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GONNA RISE AGAIN !

Economic Organizing For Hard Times
By Resources For Community Change



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GONNA RISE AGAIN!

ECONOMIC ORGANIZING FOR HARD TIMES
BY RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY CHANGE

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INTRODUCTION

What hits us first are the symptoms—at work, the line seems to move a little faster than last week; a friend tells of waiting all day at the unemployment office; balancing the budget means you have to cut back. Everybody says that times are hard.

We read about it in the paper—jobless rates the highest since the 30's; real income for working people back down to the 1964 level and getting lower; "administration spokesman" says we've got to "bite the bullet" to check inflation.

Some dreams begin to fade. Pensions that once looked so good won't make it anymore. The woman or Black person who got that welding job under affirmative action, they're the first laid off when the company cuts back. And that same administration spokesman is back again to tell us that stockbrokers are the ones hit the hardest.

Many of us—more every day—are starting to get angry, beginning to investigate what's going on. What we find is pretty startling. At the beginning of this economic crisis (the newspapers call it a "recession"), corporate profits were declining, inventories accumulating, and inflation soaring. The production of goods and services first stumbled, then fell—millions of jobs disappeared. Now profits are back up, the stockmarket frolics on the far side of a 1,000 Dow Jones average, inflation has subsided. But whose recovery is it? Unemployment continues at record levels, working people's real income stagnates, while those working are pushed to produce more by speed-ups and the like. Not only that, but compared with what you'd expect, there prevails an eerie labor peace as union leadership warns against rocking the boat. When analysed, these trends indicate nothing less than a wholesale escalation of the exploitation of already hard-pressed poor and working people by the bloated owners of industry. For such people, it's a recovery all right—in real terms, they pay their employees less to produce more.

Such developments reflect the most fundamental relationships of a system of production for private profit. That system—capitalism—has always had its business cycle with periodic crises when more goods are produced than can be sold. Many jobs are then lost. But the latest crisis has a new wrinkle. It comes at the beginning of the decline of American international power. As that decline continues, a series of increasingly severe economic downturns is likely.

On the deepest systemic levels, what appear as separate problems, such as welfare cutbacks and unemployment, prove to be inseparably linked. They are clearly rooted in the most basic, pervasive and inescapable relationship in society—the sale of our labor to the owners of industry. Each day, owners seek to extract maximum production at minimum cost. The spectre of unemployment is their whip. But that conflict does not end when the whistle blows and the new shift drifts in. Each worker is also a consumer of goods, utilities, and social services. With rising prices and cutbacks, these become less and less accessible to us all. If our job is lost, we become a direct client of the social welfare system. The connections grow tighter; the battle rages on at work, at home, and in the community.

Of crucial importance are the different ways these relationships affect us. Though our interests as workers are one, we allow ourselves to be divided. The consequences of racism, for instance, can be gross. Official figures reveal that non-Whites have nearly twice the rate of unemployment and only $\frac{2}{3}$ the level of income of Whites. Racism can also take a more subtle form, as seen by the White steelworker's illusions of power and privilege because his Black co-workers are assigned the harshest jobs at the lowest pay. Sexism, rein-

forced by ancient cultural and biological myths, is a particularly stubborn current in the economy. A government statistician will tell you that the jobless rate for women is only 1 or 2 percentage points higher than for the labor force as a whole. But the very concept of the labor force is drenched in male supremacy. For example, it defines out the millions of women working in the home who want paid jobs, as well as the mother who can't consider actively looking for work because of the lack of daycare.

This booklet is about anger transformed into resistance, about the organized response which lies on the farther side of saying, "... ain't gonna be treated this way any longer!" Here we describe organizations that have taken up the cause of poor and working people across the country. It is not a directory. Ten times as many pages could only encompass the iceberg tip of a struggle which we can but outline. The selection process has been difficult, and at times painful. In our judgement, the groups which follow are in some way unique because of their militancy, strategic clarity, or tactical creativity. The ultimate test has been the question: how would knowledge of this group's activities help other organizers?

We have tried to arrange the presentation of those groups according to our analysis of the many strands making up the economic crisis. The main division reflects what we consider the two major arenas of conflict: the workplace, including outside labor support groups; and the community, encompassing the roles of consumer and of unemployed people demanding jobs. Woven through these categories are two themes: the victims of sexism and racism require special forms of organization; and general organizations must be especially sensitive to the needs of the most oppressed among them—Third World people and women. But here it is important to make another point. Poor and working people are not merely divided—they are fractured. Besides race, sex, and nationality, there are particularly strong divisions due to age and sexual preference. The tragic social position of old people, which has many economic dimensions, must be mentioned. Nor do we wish to ignore gay men and women who are threatened by loss of livelihood because of their lifestyle. Our concentration on racism and sexism reflects especially strong movements which have emerged among women and Third World people to counter the economic squeeze.

All organizing sooner or later confronts a sticky dilemma—people's problems are immediate, yet the solutions are so complex. Organizational effectiveness lies in striking a balance between short and long-term objectives, minimum and maximum demands. This requires raising demands and winning reforms which address immediate survival needs, but do so in a way which points to the need for sweeping change. Our final goal is not reducing the unemployment rate from 8 to 3%, nor winning a cost of living escalator in every union contract, nor eliminating fuel adjustment charges from our utilities bills. Our final goal can be nothing short of full justice, of working people controlling the process of production, of meaningful, non-alienating work for all, of complete personal liberation, of an entire economy geared to meet our collective needs. We believe that these ideals can only be achieved under socialism. Our task now is to find the tactics which will instill an awareness of the necessity of new political and economic relationships, yet remember that people are hungry and out-of-work today! ☆

WHY THE CRISIS?

After years of assurance that another depression was impossible many people are wondering how it is that we're in severe economic straits again. The article below discusses some of the history and causes of the current crisis. It was adapted from Resist: A Report and Program on the Economic Crisis, prepared for District 8 Council, Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union in 1975. Since it was written, there has been some recovery for business, but conditions for working people are still grim. We are witnessing a long term assault on our rights as well as our standard of living, an assault which is not changed by temporary economic fluctuations.

The American economy grew almost continuously for the last twenty years. From World War II to the late 1960's, economic growth seemed more and more stable. American goods flooded the world. The United States became a trillion dollar economy. It appeared that almost everyone might be able to enjoy some of that affluence. Many workers shared that belief.

The illusions have been shattered. The economy is rapidly unraveling. The current economic mess has reached crisis proportions. Millions of workers cannot find jobs. Workers' standards of living have deteriorated disastrously. What happened?

HOW MUCH OF A CRISIS?

The current crisis is the worst since the Depression. Its seriousness is suggested by many different indicators.

Unemployment. "Measured" unemployment rates, have been at the highest rates since 1941. Among Third World workers and youth, the official rate is double or triple the national average. These unemployment statistics do not include about five million people who want to work but cannot find full-time jobs.

Inflation. Prices continue to soar by previous standards. It now costs about \$1.60 to buy what cost only \$1.00 in 1967. We have recently experienced the longest period of sustained inflation since they first started keeping the aggregate price statistics back in 1820.

Workers' Incomes. Workers' real incomes—wages and salaries adjusted for the cost of living—have been collapsing. The average American working family has seen its purchasing power fall back to the levels of 1964.

Industrial Production. With falling incomes, consumers can buy less. As demand has collapsed and wholesale industrial prices have soared, industrial production has been caught in a closing vise. Corporations can sell less and less at a profit so they cut back on production. The index of industrial production fell by almost 10% in the first three months of 1975, the most rapid decline since the beginning of the Great Depression.

Shaky Credit. Corporations have been trying to stay ahead of bad times by borrowing. The credit structure gets shakier and shakier. By 1974, the banks had lent a percentage of total bank deposits higher than that before the Great Depression, the highest since before the bank collapse of 1893.

International Instability. The crisis has spread rapidly around the world. The business cycles of the advanced capitalist countries are now moving together, which means that a slump in one country is quickly matched by a slump in another. To protect themselves countries try to pull inward. That only makes matters worse, for protection cuts into world exports and every country watches its sales plunge even deeper.

THE ILLUSION OF CONTINUOUS PROSPERITY

Continuous prosperity is bad for profits. If prosperity continues too long, corporate profits begin to decline. When profits decline, corporations eventually cut back on production. For those reasons alone, economic stability can't last in capitalist economies. The U.S. economy has roller-coastered over at least 16 business cycles in the past 100 years.



Isn't prosperity good for business? Continuous prosperity eventually threatens profits through the market mechanism. Individual corporations invest feverishly during a boom. When demand for their products is high, they can't afford to stop producing. All they want is profits.

Sooner or later, they begin to exhaust the reserve supplies of labor. The labor market tightens. Because no individual corporations can afford to stop producing, all corporations together sow the seeds of their own problems. For as labor gets more and more scarce, wages begin to rise rapidly, cutting into profits. And workers take advantage of labor's strength to better protect their health and energy. The capitalists begin to lose control over the work process as workers gain strength. And without control, corporate profits are threatened further.

In a market economy, there are only two possible solutions for the corporations. Competition must be restored in the labor market so that labor scarcity is eased and labor strength is undercut. And corporations must find new ways to make more efficient use of their workers. When booms persist, neither solution is possible. Prosperity protects workers from the competition of the unemployed and keeps relatively inefficient operations afloat.

In a market economy, therefore, occasional recessions are indispensable for corporate profits. As unemployment worsens, workers have traditionally found it more and more difficult to bargain effectively for higher wages or to resist "productivity drives."

For example, during each of the business cycles between 1952 and 1970, profits began to fall in relationship to wages long before the recession actually began. Profits began to decline, that is, while prosperity was still continuing.

INSTABILITY WAS DESTINED

Once we understand that corporations require occasional recessions to restore the basis for their profits, we can begin to see why some kind of crisis was destined during the recent period.

By 1966, the economy had been growing steadily for almost five years. Prosperity had lasted long enough, from the corporate point of view, and wages were beginning to cut into the corporate share of income. Economists recommended a tax increase to slow down the rate of growth. But the government was waging war in Vietnam and the Johnson Administration was afraid to raise taxes because it didn't want to call attention to the costs of an increasingly unpopular war. Recession was postponed. The boom continued until early 1969.

And the share of corporate profits in the national income began to decline. Corporations responded to the squeeze on their profits in the typical fashion. They began to speed up the pace of production. Industrial accidents increased dramatically, rising by more than a quarter in less than six years. Angered by speed-up, workers began to protest more and more militantly. Wildcat strikes spread, and work-time lost due to strikes in 1970 had risen to three and one-half times its level in 1963.

The boom could not have continued forever. Corporations had invested far too fast for their own good. Their profits were declining as a result. Workers were merely trying to defend their own livelihoods and interests. Recession offered the only hope for corporations to cut into worker strength.

THE GOVERNMENT TRIES TO HELP THE CORPORATIONS

Since no individual corporation can afford to take the first step in cutting back on production, the government tries to help the corporations by bringing about recession. This was exactly what began to happen in 1969 when the Nixon Administration took office. With business' approval, he cut government spending sharply. The recession of 1969-1970 followed almost immediately.

But time was short. Because the boom had continued so long, it would take several years for the recession to cut into labor strength. Nixon was afraid to campaign for President in 1972 with millions out of work. Besides, corporate profits had fallen to such low levels by 1969 that only the largest corporations could easily face the prospect of a long recession. Thus, in late 1970, it stepped on the accelerator again, pulling out of the recession before it had restored the basis for corporate profits. Workers, still strong, were able to secure labor contracts which protected their wages. Profits continued to fall.

The administration had few options in pursuing its salvage operation for corporate profits. It had pulled back from waiting out a sustained recession, but continuing boom would prove disastrous for profits. Nixon established his New Economic Policy as a compromise. The president assured the public, of course, that the wage-price controls were intended to protect us all from rising prices. But their real purpose was quite different. Workers had to be disciplined so that profits would recover. The administrator of the price freeze admitted last year that business "had been leaning" on the Adminis-



tration "to do something about wages." "The idea of the freeze and Phase II," he said, "was to zap labor."

From the corporate perspective, the wage-price controls worked to control labor and restore profits. But the controls also froze an economy in which many distortions had developed. Shortages became more and more acute. Strains in production became sharper. The controls were merely postponing more fundamental re-adjustments, and the postponement could not continue much longer.

In early 1974, when the wage-price guidelines were finally lifted, prices soared. Workers marched out on strike immediately, struggling to make up for their declining real earning power.

The time had come for more fundamental adjustments. From the corporate point of view, profits had not yet fully recovered. For workers, their standard of living was falling. The struggle between corporations and workers was bound to intensify.

WHY THE CRISIS IS SO SERIOUS

The preceding analysis helps explain why some kind of crisis has hit us now. It does not, by itself, explain fully why the current crisis is so severe. There are three other, equally fundamental reasons why the current crisis has had such crunching impact.

Concentration. Growing corporate concentration has had two important consequences in the current crisis. One effect seems obvious. If the economy is booming, prices are likely to rise more rapidly in a concentrated economy than in a competitive one. When the economy slumps, inflation is much less likely to slow. This helps explain why there has been a combination of rapidly rising prices and rising unemployment over the past two years. Powerful corporations, operating in protected markets, often raise their prices during the first stages of a slump—rather than lowering them—in order to protect their revenues.

A second effect, somewhat less obvious, is just as important. The size of the modern corporation makes it more difficult for a recession to weed out inefficient enterprises—and therefore exercise some of its restorative powers. When small firms meet the downturn, some inefficient firms simply close their

doors in bankruptcy. When large corporations confront recession, on the other hand, they have the resources to keep their inefficient operations afloat. Often they can't tell the inefficient from the productive. Because recession was postponed, large firms got flabbier than usual. That meant that the recession had to be even deeper than usual to trim away some of that flab.

International Instability. American corporations emerged from World War II with international power. They rapidly dominated world business, helping stabilize the world economy. But the age of American international dominance has come to an end. The world economy will never be the same. Three developments have cut away at international economic stability.

First, Western European and Japanese corporations have begun to flex their muscles. International competition has intensified. As U.S. corporations have been more and more contested by foreign corporations, the U.S. balance of payments has deteriorated. The increasingly negative balance of trade shows this trend clearly.

Second, the political dominance which supported U.S. economic power has also been dissolving. U.S. business has found its access to markets and raw materials in Latin America, Africa and Asia more and more limited in the face of growing independence and spirit in the underdeveloped world.

Third, U.S. corporations, like their European and Japanese rivals, have gone multinational. With scattered resources, they can quickly shift their capital around to void tax increases or government controls. As they move their resources, business cycles in one country echo around the world.

Leaky Growth. The growth of capitalist economies tends to leak. We have to keep pumping in air to maintain the growth. Why are there leaks in economic growth? Once again, profits help provide the key.

On one side, if profits are down, individual corporations may seek to improve their profits by trying to depress workers' wages. If each corporation succeeds at the same time, then workers as a group will have less money available to buy goods which have already been produced for the market. If they are unable to sell those goods, corporations will have to cut back on production for a while. Unless they can discover new markets with new customers.

On another side, corporations may expand production too rapidly, speeding up the pace of production, extending overtime, using up reserve workers. As labor costs rise, they may try to reduce their costs by turning toward new kinds of labor-saving machines. But this strategy can backfire. Unless the companies can find some way of increasing the productivity of a decreased number of workers.

Unless, Unless!! Those "ifs" create continuing risks for the corporations. The risks seemed remote for a time after World War II, because new markets had opened up and the Depression-War interval had provided space within which corporations could replace their inefficient operations. But the expansion of those markets slowed, and unions began to bargain for a bigger share of those "productivity gains." Profits began to fall as a share of national income during the fifties. The leaks were beginning to appear. Corporations and the government began pumping to try to keep the balloon inflated.

One effort involved government tax policy. The effective tax rate on corporate profits fell from 45.9% of corporate net income in 1961 to only 26.9% in 1970, by almost half. Oil depletion allowances, accelerated depreciation, investment tax credits—all these devices amounted to government welfare programs for corporate profits. Potential government re-

venues were given away. Tax rates on workers rose to finance necessary government programs. The "fiscal crisis of the state" emerged.

A second pumping effort has had potentially more disastrous consequences. Corporations have been borrowing money frantically to stay ahead of the profit squeeze. Corporate borrowing as a percent of total corporate investment doubled during the 1960's. Banks strained their available resources to meet the corporate demand. The growth of the sixties was built like a house of credit cards. If the current collapse of production goes much further, tremors continue to spread around the world, the house of credit cards may come tumbling down.

SO WHO'S TO BLAME?

The current economic crisis has resulted from some basic characteristics of the economic system. The economy got out of shape during the sixties because the restorative functions of recession were postponed. The growing concentration of industrial power reinforced some of the distortions of the recent period—and concentration is an inevitable companion to free market economic development. The growth of international economic instability also reinforced the recent crisis—an instability which itself flowed from the competitiveness of economic relations. Finally, individual corporate efforts to postpone their days of judgement have created a bloated debt economy stumbling, conceivably, toward an even worse collapse.

The crisis did not come about because of government "mismanagement." The causes are more basic than Nixon's corruption and Ford's stupidity. Nor did it come about because of such "accidents" as bad weather cutting into food supplies or the Arabs suddenly hiking petroleum prices.

The crisis did not come about because labor got too greedy. Looking back on the sixties, some people argue that profits began to get squeezed because labor was simply asking for what it deserves—as much of corporate profits earned off workers' labor as they could get. The structure of capitalist economics does not permit workers to seek their full share of output in ways which will secure an even and balanced growth of output for all.

Finally, the current crisis is not the fault of unskilled workers—minorities, immigrants, young people, women—who are in weak positions in the labor market. Some people blame the unemployed, but the unemployed did not create the economic system which provides jobs for fewer and fewer people. More and more, the current crisis is pitting corporations against all workers. In order to defend themselves, workers must be able to forge organizational alliances with those who are weaker, who are unemployed, who earn low wages. As long as corporations can pit groups of workers against each other, they are likely to be bargaining with a more powerful hand.

These arguments suggest that solutions to the current crisis must take account of its systemic character. If we are to do something to get ourselves out of the current mess, then we have to be able to do something about the economic system which created it.✧

UNEMPLOYMENT ORGANIZING: THE 30'S

The crisis has sparked a great deal of interest in the unemployment movement of the Great Depression. We interviewed Herbert Benjamin, elected head of the National Unemployed Council in 1931, director of unemployment work for the Communist Party, and chosen National Secretary of the Workers' Alliance of America (formed on the merger of several major unemployment groups) in 1936. His insights into the strategy and tactics of building unemployment organizations are extremely useful to a new generation of radicals.

RCC: Why did you decide to organize the unemployed?

Benjamin: You'll find in any group or socialist organization that the struggle against unemployment is always considered one of the basic tasks, for two reasons. One is that the Socialist Party or the Communist Party, a real party, is the party of the working people. It represents the interests of the working class. The interests of the working class are very vitally affected by unemployment, and therefore those people who are involved have to react to such a problem as unemployment. Number two is one of the basic reasons for the existence of a socialist party, namely, to change the system. The charges, the basis of the indictment of the capitalist system is that it does not provide security for the working class. Workers generally are subject to the whims and wills of the employing class in determining whether they have a right to earn a living or not. And so this is one of the reasons, the basis for which we as agitators, as propagandists for socialism, go before the working class and we tell them, "The system won't work, the system won't give you an opportunity to earn a living. You must change the system, you must end the capitalist system and establish a socialist system where production is carried out for use and not for profit. Otherwise, when employers find it's not profitable for them to employ you, they'll throw you out."

As a matter of fact, way back when I was a boy and first started to hear something about socialism, from soapboxes, socialist soapboxes, one of the points they would always make is that the wage slave is worse off than the chattel slave in some respects. A chattel slave is property. He costs so much, and therefore he has to be taken care of as property. He's fed and housed so his health is preserved. Otherwise the owner's out of his property. But a wage slave is not property. If he is not needed he's just cast aside and he is left to shift for himself. There is no loss to the employer. If he starves, he is just replaced. So unemployment, in that sense, is one of the basic issues on which a socialist movement has to carry on its agitation and struggle against capitalism.

And it was this attitude of ours that was charged by our critics as being the ulterior motive of socialists. But it was not an ulterior motive at all, it was the basic reason for it!

RCC: There had been other unemployed movements before you. What was it that you did differently?

Benjamin: There was a big difference between our unemployed movement and the unemployed movements in the past. What used to happen in the olden days was that they didn't go out to reach the unemployed in the community. The only people they ever got together were usually people that were already the declassed elements—those who had become permanently unemployed, the drifters, the people of the Boweries of the different cities.

It was also our attitude that was different. When the unemployment situation began to develop in the 30s, we immediately began to develop mass actions and these mass actions resulted in a mass organization. The concept we had from the very beginning of the unemployed movement—I stated it the first time I appeared before a Congressional Committee, which was holding hearings on the appropriations that were to be given as loans to the states to help them provide relief to the unemployed—was this: they asked me "What do you have to suggest, Mr. Benjamin? What do we do?" I said, "You gentlemen know, because you're not going to do anything for the unemployed until you are shivering in your pants for fear of what the unemployed will do to you." They don't do things out of kindness of heart, they do things because you have political clout. You threaten their position.

To organize the unemployed as we did in the beginning wasn't just organizing. It meant battles with the police, it meant being clubbed, it meant being jailed, it meant possibly being killed. We had two people killed in Cleveland, we had three people killed in Detroit in the Ford hunger march. We had people clubbed and beaten. In the March 6th demonstration there were about 350 people that were left laying there on the street beaten down.

RCC: With conditions as devastating as they were, how did you avoid getting too wrapped up in providing immediate relief for the unemployed?

Benjamin: We had developed two kinds of demands. We had immediate demands and we had long range demands. The political task was to make sure that the struggle around the immediate demands did not become an end in itself. They were a means to the larger and longer range purposes which was the struggle for unemployment and social insurance.

If you organized the unemployed around the immediate demands of, let us say, a relief appropriation, once you get that settled one way or the other, win or lose, most of the people fade away until the next time you had a demonstration. But when you had the issues of unemployment and social insurance, we said to our people, "now look, we're not just fighting to get a piece of bread today, we're fighting to get a long range goal." That's a process of mass education that you engage in.



We tried to create a basis for an action against unemployment on the part of both the employed and the unemployed. The unity of the unemployed and the employed is essential because the defense of the working class as a whole requires that the unemployed not be used as scabs to break down union conditions or to lower wages for the employed workers and put them in a more difficult position, vis a vis the employers in their negotiations for wage breaks. That's a political task making clear to people the political relationship between one and the other and why it's in their interest to do this kind of thing.

RCC: How specifically did you work for unity between the employed and the unemployed in the unemployed councils?

Benjamin: As a matter of fact, we didn't call them unemployed councils, we called them **unemployment councils**, and they were supposed to be councils of the employed and unemployed. When we organized a demonstration, we called on the employed and unemployed to demonstrate together. We explained to them why it was important to demonstrate in this together, and they did.

And when we organized the campaign for unemployment and social insurance then, of course, we had an issue which was clearly one of concern to all the workers, not just the unemployed. We went into various organizations of the working class: the trade unions, fraternal organizations, and others, and we called upon them to endorse the workers' unemployment and social insurance bill.

The leadership of the AF of L opposed this bill denouncing it as un-American, denouncing it as dole, denouncing it as something which would hurt the American working class. This was the most dangerous thing the AF of L could do to the worker. So, when we had this kind of issue, we were also able to use it against the leadership of the AF of L, organize movements in its support within the AF of L.

RCC: How did you present reforms like this bill to Congress?

Benjamin: We took the position that the general welfare clause of the constitution—which says that the government shall provide for the general welfare of all the people—includes taking care of the welfare of the unemployed. And the issue of unemployment and social insurance was the way in which we focused on the question of how to make the federal government's responsibilities become clear.

When we introduced our bill, we were able to set up higher standards, higher demands than what the administration or the Congress would be willing to grant. Just like when you are negotiating with an employer on wage agreements, you don't present your minimum demands, you present your maximum demands. So we had our maximum demands in

our workers' bill which provided for unemployment insurance for all workers, for all time lost, at full wages equal to trade union wages, money coming from war funds, no taxes on workers, and so on. We had the whole thing complete.

