

14 Charles Lane
New York, N.Y. 10014

May 21, 1975

TO BRANCH ORGANIZERS AND TRADE UNION DIRECTORS

Dear Comrades,

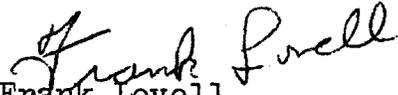
This material is a digest of eleven recent reports on union developments in different parts of the country, as promised in the May 8 survey letter.

Two of these reports -- Atlanta and Twin Cities -- are analyses of what these branches are doing and why they decided to assume responsibility for strengthening a segment of the union movement in those cities. They are different from the other reports.

The other reports are accounts of what is being done by comrades who have been active or are becoming active in union work as a result of new possibilities. They show a variety of situations and problems as well as opportunities.

It is understood that these are progress reports that are not conclusive or definitive; but they should be useful for a better understanding of new developments in the union movement and how our party can relate to them.

Comradely,


Frank Lovell
National Office

1. Social Services Union Local 535 - April 25

The State board meeting was held in Los Angeles last weekend. Henry Datson, head of the L. A. NAACP addressed the meeting and was well received. A resolution in support of the May 17 march on Boston was adopted.

News reports show unions accepting concessions on wages and benefits, a dismal trend which seems destined to go on for some time. Some more extended discussion of this is needed in the Militant.

Public workers in New York City and other eastern cities are faced with just this problem, and union officials have been too accomodating to city administrations. We should demand a moratorium on the payment of interest on city bonds, as Ray Markey suggested in his article and which Dick Roberts' ISR article discussed so vividly awhile back.

In California, the spring wage and benefit negotiations will bring new increases, but still not enough to make up for inflation.

In Los Angeles, social workers will get a seven percent increase in gross wages (inflation is 12 percent), plus additional medical benefits. In addition, there will be binding arbitration of grievances and, for the first time, the county has agreed to negotiate case loads.

The mood is not one of struggle at the moment.

San Francisco has just settled for a six percent raise.

* * *

2. Hotel, Restaurant Employees & Bartenders International, Local 9, San Francisco - April 25

There is a large number of retirees in this local who retain full voting rights and attend most union meetings which range in size from 35 to 75 members.

Last month the leadership proposed to change the local constitution so that business agents would be appointed, not elected. For the vote on this proposition over 300 members turned out and voted it down, 271-40. Lots of young people and minorities came to this meeting.

About a month ago a group of young women who work in one of the big hotels began meeting to discuss their problems. They decided to submit their own demands for new contracts soon to be negotiated. After listing their demands, they passed a petition among other hotel workers and got 400 signatures in support.

At the most recent meeting, attended by 175 or more (April 23), Joseph Belardi showed up. He is an Int'l.

Vice President and head of the Culinary Joint Board here (from the bartenders' local).

Belardi said he was sent by the International because they were upset about the vote on business agents (he actually said that).

The first motion concerned the right of the membership to be kept posted on the progress of negotiations. Despite strong opposition from Belardi and the leadership of the local, this motion passed on a voice vote with a big majority. This really got Belardi's goat.

He pulled a manoeuver on the second motion, the substantive one on the hotel workers' demands which he said was "out of order." The chair agreed with Belardi, the reasoning being that since we are part of a joint board with other culinary unions who have to strike over our demands we have no right to press our own demands... (This argument is used against most initiatives coming from the rank and file on trade issues and should be a strong argument for the impending merger of the locals).

When the ruling of the chair was appealed on this question Belardi declared, "You can't do that!" He said, "you have to go to the International to appeal the ruling of the chair," He got the hotel workers committee to agree to a small meeting with other union officers and himself about their demands.

These details are not as important as the fact that these issues have brought flocks of young people to the union meetings. The leadership has made no attempt to co-opt any of these young members.

A similar thing happened recently in local 400, Service Employees International Union. The leadership of that union fired two of the best organizers, both active in the campaign to defeat Proposition L. The membership turned out 300-strong to reverse the leadership and rehire both these organizers. (This incident and the business agent issue in the Hotel, Restaurant & Bartenders union were both reported in the daily newspapers.)

3. UAW Local 72, Kenosha, Wisconsin - April 18

There are about 10,000 workers in two American Motors plants represented by this local. About 500 attend union meetings each month.

An ad hoc committee of young members of the local recently campaigned for the UAW to establish an unemployment committee and initiate contact and joint actions with other locals and unions. This idea was discussed at a recent membership meeting and referred to the local executive board. In the discussion the popular slogan of a shorter work week with no reduction in take-home pay was raised. (30 for 40). An International

Representative who was at the meeting agreed with some of the comments from the members, but said "we are already doing everything we can."

