

INTERNAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SWP TRADE UNION POLICY

The material in this bulletin is mostly trade-union reports at the Socialists Activists Conference in Oberlin, August 13-19, 1972.

Part I is a class on SWP Trade Union Policy by Frank Lovell at the conference.

Part II is reports given at the first session of the trade-union panel.

Part III is reports at the second session of the trade-union panel.

Part IV is a report, some sidelights, and an appraisal of the AFT Vietnam Caucus by delegates to the American Federation of Teachers convention in St. Paul, August 20-25, 1972.

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PART I

SWP TRADE UNION POLICY

by Frank Lovell, a one-session class — August 1972

This class is based on the material in the Education for Socialists series entitled "Selected Documents on SWP Trade Union Policy."

These selected documents cover a span of 18 years in party history, from the 1954 Chicago convention down to the present response of the SWP to the government's wage-freeze policy of August 15, 1971.

My purpose here is not to review this history, or to trace what the party has said on the trade-union question during the past period—beginning with the witch-hunt of the 1950s, through the current radicalization leading into a new era of intensified class struggle.

What I hope to do, instead, is begin a discussion about the party's trade-union policy today, the purpose being to establish clearly what our *basic strategy* is and to provide guidelines for our *tactics* wherever our comrades are working.

I. What is our trade-union policy?

If you have not yet been asked what the trade-union policy of the Socialist Workers Party is, you very likely will be asked that question soon. If you are in a union, you will want to know what the policy of the party is because you will probably be called upon to answer some questions about the union—if not about our policy in the unions. And if you know what our policy is, you should be in a fairly good position to answer most questions that arise about your union.

Comrades in unions sometimes do not know what the officials of their particular union are doing because it is often not easy to find out about this (usually it isn't much), but we should be able to explain what we think the union policy *ought* to be.

A report earlier this year by comrades in Cleveland illustrates this. They had gained popularity and recognition in their local union because they were doing most of the right things there. They had organized an anti-war committee of the union in their place of work. They had helped to set up a women's rights committee of the union. They were serving on the union membership committee. In the course of these activities they had recruited a young woman worker.

Workers began going to our comrades for information and advice. They would ask about the antiwar committee and our comrades would tell them about what was being done in collaboration with the citywide peace action committee and NPAC. They would ask about the women's rights committee and our comrades would tell them about job-related issues that had developed and about WONAAC. They would ask about the union and our comrades would tell them how many new members had joined, but they would also have to confess that they did not know very much about what the union was doing because the bureaucrats don't say much.

The next, most natural question is what do you think the union *ought* to do? This is an important question for us, one that we must be prepared to discuss with

all who are interested.

We do not have an answer that tells exactly what every particular union should do at this moment in order to solve all the problems that workers on the job face.

Unions are not equipped to solve the problems of workers today. But, through the unions, struggles can be organized that will lead to the solution of these problems. That is what we want to talk about. How can these struggles be organized?

Our policy is to support the unions against the attacks of the employers, to strengthen the unions, to bring the union members into well-organized actions that raise the level of political consciousness.

At the present time, our discussion of overall union policy is largely a matter of propaganda. We are still talking to individuals about union policy and about our policy in the unions.

II What is our strategic aim?

All unions are different. But there are some basic problems they must all pay close attention to today: the war; the inflation; unemployment.

There is a debate raging over these issues within the union movement. Often it takes a very distorted form, but we are the only ones who have practical answers that give workers the idea that there is something they can do to solve these problems.

Most of our answers are in the "Selected Documents On SWP Trade Union Policy." But if these answers are to serve any useful purpose, we must join the debate inside the union movement. We must learn there how to introduce our ideas in such a way that we relate to this debate and contribute to it.

Our basic strategic aim is to introduce a class-struggle policy, and to build a viable class-struggle left wing.

This is easy to say, doing it is different.

It is a matter of goals, primarily; and of attitude, partly. It is the very opposite of the "militant" talk and high-sounding rhetoric often indulged in by union officials (and by their hungry rivals who seek to replace them in office) who do not know what to do in the present situation and who try to deceive the membership. They hope the workers will believe that something is being done, or can be done, *for* them through the existing union apparatus.

Our job is to *explain* the new situation, and to urge a united front of all unions against the war, against government curbs on the right to strike, against government control of wages.

We have already undertaken this in California where our comrades attempted to organize sentiment for a statewide conference of labor through the established union movement. This gave us an opportunity to speak before some union meetings and to make new contacts with militant workers to whom we explained what we think such a conference ought to be and how it can be called.

We also have some practical proposals that we think all unions ought to consider. We are *for* a federally financed public works program at union wages. We are *for* a reduction in the hours of work—nationally, for everyone—with no reduction in take-home pay. This is the only way the union movement can undertake seriously to end unemployment.

We are *for* an escalator clause in all union contracts as a measure of protection against inflation. We cannot hope to solve the monetary crisis of world capitalism, which is not of the workers' making. But the union movement can protect the workers' standard of living against some of the effects of inflation.

III. How does our 1972 election campaign help us in the unions?

One of the best ways to develop and explain these ideas now is in connection with the election campaign. The election is the most common subject of conversation in every shop or other place of work.

The two central issues of the campaign—the issues that must be debated by all candidates, including the Republicans and Democrats—are the war and the economy. It is hard to talk about one and not the other. We think they are closely related.

Linda Jenness, the presidential candidate of the Socialist Workers Party, talks about these issues. And she has something different to say from the other candidates. She sees these issues differently. She sees them from the point of view of the workers, and seeks answers according to the needs of the working class.

The capitalist candidates see these issues through the eyes of the employing class, whose interests they represent.

Immediately following Nixon's wage freeze one year ago today (August 15, 1971), Jenness urged that the union movement convene a *Congress of Labor*.

She said then that the attack which had been launched by the employing class against the union movement and the standard of living of the working class could be met only if the unions rallied their own forces and those of their allies.

The best means of doing this, she thought, was to immediately convene a Congress of Labor to draft a defense strategy.

It is important to take note of her attitude and approach to the unions.

She did not ask the labor movement to delegate authority to others to solve *its* problems. She did not promise to solve those problems for it, as others do. She urged the workers to use their unions to solve their own problems, in their own way, *independent* of the employers and their political agents.

Jenness listed some specific objectives for a Congress of Labor:

1) An end to the war in Vietnam, one of the immediate causes of inflation in this country.

2) Full employment. This is crucial now because the growing mass unemployment threatens to divide and demoralize the working class, unless the workers themselves find a way to curb it.

3) A rounded class-struggle program to meet all the needs of society today.

It is easy to propose such objectives.

Many comrades will have an opportunity between now and November to talk with workers, union men and women, in serious political discussions. Most of them will agree with these objectives for the union movement that I have listed.

But Jenness explained further that she would also like an opportunity to submit some proposals to the union movement about how to achieve these objectives.

Her proposals are all written down in the "Selected Documents On SWP Trade Union Policy." They are the following:

1) An intransigent stand against any form of government wage restrictions.

2) A cost-of-living provision in all union contracts, and as a *declaration of national policy* for all wages and incomes of poor people, specifically providing for wages, pensions and relief payments to rise in accordance with the rise of prices.

3) The organization of consumer committees, not for the limited purpose of monitoring prices, but in order to impose effective price controls in the market place.

4) A sliding scale of hours of work to eliminate unemployment. A first step would be the immediate revision of the wages-and-hours law, reducing the 40-hour work week to 30 hours with no reduction in pay.

5) Organized defense of the unconditional right to strike; elimination of all laws undermining the independence of the unions such as Taft-Hartley and Kennedy-Landrum-Griffin.

6) Mass action of the unions in conjunction with the antiwar movement and the GIs to bring all troops home from Vietnam and stop all bombing, and use all military appropriations to rebuild this country.

7) The organization of a Labor Party, based on the union movement, to present these demands in the electoral arena, win the support of the overwhelming majority of the American people, and establish a workers' government.

This is a program for the working class, a program for the unorganized as well as the organized. It is in the interests of oppressed nationalities, women and other allies of labor engaged in social struggle. It is a program to end war, unemployment, and inflation—the big issues today.

This program stands in sharp contrast to what AFL-CIO president George Meany has been trying to peddle to the platform committees of the Democratic and Republican parties as a "program for America," which proposes to solve all problems without changing in any way the present social and economic relations between employers and workers.

The program Jenness submits to the union movement states that the workers, through their own organizations and together with their allies are the only ones capable of solving the social problems of this nation and of the world. It seeks to replace the anarchy of capitalist production with a new economic and social order.

IV. How can we recruit the forces for a viable left wing that will fight for this program?

This program is not going to be realized right away, as we all know. But we think now is the time to start talking about it in the unions because there are many thousands of young workers who will listen to us. It

is not limited to this election campaign. We will be talking about it long after November.

We will discover that the bare outline of a left-wing program, as I have listed it here, does not exhaust the list of demands that will be raised by us and others.

One of the most persistent and important demands is for membership control of the union—rank-and-file control.

This is a demand that we support without reservation. How else could you hope to transform the unions into instruments of class struggle if the membership is not mobilized to take control and direct the operation?

This is one of the questions that is most widely discussed in the shops. And when these discussions lead on to actions, more often than not they take the form of a struggle for posts—union office—at the local level.

Inexperienced militants are inclined to think that if they can capture the apparatus of the union they can then do anything they wish—just like the bureaucrats *seem* to do. Only when these union militants get elected to a local union post—and this frequently happens these days—do they discover that the bureaucrats are not free agents either.

This raises the question of leadership, presenting a whole series of tactical considerations.

How does a left-wing leadership develop?

It must develop in the course of a struggle, very often over quite limited demands. The story of *Teamster Rebellion* describes in detail how a genuine left-wing leadership can develop under circumstances such as existed in Minneapolis in Teamsters local 574 in 1934.

A leadership cannot win support until it has first been tested. It has to demonstrate that it has the capacities of leadership.

This means that militants who aspire to leadership must concentrate their attention on the issues of the union, strive to organize actions that require broad participation of the membership and have a reasonable chance of success. This is what our comrades in Cleveland did in their union. They organized a demonstration of the membership against work injustices and other grievances and in this limited action demonstrated that they were able and responsible union members.

Our comrades in the teachers union are active in the Vietnam Caucus, which is a different *kind* of caucus in that union. Through their antiwar work they are demonstrating their devotion to principles and their ability to organize an action within the union.

We are convinced that the main fire of a left-wing program must be directed at the class enemy. That is also the best way to expose the trade-union bureaucrats who collaborate with the employers.

We talk about a left wing in the unions. But today this left wing is small, a vanguard, not a broad movement within the unions, and not organized. There is now ferment and dissatisfaction within the ranks from which the left wing will develop. But the young radicalizing workers are inexperienced, easily disoriented.

Our goal is to educate this new generation of young workers in order to bring broad sectors of the working class into the streets in massive class actions, demonstrations and political battles.

We don't want to create the impression that the left wing is simply a small group seeking union posts. That

is our least concern.

We want to develop the program, direct it against the employers. Those bureaucrats who refuse to support actions endorsed by the membership will stand exposed, and will eventually be replaced.

Our first job is to pull together a few reliable troops in the course of building an antiwar committee in the shop, or organizing a women's rights committee, or selling a few subscriptions to *The Militant* and setting up a Jenness-Pulley support group.

There are others who are more ambitious, who want right away to organize a rank-and-file caucus and run some unknown for office in order to get rid of the local bureaucrat.

We should talk to them, explain our understanding of the issues. Maybe we can interest some of them in our projects.

The Rank-and-File Caucus

This matter of the rank-and-file caucus is really a separate question. In some unions, and in the minds of some young militants, it sometimes gets to be a kind of peculiar "thing in itself."

We can expect to see the emergence of many such formations as a natural product of the ferment and dissatisfaction in the union movement.

The Stalinists are promoting their National Coordinating Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy. They hope in this way and through this mechanism to bring all the small, local opposition groups into *their* political orbit.

We cannot afford to shun these rank-and-file groups or pretend they don't exist. We ought to be every place in the union movement where the problems facing the working class in this country are being discussed. We want to be there and we want to say what we think ought to be done. We don't need to say everything, only what is appropriate.

I am convinced that the Stalinists are under no illusion that their Trade Union Action and Democracy (TUAD) committees will influence the course of events in the union movement—certainly not at this stage. But the Stalinists promote these formations for what *they* can get out of them. They try to attract the naive young militants and bring them into their party.

The Stalinists explain, "We won't defeat racism and reaction in the unions right away. Why don't you take a petition into the shop for Angela Davis, or for Jane Fonda? And why don't you get supporters for the Hall-Tyner campaign?"

We can talk to all the young militants who turn up in these rank-and-file committees, too. Most of them have never seen a copy of *The Militant*, but they will read it when we sell it at their meetings. We don't want to get involved in their kind of union politics or take any organizational responsibility for these groupings, but we ought to be there to see if there are young militants who will listen to what we have to say. We can explain the need for an antiwar committee in the shop, and for endorsement of the antiwar movement and participation in NPAC demonstrations. We can also tell them about the Jenness-Pulley campaign and get endorsers for it.

There is another kind of trade-union caucus that has already made its appearance. This is the all-Black caucus. We have a statement on this which is included in the "Selected Documents on SWP Trade Union Policy." This should be studied carefully.

Right now there is no viable Black caucus in any union that I know of. Those that developed with so much promise in 1967 and 1968 have withered and died. Even though these all-Black caucuses were misled by ultralefts such as John Watson (DRUM in Detroit) and Ken Horston (Black Panther, GM Freemont plant in California), we believe such formations will reappear, shorn of their ultraleft verbiage, dual-union misconceptions, and without the rank opportunism of the first crop of leaders.

It would be surprising if Black workers did not organize their own nationalist caucuses just as other national minorities have in the past formed their own caucuses in the unions. (One of these, the Jewish Labor Committee, now converted into its opposite, still exists.)

The appearance of the all-Black caucus followed historical precedent. But it was denounced as if it were something never before heard of, obviously anti-union, a device to divide the working class and split the union movement.

What had seemed perfectly natural for other national minorities in an earlier period was absolutely unnatural and wrong for Blacks in present-day unions.

We are convinced that the struggle for Black liberation in this country is both a national struggle and a very important part of the class struggle. A left-wing leadership in the union movement must know how to combine and unite the dual character of the Black struggle. The development of the all-Black caucus in the union movement will be part of the emerging left wing.

We cannot call into being the all-Black caucuses, but we must support them and work with them and through them when they appear, as they surely will.

One of the immediate issues in many unions is wages. Some comrades will be called out on strike by their union. We are not now in a position—with possibly one or two exceptions—where we must think about strike strategy, or become directly involved in the leadership of a strike. But we must understand that such developments require our careful attention and active participation on the picket lines.

Many radicals think that bread-and-butter unionism (their designation—FL) is something foreign to revolutionists. But the truth is that this is the one thing—maintaining the standard of the living of the working class—that unions are meant for. When they fail in this, they are no longer of any use.

The fight for a wage increase, especially when this is coupled with the demand for an escalator clause, becomes a political struggle because it brings the union into direct conflict with the government.

V. What is our job now?

While we look to the future and prepare the program and recruit the cadres that will begin the organization of the new left-wing leadership, we must concentrate on the important task at hand in order to make headway.

Right now our most important task, and our best opportunity, is the election campaign. What we do to build our support in the unions for Jenness and Pulley will rebound to our advantage long after the campaign. Those who organize Jenness-Pulley support committees in their shops today, will have the nucleus of tomorrow's labor party clubs.

We are lucky to have a little time yet before the big class battles explode on the industrial front. We must take advantage of this preparatory period.

There are young militant workers in the shops and factories. Many will join the Socialist Workers Party. Our job is to reach them. This is an essential part of our trade-union policy.

PART II

TRADE UNION PANEL

FRANK LOVELL:

This is the fourth national trade-union panel discussion in the recent period, beginning with our panel in New York and the 1969 national convention of the SWP. At this panel today we have eleven panelists, that is, comrades who have asked to speak. We may have additional requests from others who are active in the trade-union movement and have something to say here of importance to the party. So it may be necessary for us to have a second session. And I understand that is possible.

We have accomplished a good deal in our trade-union work since our last panels here one year ago. There have been changes in the relationship of class forces, changes in attitude on the part of both employers and workers, and some changes within the union movement. We have adjusted our work to these changes. The growing ferment in the ranks of the working class has been speeded up by the new economic policy of the United States government and by the tougher anti-union attitude of the employers.

During the past year, since August 15, 1971, when the government wage freeze was imposed, we have acquired considerable experience. You will hear some reports about these experiences, and about the lessons we can draw from them.

The first reporter is from Houston, our trade-union director there.

HOUSTON REPORT:

The problem facing us here today is not what the party can do for the trade-union movement, but what our comrades in the trade-union movement can do for the party.

We recently had an experience in Houston where a Black steelworker approached us and thought it would be a good idea if we could give out some literature at his plant. He wasn't too radical himself, but he felt we would get a fairly good reception. He provided us with information on the hours of the shift breaks, how many workers were going to be involved, even how many automobiles they had and what their general response would be to such distribution. Since he was a member of the biggest union local in Houston, we decided to have an antiwar distribution at his plant.

We probably have comrades in the unions who could provide the party branch with similar information on the possibilities of more effective ways of reaching young workers in the next period with *The Militant* and our election campaigns.

My report concerns itself with how the Houston branch related to an important strike in Texas.

Not every strike in this period offers the same opportunities. This was a unique situation. It was a strike against Dow Chemical Corporation in Freeport, Texas, the third largest corporation in the country. The immediate issue was not wages, but union-busting, an attempt to drive the unions out of Freeport, which is controlled by Dow.

