



Workers' Action 5 cents

Issue No. 5



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STRIKE FEVER!

Militant Upsurge Shows Need for Political Struggle

The biggest strike wave since the post-World War II upsurge is shaking up the U.S. and demonstrating the immense power of the working class. It is also revealing the rotteness of "labor leadership"—the bureaucrats from Reuther and Meany on down, who run our unions—and the need for new leadership based on the interests of the rank-and-file.

In strike after strike, the interests of the workers are being delayed, bargained, compromised and sold out—everything except fought for—by "our" phony leaders, whose main concern is not our interests, but preserving their privileged power position as go-betweens with the bosses. In the GE, San Francisco city employees', postal workers, railroad and Teamsters' strikes, it's the same story. It will be the same story for the auto workers when their contract expires and for just about every other struggle U.S. workers will face in the near future. In reality, the sell-out "leaders" are representing the bosses' interests in our movement, by limiting our struggles to a few economic demands, refusing to help develop real labor solidarity, refusing to fight on the political front at all, and settling for the least they think they can get away with in back-room deals with the bosses.

GE

The GE strike showed that the ranks were ready for mass picketing and other militant actions to really shut down GE, while the bureaucrats spent their time helping enforce the bosses' court injunctions and sabotaging activities designed to help build labor support and extend the struggle, such as labor rallies, linking the strike to the anti-war movement, and through a campaign to "hot cargo" GE products by all workers, all of which were initiated by rank-and-filers in

GE and other unions (a "hot cargo" resolution was passed in an SF port meeting of the NMU). Now that the strike is over, the militants in the ranks are being persecuted and harassed. Some never got their jobs back and others are being fired! It was really the bosses who won the strike, thanks to "our" leaders! (see the article on GE in this issue)

POSTAL STRIKE

The national, wildcat postal workers' strike, the most important action in the strike wave thus far, tells the same story, only on a much larger scale than the others. Nixon pretended to be concerned with the "public" welfare, but his real concern was for business interests, who, especially in New York, were suffering heavily in their communications, bill collect-

ing, etc. Most of the people in New York were happy not to be getting the bills. The power of the strike was immense and was felt all over the country immediately. Precisely for this reason, the head of the letter carriers' union, Rademacher, spent all his time trying to force the wishes of Nixon, Blount, and the government-bosses down the throats of his own members. In New York, he was called RAT-emacher, and hung in effigy by letter carriers.

Even though it was sold out, the strike forced the government to raise pay for all federal employees and to bargain collectively with government employee unions for the first time in history. None of this would have happened had it not been for the strike, yet the bureaucrats wished only that it would end!

TROOPS

Nixon's use of troops to break the strike in New York exposed more than the treachery of union leaders. The postal workers forced the government to show its true face, as the armed agent of the bosses and the enemy of working people. Nixon couldn't pretend to be "neutral" in this strike! We must remember this lesson: troops may be used to break any strike that really hurts the bosses.

Besides showing up the lie of the government's "neutrality" in labor disputes, the postal strike also showed up the lie of labor's Democratic "friends" in Congress. One of the biggest of these fakers, New York Senator Jacob Javits, was among the first to call for the use of troops to break the strike! Of all these so-called "friends" of ours, not one opposed Nixon's action! The Meany bureaucrats "deplored" the troops' use, but they failed to denounce these traitors. In San Francisco, the state-wide



A PICKET OUTSIDE RINCON ANNEX

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CITY STRIKE SOLD OUT BY LABOR BUREAUCRATS

The recent San Francisco city strike again demonstrated the urgent need to throw out the labor fakers who run the present unions and replace them with militant rank-and-file leadership. At issue in the strike was the City's attempt, led by the Board of Supervisors under Dianne Feinstein, to solve the financial pinch by attacking the standard of living of city workers and small homeowners, rather than go against the corporations who actually are behind the inflation. In the end, Mayor Alioto moved in and swung a deal with the labor fakers which left the city workers with no major financial gains, while Alioto is applauded by the pro-business Chronicle (see Mar. 23 issue) as a "very practical guy" and a friend of labor! One wonders if the whole thing was not set up beforehand by Alioto and his friends in the construction unions to harmlessly let off some steam among the rank-and-file workers while improving the Alioto image.

