



Workers' Action

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DOWN WITH THE WAR! Nixon's "Silent Majority" Con Game

President Nixon wants us to think he represents the "silent majority", while those who demonstrate against the war are at best an isolated minority and, at worst, a bunch of communist dupes. His Nov. 3rd speech, together with a pre-planned letter writing campaign of support, resolutions in congress, etc., was calculated to convey this impression. But we know better.

None of the "overseas commitments" (otherwise known as imperialism) of the U.S. have ever been approved by a majority or ever even submitted to a vote, Vietnam included. When these issues have been tested indirectly in elections, such as the presidential election of 1964 between Johnson and Goldwater, the vote has been overwhelming against the "commitment", in this case, the Vietnam war. Johnson beat Goldwater on a "peace" platform when he knew quite well that the war had already been decided upon—by the small handful of capitalist bosses who decide things in this country. Later, he tried to pass this off as the "consensus" upon which he was elected, but we saw where that got him!

Nixon, too, was elected over Humphrey on a "peace" platform—his "secret plan" to end the war. So far, this "plan" is still a secret, and it's likely to stay that way. It doesn't take any close inspection of Nixon's secrets to tell what he's really up to, which is carrying on the war. At the current rate of his much-publicised "withdrawals" (from Aug. 31 through Oct. 2), it will be 294 years until the last GI leaves Vietnam! It doesn't take any close inspection of Nixon's illusory "majority", either, to tell what the vast majority of Americans

really want: an end to the Vietnam war.

So what should we do about it? March? The trouble with the big anti-war parades is that they don't accomplish anything. The ruling class can say, through its mouthpiece, Nixon, that it "won't be affected" by the demonstrations, because it's true: the marches aren't forcing them to do a thing.

All the anti-war movement does is assemble masses of students, hippies, middle class professionals and individual workers in the streets to listen to a few big shots, including capitalist politicians (Democrats and Republicans), talk about peace. The demonstrations are large partly because of the split in the ruling class itself, between the doves, like Fulbright, who want to make a deal in Vietnam, and the hawks, like Nixon, who are trying to whip up support for the war until a deal can be made.

Nevertheless, the marches can't achieve anything, because they play no inde-

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EDITORIALS

ALA: Friend or Fraud?

The United Auto Workers and the Teamsters recently joined together to form a new labor federation, the Alliance for Labor Action, headed by Walter Reuther. Many working people welcomed this move as an alternative to the conservative policies and practices of the AFL-CIO. However, a look at Reuther's past record in the labor movement brings the supposed element of "progressiveness" in the new federation into question. Reuther has refused to struggle for improvement of conditions in his own union. Speed-up has become rampant in the auto industry; safety conditions are way below standard in most plants. The lack of union struggle around these issues has led to many wildcat strikes and the growth of rank-and-file caucuses in many areas. Reuther has eagerly cooperated with company officials and the government in crushing this wildcat opposition.

Reuther has also contributed to racism in the UAW. Racism is widespread in the auto industry—blacks are consistently given the worst jobs and are the last to be hired and the first to be laid off—and again the UAW has refused to fight. One of the responses to this policy has been the formation of exclusionist black caucuses in the Detroit area, which are talking about setting up a completely separate black organization. This has created a division between black and white workers which will enable the bosses to play one off against the other to suppress the needs of both, as they have always tried to do.

In actuality, Reuther's policies are no better and no different than George Meany's. Why then would he want to break away from the AFL-CIO to form a "more progressive" labor federation? Reuther realized that he was in trouble with his own membership. He recognized a lot of rank-and-file discontent and growth of militancy within the AFL-CIO and saw this as a threat to his own privileged position. He thought that he could cool off the militant workers by fooling them into thinking that by creating the ALA they would be forming a labor federation that would truly be in the interests of the workers rather than the bureaucrats.