The strike had some significant features, especially the

broad involvement of women, wives, daughters and relatives of the strikers. (Dow doesn't hire many women except for office personnel.) These women organized themselves as an effective auxiliary to the strike and, among other activities, assumed the responsibility for conducting mass picket lines several times a week. On one occasion, for example, some 1,500 women militantly demonstrated in front of the Dow Chemical Corporation Administration Building.

Comrades from the women's liberation fraction went down to observe this activity, marched on picket lines and attended mass meetings. Our first reliable information on the strike came from them. Another thing we observed about the strike was that Dow Chemical for years has been a target of the antiwar movement because of its complicity in Vietnam. In this connection it was also a target of campus protests against Dow's student recruitment. It was clear that the antiwar movement and students had a stake in the strike. Finally, it was clear that the strike was occurring under the umbrella of the wage freeze and we could and should use our election campaign and *The Militant* to intervene.

Subsequently, a section of the feminist movement, the National Organization for Women in Houston, passed a resolution supporting their sisters' democratic right to demonstrate in Freeport. The Houston Peace Action Committee (HPAC) sponsored a broad press conference supporting the strike and representatives of the strikers spoke at an antiwar rally in Houston. The University of Houston *Cougar* carried a report by the YSA pointing out that the Dow strikers were seeking sympathy, aid and support from students and explained Dow's role in the Vietnam war. Our gubernatorial candidate sent a letter to the strikers informing them that we intended to support the strike during our election campaign. We assigned a comrade to cover the strike for *The Militant*. She was able to interview leaders of the strike and had informative meetings with strikers. We discovered that the strikers were agreeable to support from the general population, including the student movement, the antiwar movement, the women's movement, etc. One request they made was that if any of these organizations came down to picket or distribute leaflets, they'd appreciate knowing ahead of time.

What I want to dwell on is the attempts we made to intervene as a party through our electoral campaign and with *The Militant*. Unfortunately, at our first sale in Freeport we only had thirteen *Militants* left with the Dow strike report. These were immediately sold out by two comrades as soon as they hit the picket line. Pickets suggested that they take one over to the union hall. One of the first things they observed there was a photostatic clipping from *The Militant* on the bulletin board. A *Militant* reader in Pennsylvania had already read the story in the *Militant* before we got our bundle, sent down a \$1.50 contribution to the strike. They showed *The Militant* to strike leaders who asked them if they had any more copies. They were told they could put 50 copies in each of the two union halls used as strike headquarters. Subsequent to this, we participated in other picket lines and were able to sell more

Militants.

During this period we were legally certified for the ballot in Texas. One of the things we raised at a subsequent press conference on our certification, along with all of our other demands of course, was the Dow Chemical strike and our explanation of why this union-busting attack was occurring within the framework of the wage-price freeze, and the general antilabor offensive, and the effect the war had on this process. This was an issue the media zeroed in on and as a result our campaign was able to widely publicize a strike that was desperately in need of help at the time.

In addition, our gubernatorial candidate appeared on the picket line and was generally well received by the women, who recognized her from the news coverage. There were right wingers involved on the picket line who were opposed to her presence, but they were a small minority. These elements' red-baiting remarks were televised. What wasn't televised, but reported on radio, was the warm response and embraces received from other pickets. One striker was asked how he felt about socialists participating on the picket lines in Freeport. His response was that anyone who supported the strike was welcome.

I think this experience is indicative of some modest change in workers' moods. If we are alert in the next period, we can revive some of the methods that we've utilized successfully in the past to begin to get *The Militant* in the hands of these workers. We can utilize our campaign to support workers' struggles as we do with other radicalizing forces. I believe we should be alert to situations of this type as a party. I think our comrades in the union movement should also be more aware of possibilities to utilize *The Militant* and our electoral activity, to distributions and sales to union members, and attempt to get before union meetings. I think we're going to have broader receptivity in this period ahead than we've had in the last period. And I think that we're going to get some modest but significant recruitment out of this process. There is a loosening up in union ranks that we have to pay more attention to. On a modest level we should prepare for recruitment by getting our ideas into the hands of young workers in the next period.

SWP ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN CHICAGO, BY TONY DELEON, CANDIDATE:

In the past two years I worked on the railroad in Chicago as a member of the IAM. I was able to work with the national railroad fraction. I was also active in the antiwar movement. In addition, I was nominated and am campaigning for public office on the Socialist Workers ticket.

Since I was not a member of the United Transportation Union, I could not work with the comrades who were helping to build the Right to Vote Committee in the UTU. But through my union, I tried to get support and build the idea of the Right to Vote Committee among the switchmen on the line that I worked on.

What laid the basis for the work that I did was selling *The Militant* on a very consistent basis. I was able to sell *The Militant* at the rate of ten a week, and finally wound up with eight subscriptions to *The Militant* and three one-year subscriptions. Some of the people who bought the subscriptions were officials of the union local: the secretary, the treasurer, and the committeeman.

In support of the Right to Vote Committee I distributed *Progress Report*, the RTVC publication. The purpose was to organize a national movement for a rank-and-file referendum vote on contracts and officials. The process right now is that the officials are elected at the convention, and not by the rank and file of the union. The officials negotiate and approve all contracts.

A railroad strike meeting, called last February 11, 1971, was a result of a one-day strike called by the UTU. In the last two years there has not been any strike that has gone more than three days. In all our strikes, the government has intervened with court injunctions, and the strikers have been ordered back to work.

At the February 11 meeting I brought some of the Chicanos and Blacks who had been working in my shop. Most of them were machinists, but there were several electricians and pipe fitters who came down for this meeting. When I got to the meeting I found out to my surprise that there were several members of my local, many of them officials, who had heard about the meeting without my telling them. I also found out that they were supporters of the Right to Vote Committee. At this meeting there were over 350 men.

Chicago is the hub of the railroad industry, and there were at this meeting over 350 men from railroads which are centered around Chicago. This meeting just took up and affirmed the idea of the right to strike, and the idea that the government has no right to infringe on our rights. The right to strike was a basic right that the union and working people have in this country, or are supposed to have.

The Right to Vote Committee was the main organizer of this meeting, and it gained much support and respect from the men who saw RTVC as an action organization, or committee, within the union that was trying to do something.

I then went back, along with the fraction, to building RTVC and selling *Militants. Progress Report* came out irregularly, but it was popular in the shop. Interest increased as the UTU convention approached. You will hear a separate report on that convention which occurred last year, just a year ago.

At that time I had already been working in the shop for a year, and I'd been getting out *The Militant* on a very consistent basis, and getting some contacts around the ideas of *The Militant*. As a result, my committeeman and I decided we'd try to bring up some issues around the August 15 wage-freeze edict of Nixon. Our local should be against the war in Vietnam, we argued, because the war in Vietnam was one of the main causes of the wage freeze. The committeeman is young and a very good trade-union militant. He has some radical or militant background, I think. He comes out with many of the ideas that we as socialists call for in the union. That is, he believes in rank-and-file control of the unions, in an escalator clause in wage contracts, in a shorter work week. So he's a different stripe from other union officials. Of course he's a local official, so he has more contact with the rank and file. We thought that we had some support in the local, so we decided at our September meeting to introduce a motion to publicize the following meeting of our local, local 492, and to begin a discussion of four demands.

The first demand was that our local go on record in

complete opposition to the wage-price freeze. And the second was to go on record for total and immediate withdrawal of all troops from Vietnam, pointing out that this war is the main cause of inflation, and it wasn't the working men who were striking for wages that was the cause of inflation. Number three was that a letter be written to our union executive board stating our position. We also voted to publish an article in our union paper, *The Machinist*. I was commissioned to write the article. The fourth demand was that the local call for a congress of labor.

On October 9, 1971, the next meeting, our local supported all but the last demand. That is, we passed the first three demands, going on record for complete opposition to the wage freeze and to the war in Vietnam, as well as writing a letter to the executive board and a letter to be published in the union paper. But the call for support to a congress of labor did not pass.

There were 55 men who showed up at the meeting, one-third of the membership of the local. Many of the others are just on the records, they're not active members of the union. In many ways, I guess you could say that we outmobilized the local bureaucrats. This showed in the fact that at least 30 of the men voted for the first three proposals. The point is that the local bureaucrats did not think that we were serious at all. They were taken aback when they saw that we actually built this meeting, put out leaflets, etc., and went out to the five different yards that our local covers with leaflets talking about this meeting to the men in the shops. They did not at all expect anything like this.

Along with these proposals, there also came up another one which was probably more important. Their proposal was that the committeeman and I be sent to other locals to bring up these same issues and these same demands and get the other locals to endorse the letter that was supposed to appear in the union paper. As a result, we visited five locals in Indiana and Illinois. Two of the locals went on record against the wage-price freeze and three went on record against the war in Vietnam. All of the locals endorsed the letter to be sent to the executive board and the article to appear in the paper. But none of the locals supported or endorsed the idea of a congress of labor. All of these meetings were held without any kind of publicity beforehand and we just knew about these meetings one or two days ahead of time. We had no prior knowledge of how many would attend or if there would be support.

As a result of this work, some of the men in my shop started to think about politics a little bit and started taking my politics more seriously. Some of them came to the November 6 antiwar action that was held in Chicago last year.

By this time, the local election meetings were coming up in December and many of the men were thinking that they should have a new leadership, especially the younger men. The shop, and the whole IAM, is in a changing process right now. For about 10-12 years they did not hire anybody. In 1960, or 1958, they stopped hiring machinists. They didn't hire anybody. So what they're seeing now are the young men that they're hiring during the radicalization. They're hiring Blacks and Chicanos. This makes it much easier for anybody with any kind of political ideas to get sympathy, and some action, out

of these younger men. They don't have the same conservative outlook that the older machinists have.

The union had never really gained the respect of the younger workers, especially the Blacks. Most of the young workers looked upon the union locals and officials as conservative and out of touch. Of course, there was no kind of union consciousness or plan to change the situation. The young workers found themselves in a very contradictory position regarding the elections. What they wanted to do at the December meeting was to run our committeeman, who is very good, for president and myself for committeeman. I told them I was not really looking for any kind of post in the union, and I explained to them that only the majority of the rank and file, a conscious and determined rank and file, can begin to change the union. That is a long process of activity and education, not simply electing a new leadership of people who have good ideas—especially in a local which has only raised some propagandistic slogans and has not gone through any actions.

It took a while for some of these younger workers to get the idea, and the majority has not yet grasped this idea and will not for a while.

After that, most of the work I was involved in was getting out the expanded issue of *Progress Report*. This was an attempt by the national railroad caucus to launch a paper that would be a poll of attraction in order to form a broad-based caucus among the radicals and the militants in the union, as well as to get a following among the other crafts in the railroad. There are at least five or six other crafts in the railroad. This is an attempt to try to form a caucus within the UTU and get support from the other unions.

While I was carrying out this work a representative of the Muskie campaign came to our local meeting. The IAM had already endorsed Muskie, back in September I think it was, and prior to our April 13 local meeting our committeeman asked me if I would be sure to attend. I wasn't going to the meetings regularly because they became ritualistic. It just came down to the local bureaucrats and myself and our committeeman; there was nothing going on. But he told me that this Muskie representative was going to be at the meeting and he said he had already talked to several people who read *The Militant* through subscriptions or who used to buy *The Militant* who had already endorsed my campaign and were going to the meeting. This was without my knowledge. He said I should be there in order to get out my ideas. Since I was a candidate, I should bring up the fact that I was a candidate and pose an alternative to the local. So I attended a fraction meeting with the men who were going to the meeting to oppose Muskie. We discussed what person should bring up what statement against Muskie, who should bring up the question of the war in Vietnam, who should bring up the fact that Muskie doesn't want to run with a Black person, who should bring up the fact that Muskie supported the wage-price freeze. It was a fraction meeting, but I was the only person in the SWP.

At the union meeting, Muskie's representative spoke first and just spoke about how Muskie has got a fantastic record on the side of labor and this and that. Our committeeman got up very hard and said "How could he be a candidate for labor if he supports the New Economic

Policy of Nixon? He voted for the Economic Stabilization Act. He voted for the wage-price freeze. And he's done other things along the lines of labor which members of our local should know of and which Muskie doesn't make any general knowledge about." A Black machinist got up and stated the fact that Muskie publicly said that he would not run with a Black man. Some of the other young workers who were at the meeting did not know about this and they got very excited about it. Finally, I spoke and made it clear that I was a socialist and, as the SWP candidate for Lt. Governor, I didn't support Muskie and talked about our program for labor—the escalator clause, sliding scale of hours and wages, 30 for 40, more Black representation in the unions, rank-and-file democracy, union activity against the war in Vietnam and taking part in the national antiwar demonstrations and things like this which Muskie would never support.

There was an awful lot of the usual thing that we went through in that union. I was red-baited very heavily by the president and the secretary, who are vicious. The vice-president came to my aid. He said that I had the right to speak and to hold my own ideas and I had a right to bring them up, and besides, he agreed with them. The discussion went on for several minutes on whether or not to support somebody who can't win, namely myself, or to support Muskie because he's a lesser evil than Nixon. He can win, he's got a big organization, things like this. I suggested that we not endorse Muskie and wait until the local has heard from all the candidates. Since Linda Jenness and Andrew Pulley are national candidates of the SWP and since Andrew Pulley is going to be in town in two weeks, we should wait another two weeks and have Pulley appear before our local. But the local bureaucrats brought up the idea that we can't have two local meetings in a month. So they just went ahead and pushed through a vote to support Muskie, 18 to 12. That was very significant. If we had not been at that meeting, it would have just been a discussion about supporting Muskie and everything would have gone as planned. But these 12 votes are very significant. It wasn't surprising at all that I wasn't supported—that was expected—but the 12 votes against Muskie were very good.

After the meeting, some of the men came over and endorsed my campaign, bought a *Militant*, and we got out a lot of literature. I didn't think I was taking a chance in making my candidacy open because I was nominated by the SWP to run on the ticket and since then I've been passing out campaign literature and everybody in my shop knew that I was running for Lt. Governor and some of the men had already endorsed me as a candidate. As a result of this work, some of the men came closer to the ideas of our campaign and *The Militant* and the Right to Vote Committee. But we must draw a line there. Many of the people who supported the Right to Vote Committee did not really get active in supporting it or give money. They expressed solidarity with it but didn't help in any way, shape or form, to get out its ideas, didn't take any bundles of the *Progress Report*, didn't give money to it, things like this, but that support was there nonetheless.

So when we met with the president and the vice-president (our shop committeeman and myself met with these two local officials) we decided that we were going to have a representative from the SWP campaign. They said that they would only allow me to speak and if we asked for

somebody else to speak, they would fight it on the floor of the local meeting. Knowing that we did not have enough support to force a fight on the floor, the party decided that we should settle for myself speaking for the party.

So on May 11 we had the usual local meeting, and we again passed out the literature at the five shops that our local covers and 31 men came to the meeting. We lost the vote by 19 to 12. Among the people who supported my campaign, who voted for me at the meeting, was the vice-president, the committeeman and the local treasurer. The committeeman just announced me by saying that I was an activist in the Student Mobilization Committee, the Right to Vote Committee and had helped to get the local against the war and the wage-price freeze. He was talking like a member of our organization. I just gave a talk on the wage freeze, the war in Vietnam, our defense of the right to strike, the need for a labor party, the need for independent Chicano and Black political parties.

Since all of the Chicano membership of our local and many of the Blacks were at the meeting and since there were younger workers, I thought that they would be receptive to the last point. The vote on the motion was not very important, but what was important is that these young machinists would come around our ideas and we were very open about saying that I was a member of the SWP. Every person in the shop knew I was a candidate, knew my position on each and every question and supported me on that basis. *The Militant* had a very big effect on the way these young workers looked at my campaign and the work we did in the local with the wage-price freeze and the other issues. All comrades should sell *The Militant*, if nothing else, on a daily basis. Sooner or later it's going to catch on because the kind of people we've got going into the unions today are these younger people, young Blacks and Chicanos, especially in a shop like the railroads. I'm sure that that's true for other unions.

CLEVELAND REPORT BY A TRADE-UNION ACTIVIST:

During the last year, some comrades from the Cleveland branch have been active members and builders of the AFSCME local 1746, which represents the workers at the county welfare department in Cuyahoga County. I want to describe in this report our antiwar activity, our work in a committee called the Women's Rights Committee, and how we worked to build local 1746. Finally I want to discuss our election campaign and contact work.

First, to give you an idea of the situation we are working in, there are about 2200 workers at Cuyahoga County welfare department. Ninety percent of these workers are under 30 years of age. Eighty-five percent are women. More than 50 percent of them are Black. 1300 workers are concentrated in one office in Downtown Cleveland. 500 are concentrated in two other offices, and the remainder are spread out in neighborhood centers and in a few county institutions. The comrades who are members of local 1746 all work in the main office of the welfare department.

The welfare chapter of local 1746 was founded in 1966 and one of our comrades participated in the struggle that led to its formation. Our welfare center is an open shop, with about 60 percent union membership. Our union

contracts do not include wage agreements. According to the administration, we're employees of the county and we're paid by the state, so the county (according to them) cannot negotiate with us on wage questions. Our union leadership accepts this and passes this kind of thing along to the membership. The leadership of our chapter of local 1746 is on the whole very young, very inexperienced in terms of the trade-union movement. They have no real program for solving the problems that confront workers in any sector of industry, and especially the public sector. There's a high turnover rate among these leaders of the union, but they do reflect the work force and they do reflect the general radicalization which is taking place in society. They are very open to radical ideas and to our proposals.

Conditions of work at the welfare department are demoralizing. Anybody who works in one of these situations will realize this. You're in day-to-day contact with some of the worst aspects of capitalist society.