The Issues

The nub of the money issue involved the City's elimination of the 5% "increments," instituted in 1943, which new employees have received each year of their first four years in addition to general pay raises made annually. The City estimated these increments would cost \$2.5 million; the settlement was made after the phony "discovery" that it would only cost the City \$1.4 million. The million-dollar "mistake" was supposedly made by George Grubb, head of the Civil Service Commission, and some union leaders demanded he be dismissed for the "mistake."

Strawman

Actually, of course, this "mistake" was a strawman issue. The City had made no mistake — it was consciously trying to cut costs by attacking labor, as is happening in every city across the nation. This financial crunch flows directly from the economic crisis of the whole country and is linked to the aggressive Vietnam war created by the U.S. government. The only way for the labor movement to fight this is to break from the parties of war, inflation and racism — the Democratic and Republican parties — and build a Labor Party to fight for immediate withdrawal from Vietnam, full employment and decent living conditions for all, an end to racism and sexism, and other working class demands.

Bureaucrats Fear Struggle

But this kind of fight is what the labor bureaucrats are afraid of, since it will mean an end to their power! So the so-called "leaders" preferred to take the blame off Alioto & Co. by singling out Grubb's "mistake," and Jeffereys of the City Employees Local 400 called on the workers to accept the rotten deal as the "best we can get!" The strike was holding solid: the City workers were out in strength and morale was high, the Muni railway system was closed down in sympathy, support was coming from the longshore workers — yet the labor leaders became panicky at this sign of working class solidarity and accepted an offer which does not even allow the city workers to keep up with inflation! What's more, the city unions did not even gain the right of collective bargaining and union recognition — merely a vague

Workers' Action

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promise by the mayor to "meet, confer and bargain in good faith!" (And right after the strike, the City announced that Muni drivers will get a wage cut due to another so-called mistake!)

Predictably, the union "leaders" like George Johns, secretary of the S. F. Labor Council, and Jeffereys, rammed through the final agreement in fear that the workers might not vote for it if given time to examine it. Even so, the final votes reflected significant opposition, e.g., Local 250 of the Hospital and Institutional Workers voted 369 to 173 to accept; Local 400 of the City Employees voted 451 to 136 to accept.

"Caucus"

During the strike, a group appeared called the "Rank and File Caucus". The organizers of the caucus issued a leaflet calling for a rank-and-file movement based around solely trade union demands without any working-class political demands—there was no mention of the need for a labor party, or the war in Vietnam, or the problems of racism and sexism! Such a "caucus" can only serve as a left-wing cover for the bureaucracy, create new bureaucrats who will sell out in the end, and retard the development of the workers' political consciousness. Only a caucus based on the above-mentioned political program can successfully wage a fight against the bureaucrats and the bosses.



from The Weekly People

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FEVER

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convention of COPE recently endorsed Unruh for governor and a whole list of these same fakers, who they know will be the first to betray labor when it really needs allies.

LABOR PARTY

Postal workers need a nationwide, rank-and-file leadership to fight for rank-and-file control of the unions; for one union of postal workers (there are now many craft unions); for workers' control of the Post Office, in response to Nixon's labor-strangling plot to turn the Post Office over to private capitalists to exploit; for the right of all government employees to strike; and for an alternative to the Democratic fakers who sold them out— for a political party of labor.

This need is really the same for all labor; we need rank-and-file caucuses to lead the fight to regain control of our unions from the bureaucrats, and we all need a labor party, to fight for the political interests of the working class. Letter carriers in New York who voted for Javits and now regret it learned the hard way—no more voting for the bosses' candidates! We need our own candidates and party! The railroad strike is another good example of this need. First Congress passed a law outlawing strike action, then it passed a law which said that sheet-metal workers had to accept a contract which had been negotiated for them by "leaders", but which they rejected!

ATTACK ON UNIONS

This trend will be getting stronger in the near future, because the capitalists and their government want to destroy the unions in order to prevent workers from being able to struggle effectively against the bosses for their own interests. A Nixon advisory committee has recommended that union contracts negotiated by union leaders be made legally binding without ratification by the membership! Some bureaucrats are going along with this plot because it would make their position stronger, but there can be no doubt of what it would mean for us, the members; we would have even worse deals than the ones now getting shoved down our throats!