At that meeting 17 Militants were sold and the SWP Bill of Rights for Working People got a good response, as did the Halstead reprint "Why Can't Everybody Have a Job?"

Last week the UAW local executive board organized a conference on unemployment attended by about 75, most officials. They said this was a direct result of the discussion at the membership meeting. The matter was referred to the UAW Community Services Committee, standard UAW procedure,

At the membership meeting a right-winger harassed a Militant sales agent and the local president spoke against this during the meeting since the comrade selling the paper is also an outspoken and active member of the union, but the president was rather equivocal. Later he said that the union supports the right to sell but is not committed to direct the sergeants-at-arms to protect that right. Their duties are to maintain order in the meetings. Militant sales will continue and it appears as if several workers are prepared to protect those selling from right-wingers who have little influence in the local.

Local elections are coming up with no significant differences between the contending candidates. SWP members have no reason to become involved in this or take sides in this election.

Other union activity appears possible in the Milwaukee area. Some comrades participate in CLUW, including one secretary on campus. She is a member of AFSCME which plans an organizing drive soon.

The Stalinists initiated a Coalition Against Unemployment and Inflation which appears very narrow. It served as coordinator for the April 26 demonstration in Washington, sending one bus of striking meatcutters.

In light of the possibilities and the importance of union work in Milwaukee the branch executive has recommended a trade union director.

* * *

4. AFSCME Local 1644, Atlanta - April 29

Last fall we had an opportunity to participate in positions of leadership in the work of re-establishing this union local and launching an organizing drive of unorganized city workers. We decided to take this opportunity, established a union fraction to direct the work, and heavily oriented the branch to seek jobs that would lead to union membership in AFSCME,

Atlanta AFSCME is a relatively democratic and open union. It is not characterized by an entrenched, conservative and experienced bureaucracy primarily oriented to the manipulation of the membership. On the contrary, the moods and desires of the rank and file membership can have considerable weight on the policies and decisions of the local. The union has a militant tradition in Atlanta, having led, in cooperation with SCLC, an important, if not completely successful strike of sanitation workers in 1970.

Nationally AFSCME is, of course, very heavily oriented to the Democratic party and working directly in Democratic party politics. This presents them with an acute contradiction. The "employers" that are directly carrying out the attacks on the AFSCME membership are the Democratic mayors and other Democratic officials of the major cities and towns throughout the country,

It was our judgement that in Atlanta the objective pressures were such that the local union would be forced to break with even a Black mayor with a liberal pro-union reputation, such as Maynard Jackson.

We concluded that Atlanta AFSCME and its leadership as it presently exists and seems to be evolving is one we can work with. Our major orientation is building the union and attempting to influence its present leadership in the direction of a class-struggle program.

Another factor in our decision is the absence of any serious red-baiting. The local union is strongly bent in the direction of building and strengthening the organization--organizing unorganized public workers. In general, union membership throughout the Southeast has declined in the past decade. AFSCME has bucked this trend and is the only major union to grow throughout the area and in Atlanta during the past five years. The union understands that the only way to survive, especially in this period of stepped up attacks on the working class, is to grow. As a result, this union has a relatively militant and aggressive policy.

One of the most important factors in our basic decision to help build this union is the composition of AFSCME membership and potential membership here in Atlanta. Atlanta AFSCME has a total membership of approximately 4000, divided among three major chapters--The Board of Education Chapter, the City Chapter, and the Grady Hospital Chapter. AFSCME membership here is very heavily made up of young people, women and Blacks--precisely those sections of the population already deeply affected by the previous stages of the radicalization. They are also those layers of the population that are feeling the inflation and depression most acutely.

Even with our limited experience in AFSCME so far, we are constantly coming into contact with individuals who already know and respect us through their participation in

police repression demonstrations, previous Black strike actions, antiwar demonstrations and other actions in which we were participants and leaders. Many other AFSCME members know us from our election campaigns, Militant sales, ERA work, etc. In short, the population that makes up the AFSCME membership is one which we already know in other areas of work. To a certain extent trade union work in AFSCME is an extension of work we were doing in other areas.

These, then, were the primary considerations that determined our decision to direct major attention to this union-building work.

Our work in this arena has already given the branch and the executive committee invaluable experience in drawing up and projecting a practical class-struggle program for the union movement.

We have made a number of useful proposals for Local 1644, and have seen them tested. The first of these took the form of organizational measures which were adopted by the newly elected union executive board. One was to establish a regular monthly newspaper of the Local, and the other was an organizing committee made up of rank and file members from each Chapter whose purpose would be to involve union members in a city-wide effort to build and expand the union.

