exists to focus on the organizational unification of all genuine Marxist-Leninists. Even PUL must acknowledge that this assumption is false.

Moreover, it would be a profound mistake to allow those who have demonstrated their marriage to opportunism to define the key question on which the future of our movement turns. Is it not precisely the opportunism of these groups that encourages them to attempt a premature consolidation of the communist movement by focusing on organizational questions?

PUL's third contention is that the past focus of the ideological struggle on political line necessarily had a sectarian character. Our ability to develop political line, they argue, is strictly limited by the lack of a vanguard party.

"Political line guides the proletariat 'in the field' in the struggle to build up its own forces, weaken and eventually overthrow the bourgeoisie. From this it follows that for political line to develop beyond a certain rudimentary level the proletariat must take the field." (Ibid., p. 45)

Since the proletariat needs a party to even "take the field", focusing ideological struggle on political line necessarily diverts our movement from unifying around its essential tasks.

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL LINE

It is true that there are strict limits to our ability to elaborate political line prior to the development of the Party. The political conclusions of a movement confined, for the most part, to local circles, and unfused with the class struggle are necessarily preliminary.

And it is equally true that much of the ideological struggle that has characterized the history of the party-building movement did not properly take this fact into account, and thus served to enhance sectarian tendencies. Differences over questions of tactics were often elevated over more fundamental questions of strategy and program. Disagreements that could only attain practical significance at a more advanced stage of the class struggle were held to be dividing lines between the "Marxist-Leninists" and the "opportunists".

However, while the limitation on our ability to develop political line must be recognized, that does not mean that political line should be subordinated to organizational line. If the struggle around political line is limited to fundamental questions of program, strategy and tactics

for the US revolution it will serve a positive purpose. Our movement can only advance towards a viable Party to the extent that it forges unity around these questions. While the class needs to "take the field" in order to elaborate a full political line, it will never even succeed in developing a viable "general staff" without agreement on program.

For the duration of the party-building process there will be constant interaction between organizational and political line, but over the long run political line will be decisive. Our ability to fuse ourselves to the class struggle of the proletariat will turn primarily on the maturity of our political line.

The advanced elements are not attracted to Marxism-Leninism primarily on the basis of its general principles, but on the basis of the political line elaborated from these principles. Furthermore, no matter how unified and organized our forces, we will never establish our vanguard character unless we prove capable of developing a correct political line, even if a rudimentary one. What does the history of the RCP and the CP M-L demonstrate if not this fact?

The development of the Bolshevik Party provides an historical example of the primary role played by struggle over political line in preparing the way for uniting revolutionaries. As Lenin wrote:

"Unity on questions of program and tactics is an essential... condition for Party unity, for the centralization of Party work... As long as we had not unity on the fundamental questions of program and tactics, we bluntly admitted that we were living in a period of disunity and separate circles, we bluntly declared that before we could unite, lines of demarcation must be drawn; we did not even talk of the forms of a joint organization, but exclusively discussed the... problems of fighting opportunism on program and tactics. At present, we all agree, this fight already produced a sufficient degree of unity, as formulated in the Party program and the Party resolutions on tactics; we had to take the next step... working out the forms of a united organization that would merge all the circles together." (Works, Vol. 7, pp.387-8; emphasis in original)

STRUGGLE AGAINST THE ULTRA-LEFT LINE

The problem with PUL's attitude towards the ideological struggle is not just that it leads to a reversal of the proper relationship between political and organizational

(continued on p. 14)

Communism and Democracy

by JIM GRIFFIN

"Under Communism, a tiny minority, perhaps ten to twenty men, would rule the United States. An open dictatorship called the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' would be established. 'Soviets' (meaning councils) would be formed throughout the nation. These would consist of local Communist Party henchmen who would depose and probably liquidate your mayor, chief of police, clergymen, and leading citizens."

J. Edgar Hoover

"Proletarian democracy, of which Soviet government is one of the forms, has brought a development and expansion of democracy hitherto unprecedented in the world."

V. I. Lenin

The stock in trade of every anti-communist is the idea that "communist" societies are totalitarian dictatorships where the masses of people have no say. The secret police arriving in the night, the firing squads, the forced labor camps, the countless affairs of ordinary people all being run by grey faceless Commissars...this is the image of political life under socialism that J. Edgar Hoover wants us to believe.

Yet communists maintain, as the above quote from Lenin indicates, that socialism represents not the curtailment but the extension and deepening of democracy...that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is a new and higher form of democracy.