A political party of our own, controlled by us through our unions, would fight for all the political interests of labor, such as the right of government employees to strike, re-

peal of all anti-labor laws, a shorter workweek with no loss in pay to end unemployment and so forth. The labor party would also fight for the rights of all the specially oppressed workers—Blacks, Chicanos, women—and against imperialism and the war in Vietnam. We will build this party out of our struggles; it will be our party!

POLITICS

Every political decision affects working people in some way, especially, big decisions—which are made by just a few people at the top of the corporate-government structure—like the war in Vietnam. The war forces the people to fight and die so that a few imperialist corporations can grow richer off the exploitation and misery of the people of Southeast Asia. The war is also chiefly responsible for the present inflationary spiral, which has forced the real wages of workers to go down in the last few years.

Other decisions, like government support to the construction industry's attempt to break the construction unions by promoting rivalry between black and white workers, and the Defense Department buying up of scab grapes (many times more than were ever purchased before the grape strike), are going virtually unopposed, because labor "leaders" are relying on pro-capitalist liberals to do their work for them. Politics reflects the struggle between the working class and the capitalist class, and the more we ignore it, the worse off we will be. The capitalists have two parties, one of which is especially designed for fooling working people into voting for the bosses' candidates. We need a party of our own!

More Union Busting In Printing Trades!

When Local 21 of the International Typographical Union finally called its strike against the San Rafael Independent Journal, bargaining had been going on for fifteen months. Local 21 had long since concluded joint negotiations with other Bay area papers, and only the I-J completely refused to cooperate. By the time the strike was called it was clear that the I-J intended to try to break the union. The leadership of Local 21 had said that its hands were tied as long as negotiations were in progress. The company felt no such scruples. The

fifteen month delay gave the I-J ample time to prepare its offensive. They even trained scabs who posed as Sunday janitors during the preparation period. Finally the company itself forced the issue by demanding impossible concessions. On January 7 the leadership reluctantly called for a strike.

Tactics on both sides have become fairly clear. The I-J has set up shop with live-in scabs protected by their own armed guards. Local 21 put up a picket line. Both sides played the injunction game with the usual results: the guards were not to interfere with the pickets and the pickets were not to interfere with the paper. The courts and the cops were taking their usual "neutral" position. Early in the strike the union called for a day of mass picketing to really shut the I-J down. The cops demonstrated their neutrality by showing up to bust up the picket lines.

The I-J has used its monopoly of the Marin County press in an attempt to isolate the workers. It brands the strikers as "terrorists" and tries to blame them for every crime committed in the San Rafael area. Of course the I-J never talks about the crimes of lockout or union busting. The Union leadership, fearing public opinion and police violence, has done everything it can to cool the strike, hoping to settle by arbitration. That could only mean defeat for the workers since the I-J has made it quite clear that it wants to keep the whole pie for itself. This complete refusal to conciliate on the part of the I-J and pressure from the more militant rank-and-file unionists have prevented a union sell-out. They have found some support from other unions, particularly the teamsters, and from students who know enough to recognize their common interests with the workers.

The struggle is not an easy one. Other workers must realize that if we don't strike together we'll all be beaten separately. Would-be revolutionary students must recognize that a defeat of the strikers would be a defeat for them too — we're all fighting the same bosses.
ALL OUT TO HELP THE SAN RAFAEL STRIKERS!

we goofed!

We lost our Emeryville PO box by not paying our box rent. Please note our new address: Box 6241 Albany, Cal. 94706.

WHO WE ARE...

We are an independent group of working people and rank-and-file trade union members. We formed the Committee for a Labor Party, and publish Workers' Action, to help in the fight for better unions — militant and democratic unions — and for independent working class political action.

This is our program:

... AND WHAT WE STAND FOR

We have reprinted the full version of our program in this issue since a number of changes and additions have been made. After a thorough review of the program we realized that we needed to update it and to include some new points — on sexism, government intervention in the unions, youth, workers' defense, and workers' power. The final formulations were the result of full discussions in our membership meetings and majority vote. If you agree with our program and the general ideas of CLP, write in or contact us by phone about our meetings!

1. END RACISM IN THE UNIONS: Racism in the labor movement condemns millions of black, Mexican-American and other minority group workers to a lower, specially oppressed status. It is the greatest blight on the labor movement today. It divides workers and supports false feelings of racial superiority, and identity with the bosses, in the minds of white workers. Whites can only maintain their privileged position over Blacks and other minorities at the expense of lowering the wages and conditions of all. Blacks, other minorities and white militants must band together in the struggle against racism.

