WHY UNION BIGSHOTS ARE TALKING "CLASS WAR"
EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE STILL ON THE WRONG SIDE

West Coast pulp and paper strikers stop scabs. Their current strike is so strong because their union isn't controlled by the kind of sellout who talks class war and practices treachery. • •

"Class war" says Don Fraser, head of the United Auto Workers.
"Class war" says Lane Kirkland, George Meany and Walter Reuther.
"Class war" grows Meany himself.
"Class war" echo half a dozen other top union bureaucrats.

These are strange words from the lips of men who have spent the last 30 years preaching the virtues of compromise and "labor-management cooperation."

Can the top union leaders have decided to switch sides and fight with the rank and file against the owners and their government? Hardly! But their militant talk does show significant changes taking place.

Accusations that "the business community, with few exceptions, have chosen to wage a one-sided class war," Fraser's words, reflect the union bigshots' real concern about their slipping power and their outrage at the failures of the country's capitalists to help them out.

The whole outlook was triggered by the defeat this summer of the Labor Law Reform Act of 1975 in the Senate. The bill had a lot at stake in the bill, which was done in by a massive big business lobbying effort.

In the last few years the top trade union leaders have had their hands full keeping down the militancy of dissatisfied workers. They have had trouble selling long-term contracts as "the best we can get."

They have had trouble selling this or that politician as the cure to society's failing sick.

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new employees will not be protected against layoffs until they reach six years seniority.

This new category of workers will be more insecure in their jobs. The postal service will try to use them as a wedge against the rest of the work force, Part-timers and short-term employees, who have few rights and different conditions, were promised a fight against the rest of the work force.

Flexibility, cost-cutting, and automation are the P.O.'s terms for it.

But the reality is attack.

The rank and file, who are split between different unions and numerous special classifications, will be come even more divided. More jobs will be lost and workers will be in a weaker position to fight the job eliminations and speed up.

Agreement will be worse than the rejections the rank already felt earlier. And it was far worse than the previous agreement. Even with the cap now lifted from the cost of living adjustments, the pay raise will stay under 2% over three years.

This is well below the 3% and 3.5% increases won by coal miners and railroad workers earlier this year. If it already satisfies Jimmy Carter's call for workers to give ground on the cost of living.

The unchallenged majors in the original sellout also include attacks on the grievance procedure, allowing management even greater power to dictate jobs and fire. It did not deal with demands against forced overtime, the sick leave policy, or unsafe conditions. Amnesty for the over 175 workers who were fired because of the Jersey City and Richmond, Calif. walkouts, was never even brought to the table.

From the huge bulk centers to the middle sized ones, the postal rank and file is focusing its rejection and bitterness on the top leaders who may pay the price for letting the men and women on the bottom hold up.

At the Denver Convention of the American Postal Workers Union in the midst of the contract battle, angry opposition to President Emmett Andrews came to the surface in a prolonged outburst against the contract. Andrews was unable to speak for almost an hour as delegations heckled him down. They also gave a standing ovation to a delegation of fired strikers and set up a relief fund of $50,000 to support these out of work brothers and sisters.

But he has been able, Andrews no doubt would have done the same as thegangster leadership of the Mailhandlers, who have not allocated one red cent for their 60-plussoldiers.

As it is, all the top leaders have allowed, Call with right to stay tied in court in and the grievance procedure without any real backing.

The ploy of ratification vote will be P.O. workers' last formal chance to condemn the contract. But they will have a hard time getting the sellouts who negotiated it a couple weeks later.

APWU head Andrews faces a challenge from John Napier, a candidate from Clifton, N.J. Joseph Vacca, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers is also challenging Van- cente Sombrero, the head of the New York local.

Although neither challenger distin- guished himself as a leader in the contract fight, both incumbents are likely to be knocked out for their betrayal of the membership.

The other key fight at present is over the re-hiring the fired fighters who took the mandate "No Contract, No Work" seriously are the kind of people the postal union needs. They, along with thousands of other rank and file, were the ones responsible for the cap being taken off the cost of living. They were the ones who gave inspiration to the contract fight and to struggling people throughout the country.

The fighting spirit they represent was betrayed. They should have been brought back not just for their own sake and the honor of their predecessors. No union can allow its members to be betrayed when they are fighting for what is right. That's why first workers led by the New Jersey Good Contract Committee are jarring their own court hearings and leading the continuing struggle against the P.O.'s, the firings, and the sellout leaders, Andrews, Vac- ca, and the rest, play the strong. These 175 represent the future.

After their successful strike last year, Mead's might be the thickest of the fight for a decent union.

The talk of "class war" is to remind the capitalists that there are dangers in discarding their "fragile, unwritten compact" with the trade union bureaucracy. Remember, the corporate kings are being warned by their labor leaders, there are a lot of workers out there and it's us who keep them in for your cap. Later in July it made a direct threat: "In the UAW intend to refuse the links with those who believe in struggle: 'the kind of people who sit down in the factories in the 1960s and who marched in Selma in the 1960s.'"

**NO REAL CHANGE**

Meany and his ilk may be talking "class war" to the capitalists, but their deeds show how low they believe in struggle: the kind of people who sat down in the factories in the 1960s and who marched in Selma in the 1960s.

**Why "Class War"?**

With the defeat of Labor Law Reform, the silk suit crowd in the union executive offices saw that the old way of doing business with the capitalists was being shunted aside. Their words emphasized how grave they feel the situation has become. Jane Kirkland, Secretary-Treasurer of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., talked of how the good old "system of sometimes cooperative, sometimes adversary, encounters between parties with a shared set of values," has been endangered by big business. The UAW's Fraser put it even more bluntly: "The leaders of industry, com- merce, and the government in the United States have broken and discarded the fragile, unwritten compact previously existing during a past period of growth and progress." Like Kirkland, Fraser was addressing his remarks to an audience of big businessmen.

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