Reuther claims that his opposition to Meany and the AFL-CIO is political. If he had really wanted to defeat Meany politically he would have taken the fight to the membership within the AFL-CIO, instead of simply allowing the UAW to be expelled for failure to pay its dues. But if he had done this, it would have ended up in his being thrown out right along with Meany. As it turns out, nothing has changed—the AFL-CIO is being run by the Meany bureaucrats and the ALA is being run by the Reuther bureaucrats.

At the same time, Reuther has set himself up in a position where it's easier for him to challenge the leadership of the AFL-CIO—from the outside—with the hope of simply replacing it. This is what he's really interested in—more control and power for

Workers' Action

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himself, not in struggling for the interests of the rank-and-file.

Walter Reuther likes to hide behind a lot of militant rhetoric, but his actual practices—his vicious suppression of black militants in the UAW and his crushing of wildcat opposition for example—prove that he's no different from the Meany leadership he claims to oppose on political grounds! We must recognize the formation of the ALA for what it really was—a channeling-off of militancy, a political dead end led by a labor faker whose only interest is to maintain his own privileged position. We must oppose the attempts of other "labor leaders" to do the same thing. We must insist on a militant program of struggle to throw out the entire Meany-Reuther-Hoffa leadership!

Black vs. White or Workers' Power?

The recent series of attacks on the building trades unions by black organizations across the country (Black Construction Coalition in Pittsburgh, Coalition for United Community Action in Chicago) with the NAACP taking legal action to back up the fight is an example of exactly the wrong way to gain advances for black people. Demonstrations and picket lines have been organized at construction job sites, in many cases leading to a shut down of work at the site, loss of jobs for the white workers, and even physical confrontations. Even scabbing has been encouraged! Blacks have been pitted against their white brothers while the bosses sit back and laugh.

The black leaders, most of whom are businessmen or career bureaucrats, point to the white rank-and-file union members as the people who benefit from having lily-white unions and who are the main source of racism. Instead of aiming their demands at the bosses, who control the number of jobs, they simply demand that the unions admit large numbers of black members. If such a policy were carried out, it would mean a decrease in employment for the guys who are union members now, as well as low employment for any new members, since under the present contracts, more union members means less work per person.

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Down with the War

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pendent role. They merely support the liberals and doves in the ruling class who want to make a deal for imperialism.

"So what's wrong with that," you ask; maybe the liberals will succeed in ending the war." Maybe they will. But if they do, they will do it on terms acceptable to the same imperialists who started the war in the first place, and this will solve nothing.

U.S. Motives

The U.S. is in Vietnam, as Pres. Eisenhower admitted, to control the vastly important natural resources of Southeast Asia. That is, the big U.S. corporations—the same giants that employ you and me and control our lives in many ways—want to exploit these resources and the native populations for a profit.

This control has already been achieved, however, thanks to the right-wing coup in Indonesia in 1965, and the military build-ups in Laos and Thailand. The U.S. continues to fight now not to save the reactionary clique of landlords, generals and pimps who run Saigon—they are just puppets—but to avoid defeat at the hands of a revolutionary movement. A victory for the NLF could inspire similar movements around the world against U.S. imperialism.

So the war will end if the government manages to make a deal with the leaders in Hanoi and the NLF, but this will only lead to a new war in Laos or Thailand or some other place, for the same imperialist motives. The anti-war movement spends all its effort supporting the liberal capitalists who want to make such a deal. This ignores the real cause of the war, which destroys the movement's ability to seriously oppose the war.

Working people are the only ones who can solve this problem. Every day we are subjected to intimidation, exploitation, speed-ups and verbal and even physical abuse at the hands of these same employers who want to squeeze Southeast Asia dry. Furthermore it is we, the workers who pay for the war through taxes, inflation, and being forced to go fight and die in it. For the bosses, the

war means "boom economy" and war profits, but for us the boom means mainly rising prices and lousy working conditions. Then, when the "boom" gets a little too heavy, Nixon proposes to "solve" the problem by laying half of us off!

Strike Against War

We must struggle against the war in the same way we struggle against speed-ups, lousy conditions and low wages: by striking against it. The enemy is the same, and the motive is the same: exploitation of working people.