The newspaper has proved to be a tremendous success. We are trying to broaden the newspaper committee so that the entire responsibility for putting out this publication, "AFSCME 1644," does not fall on a few. So far three issues have appeared and it is a very creditable job of journalism.

The paper has had a very good influence on the local. It is the single most effective and successful organizing tool of the union. It has raised the union and political consciousness of the membership.

Our other proposal, for a city-wide organizing committee, has not yet taken hold. The local officers and International representatives take complete responsibility for organizing, a long-standing practice that has become a habit. The newly elected local executive board does not yet have the confidence and experience to begin involving layers of the membership in its organizing campaigns. However, this may change soon.

The International and local representatives are proposing regular city-wide meetings of shop stewards and the setting-up of action committees within each chapter. One of the obvious motives of the International is to use these formations as organizational tools for intervention in Democratic party electoral politics. They talk about this. However, such a perspective has many contradictions and will not be easy to carry out, not in Atlanta,

These would be Political Action Committees of a few top officials, but essentially made up of rank and filers who are expected to do the work. It is possible that such formations will become action committees and engage in union-building campaigns.

Our major proposals in this respect concern a series of demonstrations by the union in March of this year against the city administration, board of education, and Grady hospital.

These agencies and Mayor Jackson made it clear through statements and actions that they plan to cut funds for city workers, renege on promised small wage increases, and begin layoffs. Their campaign along these lines probed the union's response and escalated in intensity when the union did nothing. We felt it was necessary for the union to respond with demonstrations.

The International representatives spoke against such actions, opting for giving the Mayor a chance and maneuvering with "friends" on the City Council. As a result, a motion in the union executive board to call a demonstration was tabled. It was taken up again at the following meeting, but defeated. Two meetings later the International representative proposed mass demonstrations, essentially the same proposal that had been defeated previously. A series of three large, militant demonstrations was called, having significant impact on city officials, the news media, and especially on the morale and militancy of the local union membership.

The present tactical plan of the local is also one we helped formulate, but through informal discussions rather than a formal motion. The City now plans to begin giving city employees forced vacations of one week without pay starting in July. This amounts to a pay cut, a cut in annual takehome pay, a forced reduction of the already meager standard of living.

In our opinion, the local is not yet large enough, strong enough, nor organized enough to successfully carry out a long decisive strike. Instead the Local has announced that with the first forced vacation in July all union members will take their forced vacation simultaneously. This does not lock the local into an open-ended strike, but provides an action toward which the union can build and which in turn can be used to build and organize the union.

* * *

5. AFSCME local 1164 - Twin Cities, May 1, 1975

AFSCME 1164 represents the service employees at University of Minnesota Hospitals and has jurisdiction to potentially organize all employees at the Twin Cities campus at the U of M -- the largest campus in the country. The local was founded in 1970, during the period of mass

campus upsurge, won the bargaining election for the service unit at the hospital in 1971, and negotiated a two year contract for those workers in 1973.

From the union's founding until last fall, Progressive Labor dominated the leadership of the local. Their perspective for the union was to use it as a base to build the "Workers Action Movement." Their bizarre antics gave the union a very bad reputation--both on campus and in the labor movement. They became so discredited that they were defeated for reelection by a slate of well-intentioned but very incompetent union activists.

The Workers League at one time also had members in 1164.

We have had members in this local since its inception. It is now clear to us that the union has reached a critical turning point.

At the time of PL's election defeat, 1164 had barely over 200 members in a bargaining unit of nearly 800. During PL's reign, no serious organizing work had been carried out. The primary union activities had centered around poorly chosen grievance actions and support to WAM activities. The union as a whole was in a demoralized state and in a process of slow disintegration. The Teamsters were making serious preparations to challenge 1164 for the bargaining rights. On top of this, the union had to face the prospect of going in to contract negotiations in the spring.

It was apparent to us that without a vigorous influx of fresh forces, the union was going to go down the tube. Probably the Teamsters Public Employees Local dominated by cops and sheriffs deputies, would come in and mop up the situation. We concluded that we could help turn the situation around and save the union. The question was: Did we want to do that? Was it important for us to commit the kind of forces necessary to do the job?

After discussion, we decided to try to save the union and build it into a real force. The main reasons for that decision can be summarized as:

1) The U. of M. campus is the political center of the Twin Cities. A militant, democratic union carrying out successful struggles would be a big asset to all of our political work. Conversely, the defeat of the union at the hands of administration and/or the Teamsters bureaucrats, would be a big setback.