RCC: Did the local councils do anything on this insurance issue?

Benjamin: Oh, yes. The local councils had much to do with it. We circulated petitions, we went to organizations to get endorsements, and finally we went to the city councils and the county commissions and to the state governments, and we demanded that they endorse the bill. They'd give us a line how they didn't have this or that, so we said, "All right, then, why don't you endorse this bill?" So we had scores of city councils and many state legislatures who endorsed this bill.

RCC: Were other demands being made as well?

Benjamin: The demand for unemployment and social insurance was always being made, always our attention. Now, we had other slogans, other demands. We used to be kidded with a funny story about how we communists were always making all kinds of "irrelevant" demands. The story was about a Bronx landlord. The tenants in this Bronx tenement house were on strike. They wanted refrigerators, they wanted more heat, they wanted the apartments painted, they wanted all kinds of things. And also, in particular, they were carrying signs, "Free the Scottsboro Boys". Finally the landlord came to negotiate and said, "Look, I'll give you a refrigerator, I'll paint, but how in the hell can I free the Scottsboro Boys?"

In the process of our demonstrations, raising demands such as that, we popularized issues, we made them accepted by the workers. Some of these slogans became mass demands, along with these immediate demands, so that the struggles were politicized. We introduced political issues into all these struggles, and workers got their education that way. We built up a mass movement around the Scottsboro case, for example, which was one of the key movements for Negro rights in this country.

RCC: Practically, how were these ideas introduced?

Benjamin: We would raise it in our speeches, in our discussions, about why there was a relationship between the struggle for the Scottsboro boys and the struggle for immediate relief for the unemployed. We'd explain it to workers and they could understand it. We'd say, "What is the Scottsboro case about? Well it's an effort to intimidate Negroes. They intimidate Negroes because this is the way they keep Negroes and Whites divided. They intimidate the Negro people so they won't go into the struggle for the unemployed, and that weakens the struggle for the unemployed. Therefore we have to fight it."

RCC: Were you able to involve many Black people in the Councils?

Benjamin: To begin with there were a few. After a while we attracted a great number. We made a special point from the very beginning to concentrate on basic objectives, just as we had decided to concentrate on certain industries. One of the basic objectives was Negro liberation, was to end the Jim Crow system, to end the lynching system, as we called it. Poll taxes and this sort of thing.

RCC: You got into organizing the unemployed as a member of the Communist Party. What was the relationship of this type of work to the CP's other emphasis, the factory and workplace organizing?

Benjamin: The primary focus was always on the workers in industry, because they occupy a more strategic position. However, at a given time, in a given period, if you wanted to conduct a campaign, the energies and all the resources of the party might be directed at that particular job.

With factories, we'd followed a policy of concentration in which we chose certain parts of the country, in certain industries, as a place in which they would concentrate a major part of their attention. When we were in factories, we'd put out our shop papers, we'd form what we'd call shop nuclei which would carry on the work inside the factories. By the time the CIO came along, we already had good strategic positions in all these places, and we could become an indispensable factor in the organizational campaign of the CIO. However, in our work in the unemployed movement, we were able to involve larger masses more immediately than we could involve in any other way.

RCC: What was the role of the Communist Party in the unemployed movement?

Benjamin: Well, without the CP, it couldn't have been done. You had to have a political party conscious of what it was doing that gave direction to its members, that had a policy formulated in advance, knew what it was shooting at, gave guidance to its members in carrying out the policy who were going into the mass organizations. And they would carry it out, they would present and introduce the resolutions. They would argue for these resolutions, they would organize demonstrations. Without this kind of a force, of a conscious and well-organized force to do this work, you couldn't get it

done. Just an ad hoc group of people couldn't do that. They didn't have the training. It would be like raw recruits being put into a battle. They wouldn't know what to do. They can be quickly dispersed.

We didn't carry on educational work in the unemployment councils in that form. We carried out the educational work through the Party organization. The unemployed at that time did not want to be bothered with those things, only the best elements. It's a process of education that takes a long period of time. Now, we educated the masses through struggle. Then the Communist Party educated them academically through classes and lectures of that sort.

RCC: Can you tell us more about the structure of the local councils?

Benjamin: It's true that we had certain organizational concepts of the best forms of organization, but it's not necessarily true that we would make rigid rules about organization. We had to be flexible. We did not just impose our thinking on the workers, we had to learn from them. We didn't realize for a long time that the important thing was not whether we would adhere to the blueprint, but whether we built up an effective organization, responsive to the needs of the people concerned, number one. Number two, the thing that had to be borne in mind was that we had two organizing jobs. The organizing of an organization was not the main job. Organizing struggles is the main job.

The councils were really not supposed to be membership organizations, but they were supposed to be delegate bodies representing unions and other organized groups of the unemployed, in a council which dealt with the problem of unemployment as a whole. That is a correct and probably the soundest way to organize the struggle against unemployment.

RCC: So it wasn't important who was or wasn't a member?

Benjamin: We started out trying to register our members, at least. We made dues very simple. A penny a month, I think. We gave them an initiation card and registered them as members for five cents. We kept track, more or less, of the size of our organizations by the number of people who signed up on cards. We told our organizers, "Don't be rigid about this question of membership, don't insist on it." After a while we did institute certain things, like if a person came and wanted the committee to represent him or her we'd decide that they should be a member of the organization.

We did this to know what forces we had at our disposal in order to plan our work, and not so much for the money. The AF of L leaders one time spoke contemptuously about us as a five-and-ten organization. Of course, one of the reasons why these old time labor leaders wouldn't do anything about organizing the unemployed was that there wasn't anything in it for them. They couldn't collect initiation, they couldn't collect dues.

I think that this is one of the mistakes that the new left groups make. You can't organize by asking unemployed workers, who are not interested one damn bit in any of your theories of any kind, to agree to join an organization which advocates stringent rules about discipline, about conduct, about membership. You can't organize a union that way, you can't organize an unemployment organization that way. They have to be organized on the basis of its major economic purpose. This is the unifying element. This is the thing that everyone is concerned with. Some are Democrats, some are Republicans, some are Socialists, some are Communists.



The only reason people join these organizations is because they want relief, and the conditions that they are suffering from at the given time. If you do a good job in that respect, you will establish your contact, you'll establish your influence among these people. Those of them who are more intelligent, more responsive, more militant, that are willing to dedicate themselves to some political purpose—they will join a political organization.

RCC: In a typical council, on a day-to-day level, what would the most active people be doing?

Benjamin: You would always have an executive committee and the executive committee would be in a position to call for an action whenever it was necessary. Suppose an eviction was taking place. The neighbor of somebody being evicted would report that an eviction was about to take place. As many of the neighbors as possible would be called out and they would try to prevent the eviction from taking place. They would fight the police if necessary, they would bring back the furniture. If the furniture was put out on the street, they would bring it back in. The deputies or police would come again and take it out and they would bring it back in. This went on until somebody got tired of it.

Somebody would have their lights cut off. Somebody would have the gas cut off, the water cut off. We had somebody in the committee who knew how to turn on lights, who knew how to turn on gas, water, and would reconnect them.

One case, I think it was in Toledo, they had cut off the electricity of a whole community, the whole block. But the women had to do their laundry. So, they went out on the street with their laundry machines and they connected them to the overhead wires. The thing to keep in mind in this connection is that people are very resourceful. People have so much knowledge that we don't give them credit for. They may not know Marxist theory, but they do know a great deal about life and living. More than some of us, in fact. Because of our isolation in political affairs, we don't know too much about day-to-day problems of living.

RCC: When faced with a specific problem or issue, how would you decide how strong the councils would respond?

Benjamin: Well, we were not pacifists, we were anti-pacifists. We were militant and we were willing to fight when necessary, but we were very much opposed to individual acts of violence, or to isolated acts of violence, even sabotage. It helps the enemy. It gives the enemy an opportunity to break up your organization. We made a point of having anybody who advocated an act of violence immediately expelled.

We had defense squads, we did some study of jiu jitsu. At that time, women used to have hat pins, big hat pins. When the mounted police came along, they'd stick the hat pin up the rump of the horse. The horse would go up and the policeman would go down. There were things of that sort that were for self-defense purposes. We were not allowing ourselves to be beaten without resistance, but we were not advocates of violence either.

The fight is justified if it is needed. When you can't get what you want, what you need by any other way except by fighting. But when you have unnecessary fights, reasonable people won't follow you. They'll say that we are just looking for trouble.

RCC: How would people participate in the local councils? Where were the decisions and tactics worked out?

Benjamin: That would be done in the executive body. Tactics and plans would always be developed in the executive committee of the council of the branch. And then it would be presented to the body for ratification.

We didn't come into a meeting and hope that the meeting would come to the right decisions, that we would have to fight them out and debate them. We would, first of all, engage in discussions in the executive committee, and talk about questions that are going to come up. We would adopt a policy on the basis of the discussions there. By the time we came into a big meeting, we'd have a very clear discussion around a central point and we'd know whether the body would approve or disapprove. We'd always try to have something clear to present.



RCC: The Councils usually had a newspaper. What kind of information and material would you try to include in it?

Benjamin: Mostly it was about unemployed problems. It was mostly about struggles taking place in different parts of the country that we used to stimulate activities, to spread the information about what was going on. There was very little editorializing. There was editorializing, of course, but they were editorials dealing with appropriations, about the WPA, dealing with various activities of that kind.

RCC: We've been mostly discussing the Unemployment Councils so far, but there were several other unemployment organizations and national groupings in the thirties. What was your relationship to these other groups?

Benjamin: The Communist Party had members working in all the unemployment organizations. We didn't just work in the Unemployment Councils. Wherever an unemployed organization would develop, our members would join the organization and work with it and help it, while carrying out propaganda along the lines of our program. The hope was to convert the organization from whatever it started out to be, to instead become part of our organization. This is how the unification of the unemployed movement eventually took place.

We differed with the other groups in their programs. Still they contributed by their activities in building up the movement for social security. It wasn't just the Unemployment Councils who won unemployment insurance or old age pensions, it was a combination of all of these movements that did it.

We did carry on our propaganda among the self-help movement, for example. I always spoke of their organization as having a policy of a dog eating its own tail. Self-help—you have the dog turn around and eat its own tail. How long do you think he'll be able to survive on that? The fact is that a person can't survive on that kind of thing. You had to have a militant struggle to win something from the place where you could get it.

The Socialists were primarily parliamentarians, that is, they engaged in election campaigns. In effect, what they were saying to the unemployed was to wait until election time and then vote Socialist, and then they'd do something about it. But the unemployed couldn't wait. And when our organization, the Communist organization, split from the Socialist Party, it was based on the need for revolutionary mass action. Mass actions were the basic points of strategy and tactics on the part of Communists and differentiated us from the Socialist Party.

Norman Thomas was very critical of our demonstrations, because he said you can't meet the needs of people by offering them revolution; you have to give them something to eat. So what they did was to set up another bread line, a soup line. We didn't do that. We went out and we organized the unemployed themselves and we did not have soup lines. We demanded that the city, we demanded that the authorities provide these things. Now there were 181 soup lines in New York City in 1932.

RCC: What do you think were the accomplishments of the unemployed organizing in that period?

Benjamin: It will be very difficult to gather up the statistical evidence of the results because it was a political rather than a statistical thing. However, you'll find if you go through the old newspapers of the Unemployment Councils or the CP, you'll find where an announcement would be made that so many thousands of people would be taken off relief in the coming month. A demonstration would take place and the announcement of the reduction of the number of people on relief would be withdrawn.

There were thousands of demonstrations at local relief stations, when some family was denied relief and we'd go to them and demand that they be put on relief, never mind the red tape. A militant committee would come in and raise hell, shout and disrupt the office. Police would be called, battles take place and so on. Or an eviction fight—a family would be evicted. There was something like 75,000 evictions in one year in New York City alone.

Of course, we always told the masses, when we spoke at demonstrations that we were not a slot machine that you put a coin in, pull down a lever and something comes out. The achievements can't be judged that way. So, those were the kind of specific instances that could be cited to show the direct results of this work. The larger gains were a cumulative process. Direct results don't necessarily result from a demonstration. In matters like unemployment insurance, which is a very long range demand—it's here that the accomplishments of the unemployment movement can be judged.

RCC: What do you think was the effect on the people who were involved in the unemployment struggles?

Benjamin: Tens of thousands of them became members of the Communist Party. Many of them became supporters of the Communist Party without being members, and the Communist movement became very influential. The Communist Party was the most influential radical movement that ever existed in this country, by reason of all these activities in the thirties. But it's not just the unemployed, it's also by reason of the Negro movement, by reason of the organizing the unorganized, and the anti-fascist movement. One movement fed into the other. They all dovetailed together into creating a general kind of an atmosphere where the left had a

good deal of influence and had to be given a lot of consideration. Scared the wits out of many people.

RCC: Would you compare objective conditions in the thirties to conditions now and say what you think they mean for people organizing among the unemployed and in unions?

Benjamin: You just can't imitate the movement of those days because you don't have the same kind of basic objective conditions. We developed our movement because at a given time, there was a political climate that called for this. There was no organized labor movement, there was nobody dealing with the needs of the unemployed adequately. Now we have unemployment insurance, we have welfare with hundreds of millions of dollars being spent every year. We have social security which is taking care of so many of the aged, so many millions of people. There's none of the desperate need you had then.

RCC: It seems that these gains, these benefits that were fought for in the 30s are now in danger of being lost. They are trying to cut back, or wipe out altogether unemployment insurance. Ford is trying to force millions of people off food stamps.

Benjamin: There is always going to be that danger and it is something that we are going to have to do something about. But it's going to have to be in a different form. The main thing you have to do really, I think, is to develop a movement in the unions and in the trade union organizations. To work to get the unions to become more active in working on the unemployment problem. They are a force, they are a power now. Now they aren't doing a good enough job. There are ways to improve the work they are doing. But it's a very hard thing to get the unions off their rear ends, to make the bureaucrats do something. You have many indecencies in the organized labor movement. But, fundamentally the historical role of the labor movement still is a progressive role.

There is room for a certain kind of local organization, not so much for a permanent type of organization, but ad hoc organizations that deal with a specific problem in a given neighborhood. If somebody gets cut off from relief who ought to be on relief, or there is a cut in appropriations in a community, or if you have problems, well you have to act. You go into that neighborhood and you organize actions around that issue. Not so much to organize the unemployed but to organize an action. Out of that, if any organization develops, fine. But don't go ahead and set up an organization, and claim you have got an organization when you haven't got it, but it's given your own few members a new name.

RCC: A lot of people are going into unemployment organizing for the reasons you mentioned in the first question. They want to win things for the unemployed people. But, they also want to show by their struggle with the unemployed that they are the party of the working class.

Benjamin: What they should do is a lot of propaganda and agitation. Sure they should represent unemployed people at times when they have a problem with the welfare agency in their community. But, also, let them win the masses of the AFL-CIO to a progressive policy, to socialism by open propaganda and agitation, for socialism, and for sound decent trade unionism.

Do what you do as part of your political work. As part of serving the political objective which you set. Tell people in the process, "Look, this is fine, but in the final analysis, we have to work for a better kind of social order. We have to realize that we are not going to be able to patch up this system, to put a bandage on it. It's a cancer that cannot be cured. We have to have surgery. We have to have a fundamental change. And that change is to a new kind of social system." ✧

NO UNEMPLOYMENT IN CHINA

(The following is adapted from the article "No Unemployment in China," distributed by the U.S.-China People's Friendship Association of Washington, D.C.)

It would seem to be the most reasonable of ideas that every person able to work is entitled to a decent job that provides an adequate standard of living. So reasonable, so simple, yet our politicians and business leaders tell us that it can't be. "It will heat up the economy too fast," they say, bringing about inflation and economic chaos. Thus, full employment is defined as a three, four, and now a five per cent jobless rate. And these same politicians self-righteously claim credit when the unemployment rate dips by a few tenths of one per cent.

But these statistics conceal the human reality of millions of people who want and need to work, but can't. We must challenge the values and hidden assumptions which accept this suffering as an inevitable fact of economic life. By looking toward other societies which accept the principle of work for everyone, we can see that there are alternatives.

The People's Republic of China is such a society. There, a whole different set of circumstances prevail. At the time of the Chinese Revolution in 1949, there were over four million unemployed workers and intellectuals in the cities, or one out of every three urban workers. In the countryside, there were tens of millions of bankrupt and jobless peasants. Today, as even the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress admitted in a 700 page study entitled, **China: A Reassessment of the Economy**, every able-bodied person of working age is guaranteed a decent, socially-productive job.

How was unemployment eliminated? Only by attacking its root causes—changing from private ownership of the means of production to collective ownership by the State and the whole of Chinese society. Production in factories and on farms is for use, not for profit. Economic growth is planned for specific needs of people and not for its own sake. The Chinese recognized that there will always be people out of work as long as decisions about employment are made privately by those whose main concern is achieving the highest possible profit. Decent work for all can be provided only by an economic system that makes human needs the first priority.

In China's socialist economy, the allocation of labor is planned. For instance, right after the revolution, the government took steps to help the unemployed during the period of rehabilitation. The main measures taken were:

1. Labor departments placed the unemployed in jobs in accordance with the needs of production and construction, taking into consideration the skills and wishes of the individuals themselves.
2. For those without special skills the government opened training courses leading to jobs in machine building, electrical, chemical, and construction fields.
3. Craftspeople were helped with government funds to form cooperatives on a voluntary basis. Most of these later became state enterprises.
4. Many people were able to obtain temporary work on government-funded public works and municipal projects, such as dredging rivers, building roads and parks. As socialist construction developed, most of these workers were taken on permanently.
5. Peasants who had drifted into the cities looking for work were urged to return to their villages. In addition, urban dwellers who could do farm work were mobilized to go to the countryside.
6. The government gave regular or temporary assistance to city dwellers who were unable to obtain work, so as to ensure them a decent living.

By 1956, China had for the most part completed the socialist transformation of industry, commerce, and the organization of agricultural cooperatives. Conversion of industry to state and cooperative ownership basically solved the unemployment problem. How was this possible? The answer is that, in a socialist economy, the main difficulty is raising the level of production to provide all people with a decent standard of living. This goal can be achieved only by making the best possible use of everyone's labor. In China, much work needed to be done to develop the economy. With the provision of education, health, and child care, millions of people previously unable to contribute to social production were brought into the paid labor force. This included 55 million housewives who had formerly worked only in the household economy.

In the U.S., automation throws thousands of people out of work. Not so in China—technical innovation raises the level of production, not unemployment. Labor released through automation is used to expand production further. For example, skilled workers from the Anshan Iron and Steel Works in China's Northeast have moved elsewhere to help establish new steel mills as automation allows a reduction in the size of the workforce.

There is much more that could be learned from the Chinese people, but the first lesson is clear—work must be for people, not for profit!





DIRECT ACTION TACTICS

The following was excerpted from an interview with Michael Ansara that originally appeared in the Haymarket Foundation's report, Community Organizing in Eastern Massachusetts. Although the interview is not solely about organizing around the economic crisis, we feel that the principles and issues discussed are relevant to a whole spectrum of organizing situations, and would, therefore, be useful to groups working on crisis-related campaigns. Besides offering valuable tactical advice, Ansara makes the crucial point that organizing must have fundamental social change as its ultimate objective. Realizing that not everyone would agree with Ansara's particular vision of a new society, we feel that it is important for radical organizers to debate both the nature of that new society and the best way of getting there. We have included this interview in order to encourage that debate.

QUESTION: What are some basic principles underlying organizing in the seventies?

ANSARA: The larger question is why should a socialist be doing this kind of organizing? The answer can be very complex. I don't believe that after 20 years of people's struggles for economic justice, never once using the word socialism, we will achieve socialism. And, I think that even if one doesn't go out and organize specifically socialist organizations that there has to be some rationale for what we as socialists are doing if we don't do that. Some perspective can be gained if we see our basic goal as the fundamental redistribution of the way power is held in society. Now this is different than saying that what you want is to change the way power is used. We need to go beyond disputing this decision and that decision. How power is used is inseparable from who holds it and this is what has to be changed.

To do that takes large numbers of well organized people who believe that 1) an alternative society is possible, 2) it is important to struggle and, 3) that at some basic level large numbers of ordinary people can control their own destiny.

However, in America we are just emerging from a historical period that taught a majority of our people the direct opposite. In general what working class people have been taught from the day they were born is that history is not of their making. Great men or deities or natural forces determine their future, and not their collective efforts. A left cannot be built on cynicism and powerlessness.

What we are doing is trying to create a left. Trying to give people a set of experiences which become the basis for understanding that it is possible for them to be active shapers of their destiny. We are trying to raise the fundamental questions of power and profit and begin to develop the political consciousness that will lead towards socialism.

One problem many people have is understanding exactly where we are in the political or revolutionary process. You don't ask the same questions or apply the same criteria to the process of birth as you do if you had a two million member organization leading 80 million people in a mass working class revolutionary socialist movement.

But we must not fall into another seriously mistaken understanding of what we are doing. It would be a tremendous error to think that what we are doing is a kind of gradual building up of the people's power, achieving a gradual erosion of the capitalist power and at a certain point, we're there. The fundamental redistribution of power is not going to be achieved through a series of incremental reforms, structural or otherwise.

But, on the other hand, it would be absolutely disastrous for socialists to sit around in study groups waiting for the collapse of capitalism. We do not have a socialist class conscious working class movement in this country. It is that movement that is presently stirring and that our organizing is trying to stimulate.

There are basically two concepts behind most traditional community organizing. Many organizers think they are dealing with a specific section of the population that has been excluded from the benefits of American society and consequently what must be done is to raise hell and get them included. Then there are those who think that a majority of people are being denied decent lives; they think the solution lies simply in getting constituencies organized. In other words, this second view actually accepts the notion of America as a democratic and pluralistic society. It's simply not true that if you got a million poor people organized and raised hell that they get justice. Neither do we believe that only an excluded minority of this country's people are being exploited. We are concerned with a radical redistribution of power and wealth and that, unfortunately, won't automatically happen when a lot of people raise hell. What we are attempting to do is to develop political consciousness in a large number of people through direct action.

Because of the crisis of the American empire, there is increasingly the possibility for developing a working class left. It will probably take as its first political consciousness a kind of vague populism but objective conditions exist that allow for organizers in that movement to develop a widespread socialist consciousness. Now here is a situation that is both very exciting and quite dangerous. I'm not one who believes that as the crisis deepens it automatically throws up lots of leftists. But it does produce a lot of people who are very desperate and very confused. I think there is the possibility for developing a working class left which understands the relationship between economics and politics—which is the key. It is important that people aren't just organizing around their economic concerns at the workplace or their utility bills without looking at the political questions involved; and, conversely, aren't just interested in political questions without understanding their economic roots. Currently the objective conditions favor that development.

QUESTION: Given that basic perspective, then, what are the principles underlying organizing now?

ANSARA: There are some principles that help organizers understand how effective their work is. The first part of it is whether or not the efforts win significant reforms that actually make a difference in people's lives. The key word is significant. It is not important just to win anything. I don't think it is important to organize around stop signs. Significant reforms are those that change people's lives and change how people perceive their lives. So with utilities, for instance, a change in fuel adjustment policy would not change anything. A real change in rate structure and lifeline or public power are reforms that do. These make a significant difference to people although they are not "radical reforms" or inherently subversive of the existing system.

A second fundamental principle is that reforms have to be won in a way that gives people a sense of their own power and their potential power. First of all you have to win. Why? Because people simply won't be in a movement that goes from defeat to defeat. There is a current of thought on the left that says if you expose all possible ways in which the system frustrates any attempt for significant reform, then it will become evident that you can't really make any change without a total change in the system, and you will have a revolution. My experience in the real world is that if you pound your head against a stone wall month after month the biggest result is that you don't want to do it anymore. People need success to overcome cynicism.

But how you win is as important as what you win. Organizing efforts must teach large numbers of people that it is possible to struggle, to fight the system. And, to do it in a way that does not involve developing a false consciousness by learning the wrong things.

I think another fundamental concept is the necessity for a large effective and efficient organization. I don't believe it's possible for us to do much of what we talked about outside the context of large, action-oriented organizations which are not easy to build. What you have to do to build a large organization is different than what you have to do to develop a particular campaign or a small group of cadres. You need an organizing style and structure acceptable to large numbers of people who don't have enough time. You can't have an organization which requires 40 hours a week of meetings. You cannot have an organization which has inefficiency at its core.