The pay at the welfare department is very low. I estimate that 60-70 percent of the work force earns less than \$90 weekly take-home pay. About 10 percent of the work force is receiving supplementary assistance from the welfare department. The result of all this is a fantastic rate of turnover in the work force. I would estimate that among case workers, who are the people who we have the most direct contact with on a day-to-day basis, the turnover is around 60-80 percent every year.

Last July, one of our more experienced comrades went to work at the welfare department. Of course, he was immediately impressed by the favorable political situation that he found himself in and began reporting to branch comrades about the antiwar sentiment, the women's liberation sentiments that his fellow workers expressed in informal discussions with him. We decided that it would be a good idea if he would begin talking to some of the union leaders about initiating some type of antiwar activity. He talked to a woman official, the chapter secretary who worked in his department, about the antiwar movement. After he had informally discussed his ideas about the antiwar movement and informed her of the upcoming actions, she suggested to him that a local peace committee be formed and that he operate as its chairman. She said, "All we need is someone to take the responsibility for doing this and it will be a valuable addition to the work of our union." Of course we thought this would be a very good idea. At the next meeting of the local executive board (local meetings take place very infrequently), a motion was made to form an official union peace committee and our comrade was appointed its first chairman. This committee gave us a tremendous advantage in the work that we were doing in terms of building the antiwar movement at the welfare department. First of all, and most importantly, it gave us the right to use all of the local facilities and the authority to distribute leaflets in the welfare department without being hassled by the administration and with full support of the union.

Our first peace committee activities began around the November 6 demonstration. In addition to the formation of the peace committee, we got the endorsement for November 6 of the local and the district council. He asked them for a donation of \$50 each, which they gave. The head of the local appeared at news conferences, talk shows

and a local speaker came to the rally on November 6. Building activities at the welfare department included regular weekly meetings with an average attendance of around 10 people and a massive distribution of leaflets to the entire work force at the welfare department. One of the people in the peace committee got the painters union to donate a banner, which you see in *The Militant* all the time, which is about 25 feet long and which the peace committee and others took around the welfare department the day before the rally. They got four workers to hold the banner and then two others came into the department with them. They would rush into the department, give a short speech on the demonstration. Meanwhile, two distributors would be passing out leaflets to everyone in the entire department about the demonstration, and then they would move out very quickly before the administrators caught on to what they were doing. In this way, they were able to directly inform (for about the third time) every worker in the entire department of the November 6 demonstration.

The next activity of the peace committee was around the NPAC conference which was held in Cleveland. We just carried out the regular building activities—passing out leaflets—with the approval of the union and, in some instances, paid for by the union to our fellow workers. We recruited a few marshalls for the NPAC conference. We got one of our union leaders to give greetings to the NPAC conference and the peace committee of our local presented a resolution in the trade-union workshop. We did essentially the same thing around the SMC convention in New York and we were able to bring quite a few people on the bus ride along from the welfare department and use that opportunity to talk to them about our perspectives in the antiwar movement and our party and the YSA. One young woman was recruited on the bus ride from the SMC convention. She was talking to one of our candidates and our candidates managed to answer most of the final objections that she had at that time.

On April 22 we did essentially the same thing. We had a whole series of demonstrations beginning around April 9, weekly demonstrations, and there was regular participation in all these demonstrations in Cleveland. Our average in Cleveland for these demonstrations has been around 20-25 throughout the entire last year. We were not able to get funds at this time because the chapter was involved in contract negotiations and there has been a consolidation of a little anti-peace sentiment among the more conservative elements of the local leadership and they're more reluctant at this point to give us funds and give us total freedom of operation the way they did in the beginning.

We had excellent participation in the May upsurge. During that entire week we were bringing out 25-30 workers to the daily picket lines which took place downtown, and this turnout was comparable to that of Cleveland State University and Cuyahoga Community College. The result of our work in the peace committee, which has really been the key to our work establishing us in the welfare department, was the building of a very large periphery around us. We've been able to maintain that periphery and in many cases to educate it, to interest it in the SWP.

The peace committee also ended up as a recruiting ground for the union. Many who think that the union is a do-nothing organization and are a little stand-offish toward it, are attracted to the peace committee. Through

the peace committee, we talk to them about the union and the importance of their joining, and they joined.

Our authority in the welfare department was established. We were well-known and respected figures in the welfare department through our activity in the peace committee. The peace committee is really a living example, especially around the upsurges of the antiwar movement, of what the union itself could be.

After our first woman recruit at the time of the SMC convention, we began discussing the possibility of forming some type of women's rights organization, or an abortion committee, in the union. We felt that since 85 percent of the workers there were women, this kind of thing would have a fairly good potential. Also, since women are openly discriminated against at the welfare department, we should have had pretty good success with it. We debated the pros and cons of an abortion or a women's rights committee, and we finally decided, for several reasons, that we would propose a women's rights committee. The local leadership, which by this time had caught on to the peace committee (this is a higher level of the leadership), was reluctant about giving the women's rights committee immediate recognition. We had to do it on a chapter level. We had gone through a meeting where the chapter officials were up for office and we had asked one of the officials who was running for chairman of the chapter where he stood on women's rights and he made a campaign promise, or committed himself to a stand on women's rights and through that stand we were able to get around the local opposition and form a chapter women's rights committee.

The fact that the local doesn't recognize the women's rights committee gives us a priority in terms of its work, that is, winning full union recognition and everything that that is going to mean: the use of facilities, leaflets and less hassle in getting out leaflets, etc. The women's rights committee has built, with leafletting and the other methods we always use, Abortion Action Week. It has been able to send five women to national WONAAC meetings, including the WONAAC convention. It brought five women on a fairly regular basis into the Abortion Project Coalition, which was the local WONAAC-affiliated coalition. It's accomplished something that the peace committee has not been able to accomplish, and that is a regular membership, women who attend meetings on a regular basis and who identify themselves with the women's rights committee. Since June, weekly meetings of the women's rights committee have been held and average attendance has been six, and there are others around the women's rights committee who are very interested and who keep in touch with its activities.

Currently it's supporting a campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment which was launched by the Cleveland Council of Union Women, helping to build an August 25 Equal Rights Amendment demonstration. One activity which pretty closely reflects the stage of its organizational development and also the stage of political consciousness of the women at the welfare department, is a mass circulation of a questionnaire on women's liberation issues to all women in the welfare department. The purpose is to get the federation to endorse the Equal Rights Amendment, which is coming up for a vote in Ohio.

The next area of work that we have been involved in is the union. In February, the union began contract ne-

gotiations with the administration. Some officials and their friends went around to the different departments and discussed some of the problems of the union and formulated a fairly good set of demands, taking care of some of the secondary needs of our membership. They elected themselves a negotiating committee of about 19 people. This committee, from that point on, really functioned as the leadership of the chapter and of the local. We realized that we had limited ability to influence this negotiating committee because it was just like a locked-in group which functioned independently of the needs and the aspirations and the desires of the rank-and-file workers. They would not even tell the membership of our union what they were negotiating for. But we did feel that it would be very important to try to break down some of the barriers there because of the weakness of the union and the dangers that were inherent in this situation that we were facing.

We felt that the union should try to link up with other public workers. It should demand freedom from wage controls and the right to bargain for wages. Even if we were not able to win these things, it should present these as part of its program in the negotiations. It should call for a one-year contract. We also felt that we should raise the right of workers to know what's being bargained for by the negotiating committee. We came up with an idea which we presented to some of the more sympathetic individuals in the union leadership: that since our union was in an open shop, one of our key problems is maintaining a membership—and membership in this period would be decisive in determining the outcome of the negotiations. We proposed a membership committee, and this proposal was accepted. Through this membership committee, which was headed up by a young woman official of the union, we were able to set up a network of contacts throughout the entire organization. This network of contacts was used for distributing leaflets and recruiting new members to the union. We also set up a coordinating committee, which was an open central body for the chapter, which actually began to assume some of the leadership functions during this period. This is the place where we are now able to go in and discuss with the leadership of the chapter what's going on in the chapter, and to try to call official meetings and do other things which we're interested in.

The final results of the contract negotiations were not really favorable, but they were much better than they would have been if we had not been able to carry out these activities. The membership committee still exists. The coordinating committee still exists. The membership committee functions as a vehicle for distributing women's rights leaflets and peace committee leaflets and there are now active members of the union in very close contact with our comrades.

Another aspect of our trade-union work has been our propaganda around the wage freeze. This has been primarily confined to meetings where broader political questions have been raised. An example is a district council meeting which was held last week and where we opposed an attempt to get the district council to endorse McGovern. We spoke against endorsing McGovern, mentioned the Jenness-Pulley campaign, got out our campaign literature, and were able to get some response from our fellow unionists.

Another opportunity was occasioned by a pay board refusal to grant a pay raise which was passed by the state legislature for all welfare workers last March. Comrades may have read about this in *The Militant*. The chapter leadership called an emergency meeting in the welfare department and sentiment around this refusal of our pay raise was extremely high in the building. We proposed that a local meeting be called for the next night. That proposal was passed. The local meeting took place. At the local meeting, we proposed a demonstration within the next four or five days and we were elected to the committee which was set up to build that demonstration, which we went about building just exactly like you would go about building an antiwar demonstration: with mass leafletting, propaganda throughout the department, press conferences, etc. Three hundred welfare workers from our building marched in that demonstration—an extremely militant and spirited demonstration. The tone and feeling in the welfare department following that demonstration was different than anything I have ever seen during my year of working there.

Finally, I just want to hit some of the things that we do in terms of contact work. We have a circle of party and YSA contacts at the county welfare department. Our distinction here is those who express interest in the SWP and whom we can approach with our materials. We sell an average of about five *Militants* per week. We once set up a meeting for these workers at my home. Several came and met local candidates.

We sell *Militant* subscriptions, about 20 have been sold. Over 20 of our friends have endorsed the campaign. We talk informally with them, which is very important.

We build all party activities in the welfare department, especially the forums, which are useful for getting our friends to the SWP headquarters and discussing our ideas with them.

We had a luncheon for Linda Jenness which was attended by about 25 people. Quite a few of them had already endorsed, and three of them endorsed at that meeting. They were extremely impressed by Linda and our campaign.

Two or three of the contacts we have right now are seriously considering joining, considering the question of whether or not they want to join the YSA or the SWP. I think that's really the most significant aspect of the work that we have done. We have been able to recruit one comrade and we do have a periphery around us that is a potential recruiting ground for our movement.

REPORT FROM HOUSTON ON TRADE UNION POLICY AND PRACTICE

This report covers a year of political involvement in Local 305 of the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Papermill Workers. It is best to begin with a brief report of some of the more salient features of the labor movement in Houston, the sixth largest city in the U. S. and the largest industrial center in the South. Some of the largest basic industries in the country are here. Unfortunately, however, only 17 percent of Houston's working class is organized. Despite the fact that the Harris County Labor Council is the largest in the South, the social atmosphere is still very anti-union.

Texas is one of the notorious right-to-work states, and probably has one of the most hostile state governments in the country. They're not just hostile to us, they're hos-

tile to everything. Consequently, the fragile existence of many Texas unions and the viciousness of the bourgeoisie brings the class struggle home to many Texas workers in an exceptionally brutal fashion—scabs, strike-breakers, Texas rangers, picket line assassinations are just a few of the realities that Texas workers face on a day-to-day basis and have to deal with. In addition, the union leadership is conservative and enormously resourceful when it comes to self-preservation. One day they're willing to sell out the union struggles—the next day they'll oppose the local political establishment as they react to pressures from both the capitalists and the union rank and file.

Nevertheless, when I was elected as a steward or as a shop committeeman in my local (a local of about 1,500 members) the leadership of the Houston branch decided that we must begin to direct our involvement in the local and to participate in its affairs as much as the prevailing circumstances would allow. Therefore, I was directed to accept the steward's post and to do as much as possible in these three major areas: antiwar work; campaign work; and *Militant* sales. In addition, I was asked to learn about internal developments and struggles within the labor movement.

The IBPSPW is one of the ten largest industrial unions in the AFL-CIO that came out of the CIO, mainly concerned with the papermaking industry and its subsidiaries. It has over 300,000 members in the U. S. and Canada and is affiliated with the AFL-CIO and the Canadian Labor Congress. In Houston, the composition of my local is varied, but it has a high percentage of Blacks, women and Chicanos. In addition, most of the members from my shop are young although, as it turned out later on in our activities, most of the participants were over 30 years of age.

In any case, the degree of discontent and alienation is very high and pretty well universal in scope. Adding to the bitterness over the generally low wages and poor working conditions (And they are really poor in Texas—let me give you an example. A federal arbitrator has just ruled that four hours of compulsory overtime every single day of the week, if the employer decides, was not unreasonable.) was the wage-price freeze and the accompanying attempt to use this ploy not to grant the well-deserved apprenticeship wages that are usually granted to new employees.

In the struggles around this issue, I was able to establish myself as a trade-union militant and activist. But more importantly, it allowed us to establish the SWP as a workers' party in the eyes of the workers. Since then I've been able to work openly as a revolutionary socialist, and this is a freedom which is entirely beneficial and can't be emphasized enough.

These struggles around the wage freeze had a galvanizing effect upon the shop. The upsurge helped set the stage for even greater participation in the spring antiwar offensive, because we tied the wage freeze in very concretely with the war. Beginning with a campaign to secure endorsements for April 22, we soon had the names of all the major officers in the local, with some of them actively participating. This isn't because we have an exceptionally liberal leadership or anything like that. It's because the pressure from the rank and file is pretty hot. An antiwar committee was formally and officially established in the local and a resolution calling for endorsement and participation was passed unanimously at the Friday, April 14,

regular membership meeting. Following April 22, the antiwar committee continued to build the local actions following the mining of the coast of North Vietnam. A large contingent from local 305 led the demonstration under their own banner and displaying their own signs. As a matter of fact, it was the largest contingent in the demonstration. When the upsurge deepened, the union responded accordingly and sent another contingent to represent it at the emergency mobilization in Washington, D. C., at union expense—and this is all the way from Houston.

For all the participants it was the first time they had ever been in any kind of demonstration and it represented a qualitatively new step with respect to antiwar union work in Houston. It's one thing to get the union bureaucrats to sign something, it's another thing to get the membership to participate. It was here that the value of the antiwar committee within the union framework was proved. We were able to oppose the war as a class issue and to fight against it in a class-struggle fashion. Subsequently, the demonstrations were built as union defense actions and the union was mobilized as if for a strike. We didn't depend upon people being outraged by the war or anything like that. We presented it as an attack on workers and the necessity of fighting against it in an organized union fashion.

Since the spring antiwar offensive the antiwar committee's activities have quieted down somewhat, but the committee is still functioning and at this time is preparing to provide a speaker for the Hiroshima Day activities.

With respect to our election campaign, we have been able to get the shop president and the secretary-treasurer to endorse the Jenness-Pulley ticket and have presented the names of our state candidates to the Harris County COPE screening committee. COPE is the Committee on Political Education, the official body which decides which candidates the labor movement will endorse in elections. In addition, we have requested that the executive board of local 305 permit our gubernatorial candidate, Debby Leonard, to address the next consolidated meeting of the local. In Texas, the state COPE committee didn't endorse a state candidate for governor and they left this decision up to each individual local union. This is creating some interesting speaking possibilities for us. Altogether, five members of the local have endorsed the campaign and we hope they will work with us in some of our campaign activities.

I should add, too, that the upcoming elections have resulted in a great number of capitalist candidates addressing local union meetings. There have been eight before our membership, and so far we've been successful in confronting them and exposing them for what they are. Interestingly, instead of creating a pro-Democratic Party climate, these complications have done nothing except add to the number of dissenters asking embarrassing questions. These capitalist candidates are really arrogant. They'll appear before our local without knowing how the local feels about anything. Our local is on record against the war, and most of these candidates come before us, and because it's a labor union they have stereotyped images, they think we're hawks and they give us this real hawkish line. Then they get smashed to pieces during the question-and-answer period.

In the area of *Militant* sales, I have been able to sta-

bilize sales in my shop at 5-10 per week, with six other union members receiving *The Militant* through subscriptions. As my shop only employs about 40 union members, we consider this a pretty good percentage. Nevertheless, I continually try to increase the number of subscriptions as the best method of ensuring that our press is regularly read.

In addition to antiwar work, the campaign and *Militant* sales, I try to learn as much about the labor movement as possible. However, until about three months ago this was very difficult, mainly because I wasn't privy to all the internal machinations of the bureaucratic crust. Fortunately, though, last June I was elected as an alternate delegate to the Harris County AFL-CIO Central Labor Council. This post has proved very educational. What I have learned can be divided into three general categories for the purpose of general classification and evaluation.

First, information on the general activities of the AFL-CIO in Harris County and across the state. Secondly, information on power struggles within the framework of the bureaucratic elite and what sort of pressures cause them, especially those related to the current radicalization. Thirdly, information on our opponents, most notably what the Stalinists are up to.

We have discovered, for instance, that the Texas AFL-CIO was in open conflict with the Meany leadership. In a speech before the Harris County Labor Council, the former president actually called for the resignation of George Meany and the establishment of a mandatory retirement age of 65 for all national union posts. I would agree with that. This is really significant, because these kinds of statements in the past have resulted, in some cases, in charters being ripped up from underneath labor councils and it was kind of a daring move. In his speech, the former Harris County AFL-CIO president called for immediate withdrawal from Vietnam and condemned the Nixon wage-price freeze as "simply a wage freeze" and demanded its end. In a related move, the Stalinists, who have been hovering on the fringes of the McGovern camp, are trying to take advantage of this rift and are now making a bid for power by running three candidates for the labor council executive board.