To resolve this apparent contradiction we have to understand exactly what is democracy and what is dictatorship. As we shall see, the defenders of capitalism and communists answer these questions in different ways.

CAPITALIST VIEW OF DEMOCRACY

The capitalist civics lesson on what is democracy goes something like this: "A democracy is a political system where the people, by electing their leaders, decide by what laws they wish to be governed and what policies they want implemented for the common welfare. In a democracy, the government reflects the will of the majority. It is not perfect because the majority, being human, sometimes makes mistakes. But it is still the best system, because the majority can be counted on to be right more often than the minority. The United States, by virtue of its constitution, is a democracy."

Now this sounds fine and good. Most of us will readily agree rule by the majority beats rule by a minority or a dictator. Our common sense and experience tells us that the majority is more often right than a minority. And most of us would rather risk being wrong than give up our right to decide to someone else.

The only trouble with this little civics lesson is that it bears no relation to the

actual political system in the United States. On paper the United States is most democratic — a government of, by and for the people. But in reality, it is the wishes of the majority that prevail?

In November of 1976, millions of Americans elected Jimmy Carter to be President because he promised things the majority of people wanted — an end to unemployment, lower taxes, more social services, better, less expensive health care, honest government and so forth.

RULE BY A MINORITY

But Carter hasn't delivered. Why? Because the needs of the majority, the working people, conflict with the needs of a small minority — the owners of the monopoly corporations. And this small minority calls the shots. This minority controls the political process — it finances the two political parties, staffs the government with cabinet heads and advisors and commands the loyalty of the vast civil and military bureaucracy which has been trained to represent its interests. In addition, this minority maintains a huge lobby and freely purchases votes in Congress and influence at every level of the government.

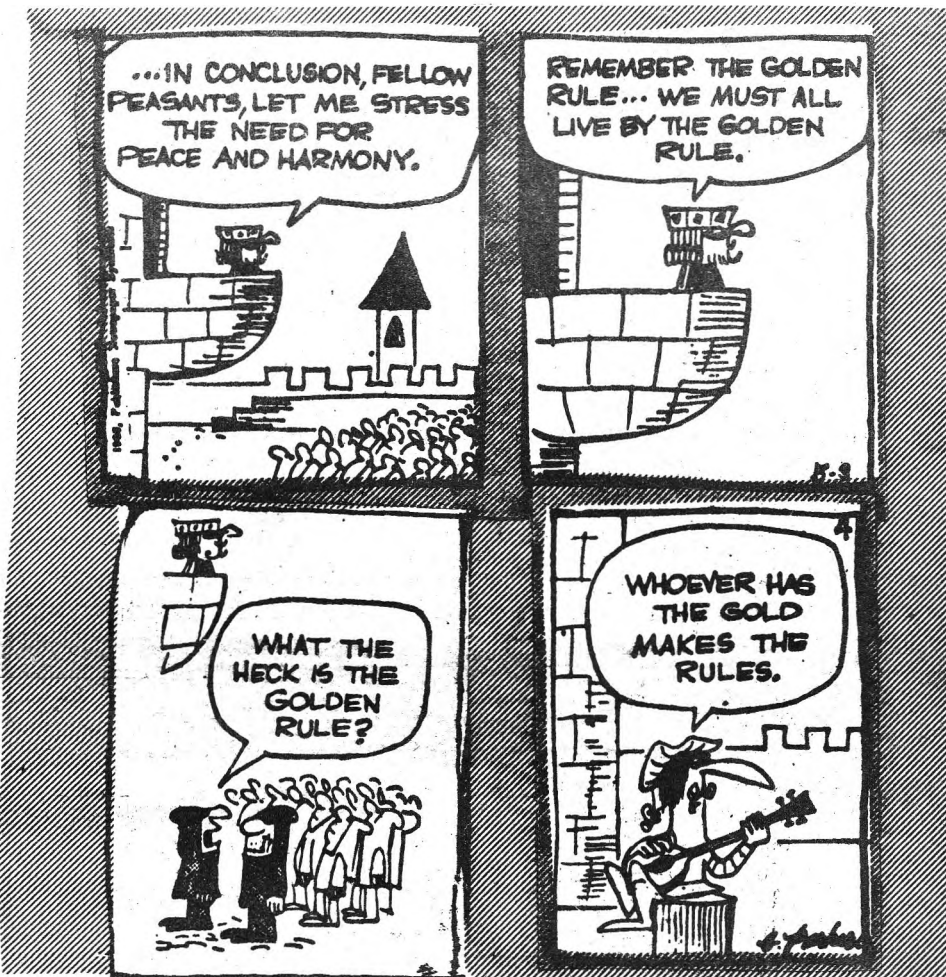
In reality, the political system of the United States does not represent rule by the majority. The democratic form of government serves to conceal the undemocratic substance of rule by a minority, a minority of corporate wealth that maintains its power by exploiting the masses of working people.