The war in Vietnam, like racism, unemployment, inflation and almost all other social problems, is intimately connected to the problems working people face on the job. To attack only one part of the problem, while leaving all the others untouched, is pointless. If the members of a union go on strike for higher wages, inflation will eat away their paychecks faster than they can increase them. If they fight for a

cost-of-living escalator clause to end inflation, then the speed-up will be unbearable. If they fight to end speed-ups, then the bosses will introduce "labor-saving devices" and automate more than half of them out of their jobs, or move south or out of the country in order to find "cheap labor" elsewhere.

The labor movement will continue to decline unless it faces up to the problems of society all around it, and this means that the rank-and-file must act. We must demand that an end to war contracts and to the war itself be added to our strike demands. This is immediately connected to our own welfare. Look at the G. E. strike: breaking G. E. means stopping G. E.'s war production as well as its other work, and this will make the government increasingly anxious to end the strike—at the workers' expense of course. G. E. workers have only one course open to them at that point: to defy the war and the government. This should be made into a conscious act—a strike against the war.

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Our Program in Brief

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 in brief:

1. END RACISM IN THE UNIONS. SUPPORT BLACK SELF-DEFENSE!
2. ORGANIZE THE SOUTH AND ALL THE UNORGANIZED
3. END UNEMPLOYMENT — 30 HOURS WORK FOR 40 HOURS PAY!
4. HUMANIZE WORKING CONDITIONS.
5. FOR A DECENT STANDARD OF LIVING FOR ALL
6. IMMEDIATE and UNCONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. TROOPS FROM VIETNAM.
7. END ATTACKS ON LABOR AND REPEAL ALL ANTI-LABOR LAWS
8. FOR THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE AND STRIKE BY ALL PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
9. FOR RANK-AND-FILE CONTROL OF THE UNIONS!
10. FOR A FREEDOM-LABOR PARTY

For a complete version of the program, and information about regular CLP meetings, write in or call. We need your support and participation!

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ILWU BACKS DOWN ON CONTAINER SETTLEMENT

The problem posed to longshoremen of future loss of work due to increased use of shipping containers, first reared its head in the late 50's with their introduction in smaller-sized units by Matson Navigation Co. It continued with Matson's introduction of the first all container ships in 1961 and 1962, and their acceptance for partial use by all major shipping lines two years before the end of the 1961-1966 first Mechanization and Modernization contract. By the time contract negotiations for the 1966 contract had arrived, Matson Co. was shipping the major part of its freight by container and U.S. West Coast shippers and Japanese, German and Swedish steamship lines all had major containerization programs going. At this time, with such rapid changes in cargo-handling being carried on full-time by so many maritime employers, a five-year contract was negotiated which failed to make any specific reference to containers and containerization in its language. Some of the faults of that contract in terms of what it did cover have been spelled out in a previous Workers' Action article. Yet undoubtedly one of the greatest wrongs of that agreement was the length of time under a no-strike contract that was provided the employers to carry out their job-eliminating technological changes.

Sub-Contract for Containers

The length of time of the 5-year contract is the reason given for the need for what is practically openly called a "sweetheart" sub-contract on containers. That is, since we have no striking power during the length of the major contract, we pretty much have to take what the employers are willing to give us. What they've given us is the shaft.

Negotiations to bring all container-stuffing and emptying to areas under ILWU Longshore Division control started in the fall of 1968, 2 years after the start of the second 5-year contract, called the Pacific Coast Longshore Agreement or PCLA. From the first, the negotiating committee asked for, and got, from the Longshore membership, permission to seek an inferior contract for containers, supposedly "in order to nail down the jurisdiction."

The employers' demands, based on presumed "uptown" agreements with the Teamsters and ILWU warehouse locals, were very heavy, practically eliminating the categories of clerks and walking-bosses (waterfront for foremen) at the Container Freight Stations.