QUESTION: How do you look at a specific organizing campaign?

ANSARA: There are several different concepts here. The first question has to be: can you win a significant victory which affects large numbers of people in a major way? Another consideration is how important they feel the specific issue is. Some issues may appear to organizers as very important, but are actually distant or irrelevant to the people they're trying to work with.

Another important question is: does the issue raise the questions of power and profit? This is at the heart of what we want to do. Again, a stop sign does not raise the question of who has the power or the question of profit—using the resources of a society for private enrichment.

A third very important concept is: does the campaign unite or fracture the general constituency you want to organize? A foremost concern is the creation of a politically conscious and united American working class. Presently working class people are divided against each other in many different ways. In particular there is the obvious division of race. With this in mind, an organizer must consider whether the campaign has the possibility of bringing blacks and whites together. Not all issues do. Certainly the tactics used to organize around an issue also will say whether it has the potential to bring people together. For example, it is possible to organize around banks in a way that only appeals to whites or in a way that involves whites together with blacks.



QUESTION: Do you have anything to say about particular organizing tactics?

ANSARA: There is the question of how you are going to actually win, which gets us into a discussion of what power you really have. We must begin to examine the inherent power of the actions available to us. For instance, a strike has a high degree of inherent power—denying something that is a necessity. On the other hand, a powerful strike is very hard to accomplish. Then there are things like legal actions which seem possible for us to use although there are many problems associated with them. Legal actions exact a high demand of resources in terms of money, expertise and so forth. They don't give people the set of experiences we want and they don't encourage participation by members of a large organization. Legal action tends to pull the leadership away from the base. These are all part of the criteria I would use in assessing a campaign. Does a form of action: 1) encourage large numbers of people to participate; 2) increase the participation in decision-making; 3) weld your leadership to your base; 4) teach people?



In our present situation we cannot easily pull off actions with tremendous inherent power. But we don't want to simply rely on those things we can do more easily but don't accomplish the job we want, such as legal actions, elections, etc.

What we are developing is a technique of organizing called direct action organizing which will be useful for only a limited amount of time. What that means is using a great mix of tactics to force concessions often by disrupting business as usual. It involves taking advantage of all splits in the establishment you are opposing. It is based on careful observation of the weaknesses of your enemy and the skillful active intervention of large numbers of organized citizens at precisely those unexpected points where your strength is greatest and their weaknesses maximized.

This is a hard thing to do successfully and applies to very specific and temporary levels of organizing. You can't win a direct action campaign against Standard Oil. A direct action campaign against the corner grocer might win, but so what?

We're thinking along the lines of a direct action campaign against Boston Edison. Edison is a manageable size for us. It has weaknesses which make it vulnerable.

What is happening now is interesting. This form of organizing is useful as we build towards organizations that can wield real muscle. But we're not there now.

So what you see now in our utility campaign is the use of a boycott as a direct action technique—to disrupt business as usual—rather than for its crippling economic effects. Fifteen thousand people withholding payment of bills can cause a major inconvenience, generating significant political pressure.

Objectively, popular forces do not have the power to beat Edison in a straightforward, all-out test. But the skillful intervention of large numbers of people, the isolation of targets and the playing off of one against the other creates the possibility of victory and allows you to win in a way that teaches people some key basic and essential political lessons.

This kind of organizing in particular demands the development of strong, indigenous leadership. You cannot develop an effective organization of the kind we talked about and you certainly cannot do direct action, without a leadership that is very strong.

One of the tests of leadership, of good leadership, is whether or not someone actually moves large numbers of people. And that raises the whole question of evaluation. Are there tests that can be applied to the work that we do? I think there are, all the way along. A set of tests that are just common sense. If you say you're going to get large numbers of people, do you get large numbers of people? If you say you're going to do campaigns that win, do you? If you say you're developing local leadership, how many do you have, how do you describe them, how do you prove that they are effective leaders?

You have to have local leaders who are strong, who understand what they're doing and how they're doing it. Developing local leaders does not mean taking gutsy, intelligent people and shoving them out into the limelight and saying, 'Here, make this speech; here, aren't you wonderful?' What it means is the patient development of local working class people who understand all of the issues that they are working on. ✧

STRIKE SUPPORT

The following, adapted from Strike and Strike Support, by Steve Max and Jim Williams, describes several ways community people can aid striking workers. Because they are independent of the union, outside supporters are often in a better position to explain issues to the public, counter company propaganda, and agitate against harassment of strikers by police, welfare agencies, and local politicians. Outsiders are also free to point out the political questions raised by the strike. Finally, such support is invaluable for its ability to maintain strikers' morale during difficult times.

I. BE PREPARED TO ANSWER COMMON QUESTIONS

Before launching a campaign for community support, your organization should agree on how to handle common questions that are likely to be raised. These include direct responses to company propaganda.

II. LEAFLETS

Prepare a leaflet or series of leaflets explaining the strike and drawing some conclusions about the situation. These should be aimed toward refuting particular charges made by the company or the media. After several prototypes have been drawn up, approach the strike committee and ask if they would like to issue the literature under their own imprint, or if they would like to do it jointly with your organization, or if they look favorably on your doing it under your name alone. Expect to be rejected on the first two requests. If the strike committee objects to the third, listen carefully to their reasons; then decide your own course of action.

Once some basic literature for community distribution is agreed upon, it can be used in a variety of ways. Obvious targets are downtown shopping areas, shopping centers, sports events, movie theaters, etc. Sufficient personpower should be available to blanket the area. This increases the psychological impact. Use of sound equipment along with saturation leafleting is often useful.

III. FOOD COLLECTION

During prolonged strikes, food becomes a major problem. Some locals try to fill the need with cooperative buying and similar methods. From a community education point of view, door-to-door food collection is a good device, although it can't compete with cooperative buying for sheer volume of food produced. In organizing a food drive, the most important step is to have members of the striking union join in. Whenever possible, your members and union members should be teamed up for the collection. All available forces should be concentrated in one neighborhood or housing project for a saturation effect.

IV. REACHING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

In many cases it will turn out that your local organization is much closer to a number of community organizations than the union. These might include welfare rights groups, women's groups, food co-ops, tenants organizations, campus organizations, etc. When this is the case, the chapter can systematically arrange for workers' representatives to appear at regularly scheduled meetings of such organizations to speak for a short time and then answer questions. As much as possible, the talk should be geared to the audience. Experience indicates that union staff and even rank and filers who are used

to communicating within the labor framework frequently do a bad job of talking to community groups. The union people assume that the community group has a background in trade union terminology, personalities, and issues peculiar to a certain workplace or type of production.

In reaching community groups, the most crucial consideration is tying in the strikers' story to the group's interest. Some tie-ins are obvious: the story of AT&T discrimination against minorities and women, for instance, could be stressed before any audience during a phone strike. Here are other possible leads:

- The plant emits industrial pollution which makes the company the enemy of the community.
- The struck facility is underassessed and thus the community is subsidizing the company through its higher taxes.
- The company has on its board of directors individuals who are: bankers who own residential property in the community; owners of stores which overcharge; members of a school board which fired a popular teacher; trustees of a university or hospital engaged in expansion into the community; members of a law firm of notorious local political figures, and so on. (Actual research on a struck company in North Carolina produced at least one director in each of the above categories!)

Remember: an audience should always be asked to do something such as writing local papers or the company, giving money, etc.

V. MEDIA

When the strike is largely a local effort with little staff aid from the international union, there is likely to be a shortage of media skills, and little effort made to use such outlets as talk shows, cable TV, letters to the local press, and so on. Organizations can provide people to organize these tasks, working in close cooperation with the local union. Alternatively, they can work independently presenting their own view of the strike situation. The more people hear of the strike through the media, the greater the willingness of community organizations to have speakers, and the more readily will people open their doors to food collection, etc. It may be in those activities that a more political message comes across.



LABOR GROUPS

Layoffs, speed-ups, runaway shops, union busting—these have become familiar words to working people in the past few years. They describe the ways employers limit the power of labor, thereby reducing their costs. Too often, the human toll becomes lost in their corporate talk of productivity and profit.

This situation is nothing new in the history of U.S. working people. That chronicle includes a legacy of resistance, organization, and revolutionary consciousness overlooked or distorted in conventional accounts.

Trade union organization has been and is today the most frequent response of working people to the exploitation they face. While not an end in themselves, trade unions play a crucial role in the fight for workers' economic and political interests. But the last 50 years has seen major unions grow flabby. Their leaders, steeped in anti-communism, develop their careers by cooperating with industry and government, and by opposing rank and file militancy and demands for racial and sexual equality. The result has been an increasing alienation of the man and woman on the shop floor from the bureaucratic union administration.

The economic crisis and the attack on working people's standard of living makes for the burning importance of labor organization and resistance. This calls for a fight on two fronts—against employers and labor movement leaders who have abandoned the rank and file. The tactics of strikes,



slowdowns, boycotts, legislative campaigns, and rank and file insurgency must be further developed. In the long run, a strong union movement with honest leadership will only emerge on a foundation of class consciousness and militant action. And only such a movement is capable of making the political and economic demands which will change society from top to bottom.

(Note: Rank and file caucuses have been formed in most unions to fight for union democracy and to push the unions into taking more militant positions. While this work appears to be of great importance, rank and file groups have not been included in this booklet. This decision was made because these groups usually must operate in secrecy, and an understanding of the issues they raise and the way they operate is beyond the scope of this booklet.)

Strike Support and Worker Education

Outside support groups are valuable mechanisms for generating material aid from the community, often key to the success of a strike. Further, they are in a position to link local events with larger national and international issues. Many strike support groups are simply ad hoc committees assembled around a single issue, usually a coalition of community, labor, and student organizations. Others are long-term formations providing continuous help to the local working class movement. In addition, a number of projects are engaged in "workers' education." This refers to both union and non-union programs specifically directed at workers, on subjects such as union organizing tactics and strategies, labor history, and political economy. Finally, we are also including a sample of working people's newspapers.

PHILADELPHIA WORKERS ORGANIZING COMMITTEE . . . is a Marxist organization "committed to building a revolutionary working class movement that will overthrow the profit system and replace it with socialism." PWOC is active in mass work among health workers, and inside such organizations as the Coalition of Labor Union Women, various rank and file caucuses, and anti-imperialist groups, such as those concerned with Southern Africa. From its inception, PWOC has focused its work on mass organizing among Philadelphia's industrial working class. In addition, they have published booklets on racism, trade unions, and labor bureaucracy based on their common work and study. PWOC's bi-monthly newspaper, **The Organizer**, includes extensive coverage of the local rank and file movement, highly practical organizing information, and discussions of the political issues behind local, national, and international events. Contact PWOC, Box 11768, Philadelphia, PA 19101.

NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR TRADE UNION ACTION AND DEMOCRACY . . . was organized in 1970 during a period of renewed labor militancy for the purpose of building a fighting, nationwide trade union movement rooted in the rank and file. Local chapters have since been established in a number of cities. NCCTUAD has organized several national conferences to share experiences and tactics, and plan national campaigns. The Committee employs a full-time organizer who acts as a troubleshooter for union insurgents around the country. Contact NCCTUAD, 343 S. Dearborn St., Rm. 602, Chicago, IL 60604, (312) 922-2540.

The following are two local chapters of Trade Union Action and Democracy.

NEW YORK TRADE UNION ACTION AND DEMOCRACY . . . part of the national TUAD network, encourages the formation of rank and file groups, provides them technical assistance, and helps coordinate their activities. New York TUAD provides a place where such groups can meet, receive mail, prepare leaflets, and find information on labor law and organizing tactics. The organization itself is in a transitional period because many of its active members and contacts have lost their jobs. They are currently considering ways by which they can also serve the needs of unemployed workers. As a beginning, NYTUAD is raising the issue of unemployment in union meetings, pressuring the leadership to respond to unemployed members. Their next objective is to organize demonstrations aimed at under-taxed businesses, banks, and real estate interests. Coordinating rank and file action with organizing the unemployed, and continuing their information clearinghouse activities are their long-range goals. Contact New York TUAD, 799 Broadway, #509, New York, NY 10003, (212) 260-1530.

BAY AREA TRADE UNIONISTS FOR ACTION AND DEMOCRACY . . . unites workers in the San Francisco Bay Area by helping build the labor movement, emphasizing the need for democracy within unions and the absolute elimination of racism. Bay Area TUAD has been active in a number of local and national labor campaigns. In the early 70's, the group concentrated on fighting Nixon's wage controls by demanding that union officials leave the wage stabilization board, lobbying in Congress, and organizing a large labor rally. More recently, they have helped organize support for the United Farm Workers and campaigned to extend the benefits of California's protective legislation to male as well as female workers. Bay Area TUAD is now leading a fight against the Pacific Telephone Company which has recently laid off and downgraded employees while simultaneously seeking a rate increase of nearly \$1¼ billion. The group also publishes a monthly newsletter, *The Bulletin*, and encourages its membership to organize progressive caucuses in their unions. Contact Bay Area TUAD, Box 3203, Berkeley, CA 94703.

WISCONSIN ALLIANCE . . . an organization dedicated to working within both unions and community organizations to win immediate economic and social gains, while also trying to build a statewide socialist organization. Members have been active in union organizing drives, in day-to-day struggles on the shop floor, in building local strike support, and in forming a chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women. On the community level, the Alliance has participated in utilities organizing, and preventive and women's health projects. Recently the Alliance has been working to publicize and gather material support for the Menominee Indians who are fighting for justice and self-determination in Wisconsin and surrounding states. The Alliance uses its monthly paper, *The Patriot*, to spread information about local and national issues of importance to working people. They also distribute a history of working women in Wisconsin, and a yearly labor history calendar. Contact the Wisconsin Alliance, 820 E. Seneca St., Milwaukee, WI 53212.

ALLIANCE FOR LABOR AND COMMUNITY ACTION . . . supports employed and unemployed workers, seeking to bring forth working class leadership to fight sexual and racial oppression as well. Its roots go back to several ad hoc strike support committees formed to aid the organizing drives of local hospital and transportation workers. The Alliance tries to concentrate on issues which highlight the relationship between class oppression and the exploitation of Third World people and women. They describe themselves as emphasizing struggles that "both help solve immediate and pressing problems, and point the way to ending exploitation and oppression." ALCA's first major action was a campaign of publicity and material support to striking restaurant workers seeking a union contract. The Alliance later expanded its scope by forming a committee to organize unemployed people. This committee began its drive with a well-publicized demonstration demanding increased benefit levels, childcare at the unemployment office, an end to delays in receiving checks, and programs guaranteeing decent jobs. ALCA's Workplace Struggle committee has helped build community support for the striking *Washington Post* workers. Toward this end, they have organized a series of forums, including a "People's Grand Jury" which indicted *Post* executives and publisher Katherine Graham for union busting and other crimes. The Alliance has also helped organize boycotts of *Post* advertisers and was a co-sponsor of a mass demonstration in support of the strikers which drew over 2,000 people. Contact ALCA, Box 21066, Washington, DC 20009.

CUT CANE ASSOCIATES . . . provides organizing support, advice, research and technical aid to community and workplace organizers throughout the southern and mountain states. Currently, CCA concentrates on union organizing drives in the textile industry, the largest single industrial employer in the South. During the last few decades, manufacturers like the J. P. Stevens Company have moved plants from the industrial Northeast, where workers were well-organized, to the South. There they found unusually friendly labor legislation, like the open-shop laws, poor worker organization, and hence, lower labor costs. The unions have responded by following these industries south and beginning new organizing drives. CCA has been working with textile unions, like the Textile Workers of America, and rank and file workers to plan strategy and help coordinate education and publicity campaigns. Also, Cut Cane has long been active around the issue of Brown Lung, a respiratory disease caused by dust in textile plants. They consider this health and safety issue to be inseparable from the larger issue of establishing militant unions in the mills. CCA asks not to be contacted by those with general requests for information. Contact CCA, 817 Carolina St., Roanoke Rapids, NC 27870, (919) 537-5362.

The Strike

*Say what ye will, ye owls of night;
The strike upholds the cause of right;
The strike compels the judge to pause,
The statesmen to remold the laws.*

*Say what ye will, all else above,
The strike is war for bread and love;
For raiment, shelter, freedom, all
The human race can justice call.*

—anonymous

WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS STRIKE SUPPORT COALITION . . . is a coalition of several community groups who have come together to provide immediate material and publicity assistance to strike situations in Western Massachusetts. WMSSC includes veterans, media, food, and community organizing groups. It formed after a successful strike involving 550 workers at a Holyoke air compressor factory, during which individual members of the coalition provided aid. Their primary function is to help with immediate needs such as picketing, leafleting, and tracking down sources of food and money. But they also emphasize the significance of political education around such issues as union busting, repressive legislation, and the international role of U.S. corporations. Coalition members see the need to develop an economic crisis fight-back movement with as wide a working class base as possible, including both employed and jobless people. One way to develop that base is to provide concrete support to local unions while urging them to unite behind the struggles of welfare recipients and the unemployed. Contact WMSSC, 21 Market St., Northampton, MA 01060, (413) 584-3862.





EAST BAY SOCIALIST SCHOOL . . . sponsored by the New American Movement, conducts classes on political economy, and community and workplace organizing. Recent sessions have included courses analysing the oil industry, the relationship between working class organizing and international exploitation, and a class taught by Vocations for Social Change, called "Spreading the Word," on the organizing uses of printed media. Each session includes at least one introductory political economy course for those seeking to understand the current crisis. These consider the origins of such crises, how they are inevitable "only with a decadent capitalist system." EBSS courses present basic ideas of Marxist and conventional economics, using them to analyse contemporary issues such as food, energy, the role of government, and more. Contact EBSS, 6025 Shattuck Ave., Oakland, CA 94609, (415) 653-5510.

BOSTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL . . . "provides the information working people need to think constructively about where American society has gone wrong and how it can be changed," with the objective of helping them develop a new democratic movement. Serving trade unions, tenant unions, community groups, and individual activists, and staffed largely by local organizers, BCS offers skills training in several areas: a labor program, a housing program, a program of general political and organizing education (called "community courses"), and topical workshops. The labor program courses examine workplace-related political and economic problems and give technical assistance, such as corporate research and leaflet production, to organizing drives and strikes. The housing program provides workshops and training sessions to those organizing around rent control, bank mortgage and lending practices, Federal Housing Administration foreclosures, public housing budgets, and other issues. Workshops have been designed around general topics, for instance, researching communities and workplaces, the role of banks and insurance companies in housing, understanding and responding to economic crises, and producing effective community publications and leaflets. The focus of BCS is the community courses, held either in the school itself or at locations chosen by the class. They are purposely kept small, run from ten to twelve weeks, and emphasize a combination of labor, economic, and historical themes. Recent courses have included "America: Myth and Reality (How the System Really Works)," "Socialism in America," "Labor Organizing in the 70's," "History of the American Worker," and "Women Office Workers." All class fees are kept below \$10 per person. Contact BCS, 107 South St., 3rd Fl., Boston, MA 02111, (617) 542-5351.

WORKERS EDUCATION LOCAL 189, AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS . . . has a long and radical history of educating workers inside and outside the trade union movement. The local was chartered in 1922 by the staff of Brookwood College, one of several independent labor colleges existing at that time. Since then, it has tried to present working people with programs on economics, labor politics and history, as well as introduce them to basic socialist ideas. 189 differs from other union locals in that it has no common employer and no collective bargaining contracts. Membership includes the educational staff of several trade unions, union organizers, the staff of independent labor media projects, and community activists. In the last few years, the local has effectively inserted progressive ideas and a radical perspective on community issues into the standard steward training, collective bargaining, labor law, and arbitration courses given by most unions. They often rely on unusual formats such as special presentations on labor's "untold" history and labor music festivals. Recently, 189's major efforts have been toward unifying opposition within the international to Albert Shanker's administration's collaboration with government and business. In response, the union leadership is seeking to eliminate the local by abolishing its charter. The local still offers semi-annual workshops on working class history, rank and file newspapers, political economy, and the problems of workplace organizing. 189 members also receive monthly packets containing information on rank and file organizing, labor resources, and articles on such important questions as affirmative action. Contact Workers Education Local 189, AFT, 580 Spruce St., Morgantown, WV 26505, (304) 293-3323.

LOCAL 404, UNITED ELECTRICAL WORKERS (UE) . . . goes beyond the usual leadership training curriculum to include the study of inflation and depression. Information on these questions comes largely from the U. E. News and special union pamphlets on the economy. Helping lead Spanish versions of these classes is the Latin workers organization, Frente Obrero Unido. Contact Local 404, UE, 327 Main St., Patterson, NJ 07505, (201) 525-1199.

RANK AND FILE REPORTER . . . based in a small fishing, lumber, and port city in far Northern California, **Rank and File Reporter** has been distributed longer than any similar paper on the West Coast. Started by anti-Vietnam war activists to explain the relationship between the conflict and the economy, it has since been directed at efforts to organize workers in local industries (lumber, trucking, fishing, long-shore), consistently fighting for greater union democracy. A typical issue of this lively journal contains coverage of local labor issues, but also includes items on labor history and politics, the economy, women in the workplace, and the role of labor in international politics. The paper takes an active interest in local union elections, supporting progressive rank and file candidates. They would eventually like to expand in the direction of active labor and strike support work. Contact **Rank and File Reporter**, Box 471, Eureka, CA 95501.

NEW UNITY . . . a group of Springfield-area workers who, since 1971, have been working to create a democratically run economy and society "which provides useful, productive, creative work for everyone without drudgery or danger, with no one living high and mighty at anyone else's expense or at the expense of the environment." Toward that end, they publish **New Unity**, a monthly newspaper covering local working people's struggles. **New Unity** meets the need for a different perspective on workers' lives from that offered by the press belonging to businesspeople, bureaucrats, and middle class leaders. The paper is distributed free in factories, offices and schools. **New Unity** holds monthly get-togethers to share information and experiences, and to evaluate the paper's content and political direction. They also sponsor a film series on current and historical labor topics, and a Worker's Rights project which emphasizes workplace health and safety. For the future, the group hopes to organize a political union of area working people, based in local organizations active around specific issues, such as housing, etc. Contact **New Unity**, Box 891, Springfield, MA 01101.

"I never went on strike in my life, never ran a strike in my life, never ordered anyone else to strike in my life, never had anything to do with a picket line."

—**AFL-CIO Pres. George Meany**,
before a convention of the **National Association of Manufacturers**

THE PEOPLE'S VOICE . . . one of the best independent community-labor newspapers in the country. In its third year, **The People's Voice** distributes free over 24,000 copies each month. All information is gathered by volunteers who work in local companies and shops, and is edited by two full-time paid staff. Their original purpose was to write about such problems as sex and race discrimination, collecting unemployment benefits, union organizing drives, and health and safety problems. They have since expanded beyond the newspaper itself, to the point that they are now one of the Boston-area's best sources of information on workplace related problems. Because of the tremendous unemployment problem in New England, **People's Voice** has also begun to help people with unemployment benefit claims. However, the newspaper itself still represents their best work. Articles range from in-depth coverage of local strikes to exposures of corrupt union leaders, from analysis of the state welfare budget to the effects of U.S. imperialism on Third World countries. The paper is notable for its conscientious follow-up of original stories as well as its ability to involve local workers in the actual writing and production process. **The People's Voice** survives financially through subscriptions and donations from readers. Contact **The People's Voice**, 324 Somerville Ave., Union Sq., Somerville, MA 02143, (617) 628-9360.

Unions and Progressive Locals

Aside from the April 26th March for Jobs and some sporadic talk about full employment legislation, little has been done by organized labor about layoffs, deteriorating working conditions, and the skyrocketing cost of living facing their members. This feeble response amounts to leadership's betrayal of the rank and file. On the other hand, several unions have passed resolutions or taken progressive stands, at least on paper, that indicate better things to come. The following are some examples. We have also included examples of organized union action, here, and in the booklet's unemployment and utilities sections.

