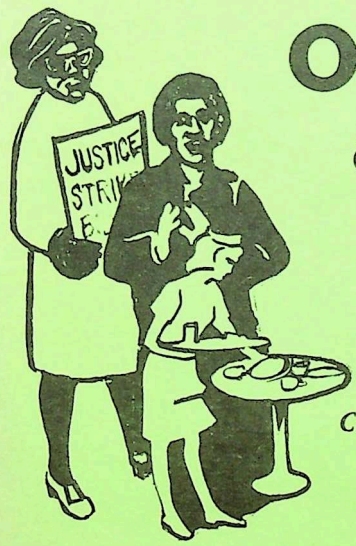


Working Women:

Our Stories and Struggles



*Published by Women of the
Center for United Labor Action*

Marina a Dolloph

Working Women :

Our Stories and Struggles

If you would like to order more of **Working Women: Our Stories and Struggles**, or if you would like to find out more about C.U.L.A., or if you would like to subscribe to the paper **United Labor Action**, send this in now!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

Editors:

B. J. Kowalski
Beth Marino
Mary Piagneri
Susan Steinman

and The Women of the Center for
United Labor Action

Volume II

July 1973

LABOR DONATED

000000000000000000



000000000000000000

Restaurant Workers



WOMEN Lasso C K Ranch

By SHARON BLACK, Delaware C.U.L.A.

Sister Sharon is a young working mother and active organizer for the Delaware C.U.L.A. She was not only instrumental in the struggle to unionize her own job but fights to help other workers win their rights from the bosses.

At the CK Ranch restaurant in Wilmington, Delaware, where I work, waitresses were paid 50 cents an hour; this is 30 cents below the minimum wage. Kitchen workers, including chefs, short-order cooks, and one woman who had 6 years seniority, averaged a mere \$1.60-\$1.80 an hour.

If all this wasn't enough, within less than 6 months, 8 workers were either fired, "dismissed," or forced to quit. It was on the 8th firing that we became panicky—who would be next? How would we support our families if we were the next to be fired? After much discussion we decided that we needed a union. We immediately phoned the closest restaurant workers' union—Local 568 of the Hotel, Motel, and Club Employees' Union—in Philadelphia. We all urged them to help us organize and convinced them that we had a chance. A committee of four strong pro-union workers was then formed whose job was to sign up fellow workers for the union.

We knew that if 30 percent of the workers signed union authorization cards, the union could file for an election with the N.L.R.B. to determine if the majority of workers would want union representation. Within two weeks, over 50 percent of our fellow workers had signed union cards! Again we phoned Local

568 and demanded that they immediately file for an election with the National Labor Relations Board. Of course, the struggle for a union does not, and did not in our case, begin or end with the filing for an election.

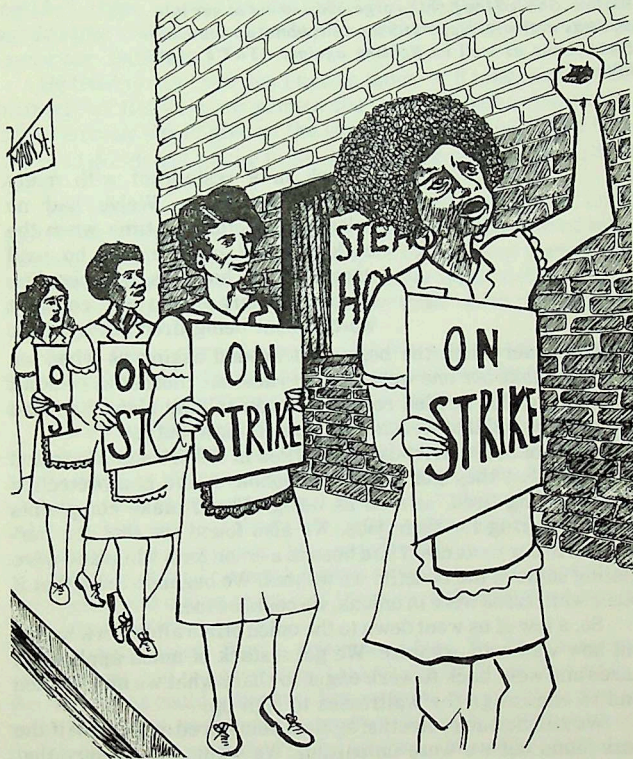
Three weeks after our organizing campaign had begun, management responded furiously when they discovered that their obedient slaves were uniting against their tyranny. Susan White, one of our major organizers, was fired for allegedly dropping a bottle of ketchup. (Was his real motive for firing the loss of 39 cents?) That afternoon the majority of waitresses held a meeting to discuss what to do. It was decided that we HAD to act decisively to defend our right to organize. We planned a BIG surprise for the boss.

The next day, business as usual didn't happen. Instead of waitresses filing into work, management was greeted by a strong picket line of 12 women carrying signs reading "Hire Susan, Fire Theo" (our supervisor), "We want minimum wage, we want job security," "We can't feed our families on what we make at the CK ranch," etc. The bosses were in such a panic that they quickly called in the police who were unable to remove us because we had the right to picket. The boss may own the restaurant, but not the sidewalk.

We began shouting: "Hire Susan, Fire Theo! We want job security." A large crowd of sympathetic onlookers had gathered and we began to hold an impromptu street meeting explaining to the crowd why we were picketing. This was an exhilarating experience. We not only told management what we thought about them to their faces, but we also printed our own handbills explaining the strike, elected a representative, and called the press.

What began as a protest of Sue's firing soon turned into a full fledged strike with the demand of reinstating Susan and recognition for our union. Frustrated by our successes in cutting business in half, management responded in one of the only ways left for them. They had one of our pickets arrested for allegedly cursing the boss. But when I jumped to her defense, one of the bosses was super-quick to scream some of his own obscenities at me. We immediately marched down to city hall and swore out a warrant for his arrest. The court clerk might not have wanted to believe our story but he had no other choice than to swear out the warrant. In this instance we showed the boss that he couldn't get away with his daily routines at work.

On the 6th day of the strike, management was forced to approach us with a settlement. Unfortunately, the union leadership went over our heads and agreed to a settlement over the phone—but without our walk-out, the union couldn't have gotten the agreement in the first place. They agreed to reinstate Susan, pay us the minimum wage, and to permit an election on the question of union representation. In this case we won a large victory. In a small but significant way the workers at CK Ranch, through militant action and unity, have proven to many other restaurant workers that you can fight the boss and win!



Waitress' Tip - Fight for a Union

By MARGARET ROLLINS, Buffalo C.U.L.A.

Sister Margaret is an active C.U.L.A. member in Buffalo. She led the fight to organize a union at her job and has actively supported the telephone workers in their strike as well as fighting against AT&T's rate hikes.

I work in a restaurant with many veteran waitresses. We've had no raises except for one time when the cooks walked off the job, no paid vacations or holidays, no benefits, continuing harassment and constant worry about being fired at any time.

Last summer when the boss went around asking us when we wanted to take our one week *unpaid* vacation, most of us couldn't even afford this needed rest. We began talking about how bad things were and that we had to do something about it.

Some of us had friends who worked in union restaurants and we knew that they got vacations, holidays, and had protection against being fired, as well as being able to make complaints without fearing for their jobs. We also found out that the bartenders in our restaurant had been in a union for a while and were getting some of the benefits we wanted. We began to think that if other waitresses were in unions, we could be too.

So, a few of us went down to the union office after work to find out how we could organize. We got a stack of union application cards and went back to work eager to share what we had learned and to encourage the waitresses to sign up.

We still had no protection against being fired on the spot if the boss found out we were unionizing. We wanted to be sure that

everyone was together when we filed for an N.L.R.B. election so we secretly spread the word in between waiting on tables, rushing with heavy trays, etc.

At first the boss didn't fuss about the union but when he found out what we wanted—vacations, holidays, a raise—he felt a sharp pain in his pocketbook. What he thought would be a nice concession was going to cost him money. He threatened us with our jobs. He said he'd have to shut down the whole day shift, laying off half of us. He even circulated a petition against the union and convinced people they'd lose their jobs if they didn't sign. We couldn't figure out why he was threatening to lay us off when he made \$1000 a week on his barbecue specialty. That *alone* would cover our vacations.

He tried to say "you don't need a union—I'll take care of you without it." But we knew without the union we had no way to be sure he really would give us the vacation he promised, and that he could decide not to any time, and still fire anyone who talked back.

The union local in Buffalo finally threatened to put up a picket line in front of the restaurant, and this really scared him. Not only would it mean bad publicity to the working people who are there, but also no unionized truck driver would deliver there. (The boss himself said, "you know how those union people stick together!")

So we finally forced him to sign! We won vacations up to three weeks paid after 8 years, a few paid holidays, a raise, seniority rights, overtime pay and job security.

But we soon found out that for the boss this was an agreement on paper only. We learned that the contract was only good if we stuck together. Because of the raises we'd won, he said he couldn't afford to keep everyone, and began to lay off. He laid off in the kitchen, cut back the cook's hours, and laid off the busboy—making us, the waitresses, bus our own tables.

But it backfired on him! It amounted to such a speed-up in the kitchen and dining room that there weren't enough people to keep the restaurant going.

We immediately filed a grievance about the cook's hours, and the boss had to agree to cutback on the work she had to do. We waitresses could only carry buspans and clear tables when it wasn't busy, but as soon as it was crowded, dirty dishes covered the place and sat unwashed in the kitchen. He couldn't afford to

not have us there.

Within a week the people laid off were called back, according to the seniority rights in our contract. With the winning of this grievance, we're not only waitresses but we've become union women too!

Anger Heats the Kitchen

By BAYINNAH SHABAZZ, Albany C.U.L.A.

Sister Bayinnah is a Black woman and a leading organizer for Albany C.U.L.A. She has fought for workers in many struggles—most recently in support of the Chef d'Italia waitresses and against the racist AT&T monopoly.

One summer I spent my working hours in the kitchen of W.T. Grant & Co.'s big downtown Philadelphia store.

The first thing I noticed was the kitchen help was all Black; the hot dog stand (where you had to stand all day long) was also all Black while the Bradford House luncheon counters were predominantly white. The fact that there were a few Blacks there was a result of a stiff fight waged by the city Black organizations.

The women and two men who worked in the kitchen were forced to stand on their feet all day long—sometimes as long as eleven hours. Two of those women had been standing for over thirteen years and still they were not even getting 25 cents above the minimum wage. Other than these two women, the turnover rate was fantastically high—in one month I did not work with the same set of women. Anybody with any other opportunities got out of that kitchen fast.

And no wonder—it was the only part of the store not air-conditioned or even well ventilated. There were two fans that just

blew the greasy hot air around and around.

One day the exhaust hood conked out and the smoke in the kitchen was choking us. Think they closed the kitchen down? Our manager came in to tell us that, for a few minutes only, we could take turns sitting outside the kitchen in the smoke-filled hallway. This went on for over a week until the hood was repaired.

Another time the dumbwaiter from the upstairs kitchen broke down. Because we only had two men in the kitchen, everyone had to help haul the ice cream and the clean and dirty dishes up and down the stairs during the main rush hour.

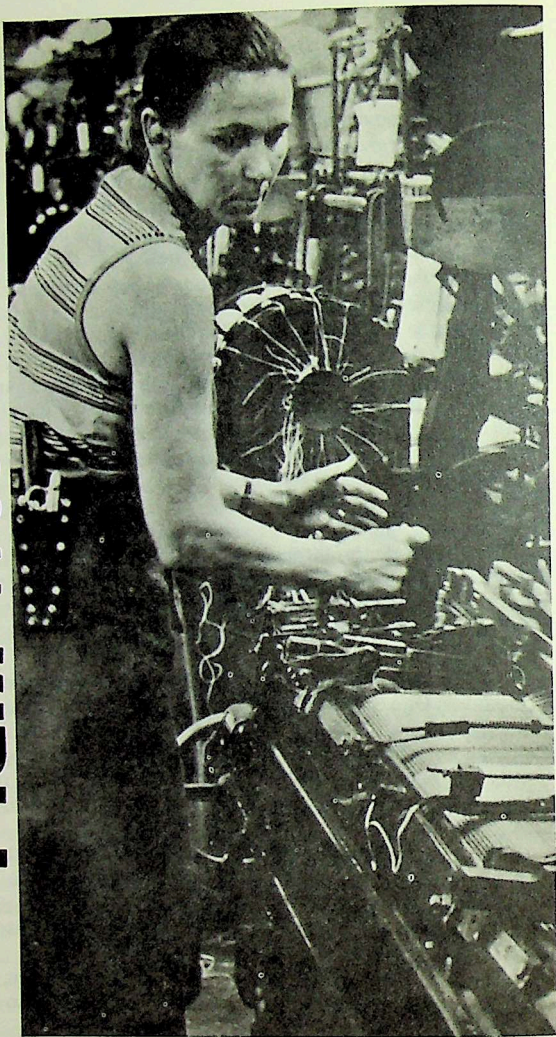
All the women both in the kitchen and outside in the cafeteria were subjected to the racial and sexual biases of the manager. He would openly stare at you while you were working and make comments on how he liked or didn't like what he saw. The "hot dog girls," although part of the cafeteria staff, were put in the humiliating position of having a monetary ceiling on what they could eat as part of their meal allowance. Everyone else ate what they wanted, but these women had to pay the difference on what they ate above their allowance.