SUPPORT BLACK SELF-DEFENSE! Militant Blacks, like the Black Panthers, are right to defend themselves against the cops, who are brutal racists. If white working people sit back and allow the cops to murder and brutalize Blacks, then all workers and their organizations will be the next victims!

2. FIGHT SEXISM IN THE UNIONS AND ON THE JOB: Discrimination against women on the job undermines the power of a large portion of labor (women make up 30% of the U.S. workforce) and results in reducing the pay they take home by 30' to 60%. All members of the working household suffer, while the bosses use sexism, very much the same as racism, to divide workers, create a

reserve potential of scab labor, and friction in the workers' homes. Workers must become aware of the common false ideas about women as emotional, illogical and helpless beings and sex objects. We must fight for the rights and respect of women as fellow workers and unionists. We must encourage and support union organizing of the many jobs usually held by women. On all jobs we must fight for full and equal pay for equal work; equal access to all job categories; free cafeterias in factories and other work places; free, full-time child-care centers paid for by the companies; and free prenatal, maternity and post natal care with time off at no loss in pay.

END THE SOCIAL OPPRESSION OF WOMEN: The labor movement must fight to end the special oppression of women in society at large as well as on the job. Besides child-care centers, other measures must be taken to free women from the confines of the family, which limit human development and trap women under mountains of burdensome household activities. We must fight for the right of women to have full control of their own bodies: for free abortions, available to all women, with qualified medical staffs paid for by the government, and free access to birth control devices and information for both men and women. For voluntary, free divorce at the request of either partner, and no alimony. Expenses for children to be paid by the government.

3. ORGANIZE THE SOUTH AND ALL THE UNORGANIZED: The union movement in the South is weak and getting weaker. This condition makes for low wages and run-away shops, and helps deteriorate wages and conditions throughout the country. Racism, and the conservatism of the present union leaders are responsible for this.

4. END UNEMPLOYMENT -- 30 HOURS WORK FOR 40 HOURS PAY! While many workers are forced to work overtime and even hold down two jobs at once in order to make it, others, especially victims of racial discrimination, suffer drastic unemployment and underemployment. Job training is important but not enough. The real way to make more jobs available is to have everyone work less time (with restrictions on overtime) for no loss in pay.

5. HUMANIZE WORKING CONDITIONS. We support all attempts to end the constantly deteriorating conditions of work, such as uncontrolled speed-ups, industrial hazards and accidents. Our contracts provide a few more cents an hour, but then the bosses automate, raise prices and speed up the line! Contracts must guarantee — and officials must enforce — decent working conditions with adequate safety provisions and rest breaks. We must control the machines, not be slaves to them!

6. FOR A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING FOR ALL: Somehow, the Federal minimum wage always seems to be about 10 years behind the times, and even now a fight is needed to extend its coverage to all workers. The minimum wage as well as all wage agreements, must be kept in line with the cost of living. The Guaranteed Annual Income idea should be replaced by assuring everyone a job, so that no one has to be dependent on welfare.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL TIME: No worker's labor is worth more than another's, whether ditch digger or college professor. Working people all have the same basic human needs. They should be paid equally for their labor, not according to the status which the capitalist rulers have attached to their jobs.

7. **FREEDOM FOR STUDENTS AND YOUTH:** Working-class youth are thrown into a hostile society at a young age. This must be fought by lowering the voting age and legal adulthood to 16, and by demanding government support for schooling and training for anyone who wishes to leave home after turning 16. There should be free education through the college level for all, with housing, food, supplies and other needs provided. For student-teacher-worker control of schools and colleges.

More often than not, apprenticeships and "training programs," whether sponsored by unions or employers, are used not to train but to provide cheap labor for the boss for as long as possible. Rank-and-file workers should control all training programs, through their unions, and trainees should be paid the full scale for the job they are learning.

8. **IMMEDIATE and UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL OF U. S. TROOPS FROM VIETNAM.** The Vietnam War is a brutal intervention in Vietnamese affairs to protect the imperialist interests of big American corporations and to terrorize the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Saigon government is a group of generals, opportunists, landlords and strike-breakers who preserve democracy only for themselves. American workers have no interest in this war! Yet it is they, and their sons and brothers, who are sent to do the fighting and dying, who must pay the taxes, and who are told to keep down wage demands in the "national interest" (that is, capitalists' interests).