UNITED ELECTRICAL, RADIO, AND MACHINE WORKERS (U.E.) . . . has always been on the left of the trade union movement, taking progressive stands on a number of political and economic issues. U.E. is currently organizing support for the passage of the Equal Opportunity and Full Employment Act in all of its locals. The union is pushing a 35-hour work week with no cut in pay in all of its contract negotiations, along with provisions requiring businesses to provide complete cost-of-living wage increases, supplementary unemployment benefits, and extended company-paid health, welfare and dental plans for laid off workers and their families. Unemployment committees, made up of both employed and unemployed members, are being formed at each local to provide technical information, coordinate campaigns for new jobs and benefit extensions, and provide research and testimony at public hearings on the economy. The locals are encouraged to work with other unions and community groups around the issue of unemployment. U.E. is also working for basic changes on a national level through legislation and lobbying. First, the union calls for the introduction of federal standards to raise the minimum level of unemployment insurance to $\frac{2}{3}$ of a person's wages for an unlimited period, and to extend benefits to all workers previously not covered. Second, U.E. wants to shift the tax burden to make the rich and corporations pay more, and the people pay less. Finally, U.E. demands a substantial cut in the highly inflationary and wasteful military budget. U.E.'s national newspaper, **The U.E. News**, provides good statistical information on the economy, and reports on some of the labor movement's militant responses to the crisis. Contact U.E., 11 E. 51st St., New York, NY 10022, (212) 753-1960.

INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE AND WAREHOUSEMEN UNION . . . supports the demand for a seven hour day, 35 hour week, but fails to take a stand against reductions in pay for such shorter hours. As a means of countering runaway shops, they propose the elimination of tax advantages encouraging foreign investment. They further suggest that companies which expand or relocate abroad be required to provide protection against loss of income or benefits, and provide alternative training or employment opportunities to their domestic employees. ILWU has also asked for a system of control over land speculation, and that federal loans and credit be made available for home construction. Finally, the ILWU takes a stand against U.S. militarism, calling for a reduction in the number of foreign bases and amnesty for military resisters. They also urge the boycott of all Chilean goods. Contact ILWU, 150 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 775-0533.

OIL, CHEMICAL AND ATOMIC WORKERS, DISTRICT COUNCIL 8 . . . works to involve OCAW's rank and file in campaigns for economic policies in the interests of working people. Charged by the international with developing a program of education about the economic crisis, District Council 8, aided by political economists, put together the introductory manual **Political Economy for Workers** (see resource section) and a series of classes for OCAW members. In 1975, a subcommittee of the council prepared a detailed report on the effects of the economic crisis on the membership, a program for action, and a series of recommendations for its implementation. Entitled **Resist: An Analysis and Program for the Economic Crisis**, the report summarizes the causes and impact of the crisis, and puts forward the most comprehensive and far-reaching proposal yet to emerge from the trade union movement. Resolutions call for forcing corporations to open their books when layoffs occur, full employment nationally in three years, unemployment benefits at 100% of normal take-home pay, a debt moratorium, price controls, and an end to corporate subsidies. **Resist** further recommends mandatory licensing of companies moving production facilities abroad, tax reform, the organization of employed/unemployed councils, educational programs, mass demonstrations, job actions and other forms of direct action to carry forward these resolutions. The proposal was not approved in its entirety by the OCAW national convention, but a substantially similar resolution was accepted. Within the District Council, the **Resist** subcommittee has begun working to implement its resolutions, for instance, by pressing the issue of national health insurance in Congress. Another focus for the subcommittee is educational work in OCAW locals against Senate Bill 1 in an attempt to mobilize the union behind the national campaign to defeat the bill. The subcommittee continues to oversee OCAW political economy courses and, finally, is moving to establish an employed/unemployed council of the union's locals in Middlesex County, New Jersey. Contact OCAW District Council 8, 115 W. Chestnut, Suite 2B, Union, NJ 07083, (201) 687-1322.

DISTRICT COUNCIL 11, UNITED ELECTRICAL WORKERS . . . has been meeting with its locals to discuss economic crisis fight-back programs, including the possibility of raising the demand for a 35 hour week. The district is currently challenging regulations prohibiting strikers from receiving food stamps and other benefits, and is calling for legislation banning the hiring of strikebreakers. Contact Dist. Council 11, UE, 37 S. Ashland, Chicago, IL 60607, (312) 829-8300.

DISTRICT 1199, DRUG, HOSPITAL AND NURSING HOME EMPLOYEES UNION . . . the major national union exclusively organizing health and hospital workers, with a Third World and female majority. 1199 has demanded a number of far-reaching reforms which, if implemented, would significantly redistribute wealth in this country. They include federal job programs, tax reforms, improved social security and unemployment insurance, national health insurance, and military budget reductions. Specifically, they call for public service employment programs whose goal would be universal full employment at union wages. They support the AFL-CIO's proposed \$30 billion tax cut, with reductions for low and middle income families, as well as long-range reform to close loopholes used by corporations and the rich. These would be accompanied by uniform nationwide standards for welfare and unemployment benefits. Minimum unemployment compensation levels would be raised to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a worker's full-time pay, with a base of \$125 per week plus \$25 per dependent. Coverage would be extended for the duration of unemployment and would include farm and household workers. Social security benefits would also be raised so as to guarantee payments equal to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' intermediate budget for the elderly. 1199 demands national health insurance which would cover unemployed people, and, in the meanwhile as a minimum step, they support the Kennedy-Corman Bill. As a means of reducing utilities costs, they propose rationing and federal price controls or, if ultimately necessary, nationalization of the oil industry. Finally, 1199 supports the Equal Rights Amendment and declares that a program of full employment is the basis for countering both racial and sexual discrimination. Contact Dist. 1199, 310 W. 43rd St., New York, NY 10036, (212) 582-1890.

Women



Economic crisis is nothing new to women workers—they have always been forced into occupations offering the lowest pay and least security. The labor movement has never concentrated on organizing the clerical and service sectors where most women work, thereby depriving them of union protection. Many groups are now organizing to fight sexism in the workplace. Some women fight for their rights within the union movement, forming internal caucuses which demand responsiveness to their special needs. Other groups are independent of organized labor, combating employer sex discrimination through the formation of workplace women's caucuses and a variety of pressure tactics.

Recent layoffs have reversed the hard-won affirmative action gains of both women and Third World people. Some organizations have fought to preserve these advances in creative ways which unite, rather than divide, working people. Generally calling for full employment, they demand solutions which force the burden of past discrimination onto the backs of the employer. The case against General Motors in California, described in the South Alameda County CLUW write-up, offers an example of these kinds of tactics.

UNION WOMEN'S ALLIANCE TO GAIN EQUALITY . . .

takes seriously its self-description as "a working women's organization" by combating women's double exploitation: as individuals who face discrimination on the job, in unions, and in society; and as workers. They are dedicated to achieving full sexual equality and organizing women workers into unions and workplace caucuses. Union WAGE strongly supports union democracy, but emphasizes the need to analyse each particular workplace to determine whether to build rank and file caucuses within existing unions, or to establish independent organizations. Their services include advising women on the pros and cons of union affiliation in their specific case. Three chapters in the San Francisco Bay area handle most of their active work. They participate in local organizing drives, and provide advice, support and skills training to working women. One example is their conference on organizing drives, and provide advice, support and skills training to working women. One example is their conference on organizing women workers held in November, 1975. Chapters have substantial autonomy, each choosing its own priorities within the general Union WAGE framework. An executive board directs the central office's work, which has included publication of a bi-monthly newspaper (see resources), and major campaigns to extend protective labor standards to men and to raise minimum wages to \$4 per hour. Membership is open to all women who are employed, unemployed, retired, or on welfare. Union WAGE plans to expand, hopefully on a nationwide basis, increasing membership and the number of chapters. Contact Union WAGE, Box 462, Berkeley, CA 94701, (415) 431-1290.

To get a raise I need a promotion. To get a promotion, I need training. The company will only reimburse me for the short-hand course after I take it. But to pay for the training I need a raise. To get a raise. . . .

—Boston office worker

WOMEN EMPLOYED . . . pressures companies to implement affirmative action for female and Third World office workers. Their organizers feel that preferential hiring and promotion must be defended strongly because of moves by business and government to substitute such measures as tax incentives in order to encourage nondiscriminatory practices. WE-initiated lawsuits have not only forced reversal of sexist policies, but have also won thousands of dollars in back pay settlements for victims of discrimination. Along with 9 to 5 in Boston and Women Organized for Employment in San Francisco, WE is the spearhead of a tri-city campaign pressuring the insurance brokerage Marsh & McLennan to improve its affirmative action program for women and minorities. Demands against M & M include training programs to allow clerical workers access to professional jobs, timetables for the training and promotion of women and minorities, and clear posting of all job openings. WE is organizing workers at M & M, leafleting outside their building, and conducting interviews to gather evidence for discrimination complaints. They hope that, because of their leadership position in the industry, M & M's anticipated compliance will lead to a ripple effect among other insurance brokerages. That industry has been a primary target because of its large numbers of unorganized female clerical workers. But WE is also active among stock brokerages, banks, law firms, and temporary employment agencies. With 600 members, WE organizers have plenty of strength to back up their demands. Contact WE, 37 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60603, (312) 372-7822.

WOMEN ORGANIZED FOR EMPLOYMENT, 127 Montgomery St., Rm. 206, San Francisco, CA 94104, (415) 982-8963.

9 TO 5 . . . is a group of women office workers in Boston organizing against sex discrimination, especially in insurance and publishing industries, temporary agencies, and universities. Their insurance committee recently completed a successful campaign to pressure the Massachusetts Insurance Commissioner to establish regulations over employment practices in the industry. Rules designed by 9 to 5 require companies to post job openings, equalize promotion opportunities, and file comprehensive affirmative action plans for women and minorities. The committee is also participating in the tri-city campaign against Marsh & McLennan. Other 9 to 5 projects resulted in prosecution by the State Attorney General of publishing companies practicing sex bias, and the introduction before the legislature of bills licensing and regulating temporary employment agencies. These campaigns have been supplemented by advocacy work for individuals who have been harassed or unfairly lost their jobs. The group has initiated conferences, workshops, and classes, and has published a variety of practical literature on organizing office workers. **9 TO 5**, their bi-monthly newsletter, distributed at office buildings and subway entrances, is a major organizing tool. Contact 9 TO 5, 140 Clarendon St., Boston, MA 02116, (617) 536-6002.



COALITION FOR PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION . . . includes feminists, labor unions, and minority and community organizations fighting to maintain protective work rules, based on the principle that "women should not have to relinquish their rights as workers under the guise of gaining their rights as women." Such legislation governs the intensity, safety, and duration of labor, placing limits on an employer's power to determine working conditions. When the Equal Rights Amendment was passed in Washington State, the Industrial Welfare Committee enacted new labor standards which not only eliminated special protections for women, but also threatened such accepted conventions as the eight hour day, toilet facilities, and lunch and rest breaks. CPL saw this as an attempt to use the ERA as an excuse to eradicate hard-won gains of the union movement. Despite CPL-organized opposition, the IWC moved to make these rules changes permanent. In response, the Coalition arranged for the introduction in the state legislature of bills to end forced overtime, provide labor, feminist, and community representation on the IWC, and include previously unprotected farm and domestic workers under their jurisdiction. These are currently in committee, opposed by a powerful business lobby. CPL continues to expose this threat by picketing the governor's mansion, leafleting, and organizing a state march on the capitol. They are also considering using the initiative process to put the issues on the state ballot. Contact CPL, 5649 11th Ave., NE, Seattle, WA 98105, (206) 626-7449.

COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN . . . was founded in 1974 as an independent organization of women trade unionists. Their original statement of purpose defined four areas of concern: organizing the unorganized; affirmative action in the workplace; political action and legislation; increased participation of women in their unions. From its beginning, CLUW has reflected the fundamental divisions within the labor movement. One tendency in the organization represents bureaucratic trade union administration; the other stands for labor militancy, rank and file democracy, and the need for a strong women's voice independent of existing leadership. Conflict between the two groups is constant. For instance, the bureaucrats, monopolizing CLUW administrative positions, blocked resolutions supporting UFW boycotts for two years, rather than alienate Teamster leadership. Although the bureaucrats have firm control over national CLUW, the organization's activist strength is rooted in its local chapters, varying tremendously in the relative influence of the two tendencies. The chapters described below are distinguished by their commitment to rank and file unionism, and the fight for women workers' rights. Contact CLUW, 8731 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI 48214 (313) 926-5244.

SOUTH ALAMEDA COUNTY COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN . . . has been a leading force in organizing support for women laid off from the Fremont, CA General Motors plant, and for their subsequent landmark lawsuit concerning sex-discrimination. GM employed virtually no women and few Third World men until forced to do so by affirmative action programs. Now, because of their lack of seniority, they are the first to lose their jobs. Eight of the women who were laid off filed suit to decide whether or not this traditional "last hired, first fired" application of seniority is discriminatory. Believing GM should pay for their past discrimination, and not other workers, the Fremont suit proposes 4 alternatives to layoffs based on strict seniority. The first, favored by the women bringing suit and having the most support, is a shorter work week for everyone at the same rate of pay. The other 3 proposals are: that GM hire back enough women and Third World men to equal their percentage in the workforce before the layoffs, without dismissing other workers; that employees work alternate weeks, collecting union Supplemental Unemployment Benefits (SUB) when not working; and voluntary inverse seniority system in which older men would retire, living on SUB payment, so women or Third World workers could take their places. Through publicity campaigns, speaking engagements, fundraising efforts, and picketing, CLUW has helped build massive support for the Fremont workers. In addition, CLUW has begun to work more directly with people in different shops to fight discrimination and exploitation of all workers. By these activities and by their educational forums, the chapter hopes to build CLUW into a strong mass movement dedicated to rank and file control of the labor movement. Contact S. Alam. Co. CLUW, 2019 38th Ave., Apt. B, Oakland, CA 94601.

Don't be lady-like. God Almighty made women and the Rockefeller gang of thieves made the ladies.

—Mother Jones



DENVER AREA CHAPTER, COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN . . . since its formation in January, 1975, has pushed union women to fight for equality and against the economic crisis. Their first major project—lending fundraising, publicity, and picket line support to the UFW farmworkers—rallied the community to the UFW cause and helped CLUW members understand the issues involved in the UFW campaign. The chapter did support work for several strikes and has worked with other groups to force the unemployment agency to pay unemployed workers their full benefits. Denver CLUW recognizes union leadership's historical neglect of women and minority workers—especially in the Southwest—and considers CLUW to be the kind of organization that can significantly push forward organizing drives, through education and actual support. They are now concentrating on organizing the unorganized. CLUW members plan to be the "hands, feet and energy" for several organizing drives under way in the Denver area by preparing and distributing leaflets, making house visits, and talking to other women about the benefits of unionization. In addition, they have scheduled a community forum on organizing the unorganized, which they hope will attract a large number of union and nonunion workers. Contact Denver CLUW, P.O. Box 1611, Denver, CO 80201.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT . . . is a Ford-funded organization describing itself as the "national spokesperson for household workers." Over 40 local affiliates raise public consciousness about measures to improve conditions for this sector of the labor force. Locals are involved in organizing and membership recruitment, and have established such services as worker-run placement centers and job training programs in the daycare, teaching, and health fields. The national office seeks to coordinate local activities by providing technical and educational resources for organizing and service projects. But their main thrust nationally is gathering and distributing information to help upgrade conditions of household employment. For example, statistics and analysis prepared by NCHE helped convince Congress to extend minimum wage coverage to professional houseworkers. Contact NCHE, 1725 K St., NW, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 291-2422.

CALIFORNIA HOMEMAKERS ASSOCIATION . . . is a dynamic organization dedicated to improving the living and working conditions of household workers. It is characterized by a real sense of solidarity among its 5,000 members and a commitment to collective action tactics. Through systematic canvassing of low income neighborhoods, they find domestic workers willing to sign cards authorizing CHA to act as their bargaining agent. The twenty full-time organizers are helped by hundreds of part-time volunteers in these recruitment drives. But their organizing efforts focus on attendant care workers, those paid by the county to look after aged, blind, and disabled welfare recipients. Following a 500 person demonstration, CHA won recognition as the collective bargaining agent for Sacramento County attendant care workers. They are now negotiating a number of demands, including wages of \$3.89 per hour. The Association also carries on organizing drives in several other California cities. For example, its members in Santa Cruz are involved in the first labor dispute between domestic workers and a major corporation—Homemakers/Upjohn. CHA has affiliated with the Western Service Workers Association, through which they are extending their organization to unemployed workers, welfare recipients, and the entire low-income service sector. Contact CHA, 3500 Stockton Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95820, (916) 456-1771.

JOB ACTION CENTER FOR WAITRESSES . . . was initiated two years ago by the Valley Women's Union in the belief that "waitressing reflects the general inferior status of women workers." Waitresses face low pay, poor working conditions, no job security, and frequent sexual harassment on the job. JAC originated primarily as a source of information on organizing and waitresses legal rights, but the group has expanded into strike support work, and helped win reinstatement and back pay for women fired during attempts to organize. Their goal is unionization of local waitresses and kitchen workers. JAC is also fighting the use of tip income as a justification for paying waitresses less than minimum wage. To stop this practice, the Center is encouraging women to flood the State Solicitor with demands for official investigations of their workplaces. As organizing tools, JAC uses a videotape of waitresses describing their experiences and a monthly newsletter, **Tip-Off**, distributed free to local restaurant workers. Contact JACW, 200 Main St., Northampton, MA 01060, (413) 586-2011.

Third World

Along with women, Third World people are forced to bear the brunt of the crisis. They also have been relegated to the lowest paying, least secure, and least safe occupations. To make matters worse, unions have a dismal record of fighting for minorities' rights. Some, especially the building trades, have practiced blatantly exclusionary policies. All these factors have served to eliminate whatever economic gains the civil rights movement of the 1960's achieved. And adding to the problems, attempts have been made to whip up a racist hysteria about how "illegal immigrants" supposedly cause high unemployment rates.

Third World people have reacted by forming organizations to fight for safe, meaningful work, and for democratic representation within unions. Their militant response to economic oppression has placed them in a leadership role in the workers' movement.

CASA (GENERAL BROTHERHOOD OF WORKERS) . . . fights for Mexicano and Latino workers throughout the West and Midwest, specifically countering attempts to blame the economic crisis on so-called "illegal aliens." These undocumented workers face massive deportations, low wages, unemployment, and discriminatory law enforcement. For the most part, unions have refused to protect them. Many labor organizations have actually supported deportations in the false belief that "illegals" are responsible for unemployment. CASA has consistently filled this vacuum. In the last year, they have actively opposed the Federal Government's "Saxbe Plan," which calls for the deportation of one million "illegals." Rallies and demonstrations have been initiated in Texas, California, and Chicago to protest worksite round-ups—Saxbe Plan operations which have resulted in the deportation of thousands of workers. In most cases, deportations were executed without due process, on the same day as the raids. The round-ups often occurred as employees collected their pay. CASA also organized a series of rallies in 1975 to protest the double standard represented by the open-arms welcome of Vietnamese refugees while Latino workers faced jail or deportation. Their monthly newsletter, **Sin Fronteras**, offers good coverage of the harassment of Mexicano communities by the U.S. government. Contact CASA, 3673 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90006, (213) 487-4171.



UNITED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS ASSOCIATION . . . is an organization of minority construction workers formed to press for the admittance of Third World people into the four building trades unions in the Seattle area. When UCWA began, these unions had fewer than ten Blacks out of a total membership of 4,000. Through a class action suit brought under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, UCWA forced the unions to open their membership and begin apprenticeship programs for minorities. Non-Whites now compose nearly 10% of the unions' rank and file. UCWA has established itself as an independent political organization keeping track of employers who discriminate and pressuring those who violate civil rights laws. They actively use the legal system, bringing suits and monitoring compliance with court decisions. Day-to-day activities of the Association include job development, interviewing and recommending candidates for apprenticeship programs, and checking such programs to ensure Third World participation. UCWA has also used mass actions and picket lines to shut down construction sites where discriminatory hiring practices exist. Members of the Association have become increasingly active in the building trades unions in recent times, putting forward programs designed to improve conditions for all workers. Contact UCWA, 105 14th Ave., Suite A, Seattle, WA 98122, (206) 324-3181.

UNITED FARM WORKERS, AFL-CIO . . . although never exclusively a Third World union, has distinguished itself by consistently expressing the aspirations of agricultural workers in much of the U.S. Rooted in the Chicano community, the UFW has conscientiously sought to bring in farmworkers of other nationalities. Since 1962, against often incredible odds, the union has had great success in organizing a previously dispersed and unprotected sector of the workforce. The UFW has confronted discriminatory National Labor Relations Board regulations which have not recognized collective bargaining rights for farmworkers, the powerful agribusiness lobby, and unions like the Teamsters who have invaded the UFW's jurisdiction. The nature of the work-place and the fact that migrants lack a strong economic or political base compounds their difficulties. Effective use of strikes in the fields and national boycotts of non-UFW grapes, lettuce and wine, however, have won a number of contracts with growers. These contracts for the first time guarantee farmworkers such basic provisions as toilet facilities, safe drinking water and work breaks, as well as new fringe benefits and wage increases. Massive public education has elicited support from labor, community, church and political groups. Most major cities and migrant stream areas have boycott support committees, and the AFL-CIO has consistently provided material aid. In California, the focus of UFW field organizing, labor and community pressure forced the state to allow union elections among farmworkers and to establish the Agricultural Labor Relations Board (ALRB) to oversee the balloting and arbitrate grievances. Since late 1975, over 360 elections have been held, with the UFW gaining twice as many victories as the Teamsters. Winning the balloting is only the beginning however. The results must be certified by the ALRB and then a contract negotiated. Both of these have been painfully slow due to Teamster challenges and bad faith bargaining on the part of the growers. So far, few of the election victories have led to actual contracts. In addition, continued state funding for the ALRB has been blocked by the agribusiness lobby, resulting in a halt to the balloting process. Workers at ranches which voted UFW are left unprotected from grower retaliation. The UFW will continue their persistent economic and political pressure until this impasse is also breached. Contact UFW, Box 621, Keene, CA 93531, (805) 822-5571.



Independent organizations which have formed along side the UFW to organize farmworkers:

TEXAS FARM WORKERS' UNION, Box 1493, San Juan, TX 78589.

ASOCIACION TRABAJADORES AGRICOLAS, 1363 Main St., Hartford, CT 06103, (203) 525-1509.

EASTERN FARMWORKERS ASSOCIATION, 58 Beaver Dam Rd., Belpport, NY 11713, (516) 286-8004.

FIGHT BACK . . . based primarily among employed and unemployed Third World construction workers, has since 1964 filled their need for an independent organization committed to the struggle against racism and class exploitation. From such a base, Fight Back tries to lay a foundation for unity with White working people. Originally the Harlem Unemployment Center which focused on the lack of jobs in Black communities, FB's main thrust now is to organize for jobs in the construction industry. From three centers in Manhattan and Brooklyn, two full-time staffpeople accompany unemployed construction workers to building sites where hiring is taking place. In exchange, each person so helped must make a commitment to support the goals and programs of Fight Back and explain his/her situation to the membership's executive board. Now with the building trades in deep crisis, they are trying to develop jobs by uniting the industry behind a proposal to rebuild the inner city. More generally, Fight Back acts as a resource group for rank and file caucuses working against racism and corruption in the labor movement. Low income public housing and tenants' rights, anti-war activities, and campaigns stemming from New York City's fiscal crisis have also been concerns of the organization. By way of example, they initiated the Coalition to Fight the Fare Increase which publicized the role of banks in putting into effect the 43% subway fare hike. Declaring first of all that public transportation should be free, the coalition called for massive refusal to pay the new fare. For many days, subway entrances and turnstiles were the scenes of constant confrontation as literally hundreds of people registered their protest at yet one more slap against poor people. Fight Back was also instrumental in organizing support in New York-area Third World communities for the National Hard Times Conference and intends to remain active in the coalition developed there. Finally, they are now considering calling a national Black rank and file conference to discuss common problems and to help establish other independent organizations of Third World workers. Contact Fight Back, 1 E. 125th St., New York, NY 10035, (212) 831-6561.