If an order was incorrect, cold, or too long in coming, the head waitress encouraged waitresses to blame it on the kitchen help. In defense, the kitchen help would blame it on the inaccuracies of the waitresses' orders. The fact that it might be the height of the noon or dinner rush hour, and the fact that we were usually one or two women short of help, was never a legitimate excuse.

Once when I asked if there was a union, there was an outburst of laughter. One of the older women said bitterly she was forced to keep this job and the dirt with it because she had no skills to do anything else. Her husband did not make enough to support the family and because of Grant's hours, she could never go to night school. As a result she was stuck in this filthy job at least until the kids grew up.

There are millions and millions of women like her "stuck" in jobs of this nature because they have no other place to go. Receiving meager salaries, they have to put up with the hot, unsafe working conditions as well as the outright abuse from their bosses.

Until we fight against these bosses and managers, these conditions will prevail—but once we fight, the heat will no longer be in the kitchen, but under the boss!



Piecework Rates More Than Piecemeal Pay

By B.J. KOWALSKI, New Jersey C.U.L.A.

Sister B.J. is a leading C.U.L.A. member in New Jersey. Besides working in a plant herself, she has been an active spokeswoman in support of the Raybestos workers in order to win back pensions the company had taken away.

Factory work is the most exhausting and most exploitative work I know. I work for Eagle Electric Co. in Long Island City, Queens—one of the major electrical equipment companies in the country. Pick up an electric switch or a box of fuses and it probably has the name Eagle Electric on it.

The company's profits are steadily increasing and they've bought new buildings for their expanding business. But it's hard to tell that by looking at the place—all the buildings look like prisons with filthy walls and broken windows. Inside it's worse—winter or summer, it's always a dirty, stinking sweatbox. Most of us are women, forced to work in a factory because we have no skills. Many of the women come from other countries—like Ecuador, Jamaica, Peru, and Greece.

My department makes switches and other equipment with very small parts. From 7:45 in the morning to 4:45 p.m., with an hour for lunch and one lousy 5-minute break in the afternoon, our hands are in constant motion. What kills us is the speed at which we must work. My daily rate (the pieces I must produce) is 138 an hour, so I turn out 1104 switches a day, averaging 2 or 3 a minute. What do I get paid? \$1.85 an hour, minimum wage. The company sells each of my switches for about \$1.00. They make almost

\$1,000 out of my labor every day and they pay me \$15.00 a day. It's robbery.

Eighty dollars is not enough to live on. But the bosses say we can make more money. How?—by doing extra piecework. The piecework system is the company's way of squeezing higher production out of us. This is how it works: we must make a certain number of pieces per hour, and that's called our rate. If the rate is 100 pieces an hour, then we must make 800 pieces per day. If we make 900, we get an extra hour's pay. For every 100, or 138, or 170 pieces (depending on our rate) that we make over and above our daily minimum, we get another hour's pay.

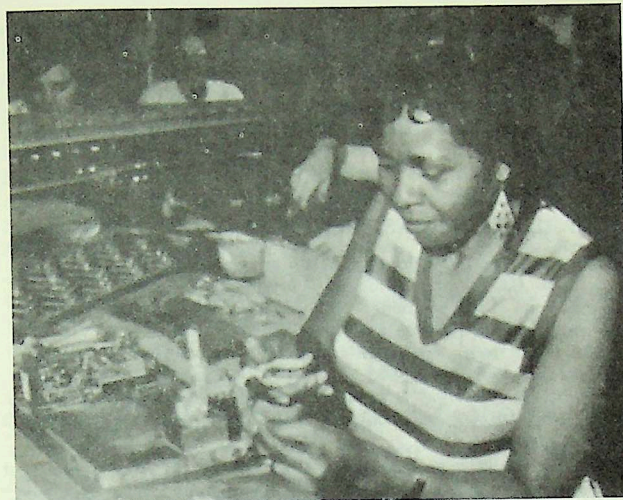
But it's not easy. Just doing the daily rate is hard—arranging the 8 to 12 piles of tiny parts on the table so we can reach them quickly, sticking them together in the right place, being careful not to drop any. It's a race with time. We push ourselves to do more and more, so we can get our quota done and do an extra hour or two above the quota.

Piecework can pit us against each other, too. For if we start to work faster, produce more and get those few extra dollars, then they raise the rate for all of us! Then, we all must work even faster for the same pay while the bosses get an even higher percentage of profit out of our work.

When I was first learning how to make switches, the foreman put me on a trial rate of 95 pieces an hour instead of 138 an hour, the regular rate for that particular switch. "This'll give you a chance to earn a little money," he said, as though he were doing me a favor. I could have spit in his face—how can anyone earn much at the low rate of pay? I'd only been there a week, and making even 60 pieces an hour was a strain.

One woman who works at my table, Maria, always seems a little more tired than the rest of us. She works hard in spurts, pushing herself as far as she can go until she gets fed up and takes a break. She supports her sister and three children on her own. To do this she works from eight to five in the plant, eats on the run, then does cleaning work in an office building from six to midnight. No wonder she's tired—her whole life is work and still more work. Yet she is one of the warmest, friendliest people you could hope to meet, and if any woman has a problem with her work, she's the first to help.

Besides the generally unhealthy conditions we all work under, any non-white woman has to put up with extra harassment. For instance, the Black women are put to work on



the noisiest, filthiest machines and the Latin and Greek women who don't speak English are given higher rates so they must work at a more feverish pace.

One day the foreman went too far. He put Celia, who was pregnant, on a very strenuous job where she had to jump and stretch all day. We decided to go to his office and speak up. Celia said, "Could I change my job?" The foreman didn't even stop to talk to us, muttering "no" as he walked out the door. "But she's going to have a baby and that job's too much of a strain on her."

"Well, then she can go on maternity leave," he yelled over his shoulder, already ten feet away. What a rat. He knew that Celia hadn't been working there long enough to take a paid leave.

Celia told some of the other women what happened, and four of us went back to Celia's corner and rearranged her input and output boxes to make her work easier for her. The foreman saw us, but he didn't say anything.

Three days later, though, he moved her to another machine. He didn't want to look like he was giving in, but we won this fight because he saw that Celia had other women on her side.

It showed us that when we stick together, we get results. One day we'll get rid of quotas and piecework altogether!

Women-The Power Behind G.E.

By MARIE MATTHEWS, Norfolk C.U.L.A.

Sister Marie joins 5500 workers at 6:30 a.m. to enter the cavernous GE plant outside of Portsmouth, Va. Assigned to their positions, the workers, mostly women, produce circuit boards, tuners, picture tubes, and television receivers. The following dialogue occurs daily in the plant:

FOREMAN: Girls, we're going to have to step up production. You aren't meeting your new quota.

WOMEN: But we're working as hard as we can. Besides we got sent home early a couple of times last week because we'd "over-produced."

FOREMAN: Well, if you don't think you can do it, there are plenty of other people who are looking for jobs.

ANGRY WOMAN: But why should we do more work for the same amount of money and then not be sure of getting a 40 hour week. I've got a family to support and I can't have my check short every week.

SCARED WOMAN: Yes, but A paycheck is better than NO paycheck at all. You know how hard it is to find a job around here.

FOREMAN: That's right. You're not going to get another job with the pay and benefits like you get here.

ANGRY WOMAN (aside to friends):—What we need is a union. I'm tired of taking all this. They're always on our backs for something.

FOREMAN (continuing):— Where else could you get a pension plan, medical insurance, savings program, paid holidays, and wages that keep up with the cost of living???? Only here at GE, where we like to keep our employees happy. Just one big family. And none of the conflict and disharmony that exists in places where they have unions.

SECOND ANGRY WOMAN: Oh boy, here it comes.

FOREMAN (still continuing): You all know, of course, this is the only television receiver plant left in the United States. All the others have moved to Taiwan or Singapore where the cost of labor is lower and there are no problems with strikes. We should all be proud of the trust and

confidence the Board of Directors of G.E. has put in this plant and in us. We've expanded at a great speed and provided more jobs largely because of the cooperative work force we have here. Of course, if anything were to change that spirit of cooperation, the company might be forced to move to Taiwan or Singapore in order to remain competitive. But I don't think we have anything to worry about. All of us are always ready to listen to your ideas and we can work out any problem that comes up as long as everyone helps along. Now, as I was saying about production. . . .

Later at break:

ANGRY WOMAN: The only reason we have any benefits at all is because people fought for them. When the foreman says G.E. "gives" us all these things, it's a lot of hot air. G.E. doesn't give us anything, but a hard time. If it weren't for the union and the strike in '69, G.E. wouldn't have half as much to "give" us.

SECOND ANGRY WOMAN: And they keep trying to tell us we get everything that the union plants get, so why do we need a union? I'll tell you. Because anything they "give" us, they can take away. Just like the 15 cent raise we were going to get in May. One minute we've got it, the next minute we don't. It seems to me we're going to have to fight to keep what we've got and to get any improvements around here.

NOT SO SCARED ANYMORE WOMAN: What you say sounds right. Maybe a union wouldn't be so bad after all!

This is the situation in the plant where I work, and in plants all over the South. The giant corporations fled from the Northern states where many workers had unionized, to the South, where they hoped to be able to make huge profits undisturbed by the just demands of organized workers.

For many years, the corporation bosses have succeeded in squashing any unified organization among Black and white workers. G.E., in particular, has been one of those companies that has tried the hardest to divide and crush the organizing efforts by workers in their plants.

The company claims unions "create bad feelings." But none of us would mind feeling that extra 15 cents in our pockets!

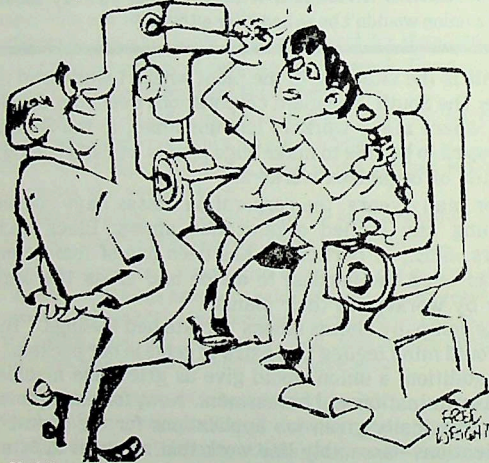
In addition, a union would give us grievance machinery to fight discrimination and harassment. Now, for example, women are automatically given job applications for the lowest paying classifications—assembly line work that starts at \$2.54 an hour and in two months reaches a maximum of \$2.64. At the same time, men are given job applications for technical jobs that for

the most part start no lower than \$3.25. Overtime is not officially compulsory—but if we won't work it, they'll find someone who will.

With no grievance machinery, we are at the mercy of memo-happy foremen. One Black woman who had worked here for 7 years and never missed a day, injured her foot and couldn't stand on it. She was out for 8 days and brought in a doctor's note. When she got back, her foreman wrote her up in a memo (three memos and you're fired).

G.E.'s greed is forcing us to fight back. There is a new assault on our dignity every day: promising us a raise and then not coming through with it; bathrooms so crowded we spend our entire break just waiting to get in, no decent cafeteria or lounge, so we have to eat at our stations.

There is presently a union drive at our plant. The credit for this drive goes to the Black women, who have had the courage to take the leadership and defy G.E.—which threatens to move the plant overseas if we unionize. But the signs are here that the women aren't going to be fooled by the company's threats and will join in the fight for the union. And we're going to fight for this union with every ounce of strength that we have.



"With all this overtime pay you're making, you can't object to a 25 percent cut in your basic rate . . ."

UAW: We Want 1 Steward for Every 25 Workers

By TERRI KAY, Detroit C.U.L.A.

Sister Terri, who has worked over a year in a Detroit stamping plant for one of the big three auto manufacturers, is active in the Detroit labor movement supporting the Black Detroit Edison workers fight against discrimination and the United Farmworkers Union lettuce boycott.

Our union, the United Auto Workers (UAW), has done a lot over the years to fight many grievances—maintaining our job classification and seniority rights, fighting speed-up, racism, and recently, discrimination against women in the plants. But there is still a fight ahead to hold the line on gains we've already made and to improve the bad conditions that still exist.

We are now fighting to improve the steward system. In most plants it's one steward for every 250 workers. In my plant we have only one for every 500 workers. So no matter how hard the steward works, there's no way one person can fight all the grievances.

If we fought and won a grievance procedure of one steward for every 25 workers, then grievances like discrimination, raises in production standards, and violations of seniority rights wouldn't get piled up on someone's desk and be forgotten. The stewards would have more time to work on grievances and still have time to work next to us on the job. This way, they would know exactly what's going on and wouldn't be plowed under by management's eye-view. And we'd be right there to back the steward up when there's a grievance to win. And there are many.

Right now they are trying to use women in the plant to smash something we have already won from the corporation—the job-classification system. Classifying jobs according to type of work, with each classification having an hourly rate of pay is a major step in gaining equal pay for equal work.

The bosses have been hiring women into the classification of stock-handler, knowing full well that many of the stock handling jobs are heavy jobs. After all, we stamp out automobile parts! Then they put women stock-handlers into jobs that are really in higher-paying classifications, claiming they are doing these women a favor by not making them do the back-breaking work—but they do not pay the higher rate of pay to the women who are still classified as stock-handlers.

And when the women put in a request to be transferred officially to the higher-paying classification, the company says “You’ll have to wait. All the jobs are filled.” In addition, since the precedent of working off-code for no more money has been set, other workers who are occasionally assigned to a job out of their classification are hesitant to ask for the pay difference they should get. The company has not only profited from this, but it also has created disunity between the men and women workers as a result.