Work Stoppage

This and other hard positions of the employers led to the "job-action" early in 1969 of longshoremen

not working commercial containers (work on military containers was not stopped) for a few weeks. The employers were shortly able to get an injunction to stop the "action" which the union accepted, but apparently the van boycott hurt enough while it lasted to bring the employers down from some of their nastiest positions. So the clerks and walking-bosses were included as categories in the final freight station agreement.

This "victory" was incorporated into an overall agreement which could hardly be called a victory for the longshoremen's rank-and-file. The longshoremen's work categories, which, under the PCLA agreement, are lift-driver, car-man, and Ross Carrier driver, do not exist at container freight stations, but are included in the catch-all category of utility-man which gets less pay than any of them. The combining of all categories into the one of utility-man eliminates any kind of manning scale, since under the PCLA contract the lift-driver only drives, and the car-men stuff, with one clerk for each stuffing gang. The utility-man who drives lift or Ross Carrier will be expected to stuff vans on command.

The regular freight station men will work steadily for one company at the reduced rates, with separate seniority within the freight station. This provision for steady workers at freight stations in addition to the steady skilled men carrying vans onto and off the ship looks toward a potential elimination of the hiring hall, the main victory of the founding 1934 General Strike.

"Temporary Contract"

Of course, the Bridges leadership argues that this is just a temporary contract to establish jurisdiction over other unions until 1971, when we'll get back all the conditions we've given up. But what kind of unity for a showdown struggle is built up by letting the employers leave a group of men to make their own struggle, with separate seniority for over a year-and-a-half, together with all the other steady skilled men no longer using the hall? At best, with the differential existing, bringing the separate agreements to parity may take all the union's strength in 1971, if there is no surge of rank-and-file militancy.

A large portion of ILWU members opposed the container agreement as well as all the other "down-the-drain" policies on wages and conditions pursued by the international leadership from the 1960 M&M contract to the present day. What we need to do now is recognize that only by taking an active part in exposing the back-handed dealings of "our leaders" and in struggling for our needs will we be able to change

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ILWU cont.

things in the ILWU. It is we who make and run the machines; it's up to us to determine the conditions under which we use them. We need to form a caucus to fight for our demands--and to regain control of the union for the rank-and-file!

The fight extends beyond the limits of the union membership. We need to build a political party to fight for a program that promotes the interests of all working people! We know we can't rely on any major party candidate, be it a Nixon, a Humphrey, a Johnson, or a Kennedy to end the war trend in the permanent Warfare State we now have. We know "deserving Democrats" will not bring about an increase in employment based on a shorter work week, and directed toward production for human needs, rather than human destruction as we know the trend is now from so much of the cargo we handle. If, instead of shipping tanks and grapes to Vietnam--the tanks to defeat the agrarian resistance there, the grapes to defeat the agrarian resistance here--we were shipping food to places that need food and agricultural implements to help underdeveloped countries to help themselves, we'd have pride in what we do. But for that to be the case we must defeat the shipowners, and, together with the rest of the working class, the owners of the rest of society whose profit-first orientation prevents us from doing useful work and rather has us performing mechanical tasks we call jobs.

Black vs. White?

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As it is now, the struggle against the construction unions simply plays into the hands of the bosses who want to break the unions, by providing them with a source of cheap labor for scabbing. Breaking the unions would hurt both black and white workers by lowering the wages and working conditions for everyone and vastly increasing the power of the bosses.

Blacks involved in this struggle should point out to the unions the need for a shorter work week, with no loss in pay, and more of the unemployed admitted to the union to fill the vacated jobs. Then they should help the unions strike to gain their demands!

We support all advances of the workers, especially of oppressed minorities, but not at the expense of already exploited workers! That's really no advance at all, but a step backwards which strengthens the hand of the bosses and weakens the power of all workers to fight for the things they need. One result of the tension created between black and white workers in this particular struggle was that the U.S. government saw its chance to step in and help smash the building trades unions by pushing a government funded apprenticeship program--the so-called "Apprenticeship Outreach" program--as an alternative for union membership for black people. This is exactly what the bosses want! --to reduce the organized fighting power of working people by keeping them un-

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ORIENT OVERSEAS CONTAINER LINE

New Independent All-Container Service
Pacific Coast to and from Hong Kong-Taiwan-Japan

from the San Francisco Chronicle

PROFIT FOR WHO?