Some might say, "Yes, this is true, but the system can be made to work as it should if only more people would get involved." Certainly reforms can be wrested from the rulers when the masses of people organize and demand them. But the fundamental character of the political system remains the same. History has shown decisively that when the masses show their determination to make the changes favored by the majority but opposed by the minority of exploiters, the ruling minority will not hesitate to suspend democratic rights and rule by open terror — fascism.

For Marxists, the point of all this is that capitalist rule, regardless of whether it takes the form of democracy or fascism, is in essence a dictatorship — that is, the rule by one class over another.

MARXIST VIEW OF THE STATE

The state, in the Marxist view, always has a class character. It necessarily reflects the interests of one class versus the interests of contending classes. Its purpose is to maintain the rule of a particular class, to enable that class to exploit and dominate the oppressed classes. Thus in ancient Rome, the state was the instrument of the slaveholders and acted to keep down the slaves. In medieval Europe, the state was in the hands of the feudal nobility and acted to keep the



serfs in their place. And in modern Europe and America, the state represents the monopoly capitalist class and serves to keep the working class in check.

In all these instances we have the dictatorship of one class over another. In the US today we do not have the "pure democracy" of our civics lesson, but rather capitalist or bourgeois democracy — a democracy that is in essence a dictatorship of the capitalist class.

Socialist society is no different from previous societies in the respect that the state functions as a dictatorship of one class over another. But it is unique in one very important respect. Whereas in all previous class societies this dictatorship has taken the form of a minority of exploiters lording it over a majority of exploited, under socialism the opposite is the case; the majority — the working class, formerly the exploited, rule over the capitalists, the former exploiters.

And while all previous class societies have been based on exploitation, socialist society marks the abolition of class exploitation. The dictatorship of the proletariat or the working class insures that the common wealth produced by those who work will be used for the common welfare of the producers. The members of the old ruling class, the former capitalists, are not exploited. They are simply restrained from exploiting others and forced to work like everyone else. Concretely what the dictatorship of the proletariat means is that political power will be monopolized by the working class and its allies and that the former ruling class, the monopoly capitalists, will be excluded from power.

WHY A CLASS DICTATORSHIP?

Why is this necessary? Can't we let by-

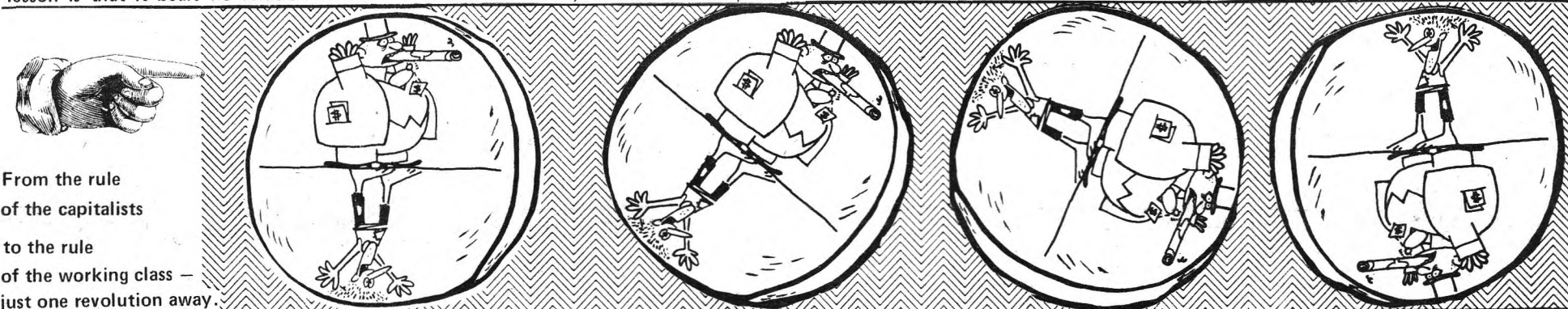
goners be bygoners? Why can't the former capitalists be given equal political rights — after all, they are a minority. The answer is that while a minority, the disenfranchised capitalists retain certain advantages — money, organization, important technical skills and powerful support from their fellow monopolists in other capitalist countries.