With the rise of unemployment, resulting from Nixon’s supposedly anti-inflation price-wage freeze, there has been a steady decrease in hiring of young Black workers and a steady increase in the hiring of young whites—white workers that is, who have relatives working for the corporation or know someone in the personnel department. The racist corporation bosses are clearly taking advantage of the unemployment situation to pick and choose whom they hire.

Also, there’s one area in the plant which has many comparatively easier jobs in it. The majority of the white workers are concentrated in this area. By dividing the Black and white workers like this, the company tries to foster resentment between them and prevent them from getting to know each other so they can find out how much they have in common.

At stamping plants, the system of regulating how much a worker is supposed to do is called the production system. Each one of the many different jobs in the plant has a production number assigned to it—the number of parts that a worker is supposed to make on that job per hour. The way they get the

workers to try as hard as they can to make production is to allow the worker a break for the rest of the hour when production is made.

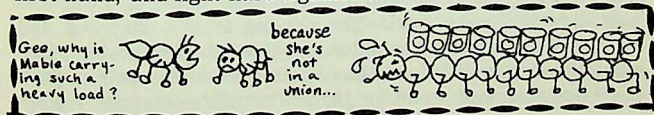
Then the company turns around, noting the amount of break time the workers have been earning, and raises production on the jobs where the workers have been working the hardest for more break time. Many of the older workers are wise to this and work slowly, but most of the young workers are learning the hard way.

In addition, many times I have seen a worker who is supposed to be operating a spot welder moving stock with a hand operated hi-lo. Moving stock with these hi-lo’s is supposed to be a separate job. However, the company knows that most machine operators will do it themselves, rather than wait for a hi-lo operator to do it, when the machine operator is in a hurry to make production.

Stamping plants are well known for their unsafe working conditions. Many factory workers with missing fingers, hands, or arms have lost them in a stamping plant. The most common cause of this is when a machine malfunctions and makes an unexpected double, instead of a single, cycle up and down.

Supposedly a worker never has to put any part of their body under the press at any time. Tools are issued as arm extensions for this purpose. However, there are many jobs requiring body exposures to the presses where tools are not issued because it would slow down production too much. One such job in my area requires handling such a small piece that you have to hold it with just the tips of your fingers to keep out of the way of the punch press. Recently someone had a hole punched in his finger on that job. Almost every job requires the wearing of gloves to protect against cuts and slivers. However, the gloves are so poorly made, especially women’s gloves, that they wear through within a couple of hours. Since we’re only allowed to get two pair at a time and we have to go a long way on our own break time to get them, workers often get cuts and slivers, which get infected very easily at our greasy jobs.

These are the grievances we have, and as you can see they are many and serious. That’s why we want one steward for every 25 workers who would be on the job, see and know the conditions first hand, and fight hard against them.



BEWARE - Of Temp. Agencies

By DENIECE HARMON, Milwaukee C.U.L.A.

Sister Deniece is active in the Milwaukee labor movement and spoke at a public hearing demanding higher minimum wages and its extension to waitresses.

“Come now girls, speed it up—you’re slowing down. The agency that sent you assured us of full satisfaction, that we would be given girls who could do the work without any difficulty.”

Phrases like this are heard daily by women slaving for temporary help agencies. They would call us with a job and could send us anywhere—in the city or miles outside of it.

The nicest job I’ve had was assembling headphones in an electronics plant. They’ve sent me to a bookbinding factory where Playboy magazine was being bound. We had to take the magazines off the conveyor, sort them, and load them. And when you get a whole stack of magazines, they are heavy! Once they sent me to a dark back room—I couldn’t really tell what the plant was—all we did was peel backings off advertising posters. Then I had another job where we loaded these posters onto blocks and then assembled them. We had to watch out for the sharp plastic edges to make sure we didn’t get cut.

The agencies have a different rate of pay for women (\$1.65 an hour) and men (\$2.00 an hour). When I asked about it, I was told men did the heavy work—like driving trucks, shipping and loading. Well, when I was unloading those display posters, that was unloading, and I should have gotten the higher rate of pay!

When you read an ad for factory or office temporary help,

beware. These agencies make themselves look pretty good in the ads, but you are never told about the harsh conditions you’ll face or the pittance you’ll earn.

The majority of workers at the agency were women, a large proportion Black and Latin. For the most part I met younger people, women just married, some heads of households who had children to support and then others who had husbands and children, but had to work to make ends meet. Some worked in off hours as a second job. The agency did a good job of keeping us scattered; there’d be a rebellion if we ever got together!

One of the worst parts is that you never know if you’re going to have a job. The longest job I had was for four months—but I’ve had some as short as two weeks or even one day. You call up the agency when one job is finished, and they say “We’ll call you when we have another job”—and that can take up to four days.

Also there are no benefits—disability insurance, paid vacations or holidays, and no overtime. Overtime is only payable when you work more than 40 hours a week on the same job. So even if you work more than 40 hours a week, if it’s split between two or three jobs, you can’t collect time-and-a-half pay.

Most women are forced to take these jobs—because they are the only ones around. In Milwaukee, seven major plants—from electronic parts to tractor to car battery manufacturers—have just picked up and left—to rebuild in Kentucky or Juarez, Mexico.

One company called Manpower Incorporated shows very clearly how these temporary agencies work. Manpower Inc. reportedly does forty percent of its business overseas. Temporary places have offices in almost every country where U.S. bosses have plants—Mexico, West Indies, Africa, Hong Kong, Israel, the Philippines, Australia, throughout Europe, Canada and South America. The workers in these countries are hired through temp. agencies like we are here—but their wages are even lower.

Another profitable gimmick these agencies have is to set up subsidiaries such as the Manpower Business Training Institute. Then they flood the newspapers, radio stations, subways and buses with ads claiming there is a great need for IBM operators, court stenographers, and key punch operators.

And they are willing to train someone willing to learn—who can afford the fee. After a flood of people scrimp and save to take

this training in hopes of getting a fairly decent paying job ("get a good education, and you can get ahead," right?) the institute tells them there are no more job openings, but they will gladly keep them on call for a temporary help position paying \$1.65 rather than the higher going wage for these skilled jobs.

These are some of the ways Manpower Inc. made over \$27 million in the first four months of 1972—off our labor, while we were lucky to bring home \$70 a week!

We have to fight these agencies to get what is ours. We have to fight these greedy profit-making bloodsuckers. We want steady work, just wages, pleasant working conditions and dignity.

Imprisoned Workers Slave for 25¢ a Day

By MARYANN WEISSMAN, New York City

Sister Maryann was imprisoned for 6 months. This sentence was part of an attempt to stop her efforts to organize active duty G.I.'s into the American Serviceman's Union, which has since grown and defends rights of veterans too.

"I had to survive. I couldn't find a job. We had to eat. I couldn't stand it. I had to get high so I wouldn't feel anything." This is the story of everyone I met in the Federal Reformatory for Women at Alderson, West Virginia, in the Women's Section of the County Jail at Paterson, New Jersey, and in the Women's House of Detention in New York City.

The stories were one and the same. The suffering was unique. Each woman suffered her own pain alone—only occasionally



crying on the shoulder of a woman who had cried yesterday or would cry tomorrow. Each cried for her children, her family, her lover or herself.

They were like me and I think they were like you. Not weak but strong enough to feel they had a right to survive. All were women. The overwhelming were poor, working class. Most were non-white—80 to 85 percent.

Everyone of my sisters in prison had been a secretary, a domestic worker, a hairdresser, a laundry worker, a waitress, a practical nurse, a nurse, a garment worker, a teacher, a clerk-typist, a teller, a telephone operator.

We were all working to feed ourselves, our kids, or to add to our husband's income.

If your living standard was threatened; if instead of going to a doctor your kids had to go to a clinic which had the reputation as a butcher shop; if their medicine had to be bought with the last of the money for food; if, therefore, there wasn't any food; if you were about to be evicted because you were three months behind in the rent; if the kids' clothes were too thin for the cold; if their clothes were patched for the fourth or fifth time; if their shoes were hand-me-downs that they had to twist their feet into — wouldn't you look *desperately* for something to do?

Do you think you could learn to hustle? Could you bring yourself to prostitution, to stealing from a customer's wallet? No one calls it this. It is known as turning a trick, being a call girl, and rolling a john. Would you try to escape the misery of it all?

You might turn to hard drugs, cocaine or heroin. Could you put yourself together to walk into a bank and cash a bad, stolen check? Maybe you could steal a car or drive a stolen car to another state?

For a while it will be okay, then you'll get arrested. The first time, you'll probably get probation. You won't want to take the risk again. But it will be harder to get a job with a record. You will do something just a little illegal just once. The cycle will start again. By the third or fourth bust, you'll get time in jail.

Make believe. You do not have to make believe too much. Imagine that you work in a laundry. Like most laundries, as you probably know, it is dirty, unbearably hot work where you often run to keep up with the machines. But this laundry is even worse than most laundries—it's the laundry in prison where you make 25 cents a day.

If you work in the washroom, you might be one of two people working at the "Jolly Green Giant," the largest of three or four machines in the plant. You stand under the chute which extends down from the sorting room upstairs, pull a chain, and stand ready to break the fall of at least 500 pounds of dirty laundry. You and your co-worker shoulder this load into the "Giant" and turn on the machine. You must handle at least seven loads a day, so 3500 pounds of laundry is the minimum amount you put into the machine in a normal working day. When you run out of detergent and bleach you must go to the storeroom and get it in heavy 100 pound boxes.

You might work in the press room, where the temperature in the winter is never below 85 degrees, and in the summer often climbs to 130 degrees. It is even hotter in the immediate area of the presses. They close automatically and will burn you seriously if you're not quick enough to remove your hand after laying out the work. Scalding hot pipes line the walls near the floor. Contrary to Virginia law, they are not insulated, and it isn't unusual for you or your co-workers to get serious leg burns by just brushing against these pipes.

Your day at the laundry begins at 7:30 a.m. and it won't end until around 4:30 that afternoon. Your pay is an outrageous sum of 25 cents a day. At 12:30 you get one half hour for lunch, but no other scheduled breaks. Armed guards and supervisors are on constant patrol to see to it that you don't take any "unauthorized" breaks, or leave your work area without permission. If you do, you risk being put in a pad-locked room for three days, with no

book except the Bible, no recreation, a shower every two days, and a chamber pot for a toilet, which is emptied once daily, in the morning.

We asked you to imagine all this, but for many women and men the above requires no imagination. Such a place is a daily reality for captive men and women workers in every prison in this country.

Garment Workers Fight to Make Our Union Fight

By FERN MINDLIN, Rochester C.U.L.A.

Sister Fern, 17, has worked over a year in a garment plant and has been active in the Rochester C.U.L.A. organizing support for the United Farmworkers Union lettuce boycott.

I work in a clothing plant in Rochester, and conditions haven't really changed too much in the past fifty years. In the clothing industry, in the past and at present, there has been a continual search by the companies to find the cheapest labor.

We can see the economic discrimination against women by looking at the fact that women garment workers start at \$1.85 an hour, while men usually start at \$2.00. But, for both women and men, these wages are still subsistence.

We can also see the search for cheap labor causing clothing industries to move to the South and overseas. The Farah Slacks Company in Texas (a right-to-work state, which makes it hard for a union to hold a lot of power to fight for its members) hires Mexican citizens and brings them across the border every day to work in their lousy factory for \$1.77 an hour, and many times, less!! The same is true overseas, where bosses can exploit workers in Third World nations by paying them practically

nothing.

In my plant, it is very clear who has the best jobs and who has the worst. The non-white people are thrown into the hottest areas of the plant to work. The pressing jobs, that pay the most money, are all given to white men.

The same is true for cutters, who are paid the most because they are skilled workers. Out of about twenty cutters in my plant, all are men and only one is Black.

Here in Rochester, the union leaders have now forgotten a lot of the union's heritage in fighting for the workers. The threat of companies moving to the South and Southwest and overseas, as they have done, in search of cheaper labor, makes the union leadership feel like they can't do anything for us. If they did, that would jeopardize the company.

But the union leaders also understand that in order for the workers in the South to fight the greedy bosses, the workers need a union, and the Amalgamated is currently involved in organizing the workers at the Farah Slacks company, the largest manufacturer of men's slacks in the world, with plants in New Mexico and Texas employing 10,000 workers.

This strike is extremely important for the Amalgamated and for all workers. If the strike is won, it will make companies look twice at the southwest for their source of cheap labor.

But along with that strike, the union must realize that, although their fears of the companies leaving are justified, they must fight for the workers in the North.

What role does the once militant Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America play in fighting these conditions? Since the early '30's, the union has become more and more bureaucratic, and removed from the real needs of its members. There hasn't been a strike by the garment workers here for nearly forty years!

The top leadership has grown fat and more bureaucratic, more conservative, and more sympathetic to the bosses' problems. And the workers have become more frustrated and more exploited as a result.

These conditions will only end when there is a strong union, made up of rank and file workers all the way to the top, one that is capable of meeting the special needs of women and non-white workers. Not until then will we be able to unite to fight and win against the bosses and their racist, sexist, profits-first, people-last system.

Woman Truck Driver Gets Bad Breaks

By DEB DUNFIELD, Detroit C.U.L.A.