UNITED BLACK WORKERS . . . was formed in the late 60's to protect the rights of Black workers in New Jersey, particularly in the Mahwah, NJ Ford plant(ation). UBW's presence at the Ford plant was first felt when they led the longest wildcat strike in the auto industry—4 days—over the firing of a Black worker by a White foreman. Since then, UBW has led a number of successful walkouts over issues such as verbal harassment of Black workers, forced overtime, and excessive heat. On local and national levels, they have pressed for changes within their union, which they feel provides them with few, if any, services or protection. They have united with other caucuses within the UAW to demand that new contracts contain provisions that end compulsory overtime, give the union the right to negotiate production speed, return the right to strike, require higher wages and benefits, and force the companies to hire full-time safety officers. UBW further demands that supervisors found guilty of racial and sexual discrimination be dismissed, and that skilled trades and white collar jobs be filled on a basis proportional to the racial and sexual composition of the plant. In addition to their work within the plant, UBW considers it important to build a base of support in the surrounding community. They have been active in organizing yearly demonstrations and celebrations around Mayday and Martin Luther King's birthday, and have protested social service cutbacks. As part of their political education program, UBW sponsors a weekly radio show covering labor issues. They also publish a number of items including a yearly workers' calendar and *The Black Voice*, a monthly newspaper concerned with the oppression of Black and Third World workers and with exposing racism and sexism wherever they exist. Contact UBW, P.O. Box 1855, Newark, NJ 07107.



COMMUNITY GROUPS

Unlike organizing in the workplace, which focuses on the antagonistic relationship between employer and employee, the community response to the crisis has no single target. In their many-faceted roles—consumers, family members, retired people, etc.—poor and working people face a devastating attack on the quality of their lives. Income which was formerly theirs now remains in the hands of banks, corporations, and the wealthy. The response must therefore include demands for a broad redistribution of income in the direction of working people. The groups listed below are demanding that jobs be made available for everyone, that all people, especially minorities and women, be guaranteed an adequate standard of living, that a basic amount of essential utilities be recognized as a human right, and that vital public services be maintained. These demands are frequently put to the various levels of government who are called upon to carry out their responsibilities to "provide for the general welfare."

Unemployment

All over the country, people are forming organizations to demand justice for the millions who have been thrown out of work. Many groups are fighting hard to help workers cope with immediate problems—delayed unemployment checks or the unfair denial of benefits, for example. But the best of them are also working for broader political goals. Through their programs, they try to make the point that the roots of the crisis lie deep in our economic system. In addition, most of the groups are pressing for major reforms, ranging from unlimited extension of benefits to full employment. Behind the demand of jobs for all is the assertion that every individual has the right to socially productive employment at decent wages. Some groups are using the Hawkins-Humphrey Bill, the Equal Opportunity and Full Employment Act (H.R. 50) to make that point. In doing so, the bill must not be presented as a panacea or as a maximum demand. In a profit-oriented economy, "full employment" programs can only be welfare measures to be withdrawn whenever corporate income begins to fall.

It is somewhat arbitrary to separate the unemployment issue from the problems people face at their workplace. Several of the groups in this section recognize this and are trying to link the movements of employed and unemployed working people. In addition, some union locals have begun to recognize their responsibilities to jobless members. The common denominator of all the groups listed below is a major emphasis on organizing the unemployed.

UNITED ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS OF AMERICA (UE), LOCAL 123 . . . has established an unemployment committee which uses mass pressure and lobbying tactics to win reform of Virginia's unemployment compensation system. Through confrontations with Virginia Employment Commission officers and state legislators, and by picketing VEC's offices, committee members have forced an end to procedures that delayed compensation checks. Other demands were raised at protests before the state legislature: increases in benefit levels; expansion of state job programs; compensation for the temporarily disabled; and enactment of those parts of UE's national program implementable on the state level. Unemployed people are now threatened by proposals to cut federal unemployment funds earmarked for Virginia by reducing eligibility from 65 to 39 weeks. In response, the committee plans new protests in the state capitol and Washington. Contact UE Local 123, 24 W. Beverly St., Staughton, VA 22980, (703) 885-0753.

In 1968, the richest 1/10 of our population (in total income) received annually as much income as the bottom 1/2 (50%). Each group receives 27% of the nation's total income. The situation has not changed since then and has been essentially the same since 1910.

—Poverty in American Democracy



RHODE ISLAND WORKERS ASSOCIATION . . . began in 1971 as an advocacy group for people out of work, but has since developed into a multi-issue organization of 2,000 employed and unemployed workers in 8 cities. The core of the organization is the local chapter meetings to which people with unemployment and labor problems are encouraged to come. If the group decides it can help, several RIWA members accompany the person to the appropriate office or agency demanding justice. They usually get results. Association people feel that this local grievance work is crucial because it helps people realize their power. But to give greater significance to their day-to-day work, they rely on mass action to pressure for policy changes both at the welfare and unemployment offices, and on a broader political level. They have forced various state agencies to hire Portuguese interpreters, allow organizers to leaflet inside the unemployment office, and stop plans to eliminate benefits for strikers. After a long campaign, during which they marched to the State House carrying coffins representing those who have died when their utilities were shut off, RIWA pressured the state regulatory agency to issue a consumers' "Bill of Rights" which virtually prohibits suspension of service without due process. The Association is also pressuring hospitals receiving federal money to provide free health care to low income people, as required by the Hill-Burton Act, and is demanding that Blue Cross allow unemployed people to continue buying health insurance at group rates. New changes in RIWA's constitution now require members to pay dues and volunteer one hour's work per month, a step which RIWA hopes will increase the organization's political force. The Association would also like to expand its workplace activities by helping organize non-union workers. Finally, RIWA staffpeople see the need to devote more time to political education, developing clarity among the membership about long-term political goals. They see RIWA's ultimate objective as the redistribution of both power and wealth in the U.S. Contact RIWA, 212 Union St., Rm. 206, Providence, RI 02903, (401) 751-2008.



YORK-ADAMS COUNTY LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO . . . may be the country's only local AFL-CIO unit with a special organization for the unemployed. A committee was formed in early 1975 to press demands for crash job programs and draw local union leadership into the fight to secure maximum benefits for unemployed members. Shortly thereafter, the committee affiliated with the National Committee to Fight Inflation and Unemployment. After a period of relative inactivity, the group has recently been revitalized through large-scale mobilization of jobless people contacted from union lists. Their work has been designed to take advantage of unemployed people's free time. Raising the demand for full employment, committee members are also concerned with immediate gains, such as ending bureaucratic abuses in unemployment offices, extending benefits, and loosening eligibility requirements. Contact Unemployment Committee, Y-ACLC, 300 Hudson St., York, PA 17403, (717) 848-2742.

PHILADELPHIA UNEMPLOYMENT PROJECT . . . began in mid-summer of 1975 with an effort to create unemployed workers councils within union locals. Their objective is to organize the unemployed behind the demand for jobs and a decent standard of living for all, a goal which PUP believes can best be achieved by working through the labor movement. Unions are "precise constituencies," people who know each other, or have at least been employed in the same or similar workplaces, and have a common identity as union members. They suggest that large, direct action organizations, capable of winning significant reforms, can most easily be built this way rather than through organizing at unemployment offices. In the long run, PUP believes that this base of unemployed members will push the union movement as a whole in a more militant, class-conscious direction. PUP recently prepared a handbook on unemployment and other benefit programs. They used it to approach several unions with an offer to counsel jobless members if these members were called together to form unemployed councils. As PUP points out, these councils represent an excellent way of mobilizing union membership for political action against unemployment. So far, councils have been established in two locals, while several other unions have shown interest. One major activity of the councils has been pressing local hospitals to provide free health care as specified by the Hill-Burton Act. Under threat of a picket line and unfavorable publicity, one hospital has already conceded. The councils also plan to work for the passage of two bills drafted by PUP organizers—one for medical assistance for the unemployed and another to extend unemployment benefits. Contact PUP, 2015 Mt. Vernon St., Philadelphia, PA 19130, (215) 235-4246.

NATIONAL FIGHT BACK ORGANIZATION . . . was formed at a Chicago conference initiated by the October League in December, 1975. The NFBO seeks to unite all working people who are "dedicated to fighting the economic and political effects of the economic crisis," and recognizes "the cause of the crisis as the capitalist system which is based on profits for a few and exploitation and misery for the vast majority." Over 70 local affiliates are working on a range of projects, including labor support, unemployment organizing, busing, housing, and police brutality. Two of the most active Fight Back committees are described. NFBO, Box 7646, Chicago, IL 60680.

COLORADO WORKERS UNITY ORGANIZATION . . . now part of the National Fight Back Organization, began in March, 1974 when the Denver-Boulder Strike Support Committee expanded beyond picket line support work to become a multi-issue organization. Their goal is to build an organization of working people that will fight for a decent standard of living and promote class unity by organizing the unorganized, defending the unemployed, and attacking racial and sexual discrimination. In the past two years, they have supported several strikes and boycotts, and led a massive campaign against a proposed telephone rate increase. CWUO members collected 5,000 signatures on an anti-rate hike petition at shopping centers, factories, street corners—wherever people congregated (including 1,000 in one hour at a Broncos football game). At public hearings, they presented testimony and legal briefs on the discriminatory effects of the increases on poor and working people. CWUO's Fight Back Committee spearheads its unemployment work. In response to delayed checks, four or five members accompany the claimant to the unemployment office—and on to the department head if necessary—demanding that the money be released. Each week, several people have been able to get their checks this way. They have also forced the unemployment bureaucrats to sign a statement agreeing that all benefit recipients must get their checks within three days of filing a complaint. CWUO has also held several demonstrations combining picketing and confrontation tactics in opposition to unemployment office red tape. In an effort to integrate the unemployment work with the larger political goals of the organization, the Fight Back Committee tries to involve the people they help in other CWUO work. For example, other committees are involved in political education about the special oppression of women and Third World people. CWUO members feel that their major shortcoming thus far has been the lack of a broad base in workplaces and they plan to focus more on this area in the future. Contact CWUO, Box 11403, Denver, CO 80211, (303) 458-7019.

ATLANTA WORKERS COMMITTEE TO FIGHT BACK . . .

is one of the strongest and most dynamic of the local Fight Back committees, consisting of Blacks, Whites, and other nationalities who are active in local communities, workplaces, and among the unemployed. In their efforts to defend the interests of people in low-income communities, such as public housing tenants and welfare recipients, they have organized forums and city-wide demonstrations. AWCFB has also actively helped build rank and file caucuses within unions. Recently, their major emphasis has been unemployment work. In April, 1975, 75 to 100 members of the Committee went to the State Labor Commissioner's office to protest unemployment check delays, inadequate benefit levels, and lack of jobs. Several people were physically assaulted by state troopers called in to disperse the demonstration; ten were charged with criminal trespass and interference with government property. The Committee is now successfully using the case of the "Fight Back Ten" as part of an organizing presentation linking the trial with the larger issues of corporate control of the economy and state support of big business. Fight Back members say they have learned a number of lessons from unemployment organizing. Because many people in Atlanta are functionally illiterate, the Committee has changed their leaflet style and sometimes entirely substituted speaking for leafleting at the unemployment lines. Most important, they found that bold and persistent action brings results. One call from a Fight Back member usually settles the issue of a delayed check. By continuing to return to the unemployment office after being thrown out, and by renting a storefront directly across the street, they have successfully sustained contacts with unemployed workers. Contact AWCFB, 149 Marietta St., NW, Atlanta, GA 30303, (404) 523-6671.

CHICAGO WORKERS' RIGHTS CENTERS . . .

are projects of the National Lawyers Guild, New American Movement, and several other organizations and individuals. After Guild training of twenty staffpeople in unemployment law, counseling offices were set up in community service centers, one on the north and the other on the south side of Chicago. They originally planned to work on two levels: counseling and representing people with unemployment problems and organizing mass political actions. After advising four to five hundred people (mostly Black and Latino), they now recognize that they underestimated the amount of energy and resources such counseling entails. This has restricted their ability to do mass organizing, but they feel that their service work nevertheless represents the best way to build a base among unemployed people. The Workers Rights Centers' planning committee is determined to move beyond such work into political action guided by their principles of unity: women and minorities are hardest hit by unemployment; undocumented workers ("illegal aliens") are not the cause of unemployment; the Centers must try to link the struggles of employed and unemployed workers; the Centers will not focus only on demands against government, but also against corporate power. Following these principles, they are now working with two kinds of groups contacted through counseling. The first kind consists of people from the same workplace. CWRC helps them plan collective action around common grievances. Secondly, they plan to organize other contacts into a group that will concentrate on unemployment problems. Workers' Rights Center staffers are encouraged by their progress, realizing that there are no "quick and cheap victories" since the goal of forming a true workers' rights center involves a long-term commitment. Contact CWRC, c/o NAM, 1643 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647, (312) 252-7151.

WORKERS RIGHTS CENTER . . . is a project of the Bay Area New American Movement. NAM members wanted to organize against the crisis and decided that unemployment counseling was the best way of reaching the people most directly affected. After training with the National Lawyers Guild, they placed an ad in a local newspaper offering their services to people with unemployment problems, and were immediately swamped with calls. For more publicity, they distributed business cards, instead of leaflets, at the unemployment office. The twelve volunteers do not ordinarily act as advocates, but they do give advice on unemployment procedures and regulations. Since May, 1975, they have handled about 1,000 calls. Unlike organizers at the Chicago WRC's, they do not plan to build an unemployed workers organization directly from these contacts. They see their work as building a base for long-term organizing around economic issues. In addition, the counseling has been a springboard for new programs. Some calls were from employed people, for example, workers hired on a short-term basis under the Labor Department's CETA program. The CETA workers wanted to know if they would be eligible for unemployment when their one year jobs ran out. Other workers called with complaints of racism, sexism, or health hazards on the job. WRC staffers hope to help such people organize around these issues at their workplace. Recently, they launched a major campaign to support Oakland CETA workers. After preliminary research, they found that the city is planning to cut personnel in all departments by between ten and fifteen percent, meaning that 500 CETA workers would be laid off. WRC has prepared a pamphlet explaining that the cuts are unnecessary and demanding that the city create more jobs instead. The work with municipal employees and discrimination in the workplace will be top priorities for the Center in the future. Contact WRC, 6025 Shattuck Ave., Oakland, CA 94609, (415) 653-5510.

HEALTH AND WELFARE WORKING GROUP, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES . . .

is conducting an intensive educational campaign to mobilize church and community support for a national full employment policy. They plan to sponsor a series of regional seminars to make full employment a priority issue for their progressive religious constituency. Contact HWWG, Div. of Church and Society, NCC, 475 Riverside Dr., Rm. 572, New York, NY 10027, (212) 870-2386.



John got to the point where he'd rather die than go down to the unemployment office and draw that unemployment—and he was due that, he paid into it. John took on his own self, as his own guilt, that he wasn't working, that there was something wrong with him, that he was a failure when it really was the failure of the system.

—Katherine Tiller

NATIONAL COALITION TO FIGHT INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

. . . is a one and one-half year old coalition with over 40 local affiliates, calling for price rollbacks and employment for all at union wages. Their major objective is organizing support for national legislation guaranteeing full employment and, in the meantime, better unemployment compensation benefits, price rollbacks, a shorter work week without reduction in pay, and other job-related demands. To this end, they are mobilizing support for H. R. 50, the Equal Opportunity and Full Employment Bill (the Hawkins Bill). NCFIU has adopted a strategy which includes lobbying Congresspeople at their district offices and holding "People's Electoral Conferences" to raise demands and possibly endorse independent candidates, all of which will culminate in a national demonstration in Washington. The Coalition uses its newsletter and the national conventions to unite local affiliates around the common strategy and encourages them to ally with as broad a range of labor, community, women's, youth, Third World, and other groups as possible. The groups which follow are among the most active of their local organizations. Contact NCFIU, 160 5th Ave., Rm. 803, New York, NY 10010, (212) 924-7871.

COMMITTEE FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT

. . . one of the most active affiliates of NCFIU. They began in February, 1975 when several workers active in the Philadelphia Committee for Trade Union Action and Democracy lost their jobs at a runaway auto plant. The CFE program has two focuses—advocacy and lobbying. The Committee has successfully built a base among unemployed people by advising claimants of their rights at unemployment and other benefit offices, and, in some circumstances, taking up specific cases. Thus far, they have managed to avoid becoming bogged down in this service work by referring people to appropriate legal aid and advocacy groups whenever possible. CFE found the Philadelphia unemployment office unwilling to give them information on specific cases, so they organized a demonstration. Fifty people picketed outside while twelve members distributed leaflets in the office calling for access to individual files, the right to leaflet inside, a CFE bulletin board and table inside, and regularly scheduled meetings between CFE and the heads of unemployment offices in the state. Two days later, the state Secretary of Labor agreed to all these demands. Most of CFE's efforts are concentrated on lobbying and demonstrating for legislative reforms. They persuaded a state legislator to introduce a bill which would provide unemployment benefits equal to 75% of gross pay for the duration of unemployment, give medical insurance to the unemployed, create ten new unemployment offices, and declare a moratorium on evictions. CFE encourages unemployed workers who use their services to join delegations to the state legislature in support of this bill. They have found this to be one of the best ways to involve unemployed workers in the committee. CFE also uses this bill, as well as another on runaway shops, to publicize both the organization and the idea of full employment. Instead of press conferences, they hold demonstrations addressed by state legislators, and have thus been extremely successful at attracting media attention, including frequent television coverage. The Committee also actively backs the Hawkins bill, for which they have circulated petitions, testified before Congressional committees, co-sponsored public hearings with PUSH, and organized demonstrations at Congressional district offices. Contact CFE, 5603 Greene St., Philadelphia, PA 19144, (215) 842-9188.

COALITION FOR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL

. . . a dynamic NCFIU affiliate with a sense of theater, began organizing around high prices after the meat boycott two and one-half years ago. Its first major project was an anti-inflation "March for Survival" of over 1,000 people which was endorsed by 30 organizations. CES has three focuses—food, utilities, and unemployment. The food committee participated in a successful campaign to lower state-regulated milk prices. They gathered signatures, testified at hearings, and led a Mother's

Day milk boycott, using a papier-mache cow (named C. B., after the State Agricultural Commissioner, C. B. Christian). The utilities committee helped organize CAUSE, the Campaign Against Utility Service Exploitation, which has successfully fought several rate increases and is now working for Lifeline (see UTILITIES section). The unemployment committee began in September, 1975, concentrating at first on publicizing the Hawkins bill. As an organizing tactic, CES members went to twelve unemployment offices with huge ballot boxes, asking unemployed people to vote on six demands for government action (for example, "Shouldn't all unemployed get maximum payments with a cost of living escalator for the duration of unemployment?") under the slogan "10 million unemployed must be heard." 30% of the ballots were returned and CES will use these as contacts to build block associations of the unemployed. As a result of this work, the committee is now composed one-third of unemployed workers and several unions have allowed the group to conduct balloting in their union halls. One UE local is even helping organize a mobile team to distribute ballots in local neighborhoods. CES organizers say that they want to build a movement that will be a strong enough political force to end the control big business has over the economy and the government, roll back prices, and bring full employment. Contact CES, 5889 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90019, (213) 938-6241.



ECONOMIC FIGHT BACK PROJECT of the SOUTHERN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (SOC)

. . . is an umbrella organization coordinating economic crisis fight back activities in the South. They provide resources and organizing help to local groups in ten states—the most active are in New Orleans, Birmingham, and Memphis. In New Orleans, the Project helped organize a Peoples Economic Conference which brought together activists working on such issues as public power, hospital cutbacks and unemployment. Birmingham SOC organizers started the Coalition for Economic Survival, which is petitioning against the President's food stamp bill, protesting unfair practices of the local gas company, and leafleting at the unemployment office. The Fight Back group in Memphis is working with PUSH and SCLC to organize a march for jobs, and with people from the A. Philip Randolph Institute to set up unemployed caucuses within unions. They have held two area-wide conferences, but in the future, plan to concentrate on local workshops to encourage grass roots work. In addition, the Fight Back Project issues a regular newsletter and is preparing two resource guides for organizers: a pamphlet on "The Case for Full Employment;" and a manual on how to organize the unorganized, the unemployed, and CETA workers. Contact Economic Fight Back Project, SOC, P.O. Box 2721, Birmingham, AL 35201.



PEOPLE FOR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL . . . is a group that emerged last year out of a coalition demanding that local banks sell food stamps. PES tries to increase community awareness of economic problems by attacking their structural roots. They are unusually conscientious in their planning—having campaigned to lower utility rates, demonstrated against misuse of taxes, and supported local strikes, the group has now decided to focus on welfare and unemployment issues. As part of the general welfare and unemployment strategy, PES picketed, demonstrated, and attended hearings with the no-longer existent Coalition to Fight the Cutbacks. Since the end of that campaign, reductions in day-care have received their special attention. An important organizational priority is a biweekly newsletter containing articles on PES activities, local strikes, and community struggles. Group members distribute it at unemployment and welfare offices, housing projects, and in the community, using it as a way to start conversations about important issues. One of PES's work groups recently formed an unemployed/employed council, now an autonomous organization. The council originally decided to work in a number of areas, but has since sharply focused on utilities because it seemed the best issue through which new organizers could gain experience. PES is also part of the Strike Support Coalition (see Labor section). Contact PES, 21 Market St., Northampton, MA 01060, (413) 586-4237.

The U.S. Department of Commerce has granted \$239,000 to the Advertising Council to help finance an ad campaign "to improve public understanding of the realities that make our American economic system work." The Federal grant came from funds ear-marked for minority business and job programs.

—The Progressive

CITIZENS COMMITTEE ON THE MAINE ECONOMY . . . is a coalition formed about a year ago to put forth "Jobs Today, Jobs Tomorrow," a proposal for job development in Maine. This group of about forty people from various left organizations proposed that the state create "jobs today"—five to six thousand public service slots financed by a radical tax reform package. For "jobs tomorrow," they propose a radical restructuring of the Maine economy creating full employment through systematic planning and "citizens' control over productive resources." At a CCME rally, 200 demonstrators from across the state crowded into a hearing room demanding that the state legislature consider the proposal. Most of the legislators withheld support for the plan, claiming it would require higher taxes. As a result, CCME has begun a new campaign for the tax reform package (which would increase personal and corporate rates for higher income brackets). They plan to prepare a packet containing a sample twenty minute speech and questions and answers about the proposal. CCME members will visit community groups throughout Maine, give the speech and ask listeners to spread the information contained in the packet to other groups. This will be coordinated with other publicity, culminating in a demonstration in late spring. CCME has also helped in the formation of the Maine Woodsmen's Association, the first effective organization of Maine pulpwood cutters. The MWA was formed when several cutters came to the jobs rally, flourishing their chain saws. CCME supported their strike against the big paper corporations in November, 1975 and sponsored the first formal conference of Maine and Canadian woodcutters. The companies have traditionally been able to drive down rates paid to local cutters by importing Canadian labor. For the first time, both groups united against these divide and conquer tactics. All of CCME's projects have the long-term goal of bringing working and poor people together to form a movement capable of changing the political and economic structure of society. Contact CCME, Box 2066, Augusta, ME 04330, (207) 549-5007.

Community Resistance

Each day brings reports of another daycare center closed, another educational program canceled. Governments all over the country have responded to the economic squeeze not by raising corporate taxes, but by cutting back social services. Perhaps in no other area is the attempt to make poor and working people bear the brunt of the crisis so clear—most of the cuts have been specifically among programs providing services to low income people. These are not frills, but basic human needs: health care, quality education, a decent income level, fire protection. Moreover, these programs were originally implemented through determined collective action of many thousands of people. The same unity which originally won important services must now be used to defend them.

In addition to social service cutbacks, other community concerns include the rising cost of living and the economic effects of ongoing racism and sexism. The groups in this section have, in some way, taken up the many-sided fight to protect working people's standard of living.