Information like this is useful, for it enables us to analyze, to prepare, and in the long run, to project our transitional program with much better results. In addition to the three major areas of work already outlined, the Houston branch has decided to support in every way possible the big Dow Chemical strike in Freeport that was reported earlier. Consequently, it was decided that I should help within the formal union structure along the lines that the Freeport strike committee had laid down—mainly they needed donations, communications of support and solidarity, and invitations for strike representatives to speak at local meetings. After talking to the branch leadership and some other officials in the labor movement, we introduced a resolution in local 305 calling for the formation of a countywide strike support committee. The following week, the same proposal was presented to the Harris County Labor Council where, unfortunately, the bureaucrats managed to table it until the executive board had a chance to examine it more closely. It will become clear, however, that if the officials do not allow the strike committee to be formed that they

will be defaulting in the eyes of the rank and file—a position I'm sure they would want to avoid. So we want to reintroduce this resolution again next month and see what happens then.

In closing, I would like to review two of the problems most comrades in the unions face and how we avoided them. First is the trap of the mini-power caucus with respect to elected posts and antiwar work. Second, how to avoid giving the impression that you are just another union job seeker. With respect to the mini-power caucuses in the elections, we in Houston have always adhered to the idea that the only basis for our comrades running for executive positions is our transitional program. Even though the opportunity to do so occurred on two occasions, we passed them up preferring to stick to union posts which permitted us to remain in close contact with the rank and file and to project our class-struggle line. Thus, recruitment to the party is done on the basis of a thorough understanding of the transitional program and seeing it in action.

As far as the antiwar committee is concerned, it is a formal official committee whose membership is made up of the rank and file and it was founded with the explicit intention that we would not allow opportunistic bureaucrats to use it as an election springboard. Thus, we tried to maintain its broad rank-and-file membership and non-partisanship as the best guarantee against corruption.

With respect to the problem of how to avoid appearing as just another job seeker, the answer lies in implementing a transitional perspective with relationship to elections and turning down nominations to posts which subject comrades to bureaucratic discipline. There is no shortcut to building a base in the unions and the acceptance of bureaucratic posts would in the long run hinder rather than aid in the building of a rank-and-file base and recruiting workers to the party. In addition, turning down nominations at membership meetings, which are usually heavily attended, allows us to express our transitional demands concerning democracy in the unions. It indicts the bureaucrats and concretizes our position as the best leaders of the rank and file and the only ones with the revolutionary program to bring the workers to power.

CHICAGO REPORT ON THE RIGHT TO VOTE COMMITTEE IN THE UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION:

Within the United Transportation Union, the membership lacks some of the most basic elementary democratic rights, including the right to vote on their contracts. The demand for membership ratification was not our idea. Real sentiment existed for that right in the Chicago railroad yards and we constantly heard railroad workers talk about the need for membership ratification. That idea, *which they raised*, sounded pretty good to us. It's a small part of our transitional program for the labor movement, so we gave meaning and organizational form to that demand by helping to organize the Right to Vote Committee in November 1969.

The committee was organized as a single-issue committee within the union, as a subordinate body of one local, which sought to change the union's constitution so that it would require membership approval of all contracts negotiated by the union bureaucracy. It was not a caucus formation organized outside the formal appara-

tus of the UTU and was not involved in any internal power fights between different wings of the bureaucracy.

By the time of the UTU convention last year we had firmly established the committee as a viable formation in both the United States and Canada which had won the endorsement of hundreds of secondary union officials, union locals and the support of thousands of railroad workers. I was elected the delegate from my local to the convention which took place in August 1971.

A majority of the 1,800 convention delegates were in agreement with our right-to-vote proposal and about 200 of the delegates were actual members of the RTVC. The bureaucracy did everything they could to undermine our base of support at the convention, but in spite of all these bureaucratic obstacles we succeeded in getting our right-to-vote proposal on the convention floor and registered a very big and surprising vote. The vote was 848 against and 815 for the right-to-vote proposal to change the constitution. The convention was split right down the middle over this issue. The vote was lost because the ranks of right-to-vote supporters were disorganized and divided at the convention and because the bureaucracy was well organized and experienced. They had a well-oiled machine and the RTVC was not nearly as well organized.

Some key secondary officials who had supported the RTVC were personally ambitious and decided to run for various offices at the convention. They were sidetracked into electioneering and they involved a large number of right-to-vote delegates in their campaigns. They had wanted the RTVC to formally endorse their campaigns. They were politely but firmly told that the RTVC couldn't endorse anyone for any office and that we would and should continue to hammer away on the right-to-vote issue at the convention.

Another serious problem was the bureaucracy itself. They rigged and manipulated the convention in every conceivable way. Where was the workers' convention held? In Miami Beach of course, and it wasn't held at any Skid Row hotel. We met and stayed at the fabulous and internationally famous Fontainebleau Hotel. Nothing is too good for the working class, or alleged representatives of that class. The Democratic Party convention had its headquarters and hotel rooms at the Fontainebleau Hotel. If it's good enough for the capitalists, it's good enough for the workers. The delegates received \$1,900 each for attending the convention (they didn't want us to go hungry) plus 15 cents per mile travel allowance and some fringe benefits if you voted the right way on the issues. The bureaucracy spent \$9 million on the convention and had a well-organized machine which operated around the clock. They wined and dined the delegates, took them out nightclubbing, paid hotel room bills, organized free golf tournaments for the delegates with some very nice prizes for the winners, held weekend excursions to the Bahamas and Puerto Rico, set delegates up with prostitutes, and opened up some so-called hospitality rooms in hotel suites where delegates could drink up a lot of free booze. It began to look to me and others like they were trying to buy us off.

The bureaucracy was very skillfully setting an atmosphere and mood among the delegates. Many delegates had thought of the convention as a paid vacation, and a lot more developed that attitude as the convention wore on. It was a short convention—it only lasted three weeks—

the previous one in 1968 lasted six weeks. The whole thing was a softening-up operation, but most delegates held firm on the issue of membership ratification.

After the convention most of the secondary officials who had supported the right-to-vote campaign were demoralized with the outcome. Some had thought they were going to challenge and change the whole union structure overnight. Those that had their eye on winning some kind of post and lost were especially down in the dumps.

We were quite pleased with the outcome at the convention because we had succeeded in making membership ratification the biggest issue at the convention; we succeeded in getting our proposal on the floor of the convention and scored an impressive vote that scared the bureaucracy, and we had actually won the right to vote on contracts for Canadian UTU members prior to the convention.

We learned that these secondary officials can be useful but that we can't count on them to lead and organize the rank and file in a class-struggle direction. These officials were useful to the RTVC as endorsers and financial contributors, but beyond that they are not very helpful. These secondary officials want a new leadership in the union—mainly themselves—but even if they took power in the UTU, if the present ruling group just handed over the union apparatus to these dissident secondary officials, they wouldn't know what to do with it. Their program is no different from the present ruling group. They have no understanding or concept of what a class-struggle program is and if they did it would terrify many of them.

After the convention we anticipated a big offensive by the railroads against the wages, jobs and working conditions of UTU members in line with the New Economic Policy. A new national contract was signed on January 27 this year which will enable the railroads to eliminate thousands of jobs.

We believed that if that attack were actually launched—and it appeared very likely at that time—it would provoke the railroad workers into a defensive struggle and fighting mood. Anticipating a massive struggle to defend their jobs, conditions and wages, we decided to launch an ambitious propaganda campaign in the name of the RTVC around a number of transitional demands that related directly to the problems that railroad workers were going to find themselves confronted with. We decided to transform the RTVC *Progress Report* newsletter, which had been published irregularly, into an attractive printed newspaper that would popularize a four-point program for railroad labor. The first issue published in mid-March declared:

"The *Progress Report* newspaper is the voice of rank and file railroad workers and those union officers who are ready and willing to take the lead in the fight for democratic and militant unionism on the railroads. We will support the following goals within existing labor organizations that represent railroad workers:

- "1. Membership ratification of contracts.
- "2. The right to strike.
- "3. Cost of living clause.
- "4. 6-hour day at 8-hours pay."

We printed 4,000 copies of the paper and mailed sample copies to 1,400 UTU officers and members on our mailing list. We had hoped that the time was ripe to establish a mass-circulation newspaper that would serve as a pole

of attraction among radicalizing railroad workers and that the newspaper could soon convene a national conference of railroad workers who agreed with the four-point program for the purpose of formally launching a left-wing caucus based on those four points.

After a number of weeks passed it became clear that a sufficient number of railroad workers were not yet ready to launch a fight for that program within the UTU by contributing financially to the paper, writing for it, endorsing its program and circulating it in the railroad yards. While around 40 railroad workers did write to us and expressed agreement with the paper, it wasn't the kind of response we needed and had hoped for.

We again had to scratch our heads and carefully review and study the objective situation in order to determine what was happening among railroad workers and carefully assess their attitude and mood.

We looked the hard, cold facts in the eye and discovered the following things:

First, railroad workers were not having their wages frozen. On the contrary, the Pay Board had approved a 42-percent increase in pay over a 42-month period. The real wages of railroad workers were beginning to advance slightly; they were not being reduced, as we had expected.

Second, all UTU members were beginning to receive retroactive pay, either in one lump sum or paid out over an extended period of time. The back pay averaged around \$500 per worker. While railroad workers expressed agreement with our newspaper's opposition to wage controls and the demand for a cost-of-living clause in all contracts, they did not feel immediately and directly threatened by the controls, and inflation became less of an immediate and pressing concern due to the back pay they were receiving and the substantial wage increases.

Thirdly, the railroads were being very cautious and playing it cool in applying the work-rule changes that had been agreed to by the UTU bureaucrats in January. Railroad workers were not being laid off by the thousands as we had anticipated; in fact, some railroads in the major terminals are actually hiring new workers right up to this day. The threatened job cuts which could be carried out under the present contract began to seem a distant, remote and far-off threat to most railroad workers. In addition, the contract contains so-called protective conditions which are supposed to protect the earnings of any railroad workers who are adversely affected by the work-rule changes. These protective conditions remain to be tested and there can be no doubt that the railroads will try to cheat and violate those agreements.

Unless the workers feel directly and immediately threatened with being thrown out on the street to join the ranks of the unemployed, they will not respond and become involved in any campaign for a shorter work week in order to spread the work. It became clear to all of the comrades in the railroad fraction that we had to make a temporary tactical retreat from our perspective.

We knew that sooner or later—maybe in four weeks, four months, or perhaps four years—the employing class would launch an all-out effort to break the back of railroad workers and their unions and railroad workers will not idly stand by and let that happen. They will stand up and fight for their rights, for their jobs, for

their living standards. The railroads understand and fear that too, but the capitalists have no other alternative in the long run. The showdown is coming and that's what we must prepare for.

During this temporary lull in union activity, we have the opportunity to prepare and strengthen the party fraction for the great battles that lie ahead. When that attack is launched the workers will develop a combative fighting spirit and we will resume publication of the *Progress Report* newspaper. But for now we are going to concentrate our efforts on building the party fraction in the railroad industry. We must build our own forces in the union because we cannot rely on secondary officials to lead any kind of struggle to victory. We need class-conscious railroad workers to do that job. There are many young women and men in the railroad industry today who are radicalizing on one issue or another and are open to our socialist ideas.

We can't and shouldn't limit ourselves to so-called trade-union issues in our discussions with these working-class youth because they know absolutely nothing about the labor movement when it was a militant and crusading social movement in the 1930s. They see their union apparatus as part of the capitalist establishment and to simply talk to them about transforming the union movement seems like off-the-wall nonsense to most of them. They are not class conscious, although they are radical. They will become class conscious and will understand and agree with our program and perspective for the labor movement after they have become acquainted with our activity and program for the mass movements that they identify with to one degree or another. They will become working-class revolutionary politicians in our party and many of them will become leaders of the working class in the struggle for political power in this land. It will be a great day for all workers and the poor when that happens and we can prepare for it now by recruiting workers to our party by the ones and twos at this juncture.

One of our most effective tools for party building is obviously *The Militant*, which tells them the truth about class relations in this country and which analyzes, explains and builds the social protest movements that they support. We are beginning selectively to approach individual workers with *The Militant* and we have discovered that some of them are starting to buy it, read it and like it.

The election campaign is our second most important product. One of the first things we are going to do after this conference is have the Chicago branch campaign committee send out an election mailing to 500 UTU officers and members in about 70 locals in the Chicago area. The mailing will include a cover letter signed by our campaign director and some local union officials. It will also have a statement outlining our program for railroad workers signed by our Senatorial candidate Fred Halstead, and a copy of our Program for Labor election brochure.

The railroad fraction will work closely with the campaign committee in follow-up work in order to have our candidates speak before meetings of UTU locals in the Chicago terminal. We are quite confident we will be able to address at least several UTU meetings and this will be the first time revolutionary socialist candidates have addressed meetings of railroad workers since the days of Eugene Debs.

I and all the other comrades in the railroad fraction are optimistic about the future and look forward to reporting a real increase in the size and activity of the railroad fraction at the next party convention.

WOMEN IN UNIONS AND SOME PROBLEMS IN THE PRINTING TRADES:

Many of the general points that the previous speaker made about the railroad union are equally applicable to the typographical union, of which I am a member, but I don't want to discuss at this time the situation in the typographical union or give a report or analysis of the convention which was just held last week. I can do that in *The Militant*. What I'd like to talk about here, briefly, are two developments in the Cleveland labor movement that I think are significant, particularly for what they show about the relationship between the trade union movement and the women's liberation movement.

The first is the Cleveland Council of Union Women. This is a new organization that held its first meeting on July 9 at the Meat Cutters' union building. There were twelve women from eight local AFL-CIO unions present. They included stewards, officers, staff or committee members, and potential officers from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Amalgamated Meat Cutters, the Communication Workers, the International Ladies Garment Workers, the Newspaper Guild, the Teachers Union, and the Typographical Union. Included among them were one woman who is a member of the International Executive Board of her union, one regional educational director and an organizer. After hearing reports on the status of women in each union, suggestions were exchanged for coping with common problems and uniting women and achieving a complete partnership "with our union brothers in order to better serve the interests of all working people." The main purpose, actually, of the group that got together was to help each other within the local labor movement, and to work together in relating the women's movement to the trade union movement, to work together for the common needs of both.

We've had two meetings since then and are increasing participation to include a representative of the women's rights committee of the UAW, a representative from the United Office and Professional Workers Union and a woman from a large independent union.

The structure of this organization is very simple: any woman who is a member of a union and interested can join. It's not a delegated body. It has no formal relationship to the trade-union movement.

The Council elected temporary officers. The president is Auda Romine of the Meat Cutters Union. The vice-president is Eileen Berlow, from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. The secretary-treasurer is Mary Swindell of the Cleveland Newspaper Guild.

The actions that the group took following reports on the status of women in each union included duplicating and circulating copies of material that the women's rights committees that were already functioning had found useful. To begin with, it was material that the women's rights committee of the Cleveland Newspaper Guild had prepared: a questionnaire which was submitted to all of the women who work at the Cleveland Press; and then

a report based on it, which they called the Manifesto, summarizing the results of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to several hundred women and was answered by 70-80 percent of them. There were also copies of the resolution supporting ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment, which was passed at the national convention of the Guild last month in Puerto Rico.

There was considerable interest in this material since other union women could adapt the questionnaire as a useful technique for reaching women in their own unions and raising their consciousness on women's issues, and for getting a representative expression of opinion. You heard in the Cleveland AFSCME report the fact that the AFSCME women's rights committee has already adapted it to their needs by addressing a similar questionnaire, in their case including, in addition to their specific job-oriented problems, questions on abortion, which were not included in the first one.

A resolution on support for the Equal Rights Amendment was distributed as an example of the type of resolution we can adapt to our particular situations. The group decided that educating union members on the need for ratification of the ERA was a top priority for them. Their plans are to introduce resolutions into the unions that have not already adopted them, and to introduce in the Cleveland Federation of Labor a resolution for which we will have developed support among the women delegates and also in some of our local unions, calling for ratification of the ERA in Ohio—one of the states where it will be contested.

Other activities that the group is involved in are hearing grievances of all kinds of discrimination in unions. People refer such grievances to this group already and we have speakers from the committee who are speaking at other conferences and rallies.

An important thing about this organization of union women is how it originated and its potential for growth and action within the labor movement. It originated in a meeting of representatives of the Guild women's rights committee and the Cleveland chapter of NOW union committee, of which I'm chairwoman. That meeting, in turn, was the logical outgrowth of the development of the women's liberation movement in Cleveland since the August 26, 1970, mass demonstrations. Five of the women who met to organize the Cleveland Council of Union Women were NOW members, three were socialists.

The Council would not be in existence within the trade-union movement today without the work that we've done in the women's movement in the past two years.

The other development in the Cleveland labor move-

ment that I want to speak about is the launching of a campaign to organize the unorganized by the 104-year-old Cleveland Typographical Union.

The 1300-member local, like ITU locals around the country, faces a situation in which the unorganized workers in the printing trades are more numerous than the organized—a very bad relationship of forces for bargaining. Pension rolls are increasing with no compensating increase of new members. In addition, the ITU has become more of a fraternal insurance organization than a labor organization. The convention last week reduced the strike fund and increased the pensions, and that's all I'm going to say at this point about the convention.

Under the leadership of a new, young president, the local union launched an organizing drive and advertised in the *Typo News* for organizers to submit resumes. I submitted one and was hired as of June 5 by the president with the approval of the executive board. My only instructions are to get results. They knew my political views, my union record and experience. I have a free hand, mainly because they don't know anything else to tell me. None of them have had any experience with organizing and don't know exactly what to do. I have a free hand to ignore all of the conservative and time-encrusted methods of the business unionism in the labor movement for the past 30 years.

In the two months of organizing in the three northeast Ohio counties, we now have a majority in three daily newspapers and contacts in three others, as well as in several job shops.