2) We had a chance to make some gains against one of our major opponents locally--PL. PL's pseudo-militancy had been discredited and we had an opportunity to put into practice a real class struggle approach to unionism that would not only benefit 1164, but would

serve as a positive example to other unions in the area as well. Also, many of our comrades were known as Trotskyists because of their campus activities and our movement would be judged by our response to the crisis in the union.

3) We consider AFSCME to be the most fruitful union generally to work in at the present, having comrades and sympathizers in other AFSCME locals and a working relationship with some of the young AFSCME staff members. To lose a local to the most reactionary Teamsters outfit would be a big setback to AFSCME and our work in AFSCME.

4) Taking a long term perspective of increasing party intervention in the unions as the radicalization deepens, we thought it was important not to pass up this opportunity to play a real leadership role in potentially important union actions.

5) Finally, if nothing else, our intervention would give the comrades invaluable experience that will serve us well in the future.

After the branch and YSA approved this perspective, we established a fraction of all the comrades in the union and began discussions on what concrete activities should be projected for the union. First and foremost was the need to immediately begin a real organizing drive. Unless a majority of the workers could be brought into the union, 1164 was doomed. We worked out an outline for the campaign to be presented to the local. The highlights of the proposal were as follows:

1) Initial expansion from existing bases of strength. Instead of diluting the drive by aiming at all 4000-5000 workers on campus, as PL projects, concentrate on the hospital bargaining unit, and within that, begin with departments already having a base of union members.

2) A weekly leafleting campaign to make the union visible and conduct basic propoganda on what the union has accomplished.

3) A button campaign, to again increase the union's visibility.

4) A union newsletter to take up specific union activities, expose the antics of the bosses, answer the Teamsters attacks, etc.

5) Establish a union office. In its four years of existence, the union had never had an office. Files, leaflets, membership cards, etc., were scattered around individuals' lockers and homes.

6) Setting up a "hot-line" phone in the office.

7) Drawing up a budget for the campaign. AFSCME Council 6 had months before allocated \$500 to 1164 for organizing expenses. PL had never spent any of this money. We projected how to spend it and get results and prepare to ask for more.

8) Pay a part-time organizer \$20 a week to coordinate a revitalized organizing committee.

9) Send out a mailing to all bargaining unit employees, timed to coincide with a 22¢ an hour raise that had been negotiated by the union.

All of these proposals, except the proposal for a paid part-time organizer were approved by the union. Many members were probably skeptical about it getting off the ground, but everyone agreed that it would be a good idea if it would work.

The AFSCME district council staff were elated at this new upsurge of activity within 1164. They had been practically frozen out of participation in the local during PL's regime (PL naturally didn't want to have any dealings with these "bureaucrats"). We were able to enlist some very valuable assistance from the district council.

At first, response to the organizing drive on the part of union members was slow. As it became apparent that this organizing drive was different than PL's past adventures, that it was serious and made some modest initial gains, more and more union activists came to participate. New recruits to the union, inspired by their own recent conversion, began signing people up. A momentum of sorts was established and in a little over three months nearly 150 new members were recruited to the union, nearly all of them in the hospital bargaining unit.

Today even the most cynical and demoralized union members recognize the value of the organizing drive and are beginning to renew their confidence that the union can survive and grow. There is definitely a new enthusiasm and a higher level of activity than ever before (except for the PLers),

The AFSCME district council leadership has also been very impressed. They probably had written off 1164 as a lost cause. Now they have seen a 75% increase in membership (and dues collections) and have concluded that the local is viable and worthy of further investments. They also recognize the key role that our comrades played in this turn around and trust our judgement and proposals.

The Teamsters were completely taken off guard. They had been biding their time, waiting for 1164 to disintegrate, before moving in for the kill. They

are now totally disoriented, their main response to the organizing drive has been to rip down 1164 leaflets from the bulletin boards. They attempted to hold one meeting at the hospital. It was attended mainly by the 1164 organizing committee and was turned in to a real fiasco for them. While they haven't completely given up hope for raiding the hospital, it appears that the threat has been decisively defeated.

We now feel the union has passed the critical turning point; we expect that the local is strong enough to survive the coming period, though many serious problems remain. 1164 is now in a position to enter its next critical phase: contract negotiations.

Public employees, especially hospital employees, of course face great obstacles in collective bargaining. Restrictive laws and the employers advantage in public opinion make the use of the workers ultimate weapon--the strike--very difficult to use successfully. The struggle to wring concessions out of the bosses will be very complex, requiring a politically conscious leadership and a mobilized rank and file.

The hospital workers deal with a semi-autonomous wing of the State of Minnesota--the Board of Regents of the University. They are "business, civic and labor" leaders appointed by the Governor.