Sister Deb has been active, along with other C.U.L.A. members, in supporting the recent picket line of the sanitation workers union—Local 26 of AFSCME. She has also been assisting her husband, an auto worker, who has been involved in recent auto plant walk-outs.

I have what most people consider a highly unusual job for a woman—I'm a truck driver. I drive a lunch wagon to different plants, shops, and offices, and the workers come out and buy their breakfasts, snacks for breaktime, or lunches from the truck.

It's really not such a strange job for women—at least not here in the Motor City (Detroit!). The pay is often higher than office work, and there are fewer supervisors than waitress work. There are hundreds of catering companies, and most of them hire women to drive their trucks.

Industrial catering is a cut-throat business. When I first started work, I was often reminded of the stories in my history books about the early days of big business. It's a lot like the days when the Rockefellers and families like them formed the huge monopolies. The way the workers are treated now is much the same—piece work, long hours, no such thing as overtime pay or an 8-hour day, pay cuts and steep competition among the workers.

In the first place I worked, there were eight drivers, and our base pay was \$2.40 an hour with a commission of one percent on anything we sold over a certain amount. The amount a driver had to sell to begin earning a one percent commission varied according to how much the boss liked each driver.

As a new worker, I had to sell \$100 worth of food. That meant that if I sold \$110 worth of food in a day (which was normal), it would add 10 cents to my pay check!

Right after I started to work there, the boss announced an "exciting change in pay procedure." He enthusiastically told us how we were going to start receiving a straight 17 percent commission on all we sell—allowing us to earn "as much as we want!"

It doesn't take much math to figure out that for most of us, that would mean a cut in pay of around 10 cents an hour. Having no union to fight this cut, and being too exhausted by the hours (4 a.m. to 1 or 2 p.m.) to put more effort into the job of selling, most of us were forced to look for other work.

I was lucky and found another job as the only driver with a small, family-owned catering company. Though my hours are shorter, I am earning about the same as before the pay cut at the other job. But, this job has its other problems.

For ten months now the truck I have had to take out on the road has had two entirely thread-bare tires. There are no windshield wipers, no heater, bad brakes on the truck, and carbon monoxide leaks in through a badly rusted floor.

The carbon monoxide which leaks into the truck leaves me with a headache and dizzy feeling everyday which takes hours to go away after leaving work. My boss, though, who drives the truck occasionally, insists there is no leak—in spite of the fact that I can see the bluish gas fumes! In a larger company the drivers could get together and refuse to drive until the trucks were repaired. With only one driver, though, it's easy for the boss to replace the staff!

Most of the stops on a route are timed stops. That means that the truck must be at the door waiting at the exact minute that the break-time whistle goes off, or else the workers get no food and the driver makes no money. If a driver misses a stop like that even a few times, she'll lose it to another company because there is such extreme competition among drivers to pick up more stops and make a little more money. As a result, every driver is always in a great rush.

Supervisors (who drive the trucks if the drivers are absent) keep drivers from being absent by always showing up with food missing from the truck or miscounting it. This gets docked from the driver's pay, and no driver wants to miss a day and come

back on Friday to find that she has had from \$5 to \$50 deducted from her paycheck for missing food!

Many workers who regularly eat off the truck are sympathetic about the oppressiveness of the job—low pay, dangers, no benefits, etc., but even these workers sometimes show their prejudices.

For example, for months after I had had an accident—which was not my fault in any way, but the fault of bad brakes—I was forced to answer cracks and comments about "women drivers" when people saw the damage to the truck. After the three-hundredth comment of "Oh-oh stay away from her . . . typical woman driver!" I wanted to tell someone off—and did.

Often the men workers have the wrong impression that women work on lunch trucks to "catch a man" or to get "opportunities to run around," forgetting that we have to make a living too.

Because so many of us work at separate places, we need the support of the workers on the route if we are ever going to be able to organize successfully to improve our work conditions. The men must overcome their prejudices, respect us and fight with us.

One way we have to win the respect and support of workers along our routes is to support their fights for better working conditions. At one stop I have, when the workers were on strike, my truck never crossed the picket lines. I only served food to the workers and not to the scab foremen in the plant.

At another stop just recently, after I was sick and missed time, the workers told me that they had told my boss (who drove the truck in my place), that if he had fired me, he might as well not come back around because they wouldn't buy from him anymore!

In these concrete ways we can stick together and help each other to win better work conditions, an end to all discrimination, and decent wages.



Workers on Strike



3,000 workers, mainly Chicana women, have been on strike against Farah for over a year now. They are striking for recognition of their union, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers. The strikers themselves see it in terms of dignidad (dignity) and a question of bastante (enough) — enough of the bosses, enough of having no control over their own lives.

May 3, 1973, San Antonio, Texas—

Hundreds celebrated a year of strength and solidarity in the strike and boycott against Farah pants. It's been a hard year—a year of suits and countersuits, charges, lies, mass arrests, biased newspapers, slashed tires, pickets run down by cars, random gunshots, attack dogs, threats, intimidations and every trick Willy Farah could imagine to try to break the strike. Despite all this, it is clear that the strikers are winning. And Joan Suarez, an A.C.W.A. organizer in San Antonio, summed up the strikers' mood in saying "If it's another year or another five years, we'll see it through until we have won."

By GERRI PRESSNALL, Houston C.U.L.A.

Oyster Packers Strike for Pay & Better Conditions

By VERONICA MASON, Norfolk C.U.L.A.

Sister Veronica is a founding member of Norfolk C.U.L.A., which has supported the Miles Co. strikers by organizing a boycott of Campbell's Oyster and Clam Chowder soups. The ingredients are supplied by J.H. Miles Co., now doing all its work with scab labor. Here, Veronica interviews Ann Miller, a striker and member of Local 26, Distributive Workers of America.

Veronica: Tell me about the reasons for the strike at the J.H. Miles Oyster Processing Plant and what has been happening on the line.

Ann: Well, our main reason for striking is for better working conditions. We get no heat when it's cold and no ventilation when it's hot. We work in cold water and we have to buy all of our working tools and meal tickets, while the men get theirs free.

We wanted a raise. We get \$2.15 an hour, and when we asked for a raise, he offered us 5 cents more. In the year of '73 or '75, who can live on a five cent raise? And our Security Plan is all we have in the case of sickness. He wants to take all of that away and give us Blue Cross and Blue Shield that doesn't cover us nearly as well.

When we went out on strike he went out and hired scabs and brought them back in his own car. We tried to defend ourselves and, well, the scabs can defend themselves, too. We can't have any weapons. We can't say anything to them because the cops are there and seem to be on their side.

It seems like everybody is against us, and the only thing that we can do is picket . . . which we don't feel bad about doing. If he's losing, well, that's his prerogative. If he would only give us what we ask for, it wouldn't be so bad. Even if we hadn't gotten a raise . . . it would have been just as good.

Veronica: What demands are you specifically asking for?

Ann: Like I said, it's mostly better working conditions. Like now in the summer in spite of the heat we still have to work in the water and in the rubber gloves and boots and sleeves—which we all have to pay for. The

gloves are \$1.00, the apron is \$1.05, and the sleeves are \$1.50, all of which comes out of our pay . . . If they wear out soon, we just have to buy them again, even if it's only a week later. We have to wash our hands in clorox, and then put on the rubber gloves. Many of the women's hands get messed up, and also the oyster meat is so strong that we get rashes on our hands. If you complain to the boss, he may consider sending you to a doctor and he may not.

Veronica: What is it that you do, and what are some of the jobs in the plant?

Ann: I have worked mostly in the packing room. I've lifted 45 pound boxes of frozen meat. And I've worked on the quality sheet, which is simply picking out the bad clams, and separating the good meat and writing it down on a sheet, which is turned in to Campbell's Soup Co. And I've worked on a belt weighing the meat in the 45 pound boxes, and on the tipper tie which staples the bags of meat.

Veronica: How many people work in the plant?

Ann: Approximately 100 workers. Everyone voted to go on strike except one. The actual vote was 74 to 1. The plant is predominantly Black and the bosses are white. They never respect us. For example, when I was working in the packing room, the boss told one of the women, "When I'm talking to you, you stand at attention." She refused to do it. Another woman had to go the hospital, to recover from a nervous breakdown caused by racist harassment. When she went, they sent her discharge papers.

Veronica: What is the daily routine like?

Ann: No matter how early we get there we can't punch our cards; we have to wait 'til exactly 7:00 a.m. You have to stand in line in the packing room, and then take your card out of the rack, punch it and go on. First though you have to wash your hands (in clorox like I said before), and if



you have irritated hands you still have to wash them in that stuff. Upstairs the foreman is there to pass out your cards—you don't touch them. We have only a ten minute break and in that break you have to punch a card. If you stay out over ten minutes, even if it's one minute over, on Friday there is a warning slip tacked on to your paycheck. If you get five warning slips, then you get a discharge for two days. If you get another warning slip, you're out five days, and with another one, you're fired. Really we don't get a ten minute break. They should realize that we are all women, and we have to have breaks sometimes, you know, for personal things. But he just doesn't care. He just thinks we're animals.

Veronica: What happens if you take a day off sick?

Ann: If you take a day off, then you have to have a doctors slip to bring back. If you don't, you'll get a warning slip. If you stay out again then you get suspended. You just have to have a doctor's note. If you are not sick and you just have to take care of some business, you have to tell them exactly what kind of business you are going to do. And the secretary checks up on you. If you were getting paid when you stayed off, it wouldn't be so bad.

Veronica: What does the boss do?

Ann: Well, the only thing that Mr. Miles does is sit up in his office. He has two prejudiced foremen and they don't mind letting you know they are. They crack jokes and try to make you feel ignorant. They always ask about the Black woman's sex life. Mr. Miles has his foremen, which I consider to be nothing but flunkies downstairs, and the only thing that they do is fix the machines if something goes wrong with them. But really what they do is to sit in their office and spy on us.

Veronica: Tell me more about yourself.

Ann: Well, if I had my choice of working anywhere it certainly wouldn't be J.H. Miles. There's nothing there. You can be 98 and when you retire, you just retire. You get no benefits. Just government benefits, and that's hardly anything at all. You know, maybe if Nixon were out of the chair, things would be much better. But the way things are now, the way life is now, the way that he is making it for us, you can't plan a future. If I could plan the future it certainly wouldn't be Miles and it certainly wouldn't be Nixon in the chair.

Life would be beautiful. I would love to have a good paying job, help my husband. And I don't want my daughter's life to be like mine, I want her to have the best of everything. And if I live, I intend to give her the best of everything.

I want her to be somebody. Really, it's for that and for respect that we're on strike.

Strike for Sick Pay

By ELEANA SIMPSON, Maryland-D.C. C.U.L.A.

Sister Eleana is an office worker and officer of AF-SCME Local 1072, University of Maryland, College Park campus.

On Saturday, March 31, 1973, for the first time in the history of the state of Maryland, 3,000 public employees went out on strike. The strike was called by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees union (AFSCME), which has 9,000 union members in the state of Maryland.

The strike was called in response to the Governor of Maryland—Mandel's—statement that there would be no funds available for a pay raise.

We have no contract, so every year we have to go before the state legislature and demand that they give us what we should have been getting years ago. This year a bill was proposed which would cut our sick leave. This is about the only thing we state employees have going for us. We accumulate 30 days of sick leave a year; the bill would cut this to 15. We asked for \$950.00 across the board pay raise for a year. The governor said, "No money." We had no choice but to go on strike.

The strike was brought on because the rank and file had had it. We can't live on \$4,000 a year (which a lot of state employees do). Not with the rising cost of food, rents, transportation, medical expenses, and child care.

The strike started at 5:00 in the morning, with four hospitals going out. Picket lines were set up to persuade and prevent the new shifts from working.

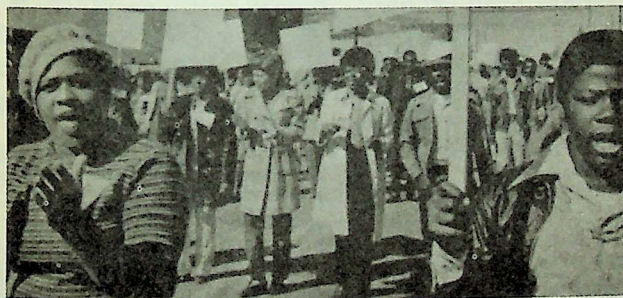
I was at the University of Maryland Baltimore Hospital, in Baltimore. We had pickets at every entrance. We managed to win the support of lots of our fellow workers who never reported to work, and either called in sick or helped us picket. After all, our fight is their fight, and they are going to benefit from any gains we fight for. We are all in the same union.

We picketed for about 10 hours in the rain. The women on the line had the most spirit and were the most militant. This was even pointed out by the men! Guess they'll think twice next time about the passive role of women.

Some deliveries were prevented. Most of the truck drivers were Teamsters and would not cross the picket line. (Absolute essentials like oxygen were let through.) Coffee and sandwiches were brought around by sisters and brothers in the union.

Around 4:00 in the afternoon, Mandel served an injunction on us which said we could no longer picket. After walking in the rain for 10 hours, being looked down on as if we were the lowest creatures on the earth by the doctors, and being constantly harassed by the Baltimore cops, we were in no mood to hear about an injunction. We had been preparing each other all day about staying and picketing around the clock. The union leadership met and decided that we should obey the injunction, much to the dismay of most workers.

It's clear to most of us that we could have won the strike had we kept on. Right now, things look pretty bleak. But we know we are the union, and we will fight to make the union fight—and next time we'll win.