Workers have their own class interests to defend, with arms if necessary, but they have no interest in fighting the bosses' wars. Let the bosses fight their own wars!!! End the draft! No labor support to this or any other imperialist war!

9. **END ATTACKS ON LABOR AND REPEAL ALL ANTI-LABOR LAWS:** Government investigation of labor unions, injunctions against picketing and striking, and laws such as Taft-Hartly and Landrum-Griffin serve only the interests of the capitalist employers. They cripple organizing drives (such as the Delano Farm Workers), take union control away from the members and force work-

ers to accept settlements on the bosses' terms.

10. **OPPOSE GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN THE UNIONS:** The bosses' government is constantly looking for nice-sounding excuses to step into union affairs, like "ending corruption" or "opposing discrimination." Unfortunately, too many rank-and-file militants, frustrated by rigged elections which return unpopular bureaucrats to power, or unfair expulsions, or some other reason, help this process by taking their unions to court. This implies that the government is a neutral agency between labor and management. This is not true; the government is the tool of the bosses. No matter what they say, the government has only one aim in intervening in union affairs: to weaken and destroy the unions. We must oppose this by opposing any thought of "easy" victory in the courts, and stick to the road of building rank-and-file support for change, and a rank-and-file movement capable of making the changes stick when the bureaucrats resort to trickery.

11. **FOR THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE AND STRIKE BY ALL PUBLIC EMPLOYEES:** More and more teachers, nurses, sanitation workers, welfare workers, postal workers, and other city, state, and federal employees are finding that they need to organize and strike to protect their interests. They are finding that the government is not neutral, but consistently seeks to smash organizing attempts and punish employees for striking.

12. **FOR RANK-AND-FILE CONTROL OF THE UNIONS!** Democratic, militant unions can only be ensured by membership participation and control. Most unions today are controlled by corrupt bureaucrats who make deals with the bosses and act to defend their own special privileges rather than the interests of the rank-and-file. They are the agents of the bosses within the labor movement. They are traitors!

We should attend our union meetings, and form militant, fighting caucuses aimed at destroying the power of these bureaucrats and replacing them in leadership under a militant and democratic program. This struggle needs a political basis. Down with the "personality politics"

that only leads to the creation of new bureaucrats!

13. **ORGANIZE FOR WORKERS' DEFENSE:** Workers must protect themselves from the attacks of the bosses and the traitors within the labor movement. Trade unionists, especially when on strike, must be prepared to fend off the attacks of the employers, who use everything from scabs to police, marshals, national guard and even the Army. Within the unions, members exposing the sell-out betrayals of their bureaucrats and challenging their leadership must be prepared to defend themselves against goon squads the officials will send out to intimidate and silence the opposition. Workers' defense guards should be organized wherever workers' organizations or meetings are threatened by hoodlum violence. Defense guards should be instructed in the use of arms and other means of self-defense.

14. **FOR A FREEDOM-LABOR PARTY** to fight on all levels for all these demands. The Democratic and Republican parties are both owned by, and run in the interests of the bosses. They are capitalist parties. Democratic "friends of labor" are really our enemies; they always sell out the real interests of workers in exchange for a few cheap reforms that change nothing: crumbs from the table.

We need a party of our own—controlled by us and based on our unions—to fight for the serious demands in this program. Unions alone aren't enough; political struggle uniting all working people, poor and minority groups is necessary if we are to win. Break the capitalist two-party system!

15. **FOR WORKERS' POWER:** In the end, only the working class can solve its own problems and the problems of society. Armed with their own party and program for power, the workers can and will take over and run society themselves. Workers can run the economy and society for the benefit of mankind and eliminate the racism, wars, and exploitation which comes from the bosses' selfish profit system. This must be our final goal! For WORKERS' POWER!

LESSONS OF THE G.E. STRIKE

Written by a G. E. Worker

The national contract and a full cost-of-living clause were the strongest issues in the recent G. E. strike. With a 13-union coalition — a solid front — we were in a good position to fight the company. Well, the leaderships of the 13-union coalition sold out. The solid front was broken by the lie of financial support. The national contract busting issue was used by both sides to sell out bread and butter issues.