The state law requires that state bodies bargain with any union that has been certified as a bargaining agent. All questions not resolved through negotiations must be submitted to arbitration. If the state accepts the arbitrator's award, the decision is binding on the union. However, the state may refuse to accept the arbitrator's decision. At that point the union theoretically becomes legally free to strike. Of course at that point the union would in effect be fighting only for the remnants of its original demands that survived the arbitrator's axe.

We proposed the following:

1) The organizing drive and the campaign around the negotiations are inseparable. A growing union majority in the bargaining unit obviously strengthens the union's position. The negotiations are a critical issue to organize around.

2) We should actively participate in the negotiating committee. Since there is no entrenched bureaucracy in the union we don't need to fear about being drawn into a sell-out of the traditional type. We can have a real impact on the course of the negotiations.

3) In the negotiations we should put forward appropriate versions of our transitional demands. However we must be very careful to avoid sectarianism and adventurism. The relationship of forces calls for tactical

flexibility on the union's part.

4) It is essential that the union undertake a propaganda campaign, explaining the miserable wages and working conditions of hospital workers, winning the support of the labor movement, the students on campus, and the public at large for the justice of their demands.

5) Keeping the ranks informed and involved at every step of the negotiations.

6) As talks progress, carrying out actions such as public rallies, informational leafleting and informational bannering of the hospital, interventions at Regents meetings, student support actions, etc.

In short, a whole series of activities to bring maximum political pressure on the state bureaucracy.

The union selected a negotiating committee in February to begin working out the union's demands -- about 30 members representing all the departments in the hospital. We held several meetings in which we went through the contract line by line, working up the proposals we thought were important. Some of the major ones were:

- 1) A cost of living clause: 1¢ increase for every .3% increase in CLI, computed monthly.
- 2) A guarantee of at least the present number of jobs in the bargaining unit for the life of the contract -- no layoffs, no loss of jobs to attrition.
- 3) A guarantee of forty hours pay per week.
- 4) A \$1 an hour across the board increase, a \$4 an hour minimum wage.
- 5) No overtime without union approval.
- 6) A safety committee with the power to ban work under unsafe conditions.
- 7) Reduction of the probation period from six months to 30 days.
- 8) A Monday-Friday work week for full-time employees.

All except 2, 3 and 5 were adopted by the negotiations committee to present to the employer. Point 2 was amended to demand no layoffs.

We expect that some gains in all of these areas can be won. Considering the status of the union, the winning of any significant improvements will be a big victory that can be built upon.

So far the union has had two meetings with the employer representatives. The entire negotiating

committee -- over twenty persons -- have gone to these sessions. While the union has presented an outline of demands and several complete articles to the bosses, the state has yet to make any proposals of their own. We think they are stalling on account of two factors: 1) They still hope that the Teamsters might get their drive off the ground and get enough signature cards to force a new election and 2) they are awaiting the results of arbitration in the negotiations between the state and the main body of state employees, which would tend to set a pattern for the U. of M. negotiations.

The arbitrator's decision has just been announced; we do not yet know the details of the award nor do we know whether the state will agree to be bound by it. However we think it is very unlikely that the state will force a strike by well organized sectors like the highway maintenance workers, so the "pattern" for further negotiations should be clear soon and we can expect more serious negotiations will begin shortly.

As the opening round in the union's propaganda offensive, we proposed and the union agreed, to invite Bill Lucey, AFSCME International Secretary-Treasurer, to come and address a mass rally at the hospital. We see this meeting as a rally to support the organizing drive and the negotiations. It will remind the employer that 1164 has the power of a strong national union behind it and we think the rally itself will be big--several hundred persons. 1164 is getting strong support from AFSCME officialdom in the area and is also seeking endorsement for the rally from the central AFL-CIO bodies. CLUW is also working to build this action and will have a speaker at the rally. Lucey's appearance should also have the effect of restoring 1164's image as a legitimate union instead of a collection of exotic screwballs.

Our comrades, during the course of their union-building activities, have also been able to carry out some contact work. While we don't make socialist speeches on the floor of the union meetings like PL, we have been able to have some informal discussions with union activists about our political ideas, have sold a few Militant subs and distributed some of our campaign literature. While we don't expect to recruit anyone in the immediate future, we do have some long-term contacts and we discuss our contact work on a fairly regular basis in our fraction meetings. One of the comrades in the fraction is a candidate for office and most of our comrades are known as Trotskyists to those activists they work with on a regular basis.

Two of the comrades in the fraction have 1164 work as their primary assignment. These comrades, plus the branch trade union work director, constitute a fraction steering committee. The steering committee meets at least once a week, frequently more often to coordinate our work.