Andrews, So. Carolina—Textile workers on strike against Oneita Knitting Mills fighting for union recognition march to dramatize their strike.

Wives Back Shell Strike; Stop Scabs



OCAW Wives' Committee blocks scabs' cars at the Martinez Shell refinery. (photo by Union WAGE)

Whistles at the Shell refinery blast, announcing catastrophe. Explosion at the plant. How many workers died? How many workers' wives were widowed? When the Shell workers struck to improve safety conditions, the women saw it as their strike too. The women picketed and organized a blocking of scab trucks. They even picketed the strikebreaking sheriff's office. With such active solidarity, this company had to negotiate and a settlement was reached.

Bell Workers & Users



C.U.L.A. Fights Bell System Nationally

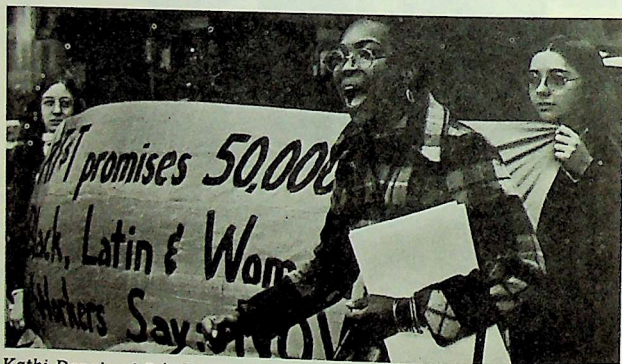


This past year the formerly invincible American Telephone and Telegraph Company has been made to bend an ear and its pocketbook to its workers and the working public through the efforts of the Center for United Labor Action, which is waging a campaign on two fronts:

For Phone Workers

Operators, plant clerks, and business representatives with the full support of the Center for United Labor Action fought for the right to be an independent party of interest in the hearings opened up before the Federal Communications Commission by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The EEOC had prepared pages of detailed evidence from telephone workers of racism and discrimination against women by this giant monopoly.

The operators filed for field hearings in New York—so that



Kathi Dennis of C.U.L.A. leading demonstration outside FCC hearings.

the operators themselves could come and speak and air their grievances, and not have to depend on a government agency to present their case.

The telephone workers made the case very clear, and came forth with testimony and demands: that they have the right to bid for the higher paying craft jobs—an end to all racial harassment and sex discrimination; an end to cable bugs on the boards and higher pay for their essential service.

The field hearings in New York lasted a full week and were followed by hearings in Washington, D.C., where company executives tried to refute the evidence against them. These executives never had a chance because the operators and business representatives were ready for them. The telephone workers held street rallies that were well attended by working people in Washington, D.C., who joined in support and made contributions to the fight.

As a result of the heat, the telephone company was forced to make an agreement for a monetary settlement to workers who had been discriminated against—but they did it in secret, with full cooperation of the two government agencies (FCC and EEOC) and never once consulted the women workers who had worked a year and a half to publicly expose the criminal discrimination they feel on their backs from this giant monopoly.

Of the \$38 million the telephone company agreed to pay, \$15 million goes to 15,000 women in craft positions and \$26 million goes to 36,000 women workers, mostly in management. Of this, 3,000 Black and Latin craftsmen will get something.

But, operators will get NOTHING. There are 65,000 operators nationally. There are 500,000 phone workers altogether. And AT&T has nearly \$50 billion in assets, equal to the combined incomes of the French and British governments—and a truck fleet larger than the U.S. army.

For Phone Users

It seems like every month, the powerful AT&T asks for more money from the public, with a new sort of cutback in services or a new kind of rate increase.

They want to raise rates, cut back message units, increase prices for what's left, charge for information calls and increase the price of pay telephone calls.

Chapters of the Center for United Labor Action have been

organizing around the country to stop these treacherous rate increases. We have been able to stop interim rate increases. We have also demanded evening public hearings so working people can attend. In both Boston and Buffalo, these rights were won.

Telephone service is a necessity and not a luxury. We must fight together against AT&T until low-cost telephone service is available for every poor and working person.

Operators Hang Up on Speed Up

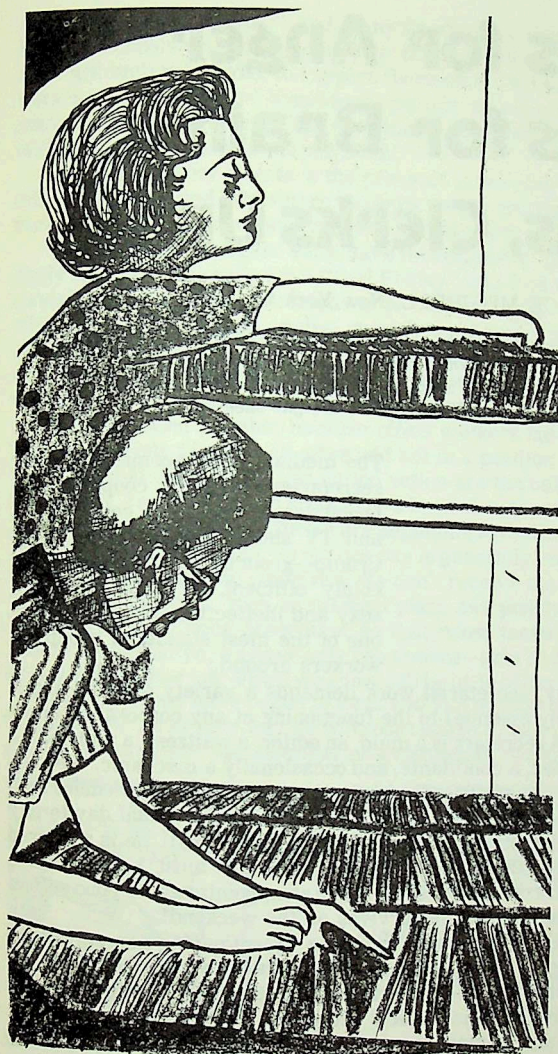
By a New York City
Long Distance Operator

On Monday night, I got taken off the board by the Group Chief to be informed that management had had a meeting where they were told New York Telephone had to get rid of 9000 workers. Then they said they took a productivity rating on all the women and found many of us couldn't meet "productivity" standards of completing 47 calls an hour. They told me mine was particularly low and reminded me that I was already on warning for low productivity.

I began to ask questions on how the productivity was taken. I finally found out that the productivity they took on me was at a position I wasn't in! I demanded to see the shop steward. The Group Chief got scared and started screaming at me in front of the whole office that I had no right to bring the union in on it.

All the women began cheering for me. So the supervisors took me to a back room for a meeting with my Group Chief and shop steward. The company-union steward was forced to support me, and we won the grievance—the productivity rating won't count for anyone.

The next night the Chief Operator called me into her office with the Group Chief and the union representative to try and smooth things out. Meanwhile, the women at the board thought I was being put on "final warning" for filing a union grievance, so seven women put in grievances so I wouldn't be the only one!



School & Office Workers

A is for ANGER B is for BRAINS C is, Clerks Unite!

By GRACE MITCHELL, New York C.U.L.A.

Sister Grace is a mother and office worker at a large NYC university. When the educational institution threatened to lay-off office workers in a budget crisis, she organized the office workers to fight back.

The media always seems to portray secretaries in only a couple of different ways. Cartoons, comic strips and TV shows give us either Miss Crump—grouchy, nearsighted and coldly efficient, or Miss Lamour—sexy and ineffective. We're probably one of the most slandered groups of workers around.

In reality, secretarial work demands a variety of skills and is absolutely essential to the functioning of any corporation or industry. A secretary is a maid, an editor, a waitress, a diplomat, a researcher, a confidante, and occasionally a mechanic. We keep the vital records in order, make appointments and schedules and, in most companies, we know more about the actual day to day functioning of the office than the boss ever will! He is rendered helpless without us, and seems, for the most part, to have forgotten even how to spell, make an appointment, or pour coffee. One wonders how he survives on the weekend!

Until recent years, to land a decent-paying secretarial job was one of the major options held out to women as a "career possibility." All the hitherto male professions have their female auxiliaries in "The Medical Secretary," "The Legal Secretary," etc. Young women preparing for college are all strenuously

advised to "learn to type." And many graduates of some of the fanciest schools find it necessary to take secretarial training after graduation in order to support themselves. A few of these women will receive the occasional upgrade or promotion that management throws out to the ever increasing demands for an end to discrimination in employment.

But the majority of us face the prospect of working in one of millions of dead-end jobs where the work we do and the pay we receive will probably not change much for years and years.

Women who do clerical work have it even worse. Often they apply for a job that calls for a "Girl Friday" and find it to be a straight clerical job combined with "errand girl" responsibilities. Or, if a woman applies as a clerk, she may be told to perform another job as well—with no salary increase. File clerks, bookkeepers, switchboard operators—all are skilled workers. Yet their pay scale is at a subsistence level.

This has been possible because office workers have in the past been isolated from each other and not in a position where it was clear that cooperation and united action are the only means of survival. Secretaries and clerks have been slow to unionize to fight for better conditions. But we are beginning to realize that, in spite of the essential work we do, our pay is generally lower than that of workers who are unionized. We don't receive the benefits of the union contract, such as medical plans and pension plans. We have no grievance procedure, so that when faced with an unbearable situation, we have only two options—grin and bear it, or look for another job, which we know will be little better.

Office workers have begun to form and join unions to be able to change our conditions, and we will soon realize a more realistic picture of ourselves—as essential and competent workers.



Teachers & Aides Fight Together

By BETH MARINO, New York City C.U.L.A.

Sister Beth, shop steward, instrumental in organizing Local 1707 at the school for mentally retarded adults where she teaches, is currently on the negotiating committee fighting to upgrade the salary of the lowest paid workers—the aides.

One teacher was fired. Then another. And then two more—all within the space of one year. Fear and panic spread among all of us. Who would be next? What could we do to stop this?

These were the conditions we were working under a year ago at the center for mentally retarded adults in New York City. We teachers and aides, with classes located in all the boroughs, were isolated and apart from each other. Often we didn't hear that someone had been fired—that is, until it was too late. And this was the way management preferred it.

But then Jim was fired and the news traveled fast to all the centers. We began to talk about how outrageous this was and so a number of us spoke to him to see what we could do to show support. He seemed to be resigned to his dismissal but strongly suggested that we do something to protect ourselves. The answer was obvious—join a union.

A few of us did some scouting on unions available to us. Since other teachers in the agency were already unionized, it seemed logical that we join the same union in order to combine our strength if need be. The union was Local 1707—The Community and Social Agency Employees of AFSCME.

We called a meeting after school of all the teachers and aides and a majority attended—even coming all the way from Far

Rockaway. The bosses' firing policies were vigorously denounced and many other cases of injustices were aired as we sat crowded together in a small apartment. We brought union membership cards with us and when anger reached its peak, we quietly handed them out.

It was decided that we would all return the cards a few days later—either signed or unsigned. It became a snowball type of action—the ones who signed influenced others to do the same. The result was a unanimous decision to unionize!

From that moment on, a fighting spirit prevailed that had never existed before. The mere knowledge that we were unified, despite not being recognized, was enough to bring about a show of strength which immediately began taking its toll on management.

The end of the school year was fast approaching and we knew management would stall over the summer rather than recognize our union. I'm sure they hoped that our fervor would die out. During the last week of work, they abruptly fired another woman teacher who had helped to organize the union. She was given no warning or notice—everyone was furious!

Another meeting was called and once again we crammed into one of the teachers' apartment and drafted a letter to the boss which strongly protested his latest action. Every single worker signed this letter—even those just hired and still on probation.

Last fall, after vacation, we persisted in our struggle for recognition. Our case was taken to the National Labor Relations Board for a preliminary hearing at which management tried to divide us by stating that the senior teachers were really supervisors and hence not in the bargaining unit.

When they saw that this tactic wouldn't work, they offered us an already existing contract negotiated by other teachers within the same agency. This strategy was a force measure used to lure us away from winning our own demands. Yet time was running out on us. We weren't recognized, we hadn't received our raises and if we didn't accept this contract, they would hold out on us for months. We finally voted to gain the strength by joining the 50 other teachers.

Since that time we have worked hard to make the bosses stick to that contract. We've seen to it that our working hours are stabilized, that lunch hours are given and that paid holidays are observed. We've seen that it requires every bit of energy we have to force them to keep their part of the bargain.

Presently, we are engaged in a wage reopener of our two year contract. Our key demand is to close the gap between aides and teachers' salaries. We say that the difference between the two categories and the work involved is much less than the salaries indicate. Of course we want to raise *all* of our salaries but feel that the greatest emphasis should be on doing away with the meager crumbs given to the aides in our schools.

The bosses are trying to tell us that they have the pie and can only divide it into so many pieces. That may be so, but we'll see to it that the pieces are more equal and not just crumbs for anyone!

Busing - The Right to Choose

By EDITH MAZZINO, New York City

Sister Edith, an office worker in a major insurance company, has a son and daughter in the New York City public schools.

I am a working mother with two children in public school in New York City, and, given the Board of Education's unwillingness to improve our deteriorated schools, I certainly support the right of Black children to be bused to better schools if their parents want it. I'd like to tell you why.

In September, 1954, I was just a little girl when the first Black children passed through a crowd of screaming whites, to attend a formerly all-white school in Little Rock, Arkansas.