They will try to restore capitalism if given the chance. They will inevitably act as a counter-revolutionary force, taking advantage of every weakness of the new, still unconsolidated workers' regime. To fail to suppress them, to give them full political rights plays right into their hands.

A revolutionary government representing the working class has the responsibility to protect the rule of the workers and insure the best possible conditions for the development of socialism. This requires a workers' dictatorship — an exclusion of the capitalists from political power. These broad principles, as we shall see, are not based on idle speculation, but reflect the experience of the revolutionary working class.

Now many will rightfully ask: "This sounds okay in theory. But isn't what has really happened in communist countries different? Isn't the dictatorship of the proletariat really just the dictatorship of the Communist Party or worse yet just a few communist leaders?"

To answer these questions we have to move beyond theory and look at the actual content of proletarian democracy as it has existed in the socialist countries. This will be the subject of our next article.



NUTS & BOLTS



Working for our lives.... health hazards to working women

"I guess my scars are pretty well healed by now, because I've been off on medical leave for two, three months. Ordinarily I usually have two, three burn spots. It's real hot, and if it touches you for a second, it'll burn your arm. Most of the girls carry scars all the time.

"We had two or three serious accidents in the last year and a half. One happened about two weeks ago to a woman on the hydraulic lift. The cast-iron extension deteriorated with age and cracked and the die dropped. It broke her whole hand. She lost two fingers and had plastic surgery to cover the burn. That dry die runs anywhere from 385 degrees to 425 degrees."

The luggage factory described here by Grace Clements shows one example of the kinds of hazards women face on the job. The issue of job health and safety for women is one that has been long ignored by the government and the labor movement. Even independent organizations formed to deal with health and safety issues tend to take up the hazards in "heavy industry" while the special problems of women workers are relegated to the back burner.

As we shall see in this article, light industry and service industries where women workers are concentrated are by no means exempt from debilitating dangers. In fact, women workers in any industry face the special concern of danger to their reproductive capacities and to the unborn children of the pregnant worker.

It is part and parcel of sex discrimination that so little is known of health hazards faced by millions of women every day on the job.

Most of what is known was published 30 years ago, in a study financed by the US Army, when women were entering heavy industry during World War II. Very little research has been done since. This article will cover a few of the more common hazards facing women workers.

HAZARDS WHERE WOMEN WORK

What are some of the most widespread hazards in "women's jobs"? Clothing workers use fabric treated with a variety *Organizer February 1978, p. 14*

of chemicals that make it shrink-resistant, rot-proof, permanent press, and flame retardant; many of these are dangerous if inhaled as sprays or when the cloth is steam-pressed.

Formaldehyde, used in waterproofing, permanent press, and sizing sprays cause skin rashes, asthma, and eye inflammation. Trichloroethylene (TCE), used to dissolve basting thread in "solvet" operations, can cause headaches, dizziness, and fainting. Workers exposed to TCE, even at low levels, for 20 years or more run a high risk of lung cancer. Chloroprene, sprayed on the edges of cloth to prevent ravelling, can also cause cancer.

LAUNDRY WORKERS FACE DANGER

Laundry workers exposed to the dry-cleaning fluid "perc" (perchloroethylene) may suffer dizziness and nausea, loss of coordination, fainting, and liver damage. Spot removers containing TCE cause dizziness and fainting, and long-term exposure can lead to cancer.

Laundry workers who clean industrial work clothes are exposed to whatever dusts and chemicals are on the clothes; shaking out clothes contaminated with lead, mercury, or asbestos dusts can be very dangerous. In fact, wives of asbestos workers have been known to get meso-

thelioma (a rare chest cancer caused only by asbestos) just from washing their husbands work clothes.

Hospital workers suffer puncture wounds from needles, back strain from lifting patients, and exposure to X-rays and infectious diseases. Operating room workers who are regularly exposed to stray anesthetic gasses have a much greater chance of miscarriage or stillbirth.

Electronics and electrical workers are exposed to metal fumes from spot-welding and soldering operations. These fumes can cause metal fume fever, and illness with symptoms like the flu, especially if the metals or flux contains zinc, lead, or cadmium. Mercury, found in electric lamp plants, is highly toxic to the nervous system, and can cause tremors of the hands, staggering walk, blurred vision, slurred speech, and serious emotional problems and personality changes.

Solvents such as TCE (described above) and methy ethyl ketone cause drowsiness and loss of coordination, making accidents more likely. Breathing the fumes of acids, used in printed circuit and instrument manufacture and as solder flux, irritates the lungs and leads to breathing difficulties. Severe over-exposure to acid fumes causes pulmonary edema, a serious condition where the fumes burn the lungs and cause them to fill with fluid, slowing down or stopping the flow of oxygen into the blood.