To say that there were no gains at all would be untrue, but we have to look very hard to find them. The medical plan has been substantially improved. We do have an automatic raise progression scale now, which we didn't have before. There are a few other gains, but the sell-out by the bureaucrats is the real story of the strike.

LIES

That the bureaucrats sold out isn't news to anybody. "Why" is more the question. They are a bunch of tired old running-scared puppets who will do anything to hang on to their soft positions. The U.E. membership was told that our leadership fought the longest and hardest and that it was someone else who sold out. And all the other 12 union leaderships are telling their members the same lie. Add them all up and you get a grand total of a "13-union coalition sell-out".

When George Meany and Walter Reuther and Harry Bridges pledged literally millions of dollars to this strike we figured we had a chance of winning. But of the 12 million plus that was pledged, less than half ever got where it was supposed to go -- to the strikers!

Busting our national contract was the key to the sell-out of all bread and butter issues. We were told that G. E. was going to bust our national contract. Later we found out that G. E. never said any such thing. They said they would like to negotiate locally on national issues. I can not believe that G. E. ever figured they could bust the national contract. Both the bosses and the union bureaucrats picked this issue up and used it to the hilt, and the workers paid for it.

We were dealt the greatest financial loss by the cost-of-living clause. Over the last contract period of 3 years the G. E. workers lost an average of 30¢ an hour because of the increased cost-of-living. In 1969 alone we lost 24¢ an hour when the cost-of-living went up by 6.9%. We were asking for a full cost-of-living clause in this contract. Instead we got an offer of 8¢ maximum a year. If the rise in cost-of-living continues at the present rate (and it will) we'll lose approximately 16¢ an hour in

the first year of the contract. The pension plan was another substantial loss. The current minimum benefit was raised from \$5 to \$5.50/month for each year of service. The \$7.50 maximum benefit doesn't take effect until 1973! The company will deduct 2.4¢ of whatever pension you qualify for, for every year you retire before 65, regardless of the years of service to G. E. With this rotten plan almost everyone who retires from G. E. will have to go on welfare to live!

Wage increases were extremely minimal. The average increase is approximately 30¢ the first year and then 15¢ each of the following two years of the contract. Wages are important — BUT — when all the other issues that will protect those wages are ignored as was done in the G. E. strike, any increases will be effectively wiped out.

GE RETALIATES AGAINST WORKERS

Many things have happened to the workers since this strike — all bad. Clear across the country G. E. is treating the strikers like dirt.

Seniority rights have been ignored. Many workers with a lot of seniority have been laid off, especially those close to retirement. Not only do G. E. and all other big businesses do this to harass people, but they save millions of dollars in pension payments. Naturally these millions that they steal, cheat and lie and even kill to save go toward the further exploitation of working class people, all over the world.

Many strikers have been charged with felonies while on the picket lines. Although strikers have been charged with beating up those who tried to cross picket lines and with carrying firearms, there has been no mention of the scab who threw dynamite or of scabs who went to work with drawn guns, under police protection, and no mention of pickets being killed and run into by scab cars and management cars. Every time this happened a striker was charged with as-

sault, or some other lie was made up by the bosses.

Harassment of union stewards and active union members has been severe. They're not even allowed to talk to fellow workers during working hours without permission! The company is refusing to hire janitors and is making the union people clean up the shops — no scabs who are still working are getting this treatment. Many union members have been given disciplinary layoff without pay and without benefit of unemployment compensation.

It is quite clear that the present leadership of the UE and all other 12 unions have no plans to protect their members. At one plant, 29 separate and valid grievances have gone to 3rd step. Yet not a single one has been settled in the workers' favor!

CAUCUS FORMED

G. E. is the fourth largest corporation in the country. With the bureaucrats on its side, it has all the power it needs to squash the workers, as was shown by the strike. A successful fight against G. E. will have to involve a fight against the whole government-industrial network. Responding to this need and the need to throw out the sell-out bureaucrats, a rank-and-file caucus, the Rank-And-File Action Committee, was formed in U. E. Local 1412 during the strike.

RAFAC first started as a direct result of the Paul Chown sell-out of a BAPAC anti-war and G. E. strike support rally last December. Even though Chown had made the original arrangements for the union to participate and invite many other unions to take part, the question of a Black Panther speaker and the fear of losing control of a march to one of the striking plants after the rally led to his calling the other unions the night before and telling them the rally had been called off. Some of us realized then and there that this kind of action had to be fought. We formed the caucus the same day. Under the pressure of the strike, we formulated a program for action during the next three weeks.