In September, 1971, I had children of my own in school, and the fall term started with the dynamiting of 10 school buses in

Pontiac, Michigan, by the Ku Klux Klan in opposition to busing. As the school year began in 1972 in N.Y.C., white parents, organized by members of the Conservative Party, barred the way to a bus of Black students attempting to go to a junior high school in Canarsie, Brooklyn. And I was horrified when a school bus in Ozone Park, Queens, was attacked by whites, sending several very young Black children to the hospital.

I watched the papers to see the government's reaction to this violence. I wasn't too sure about busing at this point, but I certainly was outraged at these attacks on children. But no press conference was called to solemnly announce that the laws of the land would be enforced and the bus-bombers punished—just the opposite.

Instead I read that Nixon's reaction was to call on the Supreme Court to declare a moratorium on integration decisions that might lead to busing. Federal officials didn't even criticize the Pontiac Police Officers Association which donated \$300 to the anti-busing campaign. Nor did the F.B.I. explain why its undercover agent in the Klan had not done anything to prevent the planned dynamiting.

I went on to read of new cutbacks in spending for education budgets in every state, and much less money for teachers and aides. On March 21, 1973, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of school budgets raised through local property taxes, even though it freely admitted that this results in discrimination against children in poorer communities.

But I didn't have to read about it. My children's school is vastly overcrowded. Money for school lunch programs is being cut, with meat being replaced by cake. I could see how dilapidated, unsafe and overcrowded were schools in poor and working class areas of the city. I could see that schools in Black and Latin neighborhoods were the worst and understood the courage of Black parents in their fight for busing.

In Pontiac, Michigan, a white group called N.A.G. (some of its leaders are actually in the Nazi Party) practically shut down production at Fisher Body and Pontiac Assembly auto plants for a day in opposition to busing Black children in Detroit.

Does General Motors care about the children of auto workers, many of whom are Black? From pollution to low wages, the answer is—no. The children of GM owners, certainly don't go

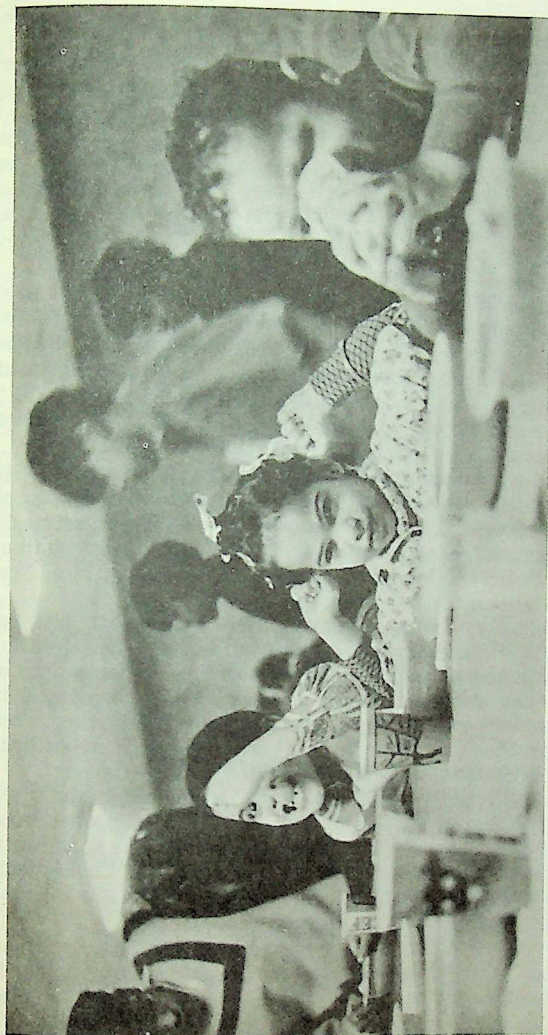
to rundown schools like my children do. In fact, Black children aren't even bused to their private schools. Even more, does this tax-evading company with its millions in profits give up one cent to the public schools to improve them? No, ma'am, it's the tax money from the Black and white auto workers that pays for every school book and eraser.

GM ignored the work stoppage and posted anti-busing leaflets on company bulletin boards to keep Black and white auto workers at each other's throats, instead of uniting to fight for better conditions. It's the same way racism keeps parents apart in the fight for decent schools. No white worker at GM got better schools because of that work stoppage. But imagine a strike of Black and white auto workers demanding GM pay for better schools!

In the Black, Puerto Rican, Chicano and Native American communities there has been opposition to busing. This anti-busing feeling is far different from N.A.G.'s. Many times busing is just a token gesture towards integration that does not consider the needs of the communities themselves. For non-white children, busing has often meant going to schools where all they face is hostility. In the South, it has meant that Black teachers from Black schools are fired when "integration" takes place, and the children are subject to prejudiced teachers.

At the school my kids go to, the majority of students are Black. The parents there overwhelmingly rejected a plan to bus children outside the district. The school day has been shortened because of budget cuts, so this choice was hard to make.

It's been a long time since I was that little girl in 1954. The fight for a decent education for all our children is still going on now. Black parents and their children, the ones who suffer most, have the right to decide for themselves how to end the discrimination. There have been many picket lines at the Board of Education in N.Y.C. by Black and white parents and students. Small victories, such as the reopening of a shut school or program, have been won. We can win more!



On the Home Front

Rollback Food Prices 25%

By CLAUDETTE FURLONGE, Women United for Action

Sister Claudette, young Black woman and founding member of Women United for Action, has been fighting high prices, discrimination in pricing and poor food quality since the organization was formed in August, 1972. At time of publication, Women United has launched a drive against rising milk prices.

Imagine seeing a sign in the window of your local supermarket that read "FOOD SALE—25 PERCENT OFF"? Sound like a dream? Well, we are working to make it happen.

During the national meat boycott April 1-7, we distributed over 100,000 leaflets in New York City alone to enthusiastic shoppers at supermarkets. And on April 7, Saturday, we led the largest single protest against rising food prices in the country: a march from Macy's in Herald Square to the meat packing district of New York City.

The national meat boycott and the march are just the beginning. We have shown what strength we have, how deep our support is, and our will to fight. The national organizations of bosses—like the Cattlemen's Association—are beginning to recognize the power we working mothers and housewives united have, for when they came to New York to try and "tell us their side" we debated with them and defeated them in argument.

The cattlemen—who are not small ranchers nor small farmers who themselves have to fight the large monopolies from being swallowed up—in fact own such ranches as the King ranch in Texas, which is larger than the entire state of Connecticut. They pointed to us and said "what about the layoffs in the meat packing industry that your boycott caused?"

We answered that we had spoken to the butchers and had found out that the boycott was the bosses' excuse to layoff workers who had in fact already been automated out of their jobs. We sent a telegram of solidarity to their union, Amalgamated

Meatcutters, expressing our sympathy—for we know how hard it is to feed a family on unemployment benefits—and our wish to make a united struggle against the bosses who had increased the price of meat with one hand and laid them off with the other.

A 25 percent rollback can be won—surely it's not too much to ask from the \$130 billion a year food industry! The actual facts are that advanced technology in agricultural production has made foods of all kinds cheaper to grow and process, and has actually made it quite possible to provide everyone in this country with good plentiful nourishment.

But as we know only too well, this great progress has been used exclusively to make greater profits for large farming interests and for giant food conglomerates and supermarkets. Instead of going down, food prices are skyrocketing!

Our organization, Women United for Action, was formed after a number of women, so disgusted and angered at the outrageous food prices, decided to organize to fight rising food costs. As working women, working mothers, welfare mothers, housewives, and students—Black, Puerto Rican, Chicana and white women, old and young—we've had enough of racking our brains each week trying to figure out ways to stretch out our dollars to pay for decent meals for ourselves and our families. And we know that millions of people in this country have too. The whole family suffers when food prices rise, but it's us, the women, who most feel the daily responsibility of putting good meals on the table. We hope to unite thousands of women to fight not only to lower food prices but eventually to fight other injustices that particularly affect women.

Several months ago, we undertook our first campaign: Operation Food Price Rollback which called for a 25 percent rollback of all food prices. And if enough of us get together and fight for it, food prices *can* be rolled back. Many things that are often taken for granted today such as social security, a minimum wage, the 8-hour day, and unemployment benefits were once unheard of. But today, because of the united struggles of working people, millions enjoy these benefits. If the millions of shoppers were as organized and determined to win as the handful of food chain owners are to cheat us—we would win our demands.

In order to reach out to other women with our campaign, we printed up a leaflet which called not only for a rollback but other demands that exposed all the other ways chain stores try to get

rich. For example, because supermarkets in poor communities charge higher prices for inferior goods than those in richer neighborhoods, we're demanding that chain stores charge the same prices in all neighborhoods—25 percent less than the lowest now charged. With prices marked up on the days that welfare checks are issued, we're demanding an end to mark-ups on welfare check days.

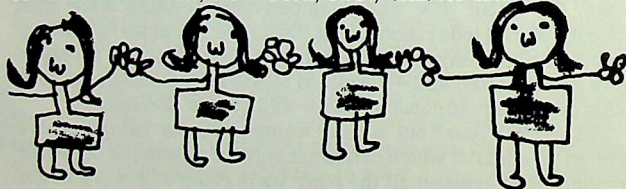
We took our demands to stores in neighborhoods where there were poor and working people, old and young, nonwhite and white. Just about every shopper shared our feelings about the rising prices and was glad to see that finally someone was doing something to fight against this daily robbery. Across the nation, women began to get together and many campaigns were started.

In August and then again in October, Women United for Action took the issue of rising food prices directly to Washington. On October 14, over 100 women from all over the country picketed outside the White House to demand that Nixon issue an executive order to rollback food prices 25 percent.

We did research on food prices and the food industry, and came up with many concrete examples of how agribusiness and government work hand in hand to rob the shopper and increase their profits. For instance, is it any wonder that the President's Price Commission granted Pillsbury an 11 percent increase on their flour products during the so-called Phase II price and wage freeze when the Secretary of Agriculture, Earl Butz, is on the Pillsbury Board of Directors?

Recently, we felt there was a definite need to focus on one aspect of the campaign and launched Project Equal Pricing which will fight the practice of price discrimination in different neighborhoods. Every poor and working woman who shops knows that prices vary in different "links" of the same food chain and that they are higher in the oppressed communities.

For further information, contact: Women United for Action, 58 West 25th Street, New York, N.Y., (212)989-1252.



NO Baloney for OUR Children

By DIANA LEECH, New York City

Sister Diana, the mother of four school-age children, wrote this letter to the Center for United Labor Action in outrage after Nixon cut back the milk program for public school children.

Dear Sara,

I'm glad to hear everybody is fine in your family. But I must let you know that I'm fed up and boiling mad the way things are going! Trying to feed a family of growing kids seems to be getting more and more impossible and involved with all kinds of decisions that I don't remember my mother having to deal with. It wasn't easy for her, she also had to worry if she was going to be able to put enough food on the table. At least she knew that if she put some food in her kids' bellies, it was halfway nourishing. Today, we don't know if we are eating plastic, cardboard or sawdust and a few chemicals thrown in for flavor. I know, I'm exaggerating somewhat, but not as much as I wish I were.

You know, I've been sending my kids to school every day with their 50 cents for school lunches. I understood that these lunches were hot, well balanced and nutritious, so I did not feel so bad if I gave them soup and a sandwich for supper on days when I would get back late from the laundry or store. However, one day I had to go down to the school and it was about lunchtime. My youngest had a doctor's appointment that afternoon. I went to the lunchroom to get her and there to my dismay, I saw the "hot lunch" for that day. . . two slices of dry white mushy bread, two slices of the very cheapest bologna and some greasy home fries, no doubt left overs from yesterday—dessert—canned peaches (soaked in sulphur dioxide) and milk! OK! The milk was great,

but where was the hot, balanced, nutritious lunch that is supposed to be provided for the children?

I asked the supervisor about this and was told that the kitchen wasn't organized yet and that they would be serving hot lunches later on in the year. I'd like you to know that this was not at the beginning of the year, nor was this a brand new building . . . that school has been around for at least fifteen years.

Humph! You know, Sara, I could have served a better lunch for 50 cents and I'm not subsidized nor could I get it wholesale like the school does. It makes me so mad the way our kids are being cheated and denied what should be the right of every child on this earth.

We all have to eat, of course, but not all of us have to feed a family of five as in my case day in and day out and have to worry about whether they are getting healthy wholesome food and nourishment not to mention all the trouble it takes to shop, plan, and cook. I'm not even going to talk about the constantly rising food prices that are torturing us every time we go shopping. It was bad enough with the daily grind of having to figure out what to feed the kids, but now you have to run from store to store to get the best prices. They should hand out free tranquilizers before you go into a supermarket, cause you could have a heart attack or a nervous breakdown from the shock of the prices.

Not only is everything so expensive, but we can't even trust what we are buying. Every other day it seems that the government is ordering the withdrawal of various food items because they found contamination of some sort in the product.

When you think of it, it is pretty inhuman that a person's health depends on how many dollars he has in his pocket. . . it's pretty barbaric that a child goes to bed hungry or full depending on whether his parents have those bits of papers called dollars or not.

What kind of a society do we live in that would let a baby go hungry and in some cases starve to death because its Mama does not have those bits of paper. . . that those bits of paper are more important than the only thing that is real . . . human life? . . .