Ads for containerized shipping, such as this one by Amerind Shipping Corp., claim that containers are a great, progressive improvement. As usual, such "improvements" for the bosses are set-backs for the working people. The accompanying article by a rank-and-file longshoreman demonstrates that the profitability of containers is based on reduced wages and conditions for the people who do the work. Containerization is eroding the hard-won gains of ILWU members. "Progress" is a two-way street.

organized, out of the unions, and split up into different groups.

The masses of black people are workers, whether employed or unemployed, and their needs are basically the same as all other workers. The only way blacks can really get the things they need, including their special needs in combatting racism and discrimination, is by uniting with their white brothers and fighting side by side with them in the common struggle against the bosses. For a shorter work week with no loss in pay! Organize the unorganized and the unemployed!

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This is, in fact, the only way U.S. imperialism will be brought to its knees: if American working people drive it to submission from within. Revolutionary movements, especially guerilla campaigns, can only chop off one or two of the octopus's many tentacles at a time. Marches aren't enough; we must strike against the war, and link this to our other demands against the bosses. For immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. troops!

BUILDING A CAUCUS

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GRAM. This demands patience, study, and determination. Candidates should run on the basis of a program of their ideas of both political and economic union action. They can then be held to their program by the rank-and-file in case they turn out not to be such "good guys" after all.

Without such a program an opposition caucus will fall apart, be smashed by the bureaucrats, or, once in power, turn out to be no better than the bureaucrats it replaced. Only a full program, which includes the main points for a better contract (economic and work rules), union democracy (union constitution changes) and social and political issues can secure a lasting and meaningful victory for the membership. Any other course can only lead to wasted effort, opportunism, and betrayals.

There is no blueprint for overthrowing union bureaucrats--for the membership to gain control of their unions--for building rank-and-file union caucuses. But there are two main guiding considerations: First, before change can be made there must be a program for change, where positions, principles, and objectives are clearly and briefly stated. Second, meaningful and lasting change can only be made by the rank-and-file membership, when they know and understand the issues.

Getting A Group Together

A rank-and-file movement usually begins when a small group of members feels that there is something wrong--that the policy and activity of their union does not serve their needs and interests--and they want to do something about the situation. Before such a group of members can launch a campaign to improve their union, they must fully understand the situation and what is involved for correcting it themselves.

At this point the brothers get their thoughts together. They should have regular meetings to discuss the problems (and grievances) which exist on the job, in the union, and in society. They should form a caucus on the basis of a program of solutions for all these problems. The caucus should then struggle to be-

come the leadership of the union. Each member of the caucus should try to educate himself about the history of the union and the whole labor movement. Experience is the best teacher. It is better to learn from the experience of others in the past in order to avoid repeating the mistakes



of others, thereby saving time and energy for the present-day struggles.

Besides studying background, it is necessary to know and understand the situation in the union today. Instead of concentrating on personalities or individuals, caucus members must understand the overall situation and all the problems of their union.

There are three main factors which they must know backwards and forwards: 1) the contract or agreement that the members work under (including pension, welfare, health and other benefits); 2) the union constitution (both local and international structure, officer and body functions, elections, trials, conventions, meetings, etc.); and 3) Roberts' Rules of Order. It is absolutely necessary that the rank-and-file understand exactly how they are being screwed. Specific examples must be pinpointed by the caucus before they can be publicized before the membership. Once a dissident caucus is organized and makes itself known, it will be impossible for it to challenge the phony "leaders" before the rank-and-file unless its members know the contract, rules and procedures of their union. Caucus members should know all of their rights as union members, since the caucus must defend the rights of all members to express their discontent in union papers, meetings, elections and conventions.