All during and after the strike it was a steep uphill struggle. Every action that was suggested by the caucus members was fought and usually voted down by the bureaucrats. Basically, the caucus took very clear stands against racism, women's oppression, and the war. Our program called for rank-and-file control of the unions, a more militant stand on labor issues, organizing the working

class, and support for other caucuses and groups whose programs were built around the ultimate goal of working-class control of corporations like G. E., now owned and controlled by the imperialists. One grave shortcoming of the program is that it doesn't offer a political alternative to what the G. E. workers (and all workers, for that matter) face in terms of anti-labor laws and social and political problems. RAFAC's call for a workers' movement doesn't point out the need for a labor party to fight the big business Democratic and Republican politicians and Wallaces.

Even though the caucus does not exist at this point the need for such struggle continues. There are many reasons for the caucus being disbanded. Most of the members were inexperienced and new to the struggle and became extremely demoralized after the strike was defeated. We were being harassed and persecuted by the company. G. E. forced three caucus members to quit their jobs. Another was fired due to an investigation by private detectives hired by G. E. And we got no support whatsoever from the union. The only way that G. E. could have found out about the caucus was from the bureau-ocrats and it's quite likely that the bureaucrats and G. E. were working together to destroy the caucus.

During the coming period, as labor struggles sharpen and militancy increases workers will see the need to continue the struggle even in the face of defeat. Instead of becoming discouraged and demoralized they will realize that only by sticking together and continuing to fight for their demands will they gain the strength needed to defeat the bosses.

Women's Liberation

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man's work." And she is forced to do this necessary labor for no pay!

The working woman has to face her household chores at the end of the day unaided—she merely has one responsibility added to another. But for many women it is simply impossible to get a job, especially those with small children. These women are isolated in their homes and subjected to tiring, boring, repetitive work for no pay. We need to fight for conditions that can release women from the burdens of family life so that they can take part in production. Fighting at the same time for a shorter work week: with no loss in

pay would mean less work for everybody. Child care centers paid for by the employer or the government need to be set up. Women must receive free maternity care with no loss in pay for time off.

Because there aren't enough jobs to go around and because the opportunities for women are so limited, women are forced to get married even if they don't want to and are forced to maintain the marriage even if it's not working out. Many raise children because in a society which offers them no alternatives, it's the only way they can see of leading a "fulfilling" life. Free birth control devices and information must be made available to all women and abortions must be legalized and performed free so that working women have the same choice as ruling class women. Divorces should be granted free at the request of either partner with expenses for children paid for by the government. Expenses for the education of children should be paid for by the government including living expenses so that children can live away from home, if they choose to do so.

Sex Objects

The job and the home are particular sources of women's oppression, but women also suffer from the pervasive male chauvinist attitudes in society as a whole. They are seen as sex objects, decorative, dependent beings with no minds of their own.

If a woman isn't married or doesn't want children she is considered to be some kind of freak. There is no place for a single woman in this society. A woman is always defined as being in relation to some man—if she is too old to be a daughter, she is expected to be a wife. There are few social activities a single woman can engage in comfortably without a male companion and she has no legitimate sex life. She is forced to earn her living at a job with low pay, even though she has no husband, since her income is supposed to be only supple-

mentary.

A married woman has even fewer rights. She has a particular role which she is expected to play—that of a "married woman." She is expected to stay home and do her "woman's work." Isolated in this narrow atmosphere she becomes bored, her interests become limited. If she has children she is even more restricted. A father may or may not participate in raising the children, but a woman has no choice. According to law, there are many things she cannot do (get a legal abortion, e.g.) without her husband's consent—as if she couldn't make up her own mind herself! She has no independence, sexual freedom, or self-respect.

We must fight all forms of discrimination against women—legal, social, political and cultural!

Men

Many men feel that an attack on women's oppression is an attack on themselves—that if women were to achieve equality, the men would lose some sort of "special privilege." The hollow satisfactions of male supremacy in the home oppress both men and women. A relationship based on the supposition that both partners are equal would be infinitely more satisfying than one based on the lie that one partner is "superior" and one "inferior," or on the fact that one is "dominant" and the other "dependent."