The other comrades in the fraction all have other major party or YSA assignments. They are called upon from time to time to carry out specific tasks such as leafleting, staffing the office, typing, etc., and are expected to attend the regular union meetings. The full fraction meets at least once a month, usually just before the monthly union business meeting. The branch organizer generally attends the fraction and steering committee meetings.

We are hopeful that by the end of the summer, the union will have secured its position at the hospital and successfully negotiated its contract. By the fall, we project proposing that the union plan an even bigger organizing drive to reach out to the thousands of clerical and service workers in other sectors of the university. Such a drive obviously could be linked up with our political work on campus.

This is the first time in many years that our branch has been involved in a union action of this scope. It has been a brand new area of work for most of us. It is a real challenge for us to develop our union work in proper symmetry with our other political tasks, to avoid the workerist mirages that have lured our sectarian opponents while taking advantage of the real opportunities that are beginning to open up for us. So far I think we have maintained a pretty balanced perspective and all of the comrades involved have learned a great deal from these experiences.

* * *

6. Twin Cities CLUW chapter - April 21, 1975

A call for a "Jobs For All" rally on May 31 at the Minnesota state capital was initiated by CLUW in collaboration with officials of some major unions. It has been endorsed by others. The following announcement and resolutions indicate how this developed.

The final results are, of course, yet to come. How successful this action is will be reported later. Watch for news accounts and analyses in coming issues of the Militant.

April 21, 1975

Dear Sister or Brother,

Everyone today recognizes that our country is going through one of the worst economic crises in our nation's history. The massive and growing unemployment is hurting the organized labor movement in many ways.

Not only have many union members been thrown out of work, with their families forced to try to live on inadequate unemployment compensation; even those of us still working are feeling the pressure of this re-

cession as the employers get tougher. Speed-ups, capricious enforcement of work rules, provocative disciplinary action, and even out and out strike-breaking, are becoming all too common as employers become more aggressive with the knowledge that there are large numbers of unemployed workers desperately needing jobs.

So far the half-hearted attempts of the government and private industry to turn around the recession have failed miserably. We cannot afford to sit idly by while our economy drifts aimlessly, with no end in sight to increasing unemployment and inflation. We believe it is urgently necessary that the entire labor movement mobilize to fight for a program to put America back to work.

A coalition of unions in the east and midwest is organizing a mass rally for jobs to be held in Washington, D. C. on April 26. Tens of thousands of working people are expected to demonstrate there, letting the government know that the labor movement will not tolerate depression levels of unemployment.

While it is not practicable to arrange for large numbers of unionists from Minnesota to travel to Washington for this action, we do think it would be possible and very beneficial to organize a similar action locally. The enclosed resolution, passed by the Twin Cities Coalition of Labor Union Women and the Executive Board of Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59, calls upon the Minnesota labor movement to call such an action: a rally at the State Capitol on Saturday, May 31, with the demand of "Jobs for All".

A meeting will be held Tuesday, April 29, 7:30 pm, at the MFT office, 9 East 22nd St., Mpls. to discuss this proposal further and to begin plans for organizing it. We are inviting leaders from all trade unions in the area to attend. We hope that you or a representative from your union can attend this meeting to contribute your ideas on this proposal. Enclosed is a form for indicating your response to this proposal. We would appreciate it if you could return it right away.

Fraternally,

Victoria Anderson, Secretary, CWA Local 7200
John Carmichael, Executive Secretary, Newspaper Guild
Norm Hammink, President, St. Paul Typographers
Elaine Onasch, President, Twin Cities CLUW
Flora Rogge, President, Minn. Federation of Teachers
Bill Shatek, Executive Board Member, UAW Local 125
Terrence Tabor, Vice-President, United Transportation
Union Local 1614
Frank Zaragoza, Business Agent, Operating Engineers
Local 34

Organizations listed for identification purposes only.
Labor and expense donated by Twin Cities CLUW.

RESOLUTION PASSED BY MPLS FED. OF TEACHERS LOCAL 59 EXECUTIVE BOARD AND TWIN CITIES COALITION OF LABOR UNION WOMEN

WHEREAS the national unemployment rate is at 8.7% (seasonally adjusted) and continues to rise, while inflation eats away at our standard of living,

WHEREAS the enemies of labor are intensifying their campaign to divide working people, young vs. old, Black vs. white, men against women, skilled vs. unskilled, native-born vs. foreign, organized vs. unorganized, in order to keep us fighting among ourselves rather than uniting against the common enemies of all labor,

BE IT RESOLVED:

The Twin Cities Coalition of Labor Union Women and the Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59 Executive Board urge the entire Minnesota labor movement to endorse the April 26 "Rally for Jobs Now" in Washington, D.C. and to issue a united call for a mass demonstration at the State Capitol, Saturday, May 31, 1975, with the demand of "Jobs for All".