A second category of information which union dissidents must learn can be referred to as the union facilities. The facilities are supposed to be open means for members to express their opinions and alternatives to the membership at large. There are four main facilities: 1) the union organs (local, regional, and/or international official publications of the union); 2) union meetings (the monthly local meeting and any others that are held); 3) the union convention; and 4) union elections (at all levels and for all offices). Rank-and-file union members, especially those in opposition caucuses, must be aware of and understand these means of expression which are, at least theoretically, at their disposal, and expose them for a sham if they are not.

The Caucus Program

After this groundwork has been completed, a list of proposals and positions should be drawn up by the dissident brothers. These proposals and positions are the basic things which must be achieved to defend workers' interests and improve their situation--it is the draft program of the dissident brothers' caucus. Additions and word changes might be made in the program as more brothers join up with the original group of union dissidents, but the basic ideas and points should be the solid guiding principles for the caucus fight and union orientation.

The rank-and-file program should deal with three general topics and might be formally divided this way by topics: 1) Contract issues (wages, conditions, work rules, manning scale, pensions, welfare, medical benefits, etc.); 2) Union constitution issues (union rules and regulations for elections, membership rights, officers' duties, meetings, publications, etc.); 3) Social and political issues (repeal of anti-labor laws, civil rights and civil liberties, right to strike, racism and other tools which divide labor, the need for a labor or workers' party, etc.). Once a basic set of objectives and principles is decided on in the framework of a program, a small group of union members becomes a formal body--a caucus of rank-and-filers which presents to the membership an

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alternative of constructive, militant unionism for the positions and leadership of the current union officialdom! This is what the caucus program is—a constructive alternative for better unionism and a better life.

From the Program to Power

The development of a program is the first part of the battle against a sell-out union bureaucracy. The next step is to build the caucus. This can be a long slow process. When men have been stuck in a rut, sold out time after time, and intimidated just for questioning things, they won't usually move the first time a chance for change comes along—and rightly so. Men must have a sense of self-confidence and confidence in something, before they can commit themselves to strong positions, especially if a struggle is involved. As fellow workers and union brothers become convinced of the correctness of the caucus program, they will see a need and a way to fight their oppression.

At first, information about the caucus and the rank-and-file program may be passed by word of mouth. Sincere and interested brothers should begin attending regular caucus meetings. As the caucus grows, leaflets and perhaps a caucus newsletter or newspaper should be issued and distributed at plant or shop gates or at union meetings. Gripes, beefs, sell-out activities of union officials, and constructive proposals based on the application of the caucus program, should be publicized and brought to the attention of the union membership.

A caucus can grow and its program can spread both to other plants and to other union locals. As this happens, the caucus will become more than a group or organization—it becomes a movement. The rank-and-file caucuses of the union in different areas should link-up on the basis of a sound, principled program.

At each stage of development for the caucus, from a small group of dissident brothers in one shop or local to a national caucus with a program there must be a firm basis of support grounded in the rank-and-file before the next stage can be accomplished or even attempted. Be-

fore brothers can be asked to join a caucus, a group of brothers must first agree on a program; before open caucus meetings can be held, there must be a reasonable number of brothers who have become committed to the caucus and the program; before the bureaucrats can be challenged at meetings, in election, or in the union papers, caucus members must become informed on the issues.

The following articles in this series will go into more detail about the existing factors and facilities available to rank-and-filers, as well as those which can be created by the caucus. Details will be given about the methods entrenched union officers will resort to in order to hold their soft jobs—the way bureaucrats

harass and attack oppositionists, and the way they play up to or intimidate the membership. Future articles in the series will also forewarn and explain common pitfalls sincere union rebels often succumb to, such as resorting to anti-labor laws, using the courts, and using the big business newspapers. Throughout the series of articles the importance of the caucus program will be emphasized. As each issue is confronted, with every question which arises, at every turn in the building of a rank-and-file organization, the thread of the guiding principles traces the path to sound and lasting victories for rank-and-file workers within their trade unions as well as in their society.