WHITE COLLAR WORKERS AREN'T SAFE EITHER

Not even white collar jobs are free of health hazards. Beauticians have a high rate of lung disease, probably caused by breathing certain kinds of hair sprays. Office workers over-exposed to ozone (a gas given off by some copy machines) may suffer eye inflammation, headaches, sore throat, and shortness of breath.

Methanol and ammonia, both used in duplicating machines, cause eye inflammation, headaches, insomnia, blurred vision, and lung irritation. Offices built between 1955 and 1970 may have heating/air conditioning ducts insulated

A WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE

A conference focusing on the health hazards facing women workers called A WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE will be held on March 11 at the Temple University Student Activity Center at 13th and Montgomery. The conference will feature Bella Nowicki, a former stockyard worker now organizing clerical workers and Sylvia Krekel and occupational health and safety specialist for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union.

There will be workshops on various hazards facing women workers plus workshops on racial and sexual discrimination and on the right to organize a union. The conference will begin at 8:30 and continue until 3:30. A \$6.00 registration fee will cover lunch and childcare. Pre-registration fees of \$5.00 can be arranged by calling the Women's Occupational Safety and Health Task Force at 568-5188.

PUL and political line *(Cont. from p.12)*

line. Even more importantly, applied in the concrete context of our movement, it could only have the most disastrous consequences.

The dominant historical trend in the development of our movement has been one of progressive consolidation of an ultra-left line on fundamental questions of program, strategy, and tactics. (e.g., the relationship of reform to revolution, of democracy to socialism, the united front, international line, etc.) The impact of this line has not only made joint work among revolutionaries extremely difficult, but aggravated our isolation from the working class.

In face of the prevailing opportunism on program and strategy, to focus our strug-

gle on organizational line will only enhance ultra-leftism. Left unchallenged politically, dogmatism will continue to advance, feeding on the very disunity and isolation that it, itself, produces.

It is only to the extent that we make progress in defeating opportunism on program, strategy and tactics that we can turn our attention to organizational matters. Prior to such a defeat, organizational unity would only serve to obscure and cover over fundamental differences that will make our advance towards the Party impossible.

That PUL could make the error of calling for the subordination of political to organizational line stems from two facts.

with asbestos; as the asbestos coating ages it begins to come loose and fall into the air supply.

DANGER TO UNBORN CHILDREN

The second major type of health hazard women face is the danger to the unborn child when mothers are exposed to certain chemicals while pregnant. Small amounts of certain chemicals, which wouldn't be toxic to an adult, are absorbed by the mother and can damage her baby. Despite this, the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has not issued a single special standard protecting pregnant workers.

Women exposed to lead (found in battery plants, foundries, and in many soldering and welding operations) run a high risk of stillbirths and miscarriage. Vinyl Chloride (found in plastics manufacture), radiation, mercury, and PCB (polychlorinated biphenyls — used as cooling fluid in transformers and in adhesives) all have been known to cause birth defects and stillbirths.

What can be done about these hazards? Well designed and maintained ventilation, and equipment designed to prevent spills or leaks, can cut exposure to most chemicals to a safe level. Harmless chemicals that can serve the same purpose can be substituted for known hazardous ones, even if they do cost a little more.

Much more research needs to be done to learn more about hazardous substances and how to control them. A number of unions have demanded, and won, company financed studies of their job hazards in their union contracts. The technology to make the workplace safe is here; it's up to us to make the corporations and the government use it. Our livelihood, and our lives, are at stake.

For more detailed information about identifying and correcting health hazards at work, write Nuts & Bolts c/o The Organizer, or call the Philadelphia Project on Occupational Safety and Health at 215-568-5188 (PHILAPOSH is an independent coalition of workers, unions and professionals who are fighting for a safe workplace).

First, since PUL sees communist unification as the primary task for party-formation, organizational questions naturally take on special importance. If the "uniting" of Marxist-Leninists is your key task, then certainly the "struggle at the organizational level" will indeed have "pivotal importance". And if fusion becomes important only after the Party is formed, then there is little immediate need for unity on program, strategy and tactics.

The second reason has to do with the shallowness of PUL's critique of ultra-leftism. Because they have essential unity with the very linchpin of the dogmatist line, PUL cannot help but underestimate the importance of ideological struggle against that line. That, however, is a topic for our next article.