PEOPLES COALITION AGAINST THE BUDGET CUTS . . . was formed to fight the Newark Board of Education plan to lay off 1600 school employees. The Congress of Afrikan People initiated the coalition, which consisted of community organizations and many individual teachers, students, parents, and school employees. PCABC has contacted PTAs and other community groups, distributed leaflets, and used a sound truck to encourage participation in a series of strategy meetings. At these, the coalition decided to hold a series of downtown, noon-time demonstrations. On 3 consecutive days, hundreds of people participated in a slow march down a major Newark street (without benefit of a permit), stopping traffic for several hours. PCABC intensified the pressure by participating in an anti-cutback march on the State Capitol. One month before school opened, the Superintendent "found" \$4 million extra in the budget, and the layoffs were canceled. Coalition members remain in communication with each other after their completely successful campaign. They feel their most important accomplishment was the political education of hundreds of Newark residents. Contact PCABC, c/o CAP, 13 Belmont Ave., Newark, NJ 07102, (201) 621-2300.



We didn't have any money. And people that says money don't matter is dead wrong, cause when you don't have it, it does matter.

—Katherine Tiller

UNITED PEOPLES WELFARE RIGHTS . . . has responded to the economic crisis by becoming involved in several new issues, in addition to continuing its welfare counseling program. They recognize that increasing lay offs make the connections between labor struggles and welfare rights more explicit. When 20 members of a striking steelworkers union local came to a meeting of UPWR, the counselors realized they would be able to offer valuable strike support. Welfare rights members went to the welfare department with the strikers to demand emergency assistance for those faced with eviction notices or utility shutoffs. After this successful confrontation, the UPWR held a workshop on the various benefit programs for striking members of several unions. Although the 5-month steelworkers strike is now over, UPWR plans to continue their relationship with the locals by supporting them in future labor struggles, and by asking union members to help in their campaign to force the county to improve its food stamp outreach program. UPWR has written articles for *The Mountain Journal*, exposing the outreach program as a sham, and plans a Food Day demonstration around this issue. Since many welfare recipients have been hit with \$100 utility bills which must be paid out of a \$274 monthly benefit check, the UPWR is also participating in a campaign against the local utility company being conducted by the Mountain Community Union, a coalition of union groups, Black Lung organizations, welfare rights groups, and other community organizations from three counties. Contact UPWR, 440 Madison St., Fairmont, WV 26554, (304) 363-2090.

NATIONAL TASK FORCE ON WOMEN AND POVERTY, NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN . . . coordinates local organizing and national activity aimed at eliminating poverty. For example, NOW members in New Jersey have organized a State Task Force on Women in Poverty, which led a march on the State Capitol to protest Medicaid cutbacks. The national staff hopes to encourage similar actions throughout the country by raising issues in the NOW newsletter, and by providing financial assistance to low-income NOW members enabling them to attend regional conventions and share their organizing experiences. The Task Force monitors national legislation and is considering a national campaign for full employment legislation. In addition, they plan to coordinate grass roots campaigns to pressure each state to bring its welfare grant up to its own "standard of minimum need," and to remove the requirement that a family must be "deprived" of a male parent in order to be eligible for AFDC. The Task Force's 30-page booklet, *Commonwealth*, (available for \$1) has excellent articles on unemployment; the welfare system; and migrant, rural, and minority women. Contact Task Force on Women and Poverty, NOW, 1824 Redwood Terrace NW, Washington, D.C. 20012, (202) 964-2996.

PITTSBURGH WELFARE RIGHTS ORGANIZATION and PHILADELPHIA WELFARE RIGHTS ORGANIZATION . . . are each organizing coalitions fighting for the rights of low income people. Unlike the welfare rights groups of the 60s, these groups are coalitions uniting labor unions and a variety of church and community groups, in addition to their primary welfare recipient constituency. Both WRO's participate in coalitions formed to fight a "forced work" bill recently introduced in the Pennsylvania legislature. Five hundred people attended Philadelphia WRO's conference to organize a protest against the bill. Both WRO's have sent delegations to the Governor and Legislature, and have staged several mass demonstrations. At the same time, welfare rights members in the two cities are pulling together a state-wide organization to work on national issues and force the Federal government to attend to the real needs of low income people. Their first project is working for the elimination of the food stamp

purchase price. Pittsburgh WRO has mailed information on this campaign to welfare rights groups all over the country, plans to testify before Congressional committees, and is organizing public hearings to educate community groups. Contact Pittsburgh Welfare Rights Organization, Rm. 761, Century Bldg., Pittsburgh, PA 15222, (412) 471-0180; and Philadelphia Welfare Rights Organization, 1231 N. Franklin, Philadelphia, PA 19122, (215) 684-3600.

THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (SASU) and THE UNIVERSITY STUDENT SENATE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (CUNY) . . . are both working to insist that quality education and low tuition or tuition-free schooling be priorities in this time of crisis. In 1975, the CUNY Student Senate organized several large demonstrations to denounce the massive budget cuts. CUNY and SASU together mobilized over 6000 students to go to Washington, DC to demand immediate federal aid for New York City, a roll-back of interest rates on city and state bonds, passage of the Hawkins Bill, and free public higher education. They have used other tactics as well. On each of its campuses, the SASU backs up and coordinates the groups of students who have organized local campaigns using letter-writing, personal lobbying, community forums, small rallies and mailings. They also held their 5th annual lobbying conference in the Spring of 1976, where 200 campus representatives came to Albany for an orientation on the issues, a 2-day lobbying blitz, and finally, a large demonstration co-sponsored by CUNY, New York State United Teachers, and other organizations. Not content with merely reacting to budget cuts, a voter registration campaign has been mobilized to give added negotiating strength. Contact SASU, 109 State St., Albany, NY 12207, (518) 465-2406, and University Student Senate, CUNY, 430 E. 80th St., New York, NY 10021, (212) 879-9509.

ACTION CHILDCARE COALITION . . . an independent coalition of feminist, gay, minority, and community groups and unions, was formed 2 years ago to fill the need for militant leadership in the fight for childcare in Washington State. The coalition considers childcare a right, not a privilege. In their first action, ACC brought 300 people to a hearing, where, along with protesting low childcare standards, they won the deletion of the discriminatory "sexual orientation" criteria from the regulations for foster parents. Since then, they have focused on Title XX of the Social Security Act, which allocates federal and state money for social services. The state has slashed its funding for childcare and for vital services for the handicapped and elderly. At the same time, some of the media are pushing the myths that women don't need to work and that childcare is a luxury, in a deliberate attempt to force women out of the workforce. ACC sees the attack on childcare as a veiled attack on women and their jobs, particularly poor working women, who are usually non-White. To counter the attack, ACC is demanding that the state's Title XX plan be totally rewritten to provide "comprehensive quality social services at no cost, including quality childcare for all workers, day and night." To pressure the governor and to publicize the issues, ACC has used leafleting, picketing, petition campaigns, and has pushed for hearings. Contact Action Childcare Coalition, c/o 3657 Francis Ave. N., Apt. 203, Seattle, WA 98103, (206) 632-2792.

. . . We are here today as our own representatives and we are saying that we will no longer take the blame for this fiscal crisis . . . we will no longer allow you to neglect us, the people you supposedly represent, and criminally sentence us . . . to starvation. You label us chislers, charity cases, welfare bums and loafers as you fail to recognize us as victims of an economic system which places profits before people's needs.

—Statement read by People for Economic Survival in the Massachusetts legislature, Aug. 14, 1975, to protest welfare cutbacks

WOMEN UNITED FOR ACTION . . . first came together when women organized against high food prices in the 1972 meat boycott. An organization of poor and working women, WUA insists that a decent living is a basic human right. Using leafleting, picketing, petitions, and direct consumer action, WUA groups in six cities work on basic issues which face working women daily—food prices and food stamps, utility rates, daycare, and welfare. The New York group serves as national headquarters, but local groups develop their own campaigns. In order to expose food monopolies and agribusiness as the real causes of shortages and hunger, the Buffalo WUA chapter gave out several tons of free food. The distributed produce was bought from local small farmers who had planned to plow their crops under, because they could not receive a reasonable price for them on the market. The Detroit WUA chapter has also focused on food issues. They have taken busloads of people out to suburban stores to compare food prices and cleanliness standards there, with those of the same chain stores' inner city outlets. For information about any WUA chapter, contact Women United for Action, 166 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010, (212) 989-1252.



ACTION ALLIANCE FOR SENIOR CITIZENS . . . is a hard-fighting organization that has forced government and business interests to pay attention to the special needs of Philadelphia's senior citizens. Their existence is particularly important during the current crisis, when social service cutbacks have drastic effects on older people living on fixed incomes. Since its formation in 1973, this 110,000 member organization has won free transit fares and a 20% reduction in gas bills. After 300 Alliance members descended upon the social security office, agency officials agreed to set up a "one-stop shopping" office, enabling people to apply for SSI, food stamps, and social security at the same time. The Alliance is now fighting the means test required by Title XX of the Social Security Act, which would limit the use of Senior Citizens Centers to people whose income fell below a certain level. Alliance members have demonstrated their opposition at hearings in Harrisburg and Washington, DC. They feel the means test is undemocratic, divisive and would deprive people who have made considerable contributions to society, of rights that should belong to all. The Alliance's action committee plans further tactics to eliminate the test. Contact Action Alliance for Senior Citizens, 401 N. Broad St., Phila., PA 19108, (215) 574-9050.

WORKERS AND PARENTS UNITED FOR DAYCARE . . .

is a militant citywide organization with members from 15 daycare centers fighting for more and better daycare "based on the common interests of parents, workers and children." Their principles of unity are broad and far-reaching, including affirmations that: daycare is a right, services should be expanded with workers receiving decent wages, workers and parents should collectively determine center policies, and daycare must be linked with all other struggles for democratic rights. The economic crisis has forced WPUD to focus on budget cuts, both on its own, and in cooperation with groups such as the Day Care Council and the Bank Street Day Care Consultation Service. Daycare in New York faces attacks on two fronts: drastic city budget cuts, and severe eligibility restrictions imposed by the new Title XX of the Social Security Act. Since its formation in Spring, 1975, WPUD has countered these cuts by investigating government policies, helping to build a rank and file caucus within the union (Community and Social Agency Employees Union, Local 205), sending out a newsletter, and contacting workers and parents from other centers. When the WPUD initiated coalition, the City-Wide Day Care Coalition Against Title XX and the Budget Cuts, testified at public hearings in December, they pointed out that eliminating daycare prevents parents from working (70% of daycare recipients in New York City are single working women). It seems that in this time of crisis, "big business wants less workers and more unemployment." A report prepared by the Bank Street Day Care Consultation Service exposed the direct lease program by which the city gives long term leases to daycare centers for rents averaging an incredible \$100,000 per year. The study concludes that "these leases have been imposed on day care by real estate and political interests whose profits are being protected, even while centers are closed and workers are fired." WPUD has decided to concentrate on a local level to build up communication among all city daycare centers. Contact WPUD, c/o Red Paint Day Care Center, 550 West End Ave., New York, NY 10024, (212) 873-9102.



OPERATION PUSH (PEOPLE UNITED TO SAVE HUMANITY) . . . is a national organization seeking to help "in the transition of the human rights movement from primary emphasis on Civil Rights to primary emphasis on Civil Economics." They see that the present crisis situation threatens to destroy the gains won by the civil rights movement through years of struggle. For the past 2 years, the drive for full employment has been one of PUSH's top priorities. The national office organized a coalition including PUSH, CLUW, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, and other community groups, that has held several demonstrations protesting rising unemployment. On Martin Luther King's birthday in 1975 and 1976, thousands of people participated in PUSH marches in cities all over the country in support of full employment and various related local demands. Through these coalitions and demonstrations, PUSH has worked to get full employment legislation introduced, with union endorsement. Their newly-opened D.C. office, acting as a "poor people's lobby," will continue this effort by pushing for legislation to combat "mass unemployment, rampant inflation, skyrocketing taxes and the drain of an unnecessarily large military budget." Contact Operation PUSH, 930 E. 50th St., Chicago IL 60615, (312) 373-3366.

THE CHICANO COMMUNICATIONS CENTER (EL CENTRO CHICANO DE COMUNICACIONES) . . . was organized in September, 1973 by people who had worked on *El Grito del Norte*, an anti-imperialist newspaper that reported news important to the New Mexico Chicano community. They have held workshops for organizers in silk-screening, theater and publication production, and have sponsored statewide meetings of Mexican Americans. The Centro has published bilingual comic-books on Tupac Amaru and Emiliano Zapata and will soon publish an "anti-bicentennial" look at 200 years of Chicano history. One of the Centro's major projects is the Teatro Colectivo, a street theater which performs actos (skits) on different issues, ranging from police brutality against Chicana women to fascism in Chile. As an example, in "The Fortune of Mr. Big," a Chicana fortuneteller reveals the past of Mr. Big (an overstuffed capitalist Uncle Sam), and in the process explains how capitalism creates recurring crises, including the current one. Other projects have been to make the resources of the Centro available to political and community groups, and to join coalitions working around such issues as food stamps and tenant rights. For more information, contact CCC, P.O. Box 6086, Albuquerque, NM 87107, (505) 243-1979.

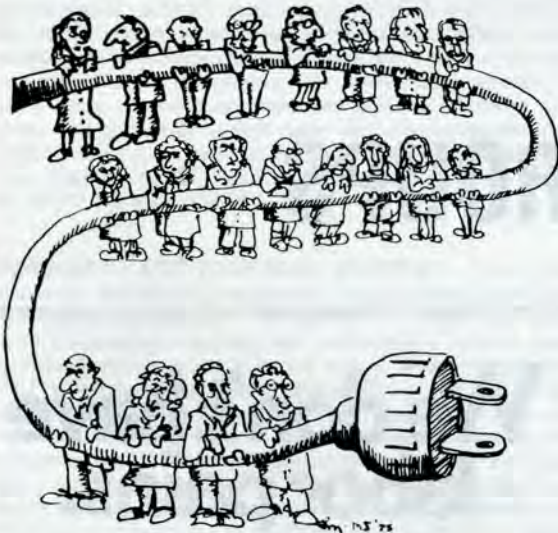
ASIAN-AMERICANS FOR EQUAL EMPLOYMENT . . . since December, 1973, has fought job discrimination against Asian-American workers. Their first project was to get Chinese workers into the construction industry, including coordinating a campaign which demanded that at least 40 Asian-Americans be hired to work on a Chinatown housing project. AAFEE then joined the Manhattan North Coalition (now called the City-wide Coalition of Blacks, Latin Americans and Asians in Construction) that used City College building and construction site take-overs to pressure New York into hiring minority construction workers, and replace cuts made in the SEEK financial assistance program for minority students. AAFEE is now organizing public education campaigns around the City's social service cutbacks, using their monthly newspaper, press releases, leaflets, and guerilla theater at community events. They also co-sponsored an International Working Women's Day march demanding an end to layoffs, cutbacks, and sex discrimination. Contact AAFEE, 1 E. Broadway, 2nd Floor, New York, NY 10038, (212) 233-0988.

In 1970, there were 5 million children under six whose mothers worked. Only 700,000 of these children were in licensed child care facilities . . . Some studies have found that as many as 400,000 children under six are left alone, unsupervised while their mothers work.

—Dollars and Sense

Utilities

While all prices are going up, the cost of utilities is rising even faster. Monopolies which sell power are guaranteed profits by regulatory agencies generally sympathetic to the industry. Practices such as "fuel adjustment" charges, which tie rates to the price companies pay for fuel, allow increases without formal hearings. However, public anger is growing, and scores of groups have emerged to fight the companies. Objectives generally include abolition of fuel adjustment charges, a halt to rate increases, and a radical change in rate structures. "Fair Share" rates, for example, equalize the rates users pay and put an end to discounts for large industrial users. "Lifeline" sets a low fixed price for a basic amount of power, in effect recognizing access to utilities as a human right. Finally, some groups are raising, as a long-term demand, the call for public ownership and worker/consumer control of power generating facilities. In the interim, they insist that private utilities absorb increasing costs rather than pass them to consumers through rate increases, or to workers through lay-offs and unsafe working conditions.



MASSACHUSETTS FAIR SHARE . . . is a statewide multi-issue organization well known for its determined battle to win lifeline and fair share rates for electricity and telephone service. From its beginning as a single local chapter, Fair Share has built a mass membership by winning concrete gains on economic issues of concern to its low to middle income constituency. As part of a brilliant publicity effort, over 300 Fair Share members, each owning one share of stock, attended the annual Boston Edison stockholders meeting. With signs, songs, and their own slate of candidates for the Board of Directors, they raised demands for lifeline and fair share rates, and against shutoffs and rate increases. MFS recently campaigned successfully to introduce the fair share proposal in the state legislature through the initiative process. Following the submission of petitions with the required number of signatures, Fair Share announced their merger with CAP Energy, a group which had organized a massive bill withholding campaign against Boston Edison. With the energy of these two groups combined, organizers feel confident of winning lifeline and fair share rates in Massachusetts. Contact MFS, 364 Boylston St., 2nd Fl., Boston, MA 02116, (617) 266-7505.

CITIZENS ACTION LEAGUE . . . initiated the Electricity and Gas for People campaign which helped make California the first state to officially adopt lifeline rates for these utilities. The EG&P designed and supported bill states the basic lifeline principle that "light and heat are basic human rights, and must be made available to all people at low cost for basic minimum quantities." The twenty month campaign began by challenging Pacific Gas and Electric's request for a \$233 million rate increase, using the slogan "turn PG&E around." With wide support from consumers, old people, labor and environmental groups, EG&P called for stopping the rate increases, instituting lifeline and fair share rates, ending price-fixing and profiteering (such as automatic pass-through of fuel costs to customers), and examining the feasibility of public power. By turning the reform of the regulatory Public Utilities Commission into a major issue in the governor's race, EG&P won the appointment of more responsive commissioners. Campaign organizers also engineered the subpoena of the PG&E board chairman before the PUC where they exposed conflict of interest in his simultaneous directorship of corporations receiving preferential rates under then current price structures. To gain support for the lifeline bill, EG&P sponsored local meetings where backers expressed their views to legislators. They also gathered endorsements from union leaders, clergy, local politicians, and community organizations of all sorts, and collected over 100,000 signatures on the lifeline petitions. Finally, the campaign organized a "Citizen Lobby Day" rally of 1,000 supporters at the state capitol and delegations to visit each legislator. In this way, EG&P combined mass action and traditional lobbying techniques to win their victory. Since then, CAL has begun work around tax reform, tenants organizing, and nursing homes in addition to their ongoing utilities campaign—this time against telephone company rate increases, tax dodges, and excess profits. Contact CAL, 1161 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 626-0661.

MIAMI VALLEY POWER PROJECT . . . started in 1975 by members of the Dayton-area New American Movement in the belief that humane energy policies will come about only when consumers and the people who work in the utilities gain control over the industry. Through door-to-door work, open meetings, and extensive press coverage, MVPP has built a solid base among low and middle income working people in their neighborhood, to community groups, they present a slide show called "The Great Rate Robbery, or Reddy Kilo-watt Strikes Back" in which the cartoon character Reddy confronts "Mr. Management" about the power company's profit-seeking policies. For the short term, the Project demands a lifeline program, an end to promotional advertising paid for by consumers, no rate increases or power shut-offs because of unpaid bills, and an abolition of the fuel adjustment charge. MVPP organized a counterhearing during a Dayton Power and Light Company stockholders meeting to publicize their demands and are pressing their lifeline proposal before the City Commission. They have also filed a fairness complaint with the Federal Communications Commission against a local TV station which has presented extensive pro-utilities coverage. Finally, the Project is involved in a statewide coalition working to put several issues on the Ohio ballot this year, including a lifeline proposal, a requirement for full indemnity insurance and public hearings on all proposed nuclear power plants, and a proposal for a utilities consumer advocacy group. Contact MVPP, Box 252, Dayton, OH 45401, (513) 275-2414.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST UTILITIES SERVICE EXPLOITATION . . . is a powerful coalition of, among others, labor, unemployment, consumer, and old people's organizations which have banded together to fight for just utilities and energy policies. A recent campaign against ARCO Oil and the Southern California Gas Company was a "pure example of people power." SoCal Gas agreed to pay over \$600 million for the mere right to negotiate for supplies of ARCO's Alaskan oil. They then planned to pass these costs on to consumers. CAUSE launched a major effort to block the deal. A ten-foot paper mache "ARCO Oil shark" was taken to public rallies; skits and songs enlivened the campaign, and consumers picketed ARCO service stations and sent CAUSE their cut-up credit cards. The heart of the fight was the withholding of bill payments from SoCal, instead sending them to the Public Utilities Commission with requests for personal hearings. Meanwhile, due to pressure from California consumers, the Federal Power Commission rescinded its ruling which allowed such deals as the ARCO-SoCal one. Set upon from all sides, the two companies called off their deal. Though the bill withholding campaign had just begun, over 1,000 people had already sent their bills to the PUC. CAUSE credited its victory to creative publicity, mass participation, and good coordination between member groups. In another battle, CAUSE has fought the L.A. Department of Water and Power's phony "lifeline" proposal, which would have imposed oppressive red tape procedures and limited the program to old people. They are also pushing for a state public energy corporation as a first step toward public ownership and control of the energy industry. Contact CAUSE, 5889 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90019, (213) 938-6241.

PITTSBURGH DISTRICT JOINT BOARD, AMALGAMATED CLOTHING WORKERS OF AMERICA (AFL-CIO) . . . a union whose rank and file, in response to deteriorating service and skyrocketing prices, collected 8,500 signatures on a petition calling for a locally-held public hearing on West Penn Power Company's proposed \$25 million rate increase. After the hearing was scheduled, members of the twelve participating locals organized telephone campaigns, leafleting, and "mini-rallies" in local communities. ACWA members met WPCC's defense of the increase with well-researched refutations in local newspapers. The night before the hearing over 150 people joined in a candlelight march and rally outside company headquarters. The next day ACWA testimony outlined areas of company malpractice, and called for lifeline rates and consideration of public ownership of utilities. This campaign helped block the rate increase, decrease fuel adjustment charges, institute itemized billing, and substantially improve the quality of service. The demand for better service had the added benefit of bringing a halt to layoffs of utility maintenance workers. At the urging of ACWA, the state legislature is considering several bills to reform the fuel adjustment allowance and provide for consumer representation on the Public Utilities Commission. The network developed during the campaign continues to press for legislative reforms and has applied pressure to prevent the location of a proposed "nuclear energy park" in a local recreational area. Contact PDJB, ACWA, 1816 Clark Bldg., 717 Liberty Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15222, (412) 281-9983.

BACK-UP GROUPS

The groups which follow perform a number of back-up services for grass roots organizations. With access to funding, resources, and expertise, they are able to provide legal, statistical, and other technical information to local organizers. In addition, through lobbying, national education campaigns, etc., many of these organizations become active organizers in the movements they seek to support. Grass roots groups can increase their effectiveness through the frequent use of the services and resources back-up organizations have to offer.

NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD . . . is an association of lawyers and legal workers, students, and jailhouse lawyers founded as a radical alternative to the American Bar Association and the ACLU. The group has developed several projects which connect legal work to organizing around economic issues. The National Labor Project and the Women and Labor Project have worked on legal tactics to fight workplace discrimination and harassment of labor organizers, to assist union rank and file caucuses, and to enforce health and safety regulations. Also, the Guild's Immigration Project seeks to protect the rights of undocumented workers, while the Prison Project attempts to unionize prisoners to fight labor exploitation. In some areas, Guild members have trained organizers in unemployment law to prepare them as counselors. Chapters are active in most major cities and may be located through the national office. Contact NLG, 853 Broadway, New York, NY 10003, (212) 260-1360.

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South Carolina has the lowest work stoppage rate in the country.

Just look at the record. In the past ten years, an average of only three one hundredths of one percent of working time was lost due to labor strife. Our worker productivity rate is another source of pride—it ranges 14.25% higher than the national average.

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For more information, send for our new brochure called "South Carolina: Resource For Industry." Write: J. Bonner Manly, Director, State Development Board, Dept. 74A P.O. Box 925, Columbia, South Carolina 29202.

FOOD RESEARCH AND ACTION CENTER . . . is a legal resource and advocacy center working to "improve and expand" the food stamp and other federal food programs. FRAC monitors the nationwide administration of these programs and acts as a resource center for local organizers. Keeping track of federal legislation, they provide technical information to legal services active around the food issue. Currently, they are helping to coordinate the movement to counter threatened Ford administration reductions in food stamp coverage. The Center distributes a wide variety of organizing literature, including the essential **Guide To The Food Stamp Program**. They have been described as "the big guns of the movement which keeps the Department of Agriculture on their toes." Contact FRAC, 25 W. 43rd St., New York, NY 10036, (212) 354-7866.