from the Berkeley Tribe

Along with blacks and other minorities, women are one of the most exploited segments of American working people. They face discrimination on the job in terms of lower wages, a limited range of job opportunities and frequent lay-offs. Women Incorporated, a women's caucus in the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers, was organized to struggle for equal wages

and working conditions for women. So far they have succeeded in getting an equal base pay and are continuing to fight against other illegal and discriminatory practices of the paper industries. Here members of Women's Liberation are shown picketing at a Fibreboard office in San Francisco in support of the caucus's struggle against Fibreboard Corporation.

BUILDING A RANK-AND-FILE CAUCUS

The article below, written by a rank-and-file union member active in caucus organizing, is the first in a series of four articles. The series will attempt to outline, on the basis of the experience of past and current rank-and-file struggles, the main problems and considerations which union members should expect as they struggle against the officials for democratic and militant unionism. The first article presents an overall view of the problems and methods involved in organizing and building an opposition union caucus. Subsequent articles will deal in detail with each of three main areas: the union contract and economic demands; union democracy; and the caucus program, emphasizing social and political issues.

Workers in trade unions are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that they have little or no control in their union's affairs. This is more than a simple problem of democratic rights; it means as workers we not only can't make decisions about our working conditions and wages, but we can't even protect ourselves from abuses (and unfairness) on the job. This can only be described as slavery. Whether the slavemaster is generous or stingy, the fact remains that workers don't control the supply of things we need and want. We need workers' power to smash wage slavery!

The key to workers' control over their job conditions and livelihood and protecting what little bit they have today is their trade unions. Trade unions are the only existing institutions in the United States which supposedly belong to the workers. However, our unions are not controlled by the members. The unions are run by bureaucrats who are concerned with lining their pockets and keeping their nice "respectable" cushy jobs as union officials. Even if there are a few local officials who are "good guys," the international officials keep things nailed down.

The union bureaucrats from the international president on down, will generally do anything to keep their positions. They hob-nob with company officials, cooperate with and brown-nose the government, and sweet-talk the union members. If a rank-and-filer insists on union action, criticizes the bureaucrats, or even questions union policy he receives treatment ranging from being totally ignored to physical abuse. It is essential that we oust the sell-out bureaucrats and institute rank-and-file

control so that we can serve our own interests and needs.

A Principled Program for Membership Control

Two basic ideas must be understood before workers can fight their oppression: First, it must be crystal clear that bosses, no matter how big or small their businesses, have distinct interests which are directly opposed to the interests of workers. There is no middle ground between the interests of workers and owners because the owners get the things they want by exploiting workers as best they can--by screwing workers to the utmost, until every drop of profit is squeezed out. This makes workers and bosses deadly enemies. Therefore workers must examine every issue to see if it poses a threat to their interests. They must fight for the things they need. Every issue, economic, social, and political, must be viewed from a working-class perspective.

Secondly, workers must join together in order to be successful in a fight for their interests. This is why unions were organized--so the workers of each plant or an entire industry could stand up to the bosses united. Today the officer

bureaucrats of the unions have gotten fat, they've become used to plush living, they're bought off by the companies. They run the unions to protect their cushy jobs instead of the workers' needs. So again workers must join together, this time inside the unions, to overthrow the bureaucrats, regain membership control, and run the union for the benefit of the rank-and-file.

We must be sure to replace the lousy bureaucrats with something better. Building a rank-and-file opposition movement involves more than running around the plant or yard, talking about how lousy the union officials are and running a few "good guys" against them in the next election. The often well-intended idea of getting a few "good guys" into office and then "explaining things to the members" is the most dangerous course to follow. It begins with impatience and leads directly to opportunism and sell-out betrayals.

Removing the bureaucrats from office is pointless unless there is a constructive alternative. For this reason the aim of every rank-and-file trade union movement should be: MEMBERSHIP CONTROL BASED ON A SOUND, PRINCIPLED PRO-

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