One of the most important aspects of the organizing drive is that a majority of the composing-room workers in the new cold type print shops are women, young women, grossly underpaid, and ready for unionism. As young working women—some of them just out of high school and some of them only out of high school a few years—they are quite independent. They are trying to support themselves and cut their ties from their families and they can relate to a woman organizer who understands their needs and concerns in today's world; they are turned off when a patronizing male unionist tries to talk to them about unionism. Our pragmatic union president is now considering putting on another woman organizer. Three years ago that was inconceivable in an old, completely male-dominated (almost completely male membership) craft union of the ITU type. It was inconceivable except for socialists, who understood the potential of the women's movement and the impact that it was bound to have on the labor movement.

PART III

SUMMARY:

We have at this point heard from six reporters and there are eight more reports to be given here. In all there will be fourteen, five by women comrades in unions.

Since I have some advance information about what is going to be reported, I can confidently state now that *all* reports from every section of the country confirm what we have believed to be the case for the past several months: namely, that there is a growing ferment in the working class and in the ranks of the union movement.

This is a welcome change for us, one that we *must* now plan to take full advantage of.

Last November 10 Comrade Sheppard and I sent a letter to all branch organizers and National Committee members urging sustained and consistent sales of *The Militant* at plant gates.

We suggested use of the national and local election campaigns to reach workers.

We even dared to hope for some consistent work in unions, wherever we have members, to promote our programmatic proposals against the wage freeze and against the war, and to propagandize for a Congress of Labor and for the idea of a labor party.

Our hopes were well founded, and the suggestions we made were adopted by some branches.

All the reports here in these panel sessions testify to the fact that in *several* branches we have made headway in selling *Militant* subscriptions to workers, and we have even succeeded in recruiting directly from the job in some instances.

In addition we have acquired valuable new experience, since we met last year, in promoting our antiwar campaign in the union movement, and organizing other class-struggle actions within the union structure.

The reports revealed some surprising incidents, indicative of what we can expect in the future.

A steelworker sought us out for advice and collaboration in the affairs of his local union (similar incidents have occurred before, but not recently).

Striking workers in Texas have welcomed the very real political support offered by our candidates there, who are on the state ballot and who have now made the Dow Chemical strike one of their campaign issues.

I can report further that a young steelworker from Pittsburgh, with friends of his, made a special trip to our educational conference here this week to get information about the trade-union policy of the Socialist Workers Party and to buy some of our literature on the history of the trade-union movement.

These are all signs of the attractive power of our party, our election campaign, our political ideas, and of our tradition as principled fighters in the union movement.

Economic and social conditions are now developing that will produce young militants and radicalize tens of thousands of young workers.

The employing class has mounted a murderous speed-up drive in the industries of this country.

They have on their side the wage control machinery

of government that is steadily driving down the standard of living.

They are reducing the size of the work force in relation to the thousands of new workers entering the labor market, increasing the numbers of unemployed.

There is a very carefully planned attack under way by the employing class upon the unions to destroy many of the privileges of the organized sector of the working class.

In the face of this new turn in the class struggle, the old trade-union bureaucracy, nurtured in the period of more peaceful labor-management relations, is bewildered, incapable of understanding any of the new problems—especially the lethal combination of unemployment and inflation.

We are right now in a rather favorable position.

We have already acquired a basic party cadre, and we have gained some practical experience in the antiwar movement and the women's liberation movement.

We have a rich tradition of struggle in the union movement to draw upon for our future work, and we have a few hundred comrades already in unions. Some have demonstrated that they understand our trade-union policy and know how to apply our politics in the union movement.

We have another advantage too—we still have some time.

We are not yet marching into the great class battles that will surely be waged in this country.

There are some skirmishes ahead at this juncture. We want to be in these skirmishes because they will provide the necessary training ground for us.

We are fortunate also in that we have a strata of party comrades who have now left the campuses and are seeking employment.

They are finding jobs where thousands of other young people, just like themselves, are working . . . in shops, railroad yards, hospitals, welfare centers, factories, schools, warehouses, telephone exchanges, construction sites, wherever respectable jobs are available.

These are all centers of political activity.

Not long ago many comrades had the idea that they would have to find some kind of job in order to live, so that they could spend time at the party headquarters or at the antiwar center or out in the neighborhoods, doing political work.

This no longer applies.

Some important changes have taken place that invalidate this notion.

It is now possible for comrades to do their most important political work right on the job.

This is another great advantage for us. We can carry out our political assignments eight hours a day, five days a week. And one of the satisfying parts about it is that we can get paid for it by the boss.

All we have to do now is learn how most effectively to do this.

The reports already given have provided some good examples.

Those that follow will explain further how this can be done under all varieties of circumstances.

REPORT BY OAKLAND-BERKELEY TRADE UNION DIRECTOR ON TEACHERS' PROBLEMS:

Comrades, this year we began a more regular correspondence between the national office and teacher comrades across the country. We have teacher comrades in Detroit, Chicago, New York, various cities in California, Atlanta, Portland, Washington, D. C., and Minneapolis, as well as a number of other places across the country. We found that the situation they face in their unions (most are in the American Federation of Teachers, AFT) is quite different than it has been in the past. We also found there is little uniformity in the kind of union situations comrades find themselves in. For example, in the past in places like New York City, where there are 70,000 teachers in the largest trade-union local in the world (local 2, American Federation of Teachers) some four years ago we supported an opposition caucus against the Shanker leadership. This included a slate of 78 people on a program which called for independent political action, a break from the Democrats and Republicans, immediate withdrawal from Vietnam and the right of Black and Puerto Rican communities to control their schools, as well as a series of other important issues including union democracy and proportional representation. Thus in New York we helped organize a large multi-issue caucus, where we had to secure several thousand signatures in order to place candidates on the union ballot. This caucus never received more than 15 percent of the vote.

In other locals we've experienced the opposite extreme. Comrades have run for office and have been elected with unanimous votes in very small locals. Comrades have also run as part of single-issue caucuses in some locals. In others, we have opposed participating in caucuses altogether. What has characterized our work in the AFT more than anything else is its great variety and the flexibility with which the comrades have made decisions. In all our correspondence—and it has been significant—one thing has stood out: there are no rules, regulations or formulas for work in the trade-union movement which have universal application.

However, in every instance our aim has been to bring our ideas most effectively to the attention of the rank and file, and to move them in action around demands which are part of our program and the part of the program for developing a revolutionary movement in the working class. In all cases we have avoided—like the plague—participating in sectarian caucuses or formations where a number of ultralefts ramble off their different variations of the transitional program and demand that it be adopted immediately. We have equally avoided the frequent power caucuses where program is secondary to winning.

Directly following this Oberlin conference, several of our comrades are going to the AFT national convention as full delegates. They were elected by locals across the country. In addition, we have other teacher comrades who are going as observers. Our teacher fraction at this convention (the 56th annual convention of the AFT) will total enough comrades to effectively participate in the important work of the convention. We helped form, for the first time in the AFT, a caucus called the AFT Vietnam Caucus. In order to build that caucus, we published 2000

copies of a four-page tabloid newspaper for the convention. It includes articles on the war in Vietnam as it relates to every aspect of the problems confronting teachers. We have articles on why war causes inflation, how to fight inflation, NPAC, the war and the wage freeze, the war and the pay board, the war and unemployment, and so on down the line.

In addition, we've prepared ten leaflets this caucus will distribute which will further link the issues of the war to the problems confronting teachers on the job.

Our work will center around a resolution introduced by our comrades in the Minneapolis local to the Minnesota State Federation Convention. After passing this convention, it became known as the Minnesota Resolution on Southeast Asia and will be debated at the national convention as submitted by the Minnesota State Federation. It links the war to the wage freeze, inflation and profits. It also calls for support for mass action, including NPAC's fall demonstrations. It's an excellent resolution. Should the AFT adopt it this week, it will be the first international union in this country where the rank and file, at a convention, has supported mass action in the form of an NPAC demonstration, or, for that matter, any mass demonstration.

After the Minnesota Resolution was passed by the State Federation, we sent copies to AFT locals and state federations around the country. In California, the State Federation of Teachers, with its 25,000 members, endorsed the Minnesota Resolution in its own antiwar resolution. The Michigan State Federation later did the same. There are now three state federations of the AFT supporting the Minnesota Resolution. The D. C. local has also endorsed the Minnesota Resolution in a separate resolution. Three of these resolutions are now printed in the AFT Convention Booklet containing all official convention resolutions, and it will be discussed as part of the national convention proceedings.

The caucus we have helped form will be a nonpartisan caucus. That is, it will stay off the other two caucuses' slates in the union: one the Shankerite caucus and the other a rapidly disintegrating, competing power caucus composed of right-wing and liberal bureaucrats and the IS and the CP, a classic result of sectarian and opportunist politics. The likely presidential candidate of this latter group, the United Action Caucus (UAC)—the caucus the IS and the CP are participating in—is a hawk on the question of the war in Vietnam, opposes a merged national teachers' organization, has been in the AFT nationally, a bureaucrat with the distinction of being a more vicious racist (if this is possible) than the misleader of the United Federation of Teachers, Albert Shanker. This individual, the president of the Philadelphia local, John Ryan, for years fought for the maintenance of the anticommunist clause in the AFT constitution. Even the IS is embarrassed by the possibility he will become the UAC presidential candidate. When I say he's a right winger, I'm not exaggerating.

To return for a moment to the AFT Vietnam Caucus: we have made arrangements for a booth with a huge banner, "Support the Minnesota Resolution—Join the AFT Vietnam Caucus," printed membership cards, reserved a large room for every night of the convention for caucus meetings, and have several hundred endorser sheets to secure support for the resolution before it comes to the

floor. There will be more than 1500, possibly 2000, delegates to that convention from all over the U.S., and we'll have a chance to talk to a large number of them. In addition, the party has sought space for an intervention with *The Militant* and our campaign. The latest issue of *The Militant* has a large article addressed to the delegates of the AFT convention, providing a detailed explanation of our ideas for teachers. We should have help from party comrades in the Minnesota branch in relation to our presidential campaign.

The convention will also take up the ERA, and it is likely that our comrades will play a role in debating the AFT's position on this issue. As you may recall, last year the AFT convention reversed its position in support of the ERA and the AFT now stands opposed to it. It has a sectarian position. Or, I should say, it has the official position of the AFL-CIO, making support to the ERA contingent upon the extension of various state protective laws to men.

George McGovern will be speaking at the AFT convention, and we might have the opportunity to relate to this question as well.

We have done considerable work in California on the war in Vietnam. I touched on some of this last year at the convention. For the most part, antiwar work in the California Federation of Teachers, which has 25,000 teachers and 185 locals, has become regular and quite effective. The CFT, for example, has contributed more than \$2500 to the National Peace Action Coalition over the last two years. The officers of most every single local have signed statements, articles, newspaper ads, or otherwise endorsed NPAC demonstrations. The president of the State Federation, Raoul Teilhet, has spoken at every major NPAC demonstration. To build the Los Angeles National Antiwar Conference, he sent out three CFT mailings to every local in the state, in addition to putting a front-page article in the *California Teacher*, the monthly state publication of the CFT.

AFT locals have raised the issue of support to NPAC demonstrations and mass opposition to the war in some ten central labor councils in California. The basic AFL-CIO structure in California is the 38 labor councils located in each of the California counties. In seven of those councils, resolutions have been adopted in opposition to the war. In six of the seven, resolutions have been passed supporting NPAC demonstrations in particular. These endorsements are usually followed by large articles in the county labor council press. There have also been articles in the San Francisco Building and Construction Trades press on NPAC's demonstrations which list the labor endorsers, the rally sight, and other pertinent information.

Through the NPAC Labor Support Committee in Northern California, organized some two years ago for the April 24 demonstration, speakers have gone to some 60 unions in the Bay Area to discuss the war in Vietnam. In most, resolutions have been passed in support of mass demonstrations. The CFT contributed some \$800 toward placing a huge ad in the *San Francisco Examiner* and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. This advertisement, opposing the war and in support of the November 6 NPAC demonstration, was the largest labor antiwar ad put in the Bay Area press in terms to endorsers. It was signed by 767 trade unions from 144 different locals.

Several months ago, following McGovern's winning of the Democratic primary, he addressed the state convention of the California Federation of Teachers. We participated in writing and introducing a resolution calling for the CFT to encourage in the labor movement the formation of a labor party based on the trade unions. The resolution was carefully linked to the day-to-day problems teachers face with unemployment, the wage freeze, staff cutbacks and other attacks on teachers and public education. It was received coolly, but there was no hissing or booing because it was not directly counterposed to a McGovern endorsement. It received some 35 percent of the vote, which might be considered rather high. A half day later, however, 99 percent of the delegates at the convention voted to endorse McGovern. There was practically no opposition. On the one hand, a growing number of teachers understand why the labor movement must *begin* to rely on its own strength. On the other, they do not see this as an *immediate* or realistic perspective to counterpose to McGovern or the Democrats. We introduced and worded the labor party resolution carefully and in such a way as to avoid giving the impression we were calling for the formation of a labor party *now*. It's absurd, first, to even think that a 25,000-member state organization, the California Federation of Teachers, lacking even a collective bargaining contract anywhere in the state—a union which is really just beginning—is going to constitute a labor party, or is going to be the body that is going to call for the formation of a labor party. But it *is* realistic to raise in a propagandistic way the necessity of the teachers' union movement in that direction, going to other unions to discuss the need for a labor party in a propagandistic way. We weren't able to pass the resolution. We were able to educate a layer of independent people on what a labor party would mean for teachers and the labor movement. Perhaps this accounts for the vote of 35 percent supporting the resolution. At that same convention, we sold 56 issues of the McGovern Truth Kit, only because that was all we had. If we had more, we could have sold more.

The AFT has 185 locals in California. They're very small, usually ranging from 50 to 800 teachers. Most are less than 100. Almost all the elected leadership, except in the very large centers in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and the state offices, are volunteers. They are not paid for working for the union. They have nothing but the best interests of the teachers in mind as they see them. There's no bureaucratic group, for the most part, at the rank-and-file level.

The State Council of the CFT, the quarterly assembly of the Federation, consists of representatives from all 185 locals. At a meeting some six months ago, we introduced a motion to add Linda Jenness to the list of speakers for the coming state convention. McGovern and Humphrey had already been proposed and passed. We debated the motion, and there were three people who spoke for it. A vote was taken and we won on the count of hands by ninety percent. But we still lost the vote when one of the members of the larger delegations insisted on a roll call. The proportional weight of the large locals with significantly more votes than the smaller ones, was then used against the motion. But it was still a worthwhile effort for it showed that an important number of teachers were at least willing to hear the views of the Socialist Workers Party. Some 50 teachers across the state of Cali-

fornia have subscriptions to *The Militant* and there'll be many more subscriptions sold this coming year.

At the state convention of the teachers' union a year ago, we made a decision to support a candidate for one of the twelve vice-presidential positions of the state federation. Jeff Mackler ran on a program calling for the formation of a labor party, support to the antiwar movement, and several aspects of our program on inflation, unemployment and the women's liberation movement. It appeared that he would win that election. He had previously been elected by a state convention to be the CFT representative to the National Peace Action Coalition. The union had paid his way to the NPAC national convention in New York and paid part of his way to the St. Louis Labor for Peace Conference. Through work in the antiwar movement and through building a "March for Education" the CFT organized on the state capital, he met a large number of activists and militants. When the leading national bureaucrat of the AFT, namely Albert Shanker, heard that Mackler was a candidate, he gave specific instructions to his cronies in California that this candidate was not to be elected at any cost. This was a direct result of the 1968 New York teachers' strike.

In order to prevent Mackler's election and to otherwise control the convention, the bureaucrats in the state arranged prior to the convention for the largest units to vote by the unit rule. That is, they mandated that all delegates coming to the convention from San Francisco, Los Angeles, and a few other large groups, support the slate of the leadership if a majority of the membership who elected them voted for that slate. They stacked various membership meetings, imposed unit rule and came to the convention with close to a mechanical majority. This caused a furor at the convention. But to the horror of the leadership, one of the largest units carrying 100 votes, voted to break the unit rule and cast all its votes for Mackler's candidacy. After a one-hour interview with this group where he described our ideas on independent political action and other aspects of our program, these mavericks felt the leadership of the CFT should include representatives of these ideas.

When Shanker heard about this decision, he told his stooges to inform this group that if they cast their 100 votes for Mackler, they would lose their \$60,000-a-year subsidy from national AFT. The San Francisco local was told the same. Mackler was not elected a vice-president. He lost that election. But as a result, there was so much bitterness in relation to the use of the unit rule, that the following year several delegates put on the convention floor a motion to amend the constitution of the CFT to prohibit the use of the unit rule anywhere in the California Federation of Teachers. We supported that, spoke for it and, in fact, made a key contribution to the fight. When the final vote came, with 600 delegates voting after a bitter battle, with the top officialdom of the CFT standing and speaking for the continued use of the unit rule, the motion won by better than two-to-one. The unit rule was abolished.

We were originally a little hesitant to work on this question because it's very difficult to discuss the issue of union democracy in the abstract. When you deal with the question of dictatorial policies of the leadership of a union, it must be concretized. The rank and file must understand and care how it affects them directly. In the absence of clarity resulting from experience, the arguments over unit

rule might have seemed quite academic to many teachers.

The August 15, 1971, imposition of the Nixon wage freeze came right at the time of the Longshore strike. There was considerable discussion among Longshoremen and among whole sections of the trade-union movement about the wage freeze, government attacks, government intervention, and other forms of strike breaking. We introduced into the California Federation of Teachers State Council a motion that the CFT initiate with other interested unions a statewide conference of labor to develop a program of united action against the freeze, and further, that the CFT form a special committee of interested CFT leaders to immediately begin work on the project. The committee was to be placed under the direction of the statewide president.