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RESOLUTION ON MAY 31, 1975 "JOBS FOR ALL" RALLY

WHEREAS the national unemployment rate is at 8.7% and the Twin Cities unemployment rate is at 7.5% (seasonally adjusted) and continues to rise, while inflation eats away at our standard of living,

WHEREAS the enemies of labor are intensifying their campaign to divide working people, young vs. old, Black vs. white, men against women, skilled vs. unskilled, native-born vs. foreign, organized vs. unorganized, in order to keep us fighting among ourselves rather than uniting against the common enemies of all labor,

BE IT RESOLVED:

The International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, Local #1140 joins with:

- Victoria Anderson, Secretary, CWA Local 7200
- John Carmichael, Executive Secretary, Newspaper Guild
- Norm Hammink, President, St. Paul Typographers
- Flora Rogge, President, Minnesota Federation of Teachers
- Elaine Onasch, President, Twin Cities CLUW Local 59, Minnesota of Teachers Executive Board
- Bill Shatek, Executive Board member, UAW Local 125
- Terrence Tabor, Vice-President, United Transportation Union Local 1614

- Frank Zaragoza, Business Agent, Operating Engineers Local 34
- Ray Johnson, Business Agent, Teamsters Local 638
- Heber J. Stephens, President, GAIU Local 229

in supporting the call for a mass labor demonstration at the State Capitol Saturday, May 31, 1975 with the demand of "Jobs For All", and in urging the entire Minnesota labor movement to issue a call for a united labor demonstration on that day.

7. AFSCME Local 590 - Philadelphia, March 25

As reported in the Militant this local adopted resolutions in support of the IUD "Jobs For All" demonstration in Washington on April 26, and the NAACP demonstration against racism in Boston on May 17. The full text of those resolutions are included here as good examples of concise statements on important issues, submitted for union consideration and endorsement.

The statement by Jon Flanders is also a good example of how to campaign for union office. It distinguishes this candidate from others and serves to raise union consciousness without introducing extraneous issues.

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American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO LOCAL 590 District Council 33

Local 590 of AFSCME endorses the April 26 demonstration for jobs initiated by the AFL-CIO, to be held in Washington. The executive board is urged to establish a work committee in order to mobilize the largest possible participation by the local. If possible, funds should be made available to help defray the costs of transportation.

Adopted
March 25, 1975

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American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO LOCAL 590 District Council 33

As union members we recognize that one of the products of today's economic crisis is the erosion of human rights, whether it be on the job or in the community at large. The right to an equal education for Black people in the United States, recognized by the 1954 Supreme court ruling, is meeting a serious challenge in Boston today. It is a challenge that must be met and overcome.

We in AFSCME local 590 add our voices to the many

around the country who are supporting the struggle for desegregation and equal education being waged by Boston's black community. We endorse the call by the NAACP for a massive, peaceful demonstration in Boston on May 17, and we urge other unions to do so as well.

Adopted March 25, 1975

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Dear Co-Workers:

My name is Jon Flanders. I work at the Van Pelt Circulation desk where I am an alternate steward. I am running for the executive board in the March 25th union elections. Since I feel that candidates should be elected on the basis of their program and ideas, rather than their personalities, I have chosen to write you this letter.

In the next year our union faces a number of important tests. In a time of nationwide recession with its snowballing unemployment and unabated inflation, working people are facing drastic reductions in their standard of living.

Here at Penn the university administration is launching an austerity drive of 8 per cent. This has already meant a hiring freeze, the beginning of layoffs and reduction of merit increases for the unorganized employees. Here in the library we've already felt the effects of this 'austerity' program through the attrition policy which has meant increased workloads for some departments. Although our local has made significant gains, we have to remember that less than 300 staff employees are organized out of a total of 2600. Keeping this in mind, it is clear that we can't be complacent about our contract.

There are a number of things we can do to meet this challenge.

First of all, we need to strengthen the union by bringing in our unorganized co-workers on campus. The union should make every effort to involve each member in the activities of the Penn AFSCME Organizing Committee. Our involvement can be an important contribution to the success of this drive.

Just as we cannot ignore our general situation as a union here at Penn, we can't ignore the state of the union movement and the unorganized majority as the economy slides into deep recession. George Meany, head of the AFL-CIO, claims that it has a more powerful political machine than either the Democrats or Republicans. Since neither of these parties have a solution to inflation or unemployment the union movement should use this power to launch massive actions

in defense of every working person's right to a job and a decent standard of living. As an initial step in this direction, the executive board should fully support the call of New York AFSCME and the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council for a national labor march on Washington for Jobs April 26.