INTERFAITH CENTER ON CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

. . . has accumulated extensive information on major U.S. corporations, much of which is available to organizers. The Center is an ecumenical agency which helps church organizations develop socially responsible policies concerning their investments. They promote the use of stock ownership as a means of prying information from business and as an opportunity to introduce progressive resolutions at shareholders meetings. In this way, they have succeeded in raising such issues as strip mining, runaway shops, military contracts, and bribery of foreign government officials in forums where such subjects were previously taboo. Current priorities are agribusiness, military contracting, women and minority employment, and multi-national corporations. While individual resolutions have little chance of passage, ICCR activities have secured needed information for community groups, publicized some of the more onerous policies of large corporations, and generally helped raise the consciousness of shareholding church groups and the congregations they represent. Contact ICCR, 475 Riverside Dr., Rm. 566, New York, NY 10027, (212) 870-2295.

MOVEMENT FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE

. . . is a clearinghouse for community organizers which grew out of the welfare rights movement of the late 60's. Their goal is to help build a movement uniting low and middle income people in coalitions working for a broad range of economic reforms. MEJ is primarily a service group for grass roots organizations. Major resource areas include the utilities, tax reform, and bank redlining issues, but their files contain detailed information on all kinds of organizing problems. For example, they can advise community groups on influencing local revenue sharing apportionment or stopping foreclosures on FHA-insured homes. In addition, unemployment organizing has become an increasingly important focus. On these and other issues, MEJ provides basic background information in the form of packets and organizing notebooks containing detailed histories of local campaigns. On the utilities question, the group issues a Lifeline Packet including a mass distribution flyer, a Federal Energy Administration study of lifeline, and samples of legislation. MEJ also publishes a monthly newsletter, **Just Economics** (see resources). Contact MEJ, 1611 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20009, (202) 462-4200.

PUBLIC INTEREST ECONOMICS FOUNDATION

. . . is a clearinghouse offering "professional advice and help in economics on a volunteer or low fee basis to low income groups and organizations." Ford-funded PIEF could help groups challenging utility rate structures or food price increases, by providing such services as technical analysis and "expert testimony" for public hearings. In addition, publicly-available Foundation files contain a wealth of information gathered during past public interest campaigns. Contact PIEF, 1714 Mass. Ave., NW, Wash., DC 20036, (202) 872-0313.



UNION FOR RADICAL POLITICAL ECONOMICS

. . . a national network developing sound economic analysis which "serves the interests of people working for progressive social change." URPE began as a campus-based organization of students and faculty dissatisfied with conventional training in economics. In recent years, most of the membership has moved toward a Marxian world view. In addition, a concern for the practical organizing implications of economic theory has emerged. Perhaps the primary function of the group is to keep radical economists in communication with one another. For instance, their quarterly **Review of Radical Political Economics** publishes articles conventional journals wouldn't touch. Boston-area members put out **Dollars and Sense** (see resources) which explains economic issues in clear, straightforward terms with a minimum of jargon. Various subcommittees take on special tasks—the Women's Work Project, for example, has written several pamphlets on women in the workforce. Many URPE members are encouraged by recent trends to increase community outreach, an area in which the group has previously been weak. However, the degree and type of activity of regional affiliates varies greatly, some having an academic orientation while others increasingly participate in local organizing. Contact URPE, 41 Union Sq., Rm. 201, New York, NY 10003, (212) 691-5722.

BLACK ECONOMIC RESEARCH CENTER

. . . investigates trends in the economic conditions of U.S. Blacks, providing technical assistance to Black community organizations. Concentrating on the South, BERC has worked in such areas as land ownership and taxation, and community development. The Center also publishes the quarterly **Review of Black Political Economy**, and an employment guide describing the effects of racism on the Black jobseeker. Contact BERC, 112 W. 120th St., New York, NY 10027, (212) 666-0310.

CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

. . . is a non-profit research group working on energy, environmental, consumer and food issues. Their People and Energy Project covers nuclear power and utilities issues, providing technical assistance to local groups in such forms as help in drawing up lifeline proposals or in preparing testimony before regulatory agencies. The Project also puts out a monthly newsletter, **People and Energy**. Contact PEP, CSPI, 1757 S Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20009, (202) 332-4250.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION FOUNDATION

. . . has initiated a utilities project which serves as a clearinghouse for organizing across the country—over 1,200 contacts are on file. Areas of interest include rate structure reform, nuclear power, and public ownership. A variety of articles, reports, and information packets are available on these and other issues. Particularly worth mention are their basic idea book, **How to Challenge Your Local Electrical Utility**, (see resources) and a monthly newsletter with excellent coverage of utilities campaigns, **The Power Line**. Contact EAF, 724 Dupont Circle Bldg., Wash., DC 20036, (202) 659-9682.

RESOURCES

In several ways, books, pamphlets, films, and tapes can be valuable organizing tools. Some of them analyse an issue in a way that increases the organizer's understanding; others can be used to raise the consciousness of the organizer's constituency. Still others provide concrete information helpful in

formulating strategies and tactics. Our selection is obviously incomplete—it is designed to give an idea of the range of materials available and to highlight what we consider to be the best of the lot.

Economic Analysis

Three topnotch anthologies analysing the causes and effects of the economic crisis:

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS READER, ed. by David Mermelstein. Vintage Books, c/o Random House, Order Dept., Westminster, MD 21157, 1975. 441 pp., \$4.95

RADICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE ECONOMIC CRISIS OF MONOPOLY CAPITALISM, URPE/PEA Teach In/Teach Out Pamphlet Collective. Union for Radical Political Economics, 41 Union Sq., Rm. 201, New York, NY 10003, 1975. 193 pp., \$2

ECONOMIC POWER FAILURE: THE CURRENT AMERICAN CRISIS, ed. by Sumner M. Rosen. McGraw-Hill, Order Dept., Princeton Rd., Hightstown, NJ 08520, 1975. 297 pp., \$3.95

"Capitalism and Unemployment," The Editors. **MONTHLY REVIEW**, 62 W. 14th St., New York, NY 10011, V. 27, No. 2, June, 1975, pp. 1-14, \$1

... an excellent, concise article analyzing the difficulties of determining the size and composition of the labor force in a capitalist economy. Its most outstanding feature is a critique of the way government employment statistics conceal the true extent of sub- and unemployment. As the article points out, the U.S. Department of Labor consistently underestimates the rate of unemployment by defining the labor force in an arbitrarily restrictive fashion. Also in this issue is Harry Braverman's "Work and Unemployment," an insightful discussion of alienation, unemployment, and work in capitalist society.

COMMONSENSE FOR HARD TIMES, Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello. Institute for Policy Studies, 1901 Que St., NW, Wash., DC 20009, 1976, 287 pp., \$4.50

... a comprehensive portrayal of political and economic relationships in the U.S., remarkable for both the breadth of its analysis and the human sensitivity and commitment it displays. Sections dig deep to locate the various faces of oppression—in the workplace where we each sell our life and labor to someone else; after work, where our real standard of living is steadily declining; the especially intense assault on Third World people and women; and all the other conditions buried in the social system, which lower the quality of life. **Commonsense** ... further identifies the culprit—an economic system where "production is organized first and foremost ... to increase the power and profit of those who own and direct productive wealth." Though extremely effective in chronicling abuse and resistance to it, the book lacks any strategic sense of how to respond.

POLITICAL ECONOMY FOR WORKERS, Political Economy Program Center. Avail. fr. Institute for Policy Studies, 1901 Q St., NW, Wash., DC 20009, 1975

... a series of 11 lectures developed from a Marxist perspective which demystify corporate control of the U.S. economy. They explain the current crisis in the context of the dynamics of the monopoly capitalist system. Topics covered include wages, profits, how the economy functions, the rise of monopolies and unions, business cycles, changes since the Depression and World War II, and the role of business and government. This course powerfully links corporate strategies to the daily conditions of workers' lives, making its points in a consistently understandable manner.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE AMERICAN ECONOMY?

Barbara & John Ehrenreich. New American Movement, 1643 N. Milwaukee, Chicago, IL 60647, 1975. 7 pp., Free

... explains the economy by offering clear interpretations of phrases like "liquidity crisis" and "cash flow," showing what they really mean in terms of dollars and cents. It makes the point that capitalism requires periodic depressions and recessions, and a certain level of unemployment to maintain corporate profit. The Ehrenreichs conclude that only "an economy in which things are produced because they're needed, not because they're profitable ... will provide security and meet basic human needs." Short, clear, simple—makes excellent agit-prop material.

HIT AND RUN: U.S. RUNAWAY SHOPS ON THE MEXICAN BORDER, NACLA'S LATIN AMERICA AND EMPIRE REPORT, Box 57, Cathedral Sta., New York, NY 10025, v. IX, No. 5, July-Aug. 1975, 32 pp., \$1; **INTERNATIONAL RUNAWAY SHOP; WHY U.S. COMPANIES ARE MOVING THEIR PLANTS ABROAD**, Mitch Zimmerman and the United Front Press Staff. United Front Press, Box 40099, San Francisco, CA 94140, 1973, 48 pp., 50¢

... both present compelling, thoroughly-documented accounts of U.S. corporations' search for unorganized, low-cost labor, showing how runaways cause unemployment and lower wages. The first focuses on shops which have recently relocated along the Mexican border, while the second analyses the runaway issue as a whole.

In plain language, here's the corporations' formula for the runaway shop: Find a country under U.S. domination. Move your machines there. Pay rock bottom wages. Sell in the U.S., under a U.S. brand name, at inflated U.S. prices. When the working people of these countries rise up against their dictatorial governments, when they struggle against their rotten living conditions and low wages—call in the entire arsenal of the U.S. government, from dollars to guns.

—International Runaway Shop

WHY DO WE SPEND SO MUCH MONEY? Steve Babson & Nancy Brigham. Popular Economics Press, Box 221, Somerville, MA 02143, 1975. 47 pp., \$1

... an enjoyable, factual analysis of the major expenses of the average family budget: housing, food, utilities, transportation, and health. Statistics, quotes, and graphics are used effectively to show how the rising cost of living is caused by the unchecked profits of U.S. monopolies. According to the pamphlet, the situation requires labor, consumer, and grass roots political organization in order to achieve democratic control of the economy.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR JOBS? Popular Economics Press, Box 221, Somerville, MA 02143, 1976. 56 pp., \$1.45
... lively illustrations and clear language make this radical analysis a pleasure to read. The booklet explores roots of and remedies for unemployment, health and safety, and union organizing, comparing today's crisis with the Depression of the 30's.

JUST ECONOMICS, Movement for Economic Justice, 1611 Connecticut Ave., NW, Wash., DC 20009, subs. rates vary
... provides national coverage of the organizing efforts of local groups. Topics include utilities, taxes, nuclear power, housing, food, unemployment, telephone rates, anti-redlining campaigns, and resources for community organizers.

DOLLARS AND SENSE, 324 Somerville Ave., Somerville, MA 02143, \$5/yr.

... offers clear explanations of "economic events from a socialist perspective." Its regular feature, "Current Statistical Review of the Economy," is an excellent analysis of developing trends. Articles cover labor issues, special problems of women and minorities, unemployment, taxes, energy, social service cutbacks, and the global role of U.S. multinationals.

MONTHLY REVIEW: AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST MAGAZINE, 62 W. 14th St., New York, NY 10011, \$9/yr. for individuals, \$12 for institutions

... prints excellent analytical and theoretical discussions of U.S. monopoly capitalism, edited by political economists. Collections of essays on the economy, taken from *Monthly Review*, are available in book form from MR Press.

"The U.S. Economy Project" (working title) will be a feature-length color documentary, combining recent events, historical footage, and "ordinary working people speaking their minds," to "provide a means for understanding the dynamics of the current economic crisis and mobilizing people to deal with it." For more information, contact Barbara Margolis, 252 W. 75th St., Apt. 2B, New York, NY 10023

Third World Newsreel is preparing "On the Street Again," a film exploring "the present economic crisis, tracing its historical antecedents," and examining "the strategy and tactics of progressive unions and militant caucuses." For information, write TWN, 26 W. 20th St., New York, NY 10011.

Haymarket, 1901 Wellington, Chicago, IL 60657.

"The Way the Eagle ... (Expletive Deleted)," 10 min., cl., 1974, contact Haymarket for ordering and price info.

... comments on the usefulness of unemployment and poverty to the capitalist system.

Labor

For other Labor Resources, see Women's and Third World Resource sections.

ORGANIZING AND THE LAW: A HANDBOOK FOR UNION ORGANIZERS, Stephen I. Schlossberg & Frederick E. Sherman. Bureau of National Affairs, 1231 25th St., N.W., Wash., DC 20037, 1971, 304 pp., \$5.50

... an important handbook, setting forth the legal framework for union organizing in a clear and concise manner. The text provides a thorough and detailed discussion of the Taft-Hartley Act and its court interpretations, and decisions made by the National Labor Relations Board (though no criticisms are made of that agency's biases). Topics covered include basic organizing tactics, unfair labor practices, recognition without election, NLRB procedure, bargaining units, and conduct of elections. A glossary of NLRB definitions and copies of standard complaint forms are appended.

ORGANIZE! A WORKING WOMEN'S HANDBOOK (See Women's Resources).

A GUIDE TO THE LABOR MOVEMENT, STRIKE AND STRIKE SUPPORT, Steve Max & Jim Williams. Midwest Academy, 600 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL 60614, 1973, 34 pp., \$2.50

... an excellent guidebook for groups doing strike and general labor support work. Unions are seen primarily as instruments of defense and thus, during the current period, their role is to maintain working people's standard of living. The booklet discusses the political implications of strikes, rank and file movements, the specific condition of women, and both legal and illegal strikes in the private and public sectors. Specific practical suggestions for actual strike support work are offered. Max and Williams show great sensitivity to the delicate balance which must prevail between strikers and community supporters if mutual cooperation and respect are to be maintained. A five page glossary explains commonly used labor terms.



"Current Trends in the American Labor Movement," Sidney Peck. **THE INSURGENT SOCIOLOGIST**, Dept. of Sociology, Univ. of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, v. 5, no. 2, Winter 1975. pp. 23-40, \$2

... examines recent changes in the composition of the labor force—increasing numbers of women, Blacks, Third World peoples, war veterans, and young people—which are leading toward greater working class militancy. Peck sees the labor movement as "numerically, the most powerful mass organization in the country," which has the potential for developing a socialist consciousness. During this period of economic decline, he does not consider militant workers' central goal to be throwing out their union, "but to throw out a reactionary leadership and restructure the union along progressive and democratic lines." And, as the article points out, only by overcoming divisions of race, sex, and age can this be achieved.

THE HOSPITAL WORKERS: "THE BEST CONTRACT ANYWHERE"? INSIDE THE HOSPITAL WORKERS UNION, Elinor Langer. New England Free Press, 60 Union Sq., Somerville, MA 02143, 1971. 15 pp., 20¢

... provides insights into the contract negotiation process and the relationship between the rank and file and union leadership in Local 1199, Drug and Hospital Union. The pamphlet traces the formulation of demands, mobilization of support, development of tactics, the interplay between workers and management during the actual talks, and the strategy of the hospital in relation to New York State politics. Amid this, worker dissatisfaction with union leadership and the role played by radicals are emphasized. Langer criticizes the unions for their ties to hospital management, but recognizes their importance in winning significant improvements in the workers' position.

COUNTER-PLANNING ON THE SHOP FLOOR, Bill Watson. New England Free Press, 60 Union Sq., Somerville, MA 02143, 1971, 10 pp., 25¢

... an inspiring account of Detroit auto workers taking control over production. Through planned sabotage, the workers systematically forced shutdowns in the plant in response to the company's decision to produce a line of poorly designed motors. The pamphlet sees the shutdown as a particularly militant tactic which complements the narrow trade union focus on the negotiation process. This example illustrates the potential power of working people when their spontaneous anger is effectively organized.

WORKING, Studs Terkel. Avon Books, 959 8th Ave., New York, NY 10019, 1974, 762 pp., \$2.25.

... "This book, being about work, is, by its very nature, about violence—to the spirit as well as the body. . . . It is above all (or beneath all), about daily humiliations." These captivating personal stories reveal people's attitudes, feelings, and experiences about their work. They indicate an almost universal dissatisfaction with their job routines and a search for meaning, for something more in their daily lives. The variety of workers Terkel interviewed, ranging from auto workers to hookers, from waitresses to gravediggers, adds to the numerous insights these tales provide.

Many of our modern leaders of labor have wandered far from the thorny path of the early crusaders . . . In those days labor's representatives did not sit on velvet chairs in conference with labor's oppressors . . . They did not ride in Pullmans nor make trips to Europe. The rank and file have let their servants become their masters and dictators. The workers have now to fight not alone against their exploiters, but likewise their own leaders, who often betray them, sell them out, who put their own advancement ahead of that of the working masses.

—Mother Jones

THEM AND US: STRUGGLES OF A RANK-AND-FILE UNION, James J. Matles & James Higgins. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632, 1974, 311 pp., \$2.95

... set in the historical context of industrial organizing since the 1930's, this book chronicles the growth of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), an organization dedicated to rank and file unionism. From its inception, UE has implemented its democratic principles through membership participation at all levels of decision-making and elections, and a strong shop steward system. The book begins by describing how layoffs in the thirties impressed upon the union the importance of taking interest in the local councils of the unemployed and the demand for unemployment insurance. An interesting feature is the discussion of tactics and strategies used in UE organizing drives. For example, during the 1969-70 strike against General Electric, UE united with what had once been its rival, the AFL-CIO member IUE, to win an important victory, including an end to discriminatory wage and job classification differentials between men and women. In conclusion, Matles and Higgins emphasize the importance of continued efforts by the labor movement to organize the unorganized.



THE CORRUPT KINGDOM: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS, Joseph E. Finley. Simon & Schuster, 630 5th Ave., New York, NY 10020, 1972, 315 pp., \$8.95

... chronicles the internal struggles of the UMWA from its inception in 1890 through 1972 when Miners for Democracy's reform slate successfully challenged the union's corrupt leadership. While praising John L. Lewis for his part in strengthening the UMWA and starting the CIO, Finley criticizes his authoritarian, anti-democratic leadership which lay the groundwork for corruption, embezzlement, and gangsterism during the years of Tony Boyle's presidency. Although the UMWA is still by no means thoroughly democratic, this account does provide an example of the potential power of the organized rank and file to effect important reforms within their unions.

RANK AND FILE: PERSONAL HISTORIES BY WORKING-CLASS ORGANIZERS, Alice and Staughton Lynd (ed.). Beacon Press, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108, 1973, 296 pp., \$3.95

... stirring personal accounts of individual organizers and their experiences in the labor movement during the 1930's and the post-World War II period. These are the stories of workers themselves, the rank and file, and not union bureaucrats. They raise the issues of relationships between the rank and file and leadership, workers and the Left, unions and parties, Blacks and Whites, and men and women. As individuals, each of these organizers shares his or her separate road to radicalization. Some became socialists or communists, some worked exclusively within the trade union movement, and some became disillusioned and left organizing altogether. All of these are valuable and, in most cases, encouraging examples to a new generation of radical organizers.

LABOR RADICAL: FROM THE WOBBLIES TO THE CIO, Len De Caux. Beacon Press, 25 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108, 1970, 548 pp., \$4.45

... connects radicals of a new generation with a proud history of working class struggle. De Caux' autobiography is distinguished by an unusual largeness of vision. In an era when the labor movement's primary concerns are wages and working conditions, **LABOR RADICAL** conveys a deep sense of the broader historical role of the working class—to build a society free from all forms of oppression, whether based on race, nationality, sex, or class. Artfully weaving one man's life with the story of an epoch, and consistently displaying humility, humor, and principle, the book chronicles five decades of labor militancy in the U.S.

AMERICAN LABOR RADICALISM: TESTIMONIES AND INTERPRETATIONS, Staughton Lynd, ed. John Wiley, 605 3rd Ave., New York, NY 10016, 1973, 217 pp., \$5.95

... excellent collection of articles (some excerpts of larger works) presenting valuable insights into radicalism within the labor movement from the early days of the Knights of Labor through the rank and file rebellions of the sixties and seventies. The section on the CIO discusses its formation, the use of the sitdown in the thirties, and its growing conservatism as illustrated by its refusal to support the non-industrial, socialist Southern Tenant Farmers Union. Section 3 is concerned with the recent revival of radicalism and includes articles on organizing, rank and file leaders and rebellions. Stanley Weir's "Rank-and-File Labor Rebellions Break into the Open: The End of an Era" is a terrific presentation of rank-and-file movements in this country's major unions. The final section discusses the potential for the working class to embrace socialism. Lynd's brief introductions to the articles are useful in making the connections between historical and contemporary radicalism explicit.

LABOR'S UNTOLD STORY, Richard O. Boyer & Herbert M. Morais. United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, 11 E. 51st St., New York, NY 10022, 1955, 3rd ed., 1970, 402 pp., \$3.95.

... an engaging narrative history which combines lively anecdotes with well-documented factual accounts. Boyer and Morais cover the period from the Civil War through the rise and fall of the CIO. It is a history of people, the rank and file labor movement, including minorities and women, as opposed to a glorification of government and union bureaucracies. The facts reveal numerous instances of workers' resistance and demonstrate the power of ordinary people to fight back. The description of Depression-era Unemployed Councils and coalitions among unemployed and employed people, men and women, Blacks and Whites, and progressives of many different political persuasions, gives us a good model for organizing during today's ongoing crisis.

LABOR TODAY, 343 S. Dearborn, Rm. 600, Chicago, IL 60604, \$3.50/year

... is a monthly newspaper about and for "the rank and file in action." It offers ongoing coverage of the progressive wing of the U.S. labor movement, crusading against racism, sexism, unsafe working conditions, and all forms of labor exploitation. **Labor Today** serves as a forum to discuss strategies labor activists are proposing in response to the problems of unemployment, inflation, and militarism. It is invaluable for an understanding of the extent of insurgency within the union movement.

THE GUARDIAN, 33 W. 17th St., New York, NY 10011, sliding scale

... a national Marxist newspaper providing extensive coverage of developments within the economy and the labor movement. As a "radical newsweekly," it also presents news and analysis of people's struggles, and national and international affairs, from a consistently critical perspective.

THE SOUTHERN PATRIOT, Southern Conference Educational Fund, 3210 W. Broadway, Louisville, KY 40211, \$5/year

... Monthly coverage of grassroots organizing activities across the South. Reporting focuses on racial and sexual oppression, political prisoners, labor struggles, and social service cutbacks.

FILMS FOR LABOR, Film Division, AFL-CIO Dept. of Education, 815 16th St., NW, Wash., DC 20006, Publication No. 22, 1975, 44 pp., Free catalog listing many historical films.

Ohio Newsreel, Box 19241, Cincinnati, OH 45219

"There's No Hiding Place Down Here!" Atlanta Labor Action Alliance, 42 min., b/w, 1975, 16 mm, rent: \$50

... Black and White textile workers in the South, mostly women, win their strike for union recognition and an end to discrimination in a successful organizing drive.

Haymarket, 1901 W. Wellington, Chicago, IL 60657. Write Haymarket for ordering and price information.

Videotapes (½ in. reel or ¾ in. cassette)

"What's Happening at Local Office 70," 20 min., 1975.

... clerical workers in a Chicago unemployment office go on strike protesting understaffing and compulsory overtime.

"Where's I. W. Abel?" 30 min., 1974.

... made with the participation of rank and file steelworkers, documents the membership's anger at Steelworker President I. W. Abel's no-strike contract with the steel industry.

Broadside T.V., 204 E. Watauga Ave., Johnson City, TN 37601. Write for info. on tape exchange policy.

"Which Side Are You On?" 30 min., ½ in. video tape, purchase: \$45.

... Florence and Dan Reece talk about organizing Appalachian coal fields in the 1930's—Florence sings her famous "Which Side Are You On?"

Broadside has many other tapes available about Appalachian peoples, their history and struggles. Write for a catalog.

Unemployed and Low Income Rights

The following handbooks are outstanding guides to the way through the benefit maze. Demand your rights!