We discussed and debated this motion. Since it caught the leadership somewhat flat-footed, it passed unanimously. We felt it would be somewhat presumptuous for the California teachers' union, as weak as it is, to call for the formation of a nationwide congress of labor. That would have been an empty call, in our opinion, at that time. Also, our formulation allowed us to actually do something rather than simply make the record. Whether or not future developments enable the teachers' union—or more precisely, an alliance of the teachers' union and other unions—to call for such a conference is an open question. But as before, if we were to make real the necessity of united action of the labor movement to defend itself from government attacks, from government strike breaking, from compulsive arbitration, from the wage freeze and other attacks on the labor movement including the war, then we had to put it in terms that the California teachers could understand.

Six weeks went by before we got any action on the resolution. A letter from the state president addressed to Hayward local president Lew Hedgecock, finally arrived. Hedgecock was appointed the chairperson of CFT Committee on the Conference of Labor and was to begin work to write the call, set the date, and organize the program for a statewide conference of labor. Teilhet was maneuvering to kill the conference by insisting that we set a date for it. Since it was beyond his comprehension that such a conference could be made real—and he was right—he reasoned that if the CFT set the date and issued a call for a statewide conference of labor, no one would come. It would have been a bad joke. Avoiding this trap, we explained to him that we weren't interested in calling the statewide conference of labor now. We *were* interested in discussing this question further and initiating with other unions such a conference. To that end, we were going to send letters to all other unions in the state of California, all the labor councils, etc., and ask all the 185 locals of the CFT to begin the work of propagandizing for the necessity of such a conference. And to that end, we appointed a ten-member committee of the CFT which was going to begin work. We wrote the two letters that were to go to all the AFL-CIO bodies, independent unions and AFT locals across the state. At that point, Teilhet became quite flabbergasted. He realized that we were seriously interested in the project. We began some work on the statewide conference, but the press of other activities forced us to slow it down, although there's plenty of evidence that we have room for effective propaganda on this question in the labor movement.

Let me conclude by saying that in all our work, in every single aspect of our work, we make a special effort to have every demand we raise relate to the real problems teachers face. We are not interested in raising slogans for the record. We are not interested in spitting out the transitional program in a way that is incomprehensible to the rank and file. We have raised the question of shortening the working day, of unemployment with full compensation, of escalator clauses in contracts, and a whole host of other issues in our transitional program. We've done it in a way that the rank and file can best understand, that they can move on and that has meaning for their day-to-day struggle. And we're going to continue doing that.

Finally, I'm going to say this, and I think it will be attested to by every comrade doing work in the trade-union movement. That is, whatever we do, whatever battle we engage in in the trade-union movement, whether it be in our local or in a state federation or at a national convention, the one lesson that is brought home to us after every single phase of our work is the necessity of recruiting another revolutionary socialist to our party. The fact that we recruit one person to the party, to our program, is probably the most important aspect of our work. We don't want to be involved in mass work to the exclusion of the most necessary aspect of our work, and that is building the revolutionary party. When we double our numbers, we do more than double the influence we have in the vanguard and in the mass movements as a whole. I would stress this for all comrades. I would also stress that all of the work we do in the trade-union movement, from the local level to correspondence and so on, should be done in the closest collaboration with the leadership of the branch. We don't separate our trade-union work from everything else. Every decision—I don't mean every small tactical decision, but every form of activity, the day-to-day work—should be discussed with the branch leadership and, where appropriate, with the national leadership.

SOME RADICAL NEW DEMANDS BY CHICAGO NEWSPAPER WORKERS AND HOW TO SELL MILITANTS ON THE JOB:

I'd like to report on a few of the developments that have occurred in the Newspaper Guild, which is an international union composed basically of editorial staff members of newspapers in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. In the past year, five demands were brought forth by the Chicago local of the Guild, which represents the *Chicago Sun Times* and the *Chicago Daily News*. Three of these demands are termed "voice-in-the-product" demands. They called first for one-third voting representation on all editorial boards and the right to publish dissenting views on the editorial pages of the paper. The second demand is veto power over the appointment of department heads by the Guild employees in that particular department. And the third was voting representation on the weekly news conferences which would be held to set editorial and news policy for the general day-to-day news coverage. As I said, these demands are termed voice-in-the-product demands.

There were two additional demands which were proposed by the Guild rank and file. The first of these was to have first option to buy the newspaper enterprise should it be

put up for sale. The second was that should the Guild not purchase that newspaper, the Guild would have veto power over the perspective buyer. These last two demands stem from a tendency on the part of owners of newspapers in this country recently to sell their enterprises very rapidly. I think in the past month there have been four or five major newspapers across the country which have folded. This is an attempt by workers in various areas of the country, especially in Chicago which is under this threat, to protect their jobs and to keep the plants from closing, which would throw the vast majority of them out of work.

The Chicago local was notified by the international leadership that these additional demands needed the approval of the international executive committee. So the Chicago local sent a representative to Washington to argue for these demands. The exec, after some resistance, approved the three initial demands, the voice-in-the-product demands, and after it became obvious that they were not going to approve the option-to-buy demands, the Chicago representative withdrew them from the table.

All during this period, it was quite obvious that there was going to be some resistance from the national leadership to the "voice" demands. First was the problem of just having them approved, and later, when an article appeared in *The Militant* around these demands, the president of the international wrote a very angry letter to *The Militant* saying that we completely misrepresented the issue. When the initial article appeared in *The Militant*, I came to the shop prepared to put it up on the bulletin board. By the time I got there, somebody else had put it up on every Guild bulletin board in the shop.

The three voice demands received heavy support from around the country. A lot of programs, especially from Baltimore, New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles, supported these demands. These demands basically stem from a certain dissatisfaction, especially from the reporters. I would say one-third of the staff from the *Chicago Daily News* and the *Sun Times* are young college graduates, many of whom have been active in the antiwar movement, have been through the radicalization. There is a proportion of women who are active in the women's liberation movement and very interested in those issues. There was a good deal of resistance to these demands from the conservative layer of older reporters, who in the end were interested mainly in economic issues, pension and wages, and finally, before it was all over, were able to control the negotiations committee and the voice demands were dropped. But the support that these three voice demands gained nationwide was sufficient so that at the national convention of the Newspaper Guild, held in Puerto Rico a month and a half ago, all three of these demands were overwhelmingly approved to be included in the nationwide bargaining proposals. In other words, these three demands would go on the table every time the Newspaper Guild is negotiating a contract.

Earlier this year in Chicago I was appointed to the Guild negotiations committee. The functions I served on that committee were: (1) to agitate and argue in an attempt to prevent the dropping of these voice demands in addition to dropping several other demands having to do with the women's movement; (2) pressing the committee to do some substantial education work around a lot of the demands which obviously were not going to be won at this particular session, but they could have been of

considerably more educational value than the committee was willing to put out.

I operated openly as a socialist and in a one-year period sold about 15 subscriptions to *The Militant* and was able to sell, on a weekly basis, from five to ten single copies. In one of those weeks right after the wage freeze was declared last August, I sold a copy of *The Militant* to our city desk editor. The next day I opened up a copy of the *Chicago Daily News* and there was an article saying, "Pulley Attacks Nixon's Wage Freeze." It was a complete reprint from *The Militant*. Certain issues sold very well: issues around Attica, the bombing of North Vietnam and the wage freeze, which was putting a lot of pressure on newspaper workers. Also there were other employees in the plant who were willing to sell copies of *The Militant* on shifts where I couldn't work. Also during this period, I was able to obtain 13 endorsers to the campaign and distributed a good deal of literature, including the McGovern Truth Kits. The contacts that I made in the *Sun Times* and the *Daily News* have proven valuable for doing press work when we are trying to line up interviews for our candidates. Also, the union passed a resolution endorsing April 22 and encouraging its members to participate.

One other thing that I wanted to mention besides simply selling *The Militant* on the job: it's very important that we write for *The Militant* what we are doing on the job, what's going on inside of our unions. When an article appeared in *The Militant* describing what was going on, it was very well received by the staff. One of the reasons is that the national Guild paper, when the voice demands were finally approved and were on the table, devoted a whole three-inch column to those demands. *The Militant* devoted almost a half-page article analyzing the demands, describing their importance. The fact that an article in *The Militant* would bring a response from the president of the international—which we published along with our answer—helped to define the issues in terms of the rank and file. Also, I think that the issue of voice, of the right of the reporters to have some say over what goes into the newspaper, is going to be a growing issue nationwide. We're going to see a lot more activity on the part of reporters in the antiwar movement, and especially in the women's liberation movement and the Black liberation movement.

HOSPITAL WORKERS UNION, LOCAL 1199, NEW YORK:

I'd like to say at the outset that, unlike many of the other comrades who have spoken here, my work in the union hasn't been specifically assigned by the branch. In other words, I sort of became a delegate in my union out of a very urgent necessity, which was to keep my job, because I had been very open about my political views, both as a feminist and as an antiwar activist. I began to be red-baited and, fortunately, there was an election up and I was able to run, win support and be elected.

Over the past year, since I have been a delegate, there have been increasing opportunities for political discussion. Unfortunately, as I said, it hasn't been an area of work specifically assigned. I think perhaps that may change. For example, we have brought to the conference here another 1199 member who works with me and who we

hope will join the party after this conference.

I will try to give you an idea of what 1199 is as a union. It's a little bit different than most unions. It's an unusual union for today, both in terms of its ability to win significant contracts for its membership and in the fact that it takes positions on various topical issues such as the Vietnam war and Angela Davis. Not only does it take positions, but it works in support of them.

A brief history of 1199 will give you an idea of what the possibilities are in this union. The union itself is relatively young, about 15 years old. Although it has locals in both Philadelphia and Baltimore and led a hospital strike in Charleston, South Carolina, when it won union recognition there, its largest concentration of membership is in New York City with about 33,000 members in 44 voluntary hospitals. The membership is 70-80 percent Black and Puerto Rican and it's also about 70-80 percent female. Many of the Puerto Rican workers do not speak English. In contrast, to the membership, the leadership of the union is mostly white, male and over 40. The majority of delegates in the union are female, Black or Puerto Rican, and young.

Several categories of workers are organized by 1199. These include everyone from service and maintenance workers to technicians, clerical and social workers, drug-store workers, and, as in the case of Columbia University, library workers. At Columbia University, since the Upper West Side local was very active there, our comrades on campus have been able to work with 1199 members in organizing antiwar actions such as April 22 this year and the demonstrations and campus activities that followed.

Before 1199 came into the hospital where I work in 1963, some workers were earning as low as \$28 per week and were forced on welfare. The union came in after a 39-day strike by maintenance and service workers, and today has recognition in most categories of hospital workers, including Licensed Practical nurses, operating-room technicians, and so on. The education and the type of background that is represented by the union is very wide and it's very diverse.

The minimum salary today, because of the union's work, among the least skilled workers has risen to \$130, and that is without the new contract which was just supposedly won, but remains to be approved by the Pay Board. The salary is better than some city employees earn, with the average hospital worker taking home about \$108-116 a week.

As I mentioned earlier, 1199 was one of the first unions to take a position on the war, and on April 24, 1971, had a contingent of over 4000 members at the demonstration in Washington and, again, at the demonstration on April 22 and May 30 of this year, sizable contingents were present. It has also organized fund-raising events for Angela Davis defense and has contributed several thousand dollars to that. In October 1971, 1199 organized a demonstration of 5000 of its own members in opposition to the wage freeze and held a demonstration at the Federal Plaza in New York. Its most overwhelming show of strength, however, came this June before contract expiration when 20,000 hospital workers walked off the job in a demonstration to show the bosses that we meant business on July 1 and that they better get themselves back to the bargaining table after they refused to negotiate with

us, giving our members an offer of \$6.00 over three years and saying that they couldn't give any more because of the Pay Board.

I won't go into details on those negotiations, since several articles are available in *The Militant* which anyone who wants to know the details can read. I just want to add that what impressed me about the 1199 rally in June of the 20,000 workers was the absence of bourgeois politicians. The union always has a few around for every occasion, but they were notably absent from this demonstration. The reason this was so impressive is that about a week before that demonstration, the union delegations had voted to support McGovern as a presidential candidate.

We were able to have an SWP campaign intervention at this rally. Even though it was very limited because we were involved in a lot of other activities, we found a very good response to the campaign literature that we distributed.

The situation right now in the union is favorable and the opportunities open for us are good. In the recent mobilization, before the union contract expiration, a lot of delegates, especially young delegates who were elected in the local elections, were thrown into a high level of activity. The threat of a total of about 44,000 workers walking off the job in the New York hospitals was a very serious thing and there were a lot of different activities organized by the union. At every hospital, there were meetings of delegates, sometimes several in a week. In many departments, delegates organized meetings of their membership in order to get support for the planned job action. The problem in the hospitals when you're organizing people to walk off is that right away management says, "No. You can't walk off because if you walk off the job, you're murdering innocent patients." That is a very hard question to deal with, especially where you have a variety of people. While service workers are mostly Black and Puerto Rican, my job has an odd combination of mostly Hungarians, Czechs, Rumanians, Gusanos and some Blacks and Puerto Ricans. It's very hard to talk to these people and try to convince them why they should walk off the job for a contract. However, in my department we were successful in having a meeting after work hours, at 5:00, when most people go home. This was unusual, because most people don't even go to meetings that are held on hospital time. But we had a meeting at which almost 100 percent of the department showed up and voted to walk off the job at the scheduled time.

Around the contract negotiations and the discussions of it, people were raising again and again the question of the Pay Board. Management was refusing to go above its \$6 over three years, using the Pay Board as an excuse. When the contract was finally settled, many of the delegates who had been very involved in activity for weeks preceding the contract expiration were rather disgusted with the union and rather disgusted with the so-called settlement. As a matter of fact, they didn't buy the union's excuse that the Pay Board would refuse anything higher. Rather, the delegates themselves raised the question that the Pay Board is not going to die at the end of this year unless we kill it. There was sentiment among the delegates, who are the most politically conscious of the workers, to do something about that. In addition, the more recent issue that has come up is the support of McGovern, that has disenchanted many of the delegates with the union leader-

ship. In our last meeting in August, the union announced that we were going to go all out in support of George McGovern and this was going to be our most important activity for the next three months, even including contract struggles and other struggles. Many delegates were totally disgusted with that.

I found that being a delegate gives me an opportunity to sell our press to different workers in 1199, and to raise some fundamental issues about whether support of McGovern really is in the interest of working people. I've been able to give out campaign literature and have follow-up discussions with other workers; in addition to which, I think that, despite my limited time there, I have been able to show that there's more to it than being a good delegate. There's a political reason for my ability to raise certain procedural questions or help on certain grievances. A number of delegates have come up to me and asked me where did I learn to speak, and how did I learn all these things, and how did I know beforehand that the union bureaucrats were going to do such-and-such. As a result of that, I've been able to make a number of close contacts.

As other comrades have said, we should continue to sell our press, even if there's just one comrade in the union and even if you're not a delegate. And right now, with the elections and the fact that many unions are not only supporting George McGovern, but also, as in our union, are going to be raising funds for him and subordinating all other activities to his election, it's an excellent opportunity for us to bring our campaign up, talk to people, show them what the socialist alternative is.

One final point about my union—since it's a majority women—is on the WONAAC conference and the projections made there. I think that any union where there's a majority of women, although we are entitled to abortion benefits, we can organize a tremendous amount of women to go out not only in support of equal rights, and the 1972 Abortion Rights Bill, but we can also bring these women to the tribunal, and I think that we will have an opportunity to do that in 1199.

ON ATTITUDES OF WORKER-STUDENTS IN DETROIT:

I teach at a community college and that's slightly different. The community college I teach at has students who are young workers. That is, they're individuals who haven't had an opportunity to go to college at one of the established universities for financial reasons and they still want to get ahead. They want to be able to get better jobs, and so they're going to what's basically a night school. But it's arranged for them through an individual system.

I teach American government, which is a very interesting thing to be teaching in this day and age. There are a lot of contradictions in this society and, as someone pointed out before, the young workers are like other young people. They feel much the same way as the rest of young Americans do about a lot of things. The Pentagon Papers is just one of those things that the government lies about. It lies consistently. This is having an effect over time.

I've been asked about the students that I teach. The oldest of my students is about 27. The average works about 37.5 hours, so you can see that they're pretty much full-time workers. The school is about 60 percent Black

and 30 percent women. We have a free rein to teach them pretty much whatever the students want in the college. We can teach the way we want to and bring in whatever speakers and ideas and stands and books are useful, as long as we get through the basics of the course.

I've brought in Laura Miller to speak on the socialist campaign. I tried to get Democrats and Republicans, but they wouldn't show up. There's only a certain amount you can do as an instructor. If any of you had politically oriented instructors in college and they tried to force their ideas down your throat, you know how you didn't like it. You can't do that to students and you have to respect the students' rights to have their own opinions.

Most of my students are in one union or another, a lot of them in the UAW and on the lines at GM and Ford. They're very hostile to the union bureaucracy, as you can imagine, and one of the things that bugs them the most is the lack of democracy in the unions. And secondly, the collusion between the bosses and the union leadership. That really galls, because these workers feel that the union is supposed to represent them and they don't want to see the president of their union sitting down playing chess or going out to golf with one of these leaders of a major corporation.

There was a poll taken in Detroit about how people felt about Leonard Woodcock becoming the Democratic vice-presidential candidate, and about 20 percent thought that they'd like that, and about 80 percent didn't think they'd like that, but a number of UAW members said, "Anything to get him out of the UAW." The feeling against the bureaucracy in the trade unions is very strong, especially now that they've broken, supposedly, with the Pay Board but they're not really taking it on in any real way.

Sentiment for the antiwar movement is high, especially among returning Vietnam vets. Every time the war comes up in class, they lay on great raps about what the United States has been doing in Vietnam. The idea is to bring the money home—we could use it here better than they use it over there.