If women were to achieve equal status in the labor force, men would be relieved of the burden of being the chief or sole supporter of their families. In Britain, a study by labor unions showed that if women were to receive equal wages, there would be an 11% increase in everybody's wages. The result has been a large-scale struggle for equal pay. If women were able to get equal pay and were able to get a decent wage, they would lose the incentive to scab and sell out labor struggles. Workers would be united, stronger, and better equipped to fight the bosses on other issues as well.

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Labor and the Fight for Women's Liberation

One of the most important ways the bosses have sought to keep wages low and to limit the power of the work force is by creating divisions among workers. They try to play one group off against another—whites against blacks, skilled workers against unskilled workers, old against young, and men against women. Many working people have long recognized the obvious need to struggle against racism, but it has been only recently that we have begun to become more aware of the role that women play in the economy and the oppression they face—on the job, at home, and in society in general.

Low Wages

Women make up about one-third of the work force but the average income of full-time working women is only 60% as much as the average income for full-time working men. This low figure is partly the result of job discrimination—women are put in the lowest paying jobs, subject to the worst conditions. But they are also often paid lower wages for doing exactly the same work as men. For example, in one of the printing unions, each job classification has two categories: the "A's" and the "B's." When one worker asked the boss what the difference between an "A" worker and a "B" worker was, the boss's reply was, "Well, everyone knows it's illegal to pay women lower wages than men, but it's not illegal to pay a B less than an A!"

Because they are the ones who have to raise the children, women are often forced to accept part-time jobs or have a tendency to leave the work force and re-enter when their children are grown. Thus they lose seniority and acquired skills and don't qualify for retirement. Many part-time workers don't receive fringe benefits.

It's easy to lay off temporary and part-time workers as business cycles fluctuate. Over the years women have been used as a reserve labor force—taken into the work force as the need arises and told to find fulfillment at home when the job market becomes glutted. During the labor shortage during World War II for example, it was not considered "unladylike" for women to work in heavy industry; a lot of factories even set up child care centers so

that women with small children could work. When the war was over, however, the bosses put out a lot of propaganda emphasizing family togetherness and the blessings of housewifery and motherhood in an effort to get women out of the factories. When women do leave the work force, they tend to "disappear back into the home" rather than enter the unemployment rolls. Even so, the unemployment rate for women is higher—in 1965, 5.3% for women as compared to 3.2% for men.

Supplementary Income

Women are open to exploitation on the job market because their primary role is seen to be that of wife and mother. Their income is supposedly only supplementary to their husbands'. They don't work because they "have to," but because they "want to" or because they "want a little extra money for themselves or their families." This is just a boss's excuse to pay less. A 1964 survey showed that more than one-half of working women supported themselves or their families!



Another justification for giving women low wages is that they are considered to be "inferior beings," less intelligent than men, therefore they don't "deserve" as much money. Or they're not able to do "heavy work," which is then done by a man with a forklift, for example, who receives a higher wage for his "skilled work." Or they're "just

going to get pregnant and quit anyway!"

Women are taught all throughout childhood that in order to be "feminine" they have to be submissive and passive. This socialization is ideal preparation for exploitation on the job, because in many cases women don't fight back. They are more apt to accept bad working conditions and most "women's occupations" are unorganized since women have been taught that active control of one's situation is a "man's role." For the same reason, the bosses have been able to use women as scabs and strikebreakers.

We must encourage women to be militant on the job and expose the lie that women are helpless, fragile weaklings who don't belong on picket lines. Women can wield workers' power! To fight the exploitation of women on the job we need to struggle for an end to job discrimination for women and equal pay for equal work.

False Ideas

The ruling class has backed up its exploitation of women by fostering false ideas which it feeds to the workers. Just as they created the myth that black people are inferior to white people, they have created the myth that women are inferior to men, both of which mean bigger profits for themselves by keeping workers divided.

Male chauvinist ideas are preached in the mass media, in the churches, and in the home. In the family the women are taught to be docile and submissive, the children must respect the parents, the wife must respect the husband. Submissiveness and respect for authority are valuable to the bosses because they make workers less "troublesome." The husband is made to believe that he is a boss in his own home ("a man's home is his castle"), and takes out his frustrations from the job on his wife and children instead of directing them where they belong—on his employer.

"Woman's Work"

The family serves to exploit the woman in other ways as well. The housework and looking after the children are her responsibility even if both the wife and husband are working since such tasks are "wo-

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