THE RIGHTS OF THE POOR, Sylvia Law. Avon Books, c/o ACLU, 22 E. 40th St., New York, NY 10016, 1974. 176 pp., 95¢

HOW TO COLLECT UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS, Raymond Avrutis. Schocken Books, 200 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, 1975. 111 pp., \$1.25

LOW INCOME RIGHTS MANUAL: A GUIDE TO THE RIGHTS AND BENEFITS N.Y.C. RESIDENTS ARE ENTITLED TO UNDER THE LAW, Worker/Welfare Research and Advocacy Project. 220 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10003, 1976, 95 pp., \$1.50 or \$1 if you don't have money

SURVIVAL HANDBOOK FOR UNEMPLOYED WORKERS, Philadelphia Unemployment Project. 2015 Mt. Vernon St., Philadelphia, PA 19130, 1975, 31 pp., \$1

FRAC'S GUIDE TO THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM, Jeff Kirsch and Jay Lipner. Food Research and Action Center, 25 W. 43rd St., New York, NY 10036, July, 1975, 24 pp., 50¢ or free to those who can't afford it

"Radicals and the Jobless: The Musteites and the Unemployed Leagues, 1932-1936," Roy Rosenzweig. **LABOR HISTORY**, Winter 1975, v. 16, no. 1, pp. 52-77; "'United We Eat': The Creation and Organization of the Unemployed Councils in 1930," Daniel J. Leab. **LABOR HISTORY**, 1967, v. 8, no. 4, pp. 300-315; both avail. fr. Tamiment Institute, New York Univ., 70 Wash. Sq. S., New York, NY 10002, \$3 ea. . . . two historical accounts of unemployment organizing by the left in the 1930's, discussing tactics, demands, and the dilemma of organizing for immediate relief versus developing a revolutionary consciousness. Both articles assume that the unemployment movement failed because of its radical strategy, and therefore, neither adequately criticize its organizing tactics.

Nationwide, AFDC is provided only to families in which one parent is absent, dead or incapacitated. In 26 states, the family is also eligible if the father is unemployed. However, if the father is in the home and not incapacitated and the mother, who has been contributing to or providing the sole support of the family, becomes unemployed, the family is not eligible for aid.

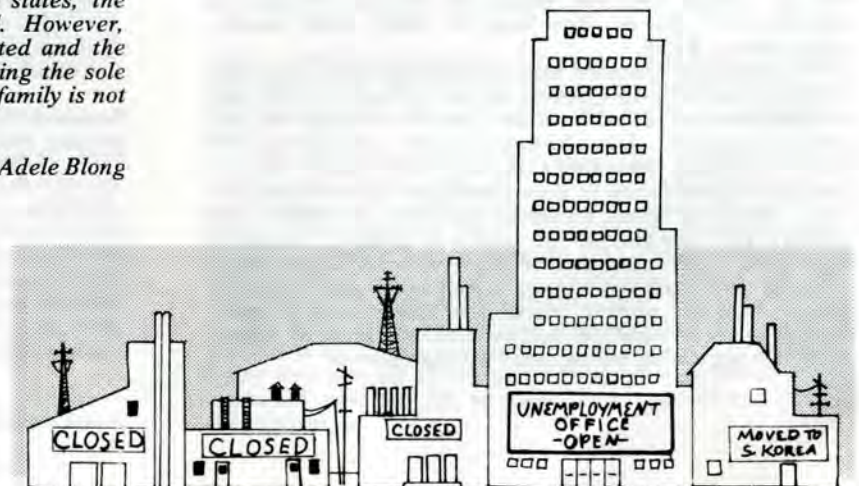
—Adele Blong

"A Call to Organize the Unemployed," Ed Sparer, **JUST ECONOMICS**, Movement for Economic Justice, 1609 Connecticut Ave. NW, Wash., DC 20009, Feb. 1975, pp. 3-7, reprints 15¢ each

. . . practical discussion of the inadequacies of current unemployment insurance programs and of tactics leading toward an equitable redistribution of income. The article suggests three goals for unemployment organizing: an adequate benefits program; a massive public jobs program; and a coalition of the poor, the unemployed, minorities, working people, and the lower middle class. Sparer further distinguishes between legislative demands and those made directly of unemployment insurance program administrators. Issues include indefinite extension of coverage, increased benefits and dependents' allowances, an end to delays in the unemployment office, modifications of regulations concerning voluntary quits, misconduct and job disqualifications, clearer hearing procedures, and, finally, recognition of collective bargaining rights for committees of unemployed workers. While extremely practical on the tactical level, "A Call to Organize . . ." fails to define the strategic goal of unemployment work as a fundamental change in the U.S. political economy.

UNEMPLOYMENT: THE FACTS THE EXPERTS CAN'T EXPLAIN, New School URPE Unemployment Project. c/o PEA, Box 331, Cathedral Sta., New York, NY 10025, 1975. 32 pp., 50¢

. . . provides a clear analysis of the major arguments used by conventional economists to explain unemployment. The booklet examines the "objectivity" of unemployment statistics and demolishes such exotic-sounding but diversionary concepts as "the unemployment-inflation trade-off," the theories of "structural," "voluntary" and "frictional unemployment," and the idea that competition from foreign workers is the source of the high jobless rate. The solution to unemployment does not lie in tinkering with the system, but, as URPE suggests, with the collective efforts of working people demanding jobs for all.



WELFARE: WHY WORKERS NEED IT, HOW BILLIONAIRES GET IT, Elizabeth Ross. New England Free Press, 60 Union Sq., Somerville, MA 02143, 1975. 22 pp., 35¢

... "when a government investigation of fraud in 1969 established that only 4/10 of 1% of all welfare cases were fraudulent, it also uncovered the fact that 28% of farmers and businessmen, and 34% of those living on interest payments were guilty of fraud and tax evasion!" Beginning with historical descriptions of the movement to institute welfare and unemployment insurance in the 30's, the pamphlet proceeds to show how workers, the unemployed, and welfare recipients all have common interests. For example, low wages mean low unemployment and welfare benefit levels. Using graphs and charts, Ross shows who really pays for welfare and who are the actual recipients, dispelling the myths about welfare "chisellers." The pamphlet calls for all working people to fight now to reverse their declining standard of living.

POVERTY PROFILE 1975, Mariellen Procopio & Frederick J. Parella, Jr. Campaign for Human Development, 1312 Mass. Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, 1975. 85 pp., \$1 ... an excellent, in-depth study of poverty in America, written from the Christian perspective. The report equates poverty with powerlessness and points out that real steps toward its elimination requires "changes in the present patterns of power and income distribution in this society." Statistics which conceal more than they uncover are demystified to show what they really mean in human terms. The report also criticizes current poverty programs for mismanagement, insufficiency and ineffectiveness, and further attacks the attitude of "blaming the victim" instead of the system. The Campaign for Human Development advocates reform of the present welfare system through job development and a guaranteed annual income, a reordering of government priorities, and a redistribution of power and wealth.

"Jobs For All," Michael Harrington. **COMMONWEAL**, 232 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016, v. CIII, No. 3, January 30, 1976, pp. 73-77, 60¢

... a critique of the Humphrey-Javits and Hawkins-Humphrey Full Employment bills from a socialist perspective. Harrington points out that these bills offer at most, a "structural transformation within the capitalist system." His specific criticisms of the bills are that they don't include "genuine democratic participation at every level of decision-making," and don't challenge corporate domination of the economy. Harrington's solution is to amend the bills to include plans for nationalization and greater public participation in decision-making.

THE POVERTY ESTABLISHMENT, Pamela Roby, ed. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632, 1974. 217 pp., \$2.95

... an anthology of recent articles examining the U.S. welfare state. The introduction exposes the limitations of current poverty programs which maintain the vastly unequal distribution of income and wealth. It further criticizes the system which "precludes programs that would actually eliminate poverty." Articles go on to present a history of U.S. policy concerning poverty, criticize government subsidies for the rich, survey government programs, and describe the corporate role in the U.S. poverty establishment. The book concludes by chiding social scientists who legitimize the system with their theories.

Ohio Newsreel, Box 19241, Cincinnati, OH 45219

"Atlanta Fight-Back," Videotape, 20 min., 1975, rent: \$10 ... the Atlanta Fight Back Committee organizing among the unemployed in the 70's.

The intake division is now handling 1000 clients a month. It's gotten worse, a speed up for me, a speed up for certification workers. Your interviews become faster. Almost in order to survive, you've got to harden yourself. I can't just sit with somebody face to face and they're telling me they can't buy food because that's the condition of being on welfare, and that's what their lives have been reduced to . . . When you work here, the contradictions in society are very clear because you see who's poor and why, and you see who gets the money and why.

—Buffalo welfare case worker

Women

See also Sources of Statistics.

Two excellent pamphlets available from Women's Work Project, URPE/Political Educ. Proj. Avail. fr. Julie Boddy, 2200 19th St., NW, #807, Wash., DC 20009:

WOMEN IN TODAY'S ECONOMIC CRISIS, 1975. 12 pp., 35¢

... presents a good overview of women's position in capitalism—their underpaid, low-skilled positions within the paid labor force and their unpaid labor in the home and as consumers. The booklet demonstrates that women's role in the economy can be considered a "continuing crisis," meaning that they have always occupied the most marginal positions in the labor force, have often been on fixed incomes, and are often unorganized within the workplace. Besides aggravating these conditions, an additional effect of the current crisis has been to set back recent gains made under affirmative action by determining layoffs solely by seniority. The booklet proposes that women organize on many levels—as homemakers and consumers, in community organizations, in unions, and in rank and file caucuses—emphasizing the potential development of strength and power through collective action. Also included is a partial listing of resource and action groups working to organize women.

WOMEN IN HEALTH, 1975. 21 pp., 35¢

... comprehensive examination of women in the health industry. It includes a discussion of the three major unions of health workers, and serves as an example of how an organizer should analyse both a particular workplace and an entire industry.

ORGANIZE! A WORKING WOMEN'S HANDBOOK, Union W.A.G.E. Educ. Com., Box 462, Berkeley, CA 94701, 1975, 43 pp., \$2.50

... exceptionally informative handbook which clearly lays out basic steps of union organizing, writing and negotiating a contract, learning parliamentary procedure, and building a caucus. Articles discuss strategy and tactics, and issues of special concern to women, while instructions on putting out a shop newsletter and a good bibliography of additional sources are also included. The aim of the handbook is to help "all workers, organized and unorganized, women and men," but it especially focuses on women clericals since they make up the largest number of unorganized workers. The booklet criticizes discrimination within unions, yet encourages affiliation, believing that women and minority workers do "have the power to democratize the labor movement and make it once again a force for social change."



When I sought a job change into a category offering more money, I was told: "Listen lady, we're got men out of work who have wives and children to support." No one seemed to notice that I was the sole support of my three young children.

—An ex-government employee

HANDBOOK FOR OCAW WOMEN, Katherine Stone. Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, Box 2812, Denver, CO 80201. 82 pp.

... an excellent, practical handbook for all workers concerned with fighting sex discrimination, presented in a thorough and easily understandable manner. Part I discusses the existing laws that apply to women: interpretations, scope, procedures for filing complaints (including addresses of appropriate government agencies and sample complaint forms). Part 2 treats several issues of special importance to women—seniority, maternity benefits and leaves, job placement tests, women's occupational health problems, and child care. The third section suggests procedures for working with the union local to fight employer sex discrimination through collective bargaining and legislative lobbying. Stone recommends countering discrimination *within* the union local by forming strong women's caucuses. These points are couched in a sensitive and realistic appraisal of women's situation in both the labor market and the union structure.

THE FORGOTTEN FIVE MILLION: WOMEN IN PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT, Catherine Samuels. Women's Action Alliance, 370 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017, 1975, 298 pp., \$5

... an excellent guide filled with concrete information for women combating sex discrimination. Though designed for women in the public employment sector, most of the information is of general use. Coverage includes legal remedies, affirmative action programs, organizing for power, and general resources. The organizing section discusses general tactics, organizational structure and development, fundraising, and public relations. The book offers an in-depth discussion of women and the labor movement, arguing that strong caucuses should be formed in existing unions whenever possible. Although Samuels declares independent organizing is the only recourse in some situations, she points out that a good union provides the best channels for winning changes, with its established grievance procedures and binding contracts.

WORKING WOMEN AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS—150 YEARS OF STRUGGLE, Joyce Maupin. Union WAGE Educ. Com., Box 462, Berkeley, CA 94701, 1974, 33 pp., \$1

... a good introduction to the history of women's participation in the U.S. labor movement during the past 150 years. The booklet covers women's strikes, points out discrimination against women within the male-dominated union structure, and discusses groups which are currently organizing working women such as Union WAGE and the Coalition of Labor Union Women (which is criticized for its bureaucratic and hierarchical structure). The need for women to join unions, using them to fight sex discrimination, is emphasized, but the booklet never adequately points out that sexism is an inherent part of our economic system.

WHAT HAVE WOMEN DONE? San Francisco Women's History Group. United Front Press, Box 40099, San Francisco, CA 94140, 1975, 58 pp., \$2; Also avail. as slide show, 35 mm. film strip with audio cassette. 45 min., rent: \$15, purchase: \$60

... an historical photo essay documenting women's resistance to their double oppression. Inspiring and beautifully done.

UNION W.A.G.E., Box 462, Berkeley, CA 94701, \$3/year

... bi-monthly newspaper of Union Women's Alliance to Gain Equality, focusing on women in the trade union movement. Excellent coverage of sexism in unions, negotiations on women's issues, organizing techniques, on-going campaigns, and conferences.

U.C.E.M.C., 2223 Fulton St., Berkeley, CA 94720.

"I Am Somebody," Madeline Anderson, 28 min., cl., 1970, rent: \$22

... portrays the successful fight of Black women hospital workers against the White establishment in Charleston, South Carolina.

New Day Films, Box 315, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417.

"Union Maids," 45 min., b/w, 1975, rent: \$50; purchase: \$375.

... three women union organizers recount their experiences in the 1930's against a backdrop of footage showing militant demonstrations and workplace confrontations.

Tricontinental Film Center, 333 Sixth Ave., New York, NY 10014.

"The Double Day," 56 min., col., 1975, Span. w/ Eng. subtitles, rent: varies; purchase: \$675.

... shows the double exploitation and "two days" of working women in Latin America—as wage laborers and in the home as wives and mothers.

Third World

DETROIT: I DO MIND DYING, Dan Georgakas & Marvin Surkin. Martin's Press, 175 5th Ave., New York, NY 10010, 1975. 250 pp., \$4.95

... tells the story of the movement of revolutionary Black workers in Detroit from 1967 to 1974, which "defined its goal in terms of real power—the power to control the economy, which meant trying to control the shop floor at the point of production." The authors held extensive interviews in the summer of 1972 to capture the spirit of the struggle. They document the use of the media as a tool for political education, the creation of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and the Black Workers Congress, wildcat strikes, and the effects of police repression. Especially interesting is the book's comparison of the strategies and tactics of different groups.

BLACK FAMILIES IN THE 1974-75 DEPRESSION. National Urban League, Research Dept., 733 15th St., NW, Wash., DC 20005, July, 1975. 29 pp., \$1.25

... examines the effects of the current economic crisis on the status of Black families. Statistics and analysis show rising unemployment for Black women, men, and youth; a declining standard of living for the Black family as a whole; and a widening gap between the incomes of Blacks and Whites.

CHINESE WORKING PEOPLE IN AMERICA: A PICTORIAL HISTORY, Wei Min She Labor Committee. United Front Press, Box 40099, San Francisco, CA 94140, 1974. 71 pp., \$2

... uses pictures and text to chronicle the history of Chinese working people in America. The Chinese have made great contributions to building America's wealth, but have been rewarded with racist exploitation as a marginal labor force. However, from the earliest years, exploitation has inspired resistance. It is a proud history which starts with workers' associations formed in the 1860's to improve wages and working conditions, and continues through recent unionizing drives by women garment workers.

ECONOMICS OF RACISM U.S.A., Victor Perlo. International Publishers, 381 Park Ave. S., New York, NY 10016, 1975, 280 pp., \$4.25

... exposes the economic aspects of racism in the U.S. Clear arguments and thorough statistical documentation demonstrate that Black people are on the short end of every income and employment yardstick. The book consistently points out that racism is not merely a set of attitudes, but is exemplified by practices such as employers reaping extra profits by paying non-Whites less than the prevailing wage rate. Employers also use racism to divide the labor movement. **Economics of Racism** is especially impressive in criticizing the idea that Black and White workers are economic rivals, showing it to be based on the false assumption that there are a fixed number of jobs, a fixed total of wages, etc. Real gains can only be won by a persistent and organized mass movement demanding full economic equality. While that can never be fully achieved under the present economic system, improvements are possible. From that perspective, Perlo outlines some short-range goals, including affirmative action programs and special seniority rights to prevent massive layoffs of recently-hired Third World people. The book concludes with a strong argument for a militant trade union movement fighting for concrete improvements for its members in the context of employment, educational, housing, and other programs beneficial to all.

Tricontinental Film Center, 333 Sixth Ave., New York, NY 10014.

"Finally Got the News," 55 min., col., 1970, rent: varies; purchase: \$495.

... Detroit auto plants from the point of view of Black workers and the organizing efforts of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

RACISM AND THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT, Jim Griffin. Philadelphia Workers' Organizing Committee, Box 11768, Phila., PA 19101, 1973. 40 pp., 75¢

... sharp analysis of how business has used racism to divide workers and increase profits, documenting discrimination against Black people as consumers and on the job. They are channeled into the lowest paying occupations and are rarely adequately represented by unions. The booklet sees racism as a product of capitalism, not of the attitudes of the White working class. It points to the militancy of Black workers in rank and file movements as a reason why it is in the interests of Whites to unite in the fight against racism in the workplace, in unions, and in society as a whole. PWOC believes workers must wage a class conscious struggle through a democratized union movement on both political and economic fronts. Only after a thorough effort to eliminate racism can the unity necessary for such a movement be achieved.

CHICANOS STRIKE AT FARAH, San Francisco Bay Area Farah Strike Support Committee. United Front Press, Box 40099, San Francisco, CA 94140, 1974, 21 pp., 35¢

... an account of the Chicanos' strike at the Texas plant of Farah Slacks in 1972, revealing the determination of working people to organize. The workers themselves describe the process of building a union in spite of company harassment, building support in the local community, increasing the participation of women, and creating an effective system of strike support, including a national boycott. This strike concretely upset the corporate strategy of establishing runaway shops in the Southwest, a largely unorganized area. It also demonstrated the importance of building unity between working people of different nationalities and destroyed the myth that "women can't be organized," providing "a powerful example to all working women that they don't have to stand for low wages, discrimination, and no unions." In English or Spanish.

There are 2 billion foreigners out there willing to work for 10¢ an hour...

—Willie Farah of Farah Clothing Co.

El Taller Grafico, United Farm Workers, La Paz, Keene, CA 13531.

"Why We Boycott," 17 min., col., 1975, rent: \$35; purchase: \$68.70

... a moving film in which members of the United Farm Workers tell their own stories about La Causa.

See also Sources of Statistics.

Utilities

HOW TO CHALLENGE YOUR LOCAL UTILITY, Richard Morgan & Sandra Jerabek. Environmental Action Foundation, 720 Dupont Circle Bldg., Wash., DC 20036, 1974. 104 pp., \$1.50

...an information-packed organizing manual explaining how to challenge utility companies on environmental and consumer issues. Part I is a general description of the U.S. power industry, including government regulation and environmental effects. The second part explains ways to challenge the policies of local utilities companies, focusing on state regulatory commissions. This section covers opposition to discriminatory rate structures, rate increases, harmful environmental practices, and nuclear power plants. Including an annotated bibliography, the book provides essential information to utilities organizers.

AN ORGANIZER'S NOTEBOOK ON PUBLIC UTILITIES AND ENERGY. Human Affairs Program, Cornell Univ., 410 College Ave., Ithaca, NY 14853, 1975. \$15—discounts to low income groups

...contains a wealth of information for organizers concerning utilities and energy, ranging from bibliographies to reprinted articles from a variety of sources. The notebook addresses such issues as community power and utilities, structure of power companies and the oil industry, utility rates, nuclear power, and power lines. Especially good are the sections on research and organizing. There is some emphasis on organizing in New York State, but most of the information is of general interest.

RESOURCE GUIDE ON ELECTRIC UTILITY ISSUES. Utility Project, Environmental Action Foundation, 724 Dupont Circle Bldg., Wash., DC 20036, 1975. 7 pp., Free

...comprehensive guide to recent literature useful to utilities organizers, including a much wider variety of materials than could be covered here.

The Great Atlantic Radio Conspiracy, 2743 Maryland Ave., Baltimore, MD 21218. For individuals: reel ... \$5; cassette ... \$3.50. Institutions: reel ... \$10; cassette ... \$7.

"The Great Utilities Rip-Off," 30 min., #02-672-22.

...a critical examination of one utility company's application for increased rates.



Sources of Statistics

QUARTERLY ECONOMIC REPORT ON THE BLACK WORKER, National Urban League, Research Dept., 733 15th St., NW, Wash., DC 20005, 1975, 8 pp., \$1/issue

...a valuable source of information and analysis concerning the status of Black workers.

Statistical data available from Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Wash., DC 20402:

HANDBOOK OF LABOR STATISTICS 1975, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, catalogue # L2.3:1865, 473 pp., \$5.35

...makes available in one volume a variety of data on employment, hours, productivity, compensation, prices, living conditions, and more, cross-tabulated by sex and race.

MONTHLY LABOR REVIEW, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, \$20/year, \$2.40 per copy

...reviews statistics, developments, and trends in the economy, with an emphasis on the labor force.

Statistical information available free from Women's Bureau, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Wash., DC 20210.

A GUIDE TO SOURCES OF DATA ON WOMEN AND WOMEN WORKERS FOR THE UNITED STATES AND FOR REGIONS, STATES, AND LOCAL AREAS, 1972, 15 pp.

...information for developing affirmative action programs, including demographic, educational, occupational, and employment statistics.

FACTS ON WOMEN WORKERS OF MINORITY RACES, 1975, 10 pp.

...data concerning the participation of Third World women in the labor force, including unemployment and wage rates, and demographic characteristics.

WOMEN WORKERS: SOME BASIC STATISTICS, Lise Vogel, New England Free Press, 60 Union Sq., Somerville, MA 02143, 18 pp., 40¢

...although the statistics are based on the 1960 census and the years 1968-70, this pamphlet's continued usefulness lies in its interpretation of data on women's position in the labor force. It draws important insights about the effects of sexism and racism out of information on occupational segregation, differential wage rates, women in labor unions, and more.

*If a life is spent
as hours
chained to machines
slaves
of the master profit
what is it worth?
everything.*

*We demand our natural worth
ourselves
and each other
we will no longer be footnotes
because we are
history.*

—Brick Miller

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DEMAND FOR DAY CARE: An Introduction for Campus and Community, 1974, 45p., \$1.50

. . . covers various aspects of developing day care programs — parent involvement, cooperatives, day care's relationship to women's liberation, bi-lingual centers, funding and legal problems, etc. The last seven pages list and describe other resources and resource groups.

Available from RCC, P.O. Box 21066, Wash., DC 20009.

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Source Catalogs are organizer's manuals, each one covering a broad area where radical change is taking place. They list and describe projects, strategies, support groups, and resource books, films, and periodicals. **SOURCE III: ORGANIZING FOR HEALTH CARE**, recently published, covers such issues as community controlled clinics, occupational health, the women's health movement, mental patient's rights, hospital workers, drug and insurance companies, and much more. Beacon Press, 1974. 256pp., \$5.95. **SOURCE I: COMMUNICATIONS** lists over 500 media groups—anti-racist/anti-sexist broadcasting groups, guerilla theater, community controlled cable TV, film co-ops, alternative press services and print shops—plus over 400 resources. Swallow Press, revised 1972. 116pp., \$1.75. **SOURCE II: HOUSING** is a diverse manual for action including tenant unions, legal resources, public housing organizing, non-profit housing development corporations, rural housing, Third World housing resources, and much more. Swallow Press, 1972. 264pp., \$2.95. For more information, contact SOURCE, P.O. Box 21066, Washington, D.C. 20009.

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