The nationalist sentiment is very high among Blacks, and there also seems to be some developing Chicano sentiment. I haven't many Chicanos in classes.

Community control statements and discussions are very popular. The white students may be racist, but they ain't going to say it in class. You don't say that if you want to be respected or accepted. They don't make racist jokes. But these young workers don't mind making sexist jokes. On the other hand, it's becoming more and more evident that when you make a sexist joke and you want people to laugh, all of a sudden nobody's laughing and you stand there and look very foolish. That's one of the best ways of simply putting a stop to that.

Women's liberation is still the butt of a lot of jokes, but this is decreasing gradually, especially among some of my young students who are trying to find jobs and it's been very difficult. All of a sudden, it's hit them right in the pocketbooks and they don't see why women shouldn't have equal pay and be able to get a job just like everybody else. There's a great deal of support among the women for abortion and for childcare.

A vast majority of my students figure that they aren't going to get anything done in this country unless they go out in the streets. There's some interest in the old lessons of the labor movement, how did they get things done?

Well, they went out in the streets. If you read *Labor's Giant Step*, you'll see that Detroit has a history, a very radical labor history. This is a recurrent theme in assigned papers. There is often reference to the antiwar movement, to its effectiveness at getting rid of LBJ. I've been reading these papers, and I see we've been right all along. I see my students telling me what we've been telling the American people back in 1965, 1966, 1967. We said it in SWP and YSA discussion bulletins, and here are others coming to the same conclusions, later than we did, but we must expect that. But they're coming to absolutely the same conclusions—out in the streets is the way we make changes.

There's a deep distrust with the Democratic and Republican parties and the whole system that they represent. I've gotten a great number of papers and some good discussion in class on how money and big business run the two parties and big government. It's a very realistic approach. On the other hand, these workers are not quite ready to vote for us. In fact, if they had to do anything, they'd rather just not vote, or they'll probably vote for McGovern. They vote for McGovern in some cases just to register a protest, but there's very little feeling that this is actually going to do anything. That's very depressing to many of them.

They're interested in the concept of independent parties: a Black party, some of them like the idea of a labor party. It's not an intense interest, but a moderate general sort of interest. They think, "Maybe that's something we could control, but then money would probably get it in the end anyway. So what's the sense? When it comes down to it, what you need is sort of a socialist party, but you should have something that represents us." But they're not ready to join one yet—a socialist party that is.

These are not just your entirely average workers on the line, because they are taking time out of their schedule to come to class one night a week for three hours, and to take American government. But they take these ideas which they get in class back to the plant, and I've had some rather striking examples of that.

These workers want to be able to hear all sides of a question and all kinds of ideas. One of my students, when I mentioned that the SWP was being thrown off the ballot in Ohio, said that that was the most ridiculous thing he ever heard of and told me he was going to go to his shop steward and get him to send a letter to Ohio. He was rather surprised when his shop steward came back and said, "Sorry, but those people are communists, aren't they?" And he said, "Yes. They still have the right to be on the ballot. You can't keep them off the ballot just because they're communists." He was very upset and it was one of his first educations in how the system works and how they—the capitalist class—weights the thing to their advantages. He's going to vote for Nixon, so don't automatically assume that he's going to run out and join the SWP. He, like most others has many contradictions.

Either they're going to vote for McGovern or they're going to vote for Nixon, but they are interested in reading about the SWP campaign. They want to know what happened in the Soviet Union and China. As soon as I bring a socialist speaker into the class, I leave the class for the rest of the time. They don't want to talk about the three branches of government, they want to talk about

socialism.

It's not so good if you have a certain amount of material to cover and you're a teacher and the administration gets a little bit uptight about that. But what they really want to do is look at new ideas, and somewhere in the back of their minds is the remembrance that socialism, or communism, wasn't good. That it was about workers. They have all kinds of strange, contradictory ideas when they hear the word socialism. But they want to know. There's a tremendous thirst for knowledge and new ideas, new ways of organizing things. How do you guarantee democracy in a socialist country? How do you organize the economy? What happened in the USSR? Etc. One of my students got really interested in what an SWP candidate said in class one night, and talked about it at work and then he came back with a request the next week that the SWP candidate come out and speak to the workers on his shift at the plant. It didn't quite work out for a number of reasons, but that's the kind of opportunity I expect.

We've recruited one comrade so far and another on the way, we think. We have 20-plus campaign endorsers. There is a circle of Militant subscribers. I don't allow *The Militant* to be sold in class. But around school and in places where these students meet *The Militant* is sold. One of the problems is the difficulty of setting up an organization at Community College. That is, we have no central campus. We have an administrative building, but we teach in high schools around the Wayne County area. So it is difficult for the students under these circumstances to have an organization.

In ending, I urge that we use our election campaigns this year, especially our local campaigns, to build on and take advantage of some of the local issues that come up. We can use these to get out our socialist ideas. Where bussing is an issue (as in the Detroit-Pontiac area), or the terrible prison conditions (as in the Wayne County prisons), we should join the debate over these questions. In this way we may reach those who read only the local papers, who don't read the *New York Times*, and let them know that the local issues which arouse so much excitement are often not entirely "local" in the narrow sense and in any event require a socialist answer. Our local SWP candidates should seek every opportunity to provide this answer.

BLACK WORKERS STRIKE IN ATLANTA:

I want to report on the recent strike by the employees of Sears Roebuck which took place in Atlanta and our support of it. It was a non-union strike initiated by the Black employees which came at a time when we were just in the process of discussing the formation of a Black work fraction. We found out about this strike about two weeks after it had been initiated at one of the Sears locations in Atlanta, about three weeks ago, and just after it had become a citywide action. We then organized a campaign and information-gathering committee.

We had no comrades employed at Sears. We had no contacts initially with any level of the strike organization. The nature of the strike made it obvious that we should find out more about it. The demands of the strike were designed to force Sears to become an equal opportunity employer with Blacks holding a proportionate number of Sears Roebuck positions at every level of the company. Included in the list of demands was the provision that

Black employees at all levels of the company get the same pay as whites in the same positions, and that they should have the same capacity to act in accordance with the responsibility of that position. They also requested that Sears recognize their right to strike and demanded that all employees on strike be reinstated at their previous rate of pay, at the same jobs and hours, and that their record contain no reference to their participation in the strike. Also, that they be paid in full for the time that they were on strike. Negotiations involved representatives who were chosen at the mass meetings which were held every night. Sears sent in their southeastern vice-president and the chairman of the board of directors who flew down from Chicago. The strike meetings stressed the fact that other companies in Atlanta were participating either directly or indirectly in pressing Sears to hold out and try to defeat the strike.

The strikers and supporters spoke of their effort at Sears as being an initial effort toward a goal of organizing all the Blacks and poor whites in Atlanta. The strike ended when Sears agreed to all but three of the 31 demands and recognized an independent union which was carrying on, and had by now completed, the negotiations of a covenant with Sears and will be investigating the personnel files every 30 days to ascertain the progress that Sears is making toward fulfilling their agreements.

Broad mass meetings, including the leadership of the Sears strike, were being held weekly in Atlanta at which there was discussion of further action, but no discussion or proposals for action have been formally placed before these meetings. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference is playing a big role in these mass meetings, as they played a big role in organizing the strike. It should be pointed out that the strikers maintain the militant thrust of the strike, despite SCLC's perspective of attempting to assume the leadership of the strike.

When we first heard about the nightly mass meetings, we distributed campaign literature, including a statement of support from the campaign. This was done by what was to become the Black work fraction. Our leaflet was enthusiastically received at meetings and on the picket line. We organized a forum on the strike which took place last Friday. We were able to contact the initial and primary leadership of the strike and get them to speak at what turned out to be one of the largest and most successful forums which we've had in Atlanta. We've begun to develop a very good relationship with these workers through this forum and another discussion, through our literature distribution at one of the weekly mass meetings which took place the Saturday before we drove up here. And we are looking forward to working with them in the antiwar and women's movements. It was an acknowledged fact by the strike leadership that women participated in the strike in proportionately larger numbers than did men.

We are trying to get to know the various Black organizations in Atlanta. We have made initial contact, last Saturday, with a group of Blacks who are running two independent candidates for state offices. They played no part in the strike, nor attempted in any direct way to relate to it. However, our initial impressions on talking to them is that they recognize the significance of the strike and would be seriously interested in working with us in using our campaigns to help any future strike activity and, more immediately, to build such actions as anti-

war mobilizations this fall.

The most important gain we made was the development of working relationships with recognized leadership elements in the Black community who are open to our concepts of organizing around issues such as community control and the Vietnam war, as well as the eventual spearhead of any union organizing that will begin in the South.

In summary, the Sears strike, like two or three similar and smaller strikes before it, was not a union strike but was a strike initiated and led by the Black employees who called for an organized support from the community as a whole. The demands of the strike were thrust toward ending discrimination on the job and for improving working conditions for all employees, "Blacks and poor whites."

Because of the nature of strikes of this kind which obtain the scope of an action of the Black community as a whole it is important for branches to help them to become participants in the strikes on the picket lines, attending and attempting to take an active role in the strike meetings. The most important contribution which we have to make is to put forward the concept that the true strength of the strike is in its ability to mobilize community support, and to encourage the building of as broad participation in the strike as possible.

WOMEN WORKERS IN CLEVELAND:

You have already, in the first session, heard most of the AFSCME report. The reporter described how we helped organize the peace committee, and then how we launched the women's rights committee after I was recruited in March. Since I've only been in the Trotskyist movement six months, I just want to give my views on our work in the union movement.

First of all, we're finding in AFSCME, and I guess in other places where women are the main part of the work force, that women are radicalizing, and we are radicalizing not just around antiwar issues, not just around working issues, but around feminist ideas. A lot of women feel, quite rightly, that the management is not doing anything for them and that the union leadership is not doing very much for them.

I've also found that abortion is the magic word to a lot of young working women. This became evident to me when the committee was first getting started. I would talk mainly about abortion and try to get people involved in the abortion project coalition in Cleveland. Some of the women objected, not to the abortion issue, but to making abortion the main focus of our committee. Other women on the committee argued with them and pointed out how the abortion laws and the forced sterilization was hurting women.

Also, I learned a lot about how to organize a women's committee. At first I started out with the idea of organizing a committee just to get another group of people involved in the abortion project coalition. That was my main interest. My idea was that we had to belong to the union because that would give us some kind of official status. But I was not interested in establishing a feminist wing of the union. We organized mainly around the May 1-6 abortion action week. Then the committee was inactive for about a month, partly because of the antiwar upsurge and my involvement in it. Then we started orga-

nizing again for the WONAAC conference in July. Some women had complained to me because the committee wasn't meeting, and they felt that that was my fault and I ought to get on the ball and do something.

Since then, the women's rights committee has reached a decision that we should have regular meetings. Now we have meetings every Wednesday at noon in the same room. We talk a little bit about politics and get our organizational work done, then we talk about general matters that come up. It's a very informal committee.

I also changed my attitude, through working with these union women, about our relationship to the union. A comrade yesterday gave a report on the Council of Union Women. She and a number of women from NOW and the Newspaper Guild called for the formation of this group. What we are trying to do is build a feminist caucus within the unions. We are trying to get women involved in their unions, and also to get women who are already involved in their unions interested in feminism, and put pressure on the unions to take stands on feminist issues. I think this falls right in with our policy of creating a left wing in the unions, because these women, as they radicalize around feminist ideas, can become very militant.

Consciousness-raising should not be counterposed to action, but I found that some women who are not quite ready to get involved with activity would still like to talk about feminist ideas. I also found that it's very easy to bring the conversation around from the personal to the political. When one woman has been oppressed as an individual, she'll say so, and find that other women have suffered similar problems. These women then begin to realize that it's not just individual problems, but also a general oppression of women. This is evident in the conditions under which we work, the fact that we can't get abortions, and the fact that many women are not able to get involved in union activity because of their child-care needs, which are not met. They begin to see that it's a political solution which is necessary. Women, more and more, are beginning to understand the need for organizing a mass movement. In fact, a number of women consider it important to build the women's rights committee, which they regard as their own committee.

A central development has been the questionnaire (see attached). I got the idea for the questionnaire from the Council of Union Women; how members of the Newspaper Guild established a women's rights committee. A group of women at the *Press* got together, circulated a questionnaire among the women, and published a manifesto on the basis of their results. They've now organized a committee of 50 members, including some men. (We don't have any men in our group.) An independent woman from AFSCME adopted the idea; she wrote a questionnaire, which was then revised by other women in the committee so it became a group project. This was very important in developing a consciousness among the women that the women's rights committee is a group effort, and not just something that I started because I'm a "feminist radical."

I think that comrades who are working in unions can help develop this growing feminist consciousness through women's rights committees. The potential is there for radicalizing a large sector of the working class, which is already radicalized to a large extent. Sometimes if I would just start talking about feminist ideas in the lounge I

would attract a lot of attention. I even found that I can lead the discussion from feminism to socialism and the need for sweeping changes and many people would agree with me. The main opposition to our program has come from people who still believe in lesser-evil politics. Even they admit that change is necessary.

I think that it is important to continue the idea of building a left wing in the unions. In the latest period, women have not really played a large role in their unions, even unions that have predominantly female memberships like AFSCME or the teachers' unions. Most of the leaders of these unions are men, and I think there are a number of reasons for this. For one thing, women are more apt to have responsibilities at home, so they can't go to union meetings or they can't take on the different responsibilities of the union. Also, a lot of women still have prejudices about women leaders and aren't quite ready to elect women leaders or take responsibility themselves. But this is changing. Also many women workers are still unorganized.

The main reason why we should build a feminist movement in the unions is so that we can encourage women to become leaders in the feminist movement, to take a larger role in the union movement and to develop a more radical consciousness in the unions. Also, I think a major importance of the women's rights committee is that it's given me a chance to do contact work, since I see all these women often and talk to them informally. They all know I'm a socialist. To do contact work, you have to talk to people in small groups or individually. I was recruited partially because I ate lunch with some socialists and talked about politics. Lunch and breaks can be used to reach people who are interested in our ideas. Many people want to talk about the union. They want to talk about the war. They're interested in what is happening all around the world. Women are interested in feminism, and so are some men. Many working people are interested in socialism. They want answers to the problems they see all around them. Most of the people who work in the welfare department realize that there have to be some changes in this country, because every day they see the results of capitalism. They see their own oppression through the wage freeze and higher taxes and they are also exposed to the most oppressed layer of society.

WOMEN'S ISSUES QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire was prepared by the Women's Rights Committee of the Welfare Chapter of AFSCME. We ask all women at County Welfare to complete it. Its purpose is twofold; (1) to determine the opinions of women at the Welfare Department and (2) to study the problems of women who work here. Your cooperation in filling out this form will be greatly appreciated. All replies will be strictly confidential and you need not sign your name. Please return completed forms to Eileen Berlow, Intake 660 Casebank, ext. 635. Or return it to the person who gave it to you.

These questions pertain to conditions at County Welfare: Department, Job classification

Age Education or Specialized training

Years at County Welfare

Do you feel that women are considered for jobs with more responsibility and more pay equally with men? () YES () NO () UNDECIDED COMMENTS:

Would you prefer a () Male () Female supervisor or () Don't care? Why?

Have you ever applied for maternity leave? () YES () NO If yes, has the Department given you any resistance? (urged you to resign, made you leave before you wanted to, etc.)

What are your daycare arrangements? () Don't need daycare () Baby-sitter () Relatives () Daycare Center () Other

Theoretically, the County Day Care Department serves as a referral service for all employees with day care needs. Have you ever requested their services? () YES () NO If yes, were their services helpful?

Additional comments on conditions at County Welfare

These questions pertain to more general questions of Women's liberation

If married, how do you prefer to be addressed? () Your first name (Marge Smith) () Your husband's name (Mrs. George Smith) () Your maiden name (Ms. Marge Jones) () Other

If she were qualified and held similar views, would you vote for a woman for President? () YES () NO () Undecided. (for other high office?) () YES () NO () Undecided

Do you think that there is sex discrimination in the general labor market in salary levels and responsibility? () YES () NO () Undecided

The proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the constitution is stated: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex" What is your Opinion? () Favor the amendment () Oppose it () Undecided Comments

The Ohio abortion law forbids abortion unless pregnancy threatens the life of the mother. Do you () Agree with the law () Disagree, feel that the law should be repealed and the decision left to the individual, or () HAVE another opinion? Comment

Have you ever had an abortion or known any woman who has had that experience?

The County distributes free birth control information and devices to anyone over eighteen who requests it. Do you agree with this policy? () YES () NO Do you think that the age requirement should be lowered or eliminated? () YES () NO () Undecided Comments

State any comments which you may have regarding women in general, conditions at County Welfare, the Women's Liberation movement, or this questionnaire

Attend Women's Rights Committee meetings every Wednesday at noon in the seventh floor conference room of the main building.

SUPPORT OF CAMPAIGNS BY SOCIAL SERVICE WORKERS IN CHICAGO:

This report covers our activities in the Illinois Union of Social Service Employees in Chicago. The Illinois Union of Social Service Employees is an independent union which broke away from the Building Services International in

the middle '50s. It is a union operating under open-shop conditions and with a membership of 1700-1800 out of a possible 3600. Its membership includes clerical and financial workers, besides case workers. It is a majority Black, and a majority women union. Our work is mainly in three areas: the antiwar movement; the campaign; and consistent sales of *The Militant*.

Over a period since the convention last year, we have gotten antiwar resolutions passed for November 6, April 22 and May 21. We've consistently passed out antiwar leaflets and tried to get workers to participate in the demonstrations. One result was that one of our comrades was elected delegate to the Labor for Peace Conference, for which the union paid full expenses. He gave a full report on the conference to the next mass membership meeting. However, we met with little success in trying to involve workers in the antiwar demonstrations.