With love from all of us,
Diana

Day Care Is A Mother's Right

By SHARON EOLIS, New York City

Sister Sharon has worked for over 10 years in pediatrics and the emergency room in a New York City community hospital. She is a supporter of community control of the hospital, was instrumental in organizing nurses into a bargaining unit, and is a supporter of the hospital workers union. She initiated setting up a Saturday Day Care center in her neighborhood.

The need for day care for working mothers in the U.S. has become a necessity and not a luxury. At the present time women make up 42 percent of the work force in this country. More than half of these women are working mothers; many are heads of households. The big question we face is how and when to find day care for our children.

We need day care facilities that are readily available and low cost in our neighborhoods. There are some state and city funded day care centers, like Head Start programs. Private industry rarely provides day care for its employees, but Tyson Food Inc. in Springdale, Arkansas, does. (This company subsidizes and provides a facility for fifty children, ages 2-6 years, five days a week from 5 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.) This is one of only a dozen companies around the country providing this service to their workers. This is a very insignificant number of companies in the U.S. The cost to mothers in most of these facilities is from a lunch fee to a sliding scale based on income.

There are also some labor unions that have set up day care, like the facilities in Baltimore, Md., run by the Baltimore Regional Joint Board of Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America. They set up the first center in 1968 with a capacity for

240 children. Since then they have expanded to several other centers. Their goal is to serve 2,000 pre-school children in their union's jurisdiction. Parents pay a token fee; the rest is covered by a special fund provided by the union and the employer. These centers offer educational, social, nutritional and health service to working mothers. Chicago Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America has also set up several centers that are located near the factories where many mothers work. United Federation of Teachers in New York City runs a day care program (city funded) for its teachers who work in poverty area schools. This program is not well attended by the teachers, so it is open to parents in the area. At least 50 percent of the children enrolled are from families that fall on or below the poverty line.

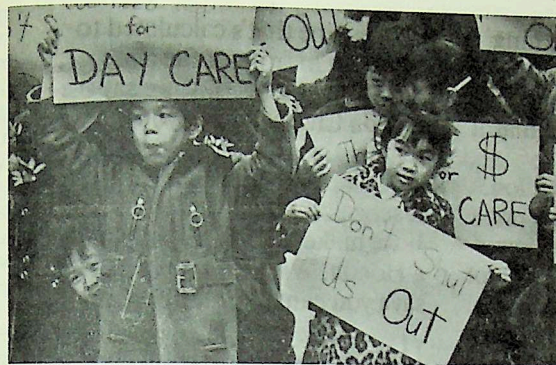
Many communities have day care centers with some staff hired and the rest filled in by volunteers or parents who work part time. Of course there are private nurseries, but most of them are expensive and therefore not available to working mothers.

When all the above facilities are not available, many working mothers are forced to find neighbors or relatives to watch their children while they work. As we know, often this is an unsatisfactory solution as the women who take in children usually have all they can do to handle their own, and don't really have the time, energy, funds or space to care for more children.

We need day care centers that are well staffed. Some staffs are fully trained teachers, teachers aides and volunteers. Most of the centers have members with teacher's training, others have aides with little or no training. Some have health workers, social workers available for consultation or on the premises. But, in order to go to work without constant worry, working mothers need to know if there is enough staff available to give adequate attention to the children.

After having considered many of the physical aspects necessary for day care such as space, cost, staff, convenience, it is necessary to look into the question of who controls the program.

Working parents must have a say in setting up and implementing the program. It is important to know if the staff reflects the nationalities of the children in the center. For example, if the majority of the children are Spanish-speaking, is the staff bi-lingual? Are the programs planned to teach the children respect and pride in their own history and culture? Do



books and toys and pictures reflect the background of the children, especially if the children come from Black, Latin or Asian communities? In listing these needs and asking the above questions, a mother can see that most of these problems are unanswered by the present day care facilities in the U.S.

In many countries around the world, much time and energy goes into planning day care facilities that not only make it possible for women to work, but also that make the care of children a high priority. Although there isn't much information available, it is worth mentioning the following countries—Japan, Sweden and Poland. For example, the city of Tokyo, Japan, has 600 day care centers while New York City has only 400 (and about fifty of them will be closed before this is printed). Some of the centers in Japan are run by industry, like the Sony corporation. Most of them are located near the work place. In Sweden and Poland the cost is nominal and therefore not a factor in the mother's decision to send a child to day care.

As can be seen in other countries they have made strides that in many ways surpass the progress in day care here at home. These countries are attempting to meet the needs of working parents as well as develop healthy, happy, educated children.

We must continue the fight to keep what day care centers are now open, at fees we can afford, and at the same time demand the right to implement the kinds of programs we want for our children.

Day care must be available to all working mothers.

Black Mothers : Facts on Sickle Cell Anemia

By BAYINNAH SHABAZZ, Albany C.U.L.A.

Sister Bayinnah has recently enrolled in medical school to study to become a doctor. She plans to make sickle cell anemia, one of the oldest health problems Black people face, her major concern. The racist U.S. government has known about the anemia for decades—and although there were more cases of sickle cell anemia than cystic fibrosis or muscular dystrophy in 1967, the government allocated 90 percent less money to research its cure.

Sickle cell anemia is an inherited abnormality that causes a slight change in the body's hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is the part of the red blood cell that carries oxygen to the cells, tissues, and organs of the body. It is the hemoglobin that gives blood its red color.

The abnormality in the hemoglobin is caused by a change in one gene. Genes determine the body features such as skin, hair, size, etc., and are passed on from one generation to the next. In normal blood hemoglobin, the red blood cells are round and very flexible. The sickle cell gene alteration can cause these normally round cells to become inflexible and crescent or sickle shaped. These affected cells maintain the usual roundness of normal red blood cells except when there is a shortage of oxygen in the body. Then they will begin to change to the sickle shape.

The gene for sickle cell can appear in two forms—sickle cell trait or sickle cell anemia. In sickle cell trait there is one normal gene for hemoglobin and one gene for sickle cell. (All characteristics are determined by at least two genes.) A person with the trait has enough normal hemoglobin being produced so that the cells carrying the hemoglobin will usually not sickle. Thus a person with the trait is usually perfectly normal.

Unfortunately, someone with sickle cell anemia has no

normal hemoglobin gene to mask the two abnormal ones. Under low oxygen conditions these cells will sickle and become inflexible. Because they cannot bend easily, they jam up tiny arteries and veins and slow down the blood circulation to areas such as the abdomen, hands and feet. This produces painful swelling, fever and jaundice. This is called a sickle cell crisis and can last anywhere from a few hours to a week.

A crisis can be brought on by a shortage of oxygen to the blood. This can be caused by strenuous exercise at high altitudes, unpressurized airplane rides, deep sea diving or being under a general anesthetic during surgery. Infections, other illnesses and pregnancy may also precipitate a crisis. (Since the birth control pill simulates pregnancy, women with sickle cell anemia or trait should consult their doctor about other forms of birth control.) In some extreme instances these low oxygen situations may cause sickling in a person who has only the trait. For these reasons it is wise to be in contact with a physician that knows of your condition and can be notified in an emergency.

Being a genetic disorder, sickle cell cannot be transmitted in the sense of a cold but it can be passed on to your children. A simple test requiring only two or three drops of blood can determine if a person has the gene for sickle cell anemia. It is estimated that one in ten Blacks and one in twenty Puerto Ricans carry the trait, with about one out of five hundred Blacks having the anemia. A small percentage of whites and people of Mediterranean descent may also carry the trait.

The test is available from most doctors, clinics and hospitals. These testing areas have more information on sickle cell anemia, concerning treatment and the probability of future children inheriting the gene if you or your spouse has the trait or the anemia. Although there is no cure for sickle cell anemia, there is treatment to lessen the severity and help prevent future crises that may occur. For children who have the anemia, there are coloring books that explain the nature of their illness and how far they can exert themselves in work and play.

Although sickle cell anemia is not among the high ranking diseases that plague Black people such as diabetes, heart disease, etc., it is an extremely painful and crippling illness if left untreated. Thus it is important to maintain contact with a physician or clinic if sickle cell anemia is diagnosed. In many instances treatment may be provided free of charge, or subsidized by local community testing groups.

HR-1 Legislates Slave Labor

By ALICE DIAZ, New York City

Sister Alice, a young Puerto Rican mother, fought the HR-1 bill since it first threatened. Speaking at a Human Resources Administration Hearing she said, "How is the city going to find jobs when there aren't any? The few they get will be from union-busting at \$1.20 an hour, below minimum wage and not including sick pay, vacations or raises. While big business makes super-profits, Welfare recipients will sweat for \$1.20 an hour to stay alive."

Since 1959 people have been struggling against welfare cuts. In 1968 welfare cut the flat grant of \$100 a year for clothing. Over 10,000 people marched through the streets on Fifth Avenue to protest the cut. In 1969 the NWRO (National Welfare Rights Organization) was formed where people united in a common struggle for welfare rights.

President Nixon has a bill pending in the Senate for approval which will provide an annual income of \$2400 a year for a family of four. This comes out to about 19 cents per meal per person. The Bureau of Labor Standards says that a family of four needs at least \$6,900-\$7,300 per year to live comfortably. Nixon's HR-1 bill not only provides less for the poor but it will also wipe out the food stamp program. It will send mothers and pregnant women over 19 years of age to work and training programs. However they can only work long enough to pay the state back for the welfare grant. This is a direct attack on women with children, since nearly 50 percent of welfare families are headed by women.

Day care grants will be a set amount (\$30 in Calif.) and anything higher would have to be paid out of the welfare recipient's own pocket. The blind and disabled will also be

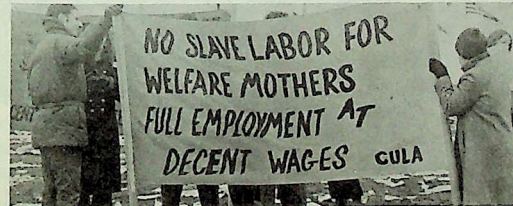
required to register for "rehabilitation programs." The welfare recipient will work for three quarters of the minimum wage at private businesses. If he or she refuses to work they will be cut off welfare. Emergency and special grants which are now provided in cases of fire, theft or hospital expenses will no longer be in effect. Those recipients who are not found jobs in private industries will hold jobs that city employees were paid to do. These jobs are cleaning garbage from parks and shoveling snow.

Recently the states, with federal approval, have tried several attempts to control the lives of the people on welfare. Nixon's HR-1 bill will do just that, curb the life style of the welfare recipient to meet that of a trained dog.

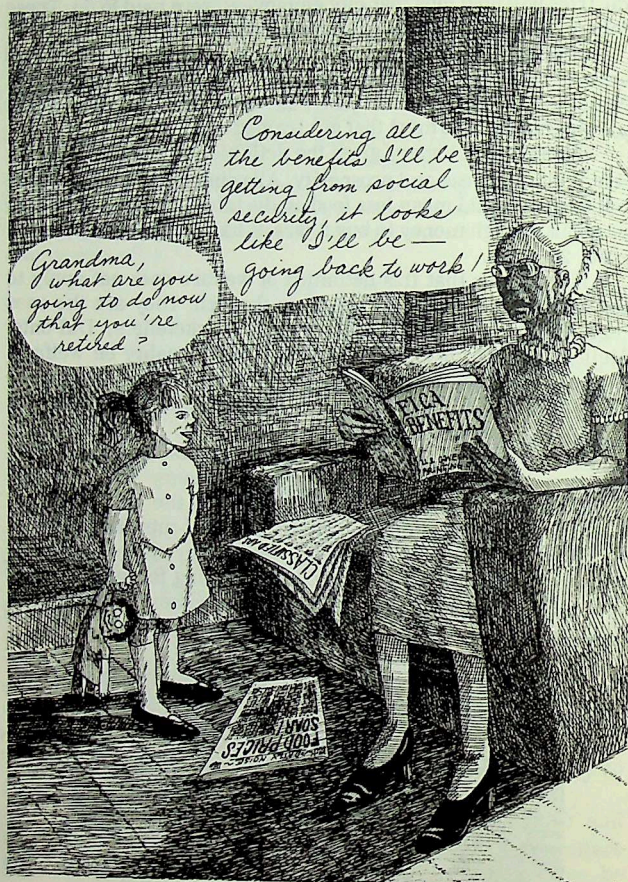
Webster's dictionary gives the definition of welfare to mean that it is happiness and prosperity. Allowing Pres. Nixon's HR-1 bill to pass would mean less food on the table of those on welfare or about enough money to buy 2 jars of baby food and that alone costs 25 cents.

It's obvious that this definition of welfare does not apply to the welfare recipients but rather to the rich. They are the ones that are happy and prosperous. The Rockefellers, DuPonts, Mellons and Fords are the ones that are in reality on welfare. These are the lazy recipients who don't want to work; they're the recipients of the billions of dollars that they steal from us every day of our lives.

Our taxes are poured into wars, and now that the war in Vietnam is over, instead of pouring the money into domestic development they still pour our money into the war economy. Welfare recipients are sick and tired of benefit cuts. They will not put up with Nixon's HR-1 bill which will not even meet the basic daily needs to survive on. They are beginning to fight back not only welfare cuts but anything else that the bosses and politicians scheme up to repress the poor and working class.



Rights We've Won- Rights We'll Win!



Social INsecurity

By ELIZABETH ROSS, New York City

Sister Elizabeth, waitress, factory worker, and lab technician, is also a proud grandmother of Kitty, aged four.