With the announcement of Nixon's blockade on May 8, response to our ideas changed radically. At one of the welfare offices where we have some comrades who have been passing out leaflets and selling *Militants* consistently, there was a meeting of between 30 and 40 workers out of an office staff of 200 the day after Nixon's announcement. They decided to build a meeting for the next day and got permission to use the conference room at lunch time. They then started running off leaflets on the agency's ditto machine. The steno pool typed the leaflets and the supply clerks let people use the material.

The meeting the next day voted to support May 13, which was the antiwar demonstration against Nixon's blockade and called for "Out Now." They voted to send a delegation down to the demonstration and to designate Friday, May 12, as antiwar day. In our office, they wore black armbands and there was a spirited picket line from about 12:00 to 2:00. There was a constant line of about 30 people maintained during those hours. Part of the success of the line was that people from the nearby social security office joined in, and others who had been parked close by also joined in. A telegram from the office was sent to Nixon and the Illinois Senators demanding an immediate withdrawal and an end to the bombing. People were asked to sign their names to that and volunteer to pay a quarter to cover the cost of the telegram. The money left over was used to buy posters for signs and banner-making materials. A banner was made on agency time for the demonstration on Saturday, saying, "Garfield Public Aid Workers Demand Out Now." Posters were made with the slogans, "Freeze the War, Not Wages," and "Welfare, Not Warfare." There was press work done with a series of three mailings sent out with agency letterhead and paper to every TV and newspaper in the city.

During the upsurge in that office, we were able to translate the concept of the antiwar university into the antiwar office by just using the office materials that were around. People with hidden talents came out, like an old Berkeley activist came over and volunteered to paint a banner. He said, "Give a blow for old Berkeley." At another office there was also a meeting where we had a comrade the Tuesday after Nixon's speech. People decided to wear armbands (that was my office) and we organized a picket line of people that went to a nearby army recruiting station. During our lunch break the first day the line was 20 and the next day we were able to recruit some more people that went back. We got press coverage for our picket line in the neighborhood newspaper and do-

nations were also collected in the office for an ad that was sponsored by public aid employees and the Jane Addams School of Social Work at the University of Illinois. The ad called for Out Now and an end to the blockade. It appeared in the major newspaper. We also had a banner-making party at the union representative's house, which involved financial, clerical and filing workers.

At the demonstration on Saturday, there were four offices marching under separate banners, and we estimate 100-150 public aid workers turned out. This was by far the largest labor contingent in the May 15 demonstration.

In our election campaign, we first tried in the spring before the primaries to get our candidates to speak before a political endorsement meeting of the union. This was denied to us by the political affairs committee so we took it to a mass membership meeting. Here we got more support, especially from one office where Suzanne Hayes, who is now a candidate for public office on the SWP ticket, is well-known and popular, had made an impact. But the leadership was able to have the discussion postponed to the new business section, and when we got to that point on the agenda, the meeting was adjourned.

We made some gains out of that struggle, however, and two people on the political affairs committee are now regular readers of *The Militant*. One of the women is so disgusted with McGovern's position on the woman question that she is now thinking seriously about our campaign. We were also able to get a speaking engagement for Linda Jenness sponsored by the union at one of the offices.

The Illinois ballot fight has already had an impact in the offices. Two comrades reported that people came up to them during lunch hours to discuss the question of the loyalty oath, and we've asked the union leadership to endorse the loyalty oath fight, and they're now seriously considering it. Right now we have about six subscriptions to *The Militant* and one *ISR*; and one young Black woman has just renewed and gotten a full-year subscription to *The Militant*. We sell an average of about fifteen or twenty *Militants* every week. In addition we sent in one *Militant* story on the antiwar upsurge, and have a perspective of sending in more.

Our evaluation of this takes into account the composition of the workforce of the union being mostly women, Blacks and youth who've just come off the campus and having had experience in the antiwar movement. However, with the general lull in the antiwar movement, the best activists in the upsurge are now quiet, which reflects what the general antiwar sentiment is now; it's not at a very high point.

Our projections are to lay the groundwork for the next upsurge by selling *The Militant*, by writing articles for *The Militant*, and discussing with our fellow workers about the mass movement. We now have contacts coming to our forums, and we want to follow this up by putting our contact work on a more organized basis.

To close, I'll give you one example of what's happening as the college graduates come onto the job. One new worker, a graduate of Northeastern University in Chicago, started working about three weeks ago in one of the offices, and when he was shown a copy of *The Militant*, he said, "Wow! I haven't seen one of those since I left the campus."

THE UE IN PHILADELPHIA

In reporting on UE, I'd like to take the opportunity to clarify something: comrades have been approaching me in regard to UE, evidently under the mistaken notion that UE is some kind of an exceptionally radical organization due to its political leadership under Stalinism. It's nothing of the sort. The Stalinists who are in it are mostly ex-Stalinists who take an independent attitude at times but who, because of their Stalinist past, have Stalinism ingrained in them. I don't believe that they have any organizational relationship with the Communist Party. The only radical element in the UE is, I believe, the plant that I work in, because of a concentration of radicals that have gathered there over the years, which gives it a policy and an attitude completely atypical of UE. I've worked in other UE places and local 107 of UE in the Westinghouse turbine plant in Philadelphia is nothing like UE at all. In fact, Matless, one of the UE national leaders, has been kicked out of there several times.

Like many other unions, UE has passed some good resolutions which say things on paper. They've tried to refurbish their image about their antiwar stand, back-dating it several years. But recently, they had a fairly good resolution, although queasy-worded, at the last convention, and in the course of antiwar work over the last four or five years individual secondary leaders of UE have independently on their own done something to help the antiwar movement. In Philadelphia those around the district have helped get some money out of the district and they paid for two buses to go to New York City or to go to Washington. But this is strictly individual efforts that perhaps have met with some resistance from the top, perhaps not.

In my plant, I've spoken about the labor party and I appreciated the pedagogical approach the comrade reported about how you handle that question. You have to know when to give it as an educational point, to explain why that's an answer. Which means you have to hitch it up to some development that hits the members. There are many occasions when you have that happen in your area, like we had a state tax bill come through that the governor, in his election campaign, had pledged to workers would *not* hit the workers very much. When it hit, the world flew apart and the political action representative in our local had to practically apologize to the local meeting for having endorsed the governor. I took the floor and explained that to show that labor wanted something for itself, it had to have its own organizations, it must have a labor party. This happened recently and it was the first time in the many times I have taken the floor that I got considerable applause for it.

That all leads up to the fact that in the last four or five months, Fitzgerald, the president of the union, and Matless, the general organizer, have been going around

the country organizing district meetings, meetings called by the various districts of UE, to which other union representatives were invited and the line that was given to the meetings (which I understand were all well attended) was on Matless' part to describe a crisis facing the labor movement from all directions: what is happening in congress; the wage bill; and so forth. They took a good stand—but again, like many stands, on paper—that labor should not participate in any way in the Pay Board. They took that stand. But now, in these meetings, Matless described all these things and pointed out the terrible effects on the labor movement that are very bad and very dangerous and call for some work. Fitzgerald called for a labor party. To my knowledge, this is the first time that any top union official has gone around calling for a labor party. It was a little queasily worded. There's an escape clause, or some of the words can be used as an escape mechanism. But the point is that there has been a commitment, given the fact that this has gone on all over the country, it has been said to representatives of other unions. There's going to be a convention in New York City in September where they're going to have to take a stand on the presidential race. I'm pretty sure that there's going to be a hell of a large pro-McGovern attitude there, but I think there's going to be some opposition, from the right as well as from the left.

What I think can be done by us is that we can take advantage of this practically in this respect: this has happened all over the country from the top. It gives legitimacy to this. This should enable us, wherever there are UE locals, to approach the local for a candidate of ours to speak, on the basis that we have been furthering the labor party idea. This is regardless of what happens at the UE convention. I think it helps us to get a candidate of ours before a union meeting. I'm not sure that that's the way the development is going to go, but the logic of the situation is such that there will be something said there about being for a labor party and some form of commitment. It's hard to believe that they can go out all over the country like this and not carry it into the convention in some way.

I just want to say one thing in general. All the reports here show that there's an opening certainly for pedagogical work on our part in various ways. Let's keep in mind one thing: that is, only we can or will explain why such a development as the Pay Board took place and why there is this attempt to shakedown the standard of living of working people. Only we can explain that. I think it's known by other elements in the union movement, but I don't think they'll explain it. We can use that. We can put out educational leaflets at the plant, or in *Militant* sales where it carries that point. *Militant* sales, of course, are a must.

REPORT FROM AFT NATIONAL CONVENTION IN ST. PAUL, SEPTEMBER 21-25, 1972:

The AFT Vietnam Caucus appears to be functioning like a well-oiled machine here on the second day of our convention. Every delegate is aware of it and its aims.

The caucus finally set up a table about 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, and between then and Monday night we collected 426 endorsers for the Minnesota resolution. The caucus has been asking \$2.00 for membership, and by Monday night has signed up 76 new members. *Everyone* knows about the Minnesota resolution.

Enclosed are copies of the leaflets and literature and the beautiful caucus newspaper. The paper is a four-page special edition with a banner headline, "Support the Minnesota Resolution on S. E. Asia." It reprints the text of the Minnesota resolution on the front page. Also on the front page is an article explaining the AFT Vietnam Caucus, why it was formed and how. On the inside pages are articles explaining that war is a bread-and-butter issue; an antiwar quote from a piece of Anthony Lewis in the July 3 *New York Times*; an article on NPAC listing some of the supporters in the union movement; an explanation of why war causes inflation; another piece headed "\$\$\$'s for Education—Not War;" a call for support of the November 6 antiwar demonstration; the reprint of a statement by the San Francisco Longshoremen on the wage freeze and the war; a cartoon showing Nixon glowering over a Vietnamese child, and a statement on "What it's Like to Grow Up in Vietnam." The back page is the "statement of policy" by Labor for Peace, also a list of the Labor for Peace steering committee. There is a short statement on the number of killings in Vietnam by U. S. bombings, quoting the Kennedy Senate subcommittee on Refugees. Altogether, this special edition of the AFT Vietnam Caucus paper says more about the war, and says it better, than any other single piece of literature of comparable size that I have ever seen.

The paper is not the only thing distributed here by the AFT Vietnam Caucus. A single sheet carries the announcement, "Vietnam Caucus Formed." Another leaflet calls for support of the Minnesota resolution, very well done with a picture of a mass demonstration. Another leaflet urging delegates to support the Minnesota resolution and listing the goals adopted at the NPAC convention in New York, July 2-4, 1971. There is a leaflet which reprints the policy statement of Labor for Peace. Another leaflet issued by the caucus graphically shows the cost of war to teachers in particular, titled "Do You Know What The War Costs You?" All these leaflets are extremely well done on various colored paper. Finally there is one I have just picked up announcing a meeting of the Caucus tonight at 8:15, everyone welcome.

Our first caucus meeting had about 43 people and was an introductory meeting. The IS group tried to include a one-day work stoppage for the caucus to support and the CP tried to strike out NPAC. Both proposals were discussed, which gave an opportunity for some of the leaders of the caucus to explain why it was organized and what it is for, and the teachers voted down the divisive proposals.

Tonight—Monday—we had over 90 at the Caucus meeting and heard speeches by members of *both* the United Action Caucus and Progressive Caucus supporting the Minnesota resolution. The theme of these talks was, "We may disagree on all sorts of other issues, but we agree on the war issue and support the Minnesota resolution to end the war." It was a *great* meeting.

I'm saving the best for last. The International Relations Committee met and *passed* the Minnesota resolution. The Shankerites packed the committee, but the Vietnam Caucus actually succeeded in splitting a couple of votes away from them. It was very close, and shows what a difference one vote makes. The vote on the resolution as amended was 26-26 in committee; the chairman, Mr. Forsythe of UAC, broke the tie in our favor. The amendment included participation in Labor for Peace which was good, but they struck out reference to support of mass actions called by NPAC.

The motion to strike the reference to mass action failed by *one* vote and the motion to strike reference to NPAC won by *one* vote. So we're mounting an educational campaign on these two questions and will try to get them added again when the resolution comes to the floor.

You would enjoy the work that is being done here. The AFT Vietnam Caucus has brought in a resolution and made it one of the most talked-about issues here. The caucus has built support and convinced delegates. Members of this caucus are always *doing something*: giving out leaflets, newspapers, signing delegates up as endorsers, selling membership, publicizing caucus meetings. I am really proud to be a member of this caucus and to hear the opponents of it try to sneer at it as a "Trotskyist caucus" when I see how popular it is with the delegates, especially the young teachers. All the skills of the antiwar movement are put to good use here at this convention—and it is quite impressive. I keep thinking what the caucus would have done if we had come here with only 50 delegates to start with.

The Minnesota comrades sold something like 78 *Militants* Monday. Our opponents, IS and PL, are here also, and the Wohlforthites for a brief time. I haven't seen the *Daily World*, though. I hope the Jenness-Pulley campaign committee can get a table—the McGovern people are here.

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[The following is reprinted from *American Teacher*, September, 1972/Vol. 57, No. 1, p. 19—First-timers give convention an "A"]

"I'm ecstatic that the Vietnam resolution was passed," said Paula Reimers, a member of the Wayne County (Mich.) Community College Federation, Local 2000, and another first-time delegate. "The whole world is watching, and I think we can be very proud." A teacher of freshman political science, she had been active all convention week in the Vietnam caucus, and reported that the final total of delegates endorsing the Minnesota resolution on Vietnam was 905, including 100 local presidents. "It's the first time in an AFT convention that people have

been asked to endorse a resolution before it came to the floor," she said. Reimers reported she had missed breakfast and lunch on Thursday and breakfast Friday "sitting by the mike," hoping to speak, but had been unsuccessful. "I got to meet teachers from all over the country; went to the college workshops where we took up open enrollment, tuition-free education, and the whole idea that higher education is the right of everyone, not just a few. We want to upgrade the kind of education we give in our community colleges and extend the union to more college teachers. I'm glad we came out on the Equal Rights Amendment and we took a very important step in educating not only the labor movement, but also working people, that truly protective measures should be extended to men, that women aren't weak and should be protected, but that everyone should be protected from burdensome and hard working conditions."

REFLECTION ON THE AFT CONVENTION, by a Washington, D. C. delegate:

The SWP participation in and support of the Vietnam Caucus at the recent AFT convention reflects a correct assessment of the present state of the labor movement. The working class, including the organized workers, has yet to reach a level of political class consciousness. This was reflected in the overwhelming defeat of a resolution calling for a Labor Party and the very strong vote to endorse McGovern (most delegates who did not vote to support him opposed him for being too "radical"). Another indication was the strong endorsement of a "Support Israel" resolution.

After the experience of the AFT Convention in 1971, we felt it would be a waste of time to work in the United Action Caucus (UAC), the caucus presently in opposition to the ruling Shanker-Selden Progressive Caucus. Although the UAC claims to be an "open caucus" (an ambiguous definition, which implies open discussion), we were stifled by the Stalinists when we attempted a discussion around a resolution calling for "immediate withdrawal from Southeast Asia" and support for NPAC's fall calendar. For that reason, it was decided that we should not join the UAC this year. The formation of the AFT Vietnam Caucus enabled us to devote our full energies to the passage of a strong Vietnam resolution and bring out all the basic issues without having to face the numerous sectarian roadblocks of our opponents (mainly CP and IS) within the UAC.

This was also an election year with the UAC running a full slate of 21 candidates for union office. By concentrating our attention on the antiwar resolution, we were not considered a threat by the wheeler-dealers in the

UAC who feared that any principled position would result in a loss of votes for their candidates. Furthermore, this freed us of any fractional taint in the eyes of delegates in the Progressive Caucus. Although the Progressive Caucus is controlled by Albert Shanker, a right-wing Social Democrat, many of its members are strongly antiwar. The reason is simple. Many delegates come from small locals that do not have contracts; some of these locals receive subsidies from the AFT; in other cases these small locals belong to state federations that are subsidized by the AFT. Those delegates are under strong bureaucratic pressure to belong to the Progressive Caucus but don't necessarily reflect Shankerite views. And then many of Shanker's own loyal delegates from local 2 in New York City have been strongly affected by the massive antiwar sentiment in this country. All of these delegates are looking for a way to express their antiwar feelings and put the AFT on record unequivocally against the war, but want to do so without appearing disloyal to the Progressive Caucus.

The response to the AFT Vietnam Caucus was greater than expected; over 200 delegates and observers paid two dollars to join. The Minnesota Resolution, the passage of which was the focus of our activities, received the written endorsement of over 800 delegates and observers. All of them consider themselves either members or active supporters of the teachers' Vietnam Caucus and will attempt to pass strong antiwar resolutions and actions in their locals.

The Minnesota Resolution passed 265-196 and is the strongest antiwar resolution to ever come out of an AFT convention. Unfortunately, a clause calling for support to NPAC's fall action calendar was excised in committee. Since the resolution didn't reach the floor of the convention until late in the afternoon of the last day, when only one-third of the delegates were still present, an attempt to reinstate a clause calling for support for peaceful demonstrations failed, since Shanker's delegates were instructed to vote in opposition to such an amendment.

Our activity won the respect of many delegates, some of whom would take a Minnesota Resolution petition to the hotel suites of their locals and bring it back full of signatures. After two days, every delegate knew of the Minnesota Resolution. Perhaps even more important, the more politically advanced delegates saw the principled way the AFT Vietnam Caucus operated in direct contrast to the power politicking of the other two caucuses. Some delegates expressed an interest in the politics of the SWP because it alone of all the political tendencies at the convention was identified with the Vietnam Caucus and in no way connected with the power caucuses of the job seekers.