When the New Deal politicians, back in the 1930's, told us we were going to have protection through Social Security "from the cradle to the grave," it seemed to us a wonderful thing.

There wouldn't be any more grandparents living with their children's families, hiding in back bedrooms when company came, trying to earn their keep by washing dishes and babysitting—fearing all the while that their children might be looking forward to the day when they would die and no longer be a financial burden to the younger generation, who had plenty of problems of their own.

And there wouldn't any longer be that other dismal alternative—the Old Folks Home, where everybody was miserable, but especially the elderly women because most of them, having spent the greater part of their lives with children, watching them grow and ripen, were cut off from the vital meaning of their existence and condemned to wither along with their equally hopeless peers.

Nor would there be any more chronically sick people running up bills they couldn't pay, relying on their relatives to help them out. Social Security would take care of them, too.

Of course, the advanced European countries had already instituted Old Age pensions and sick benefits many decades earlier; it took a ten-year depression with food riots and unemployed demonstrations and marches on Washington to put the

fear of God into the U.S. Congress. Those hard-nosed, brazen-voiced demagogues only acted at last when the hot anger of America's working people set a fire under their coat-tails.

But the men who vote themselves salaries of \$42,000 a year have a different idea of how much it takes to feed, clothe and house an elderly or sick person than you or I might have. Although Social Security benefits have increased since the 1930's they have always lagged way behind the cost of living.

A White House Conference on Aging recommended in 1971 (and we all know how much rents and food prices have gone up since then) that a retired couple should have at least \$4,500 a year to live above the poverty level, and a single person needed \$3,375 a year.

So how do our needs compare with what we get? The *average* Social Security check is now \$150 a month, or \$1800 a year—\$2575 less for a single person than Nixon's own Conference on Aging decided two years ago was necessary and decent! The *minimum* Social Security check is \$65 a month—or \$780 a year!

So, of course, the recipients of both the average and the minimum Social Security checks must usually continue to work after "retirement." But if anyone earns more than \$2100 she or he will lose part of the Social Security check, or on earning \$2,870 will lose all of it. So no matter how we manage it we are condemned to an old age of poverty or continued hard work.

This is particularly hard for women, because on the average they earn less than men, and therefore receive less in benefits. Mr. Nixon would tell us to go live with our children's families, but that indignity is what we all believed was ended forever!

The government doesn't go out of its way to inform people of their rights under Social Security, and if you don't read or speak English well, or live way out in the country, or haven't had a high school education, you're not likely to be well-informed on the subject. For instance, most people think Social Security is only for the aged. They don't know it's supposed to help those who are physically or psychologically ill.

A friend of mine has a grandmother who is 59 years old, and so crippled with arthritis she can't hold down a job. She had no idea she was eligible for Social Security until her granddaughter told her she might have been collecting it for three years. She thought she had to wait until she was 62.

People over 65 have the great opportunity to get in on



Medicare (so long as they pay \$5.80 a month out of their Social Security checks for it). Medicare is supposed to be so much better than Medicaid. It pays 80 percent of medical bills in any year after you yourself have paid \$60. Last year, I, who am 67 years old, had a medical bill of \$270. After paying the initial \$60, I naturally expected that Social Security would pay 80 percent of the remainder, but to my surprise they only paid a little more than 50 percent of it. I phoned them to ask why, and they answered cheerfully that they paid 80 percent of "a reasonable bill," and that I should get in touch with my doctor and tell him his bill wasn't reasonable. He didn't see it that way, and still had one of those automatic billing companies send me a notice each month. So in the end, counting the \$5.80 a month insurance, I paid \$213.60 out of \$270.00.

That's the kind of thing you can expect when you're "covered" by Medicare. But of course my experience was a small matter compared with what happens to people who have to go to the hospital and pay \$1200 a week or more. When Medicare refused to pay 80 percent of *their* bills because they are "not reasonable," those people are in hock for the rest of their lives!

There are so many things wrong with the Social Security system we "enjoy," I'm sure I can't list them all. For instance, because so many people (especially women) can't live on their monthly check from the government, they have to work besides. But, as I mentioned before, they can earn only \$2100 a year and still keep the Social Security money they paid for all the working days of their lives. If, however, they happen to own stocks or bonds or tenement houses or an oil well, it doesn't matter how much they rake in—in interest, rents or royalties—that monthly check will still roll in regularly as long as they don't work for wages. John Paul Getty, after he retires from a salaried position, can still collect the maximum in Social Security, and I'll bet he does, too!

Questions ?? About Unemployment

1. How long must I work to qualify for unemployment benefits?
2. What conditions must be met to qualify for unemployment benefits?
3. Does my boss have a say whether I collect or not?
4. What must I do while I am collecting?
5. Am I eligible to collect unemployment benefits if I am pregnant?
6. If I don't speak English and am running into difficulty, what do I do?
7. What do I do if they deny me my benefits?
8. What next if I am denied at my local office?
9. What do I do if I am denied my benefits after my referee hearing?
10. What do I do if I went through the process alone and lost?

ANSWERS

(These answers are accurate for New York State—weeks may vary in other states. All answers are only applicable if you work in a state in which unemployment benefits are given. See chart on right to work states. Facts may vary depending on your state. Check with your local C.U.L.A. if you have additional questions.)

1. After having worked for 20 weeks (not necessarily at the same job) you can qualify.
2. You must lose your job through no fault of your own. If you were laid off, fired "without provocation," or quit with "good cause," you are eligible.

3. Yes. If you were fired or you quit, he probably will contest it. He skimmed part of your paycheck to save for unemployment payments. Therefore he stands to lose the money that you worked for.
4. You must be eligible for work and must show you are actively seeking employment. You must also show you have a babysitter for your children.
5. Only in 13 states out of the 50 (New York State included). But only if you are available for work.
6. You can demand a translator or get a postponement so you can bring one.
7. You can immediately fight for your right to collect benefits. But don't fight alone. If you anticipate that your boss will contest your case, have a representative of C.U.L.A. go with you. The first step is to go to the interview section for an interview to establish your rights. They will take down a written statement. Don't sign unless you 100 percent agree with it.
8. We file for a referee hearing to present your case. Do not go alone. It can be intimidating and run like a kangaroo court.
9. We can appeal the case to the Unemployment Appeal Board and if that fails, we can take it to the State Supreme Court.
10. We can always reopen your case or help at any stage of your case . . . and fight to win!



"Company policy . . . ladies first."

Support Household Workers Right TO ORGANIZE



No Benefits in Anti-Union States

What is a right-to-work state?

- The right to work long hours at low pay.
- The right of employers to hire women to do the same work as men for less pay.
- The right to refuse to hire or promote workers because of the color of their skin or their religion.
- The right to employ children at dangerous work without effective regulation.
- The right to pay sub-standard unemployment insurance.
- The right to pay inadequate compensation to workers who are injured on the job.

It's no coincidence that labor standards are lower in "right-to-work" states.

Non-Union States	Unemployment Insurance	Minimum Wage Laws	Equal Pay Laws	Child labor
Alabama	0	0	0	0
Arizona	X	0	X	0
Arkansas	0	X	X	0
Florida	0	0	0	0
Georgia	0	0	X	0
Iowa	X	0	0	0
Kansas	X	0	0	X
Mississippi	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	0	X	X	0
Nevada	X	X	0	0
No. Carolina	0	X	0	X
No. Dakota	0	X	X	0
So. Carolina	0	0	0	0
So. Dakota	0	0	X	0
Tennessee	0	0	0	X
Texas	0	0	0	0
Utah	X	X	0	X
Virginia	0	0	0	X
Wyoming	X	X	X	0

X means these meet the requirements.

0 means none or below requirements as indicated.

Chicana Woman Denounces Racism

By MARIA GAITAN, Los Angeles

Sister Maria, young Chicana woman, made the following address at the Labor Conference for Peace in St. Louis, June, 1972. She received a standing ovation from the delegates who supported her determination to fight racism and the REAL right to work of the Chicano people.

I am very young and I respect the older people that are here. And I also know that many of you in the past were also used as scapegoats when there were wars. There were times when the Japanese were deported. There were times when we were all "spics, wops, micks, japs, jews and kikes." And I'm telling you, brothers, that if we do not recognize the issue of racism in the Vietnam war—as one of the primary factors around which it revolves—we will never be able to get rid of Vietnam. Because it may die, but tomorrow it may be born again—perhaps within our own boundaries.

If this body does not recognize racism for capital gain as a prime target in this objective to obtain peace, the Vietnam war may end. But tomorrow, under the same banner of racist patriotism, perhaps Latin America or some other country will become another Vietnam.

The labor movement of the United States of America must recognize racism as one of the most important issues it must deal with when it vows to take a just and progressive attitude in regards to this war. Because if the working people of America do not move on the issue of racism both within and without the United States of America, and if the working people of the United States do not recognize the plight of their fellow workers around the room as their countries are being sabotaged by bombs and by Pepsi Cola, then Vietnam may end but it will begin some other place, perhaps even within our own boundaries.

Black, Chicano, Asian, and other minority groups will not be able to relate to this conference whose main objective is peace,

and I am here brothers because we want to relate to that objective. We are tired of wars within our barrios and within our ghettos. And right now we are an integral part of this war, because for every Anglo that's sent over to Vietnam, in relation to him by numbers, 10 Chicanos are sent over and 20 Blacks. So my people are very much affected by this. We don't have the money to go to college so we have to go to fight a war. A Vietnamese never called me a dirty Mexican, right? [applause]

Ladies and gentlemen of this conference, I won't take up much more of your time, I know there's many opinions and many minds in this room right now, but I want to tell you that we have had to go to such lengths that one of our brothers had to hijack a plane in order to make himself heard. Because many times congresses like this overlook really poor people. They're not even privileged to be in unions, and they can't get jobs and cannot voice their opinions. It's for them—they elected me to come here on behalf of them—that I am here. But I want to make it very clear that Chicanos and Mexican illegal aliens—we are 97 percent illegal aliens in the whole southwest—we are not going to be Mr. Nixon's scapegoat for this war. We have signs in Los Angeles that say "peace and power for unemployed veterans." That sign is created to say "who is causing unemployment?" So they are starting to pass laws that are pointing to the illegal alien as the cause of unemployment.

Ladies and gentlemen, I will tell you that Latinos would not come to this country if they did not need jobs. Guatemalans would not come to this country if United Fruit Company did not own their souls in their own country. (applause) President Nixon and governor Reagan and other racist people begin to point to us illegal aliens, Blacks, Chicanos, as the main reason for the rise in the welfare rolls.

I want to tell him that the great monopolies of this country who are hurting labor also are the reason why this country is living on welfare too, because it is living on the blood, on the sweat, on the work of many many people around the world. My organization that I am representing has delegated me here to tell you that Chicanos with visas and without visas are here to work for peace, and we want to be part of this conference here and the organization that I hope will come out of here, because I want the organization to deal with racism and with the right of my brothers to come here and work.

Viva la Raza!

BOSSSES FIGHTING AGAINST YOU?

- | | |
|---|--|
| Rising telephone bills? | Soaring grocery bill? |
| Rising gas and electric bill? | Cheated out of maternity benefits? |
| Cheated out of Unemployment or Workers' Compensation benefits? | Company maneuvering to block the union drive? |
| Company denying Black, Latin workers equal job opportunity? | Company forced you on strike? |
| | Having problems reading your union contract? |

c.u.l.a. fights for you

....We fight rising rates, charges for 411, 20 cents for pay phone call.

....We fight rising prices in company cafeterias and picket the supermarkets.

....We will defend your rights, with a picket line if necessary.

....We will fight for equal job opportunity, and make the company pay back pay.

....We fight power monopolies, at their offices and at the rate-hike hearings.

....We fight for benefits through our Unemployment Grievance Committee, at local offices or at referee hearings.

....We will help you on the picket line, with publicity in our paper, or whatever you inform us is necessary.

To join the fight, and to meet some friends over a cup of coffee, contact your local Center for United Labor Action:

ALBANY
69 Clinton Ave.
Albany, New York

BOSTON
639 Mass. Ave.
Cambridge, Mass.
Tel. 661-6345

BUFFALO
470 Rhode Island St.
Buffalo, New York
Tel. 882-3832

CHICAGO
920 N. Cicero
Chicago, Ill.
Tel. 261-6474

CLEVELAND
P.O. Box 2598
E. Cleveland, Ohio

DELAWARE
P.O. Box 2439
Wilmington, Del.

DETROIT
103 Alexandrine St.
Detroit, Mich.
Tel. 832-4847

HOUSTON
3520 Moore
Houston, Tx.
Tel. 227-4022

MARYLAND-DC
P.O. Box 321
College Park, Md.

MILWAUKEE
P.O. Box 91663
Federal Station
Milwaukee, Wis.

NEW YORK CITY
(National Office)
167 W. 21st St.
New York, N.Y.
Tel. 741-0633

NORFOLK
P.O. Box 7002
Norfolk, Va.

ROCHESTER
292 Andrews St.
Rochester, N.Y.
Tel. 546-4759

BLOW ON THIS DOT



IF IT TURNS BLUE

COMPANY PROMISES MAY COME TRUE

Write to:

Center for United Labor Action

167 W. 21 St.

New York, N.Y. 10011

Table of Contents

RESTAURANT WORKERS	2
PLANT WORKERS	10
ON STRIKE	30
BELL WORKERS AND USERS	37
SCHOOL and OFFICE WORKERS	41
THE HOME FRONT	49
RIGHTS WON, and TO BE WON	62