From what I've just said, it should be clear that the unions need to return to their origins as a broad social movement. In the areas of women's rights and civil rights, for instance, unions should play a much more active role. Due to the large number of women who work here at Penn, our union must take the lead in opposing sex discrimination. In the last twenty years, gains made by the civil rights movement have benefited all working people. Our union should go on record in support of the call by the NAACP for a national mobilization in Boston on May 17 to defend the right of Black school children to attend the schools of their choice.

There are many other issues that I could discuss, if I had the space. However, I would like to close by saying that I hope my candidacy will begin discussion on these and many other issues in our union.

If you have any questions about what I've said, I will be glad to talk to you.

Yours sincerely,
s/Jon Flanders

[This candidate was elected to the union executive committee and as a delegate to the central labor council.

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8. Houston Teachers Association - Houston, May 7

Several members and friends of the SWP were recently elected delegates to the NEA Convention in Los Angeles July 3-8.

The purpose here is to submit some ideas about how we can most usefully participate in the important deliberations of this convention.

The endorsement of a U.S. presidential candidate is going to be a big issue at the NEA convention. The recent issues of the NEA newspaper and also the Texas newspaper and magazine have interviews with Democratic and Republican candidates for president. The NEA will not make its decision on who to endorse until the next convention in 1976. However, I'm sure there will be booths set up for promoting different candidates at the upcoming convention.

The bourgeois candidates will probably be invited to address the NEA convention. The formal business meeting is going to be preceded by a two or three day "Critical Issues Conference" with guest speakers. It is during this "Critical Issues Conference" that the Democrats and Republicans may be asked to speak.

We should formally ask that if other candidates are invited to speak, then Camejo and Reid should certainly get an invitation also. There will be meetings of the Black Caucus of NEA and also the Womans Caucus of NEA throughout the convention. It should be possible for Willie Mae Reid to address both of these caucuses, even if the SWP candidates don't address the entire convention. We should send letters immediately trying to get Reid to speak at these caucuses.

The SWP National Campaign and/or Pathfinder Press should rent a booth staffed by Camejo and/or Reid along with others. There will be more than 10,000 delegates from around the country in addition to all those persons who will be guests. Not only can we get many endorsements, speaking engagements in high schools throughout the nation, etc., but our presence there in such a big way will make it more difficult for them to exclude the SWP candidates from the endorsement ballot at the 1976 convention. Everyone will know the SWP has candidates running for president and vice-president and refusal to put them on the ballot by the NEA staff would certainly raise a stir among many NEA members.

As far as what we might introduce as motions in the formal business sessions, we've been considering a Boston resolution and possible endorsement of some future convention or action. Also a CLUW resolution has been discussed. (NEA has not endorsed CLUW and explains the reason is because CLUW is for union members and since NEA is not a union...). There are many other possibilities but these seem most appropriate to us.

In any event, the presidential campaign should be the main focus. We could have at least 3 comrades who were delegates help staff a campaign booth and talk to many teachers about Camejo and Reid.

Of course, the LA comrades would have to help out considerably with the Militant sales, campaign literature distribution, etc.

We're looking forward to going to the convention.

9. American Federation of Government Employees Seattle, May 1.

SWP members are active builders of AFGE Local 3197. We are also helping to build the AFSCME local at the University of Washington, and we are supporters and partisans of the Seattle Teachers Association (an NEA affiliate) in the present fight to save the public schools in Seattle. (See the Militant - May 9, p. 12)

Professional employees at the Veterans Administration Hospital are voting on union representation. At this VA hospital AFGE local 3197 represents the non-professional employees and hopes to get the professionals into the union. The election results will be announced May 19.

The problems of government workers -- federal, state, and city -- are acute because of funding cutbacks in all departments. Right now teachers are hardest hit, but others feel the pinch and fear layoffs.

We hope to bring as much support as possible to the teachers from all other unions. Wherever possible we are raising the basic issue of solidarity and joint action. Our delegates to the King County Labor Council hope to win support there against the narrow position adopted by the council in refusing to back the Seattle Teachers Association because it is not an affiliate. This position was adopted on the recommendation of the Washington Federation of Teachers which has few members and hopes to raid STA.

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10. Washington Teachers Union, AFT - Washington, D.

The following is a campaign letter mailed to all members of WTU, April 30, 1975.

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This is to let you know that we are running for Executive Board, Convention Delegates, and Central Labor Council in the upcoming union elections. We feel that our program is central to strengthening the union during this time of educational cutbacks and general economic crisis. We hope that our platform will be part of a constructive discussion on how we can all build and strengthen the Washington Teachers Union.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss our ideas with you and the union members in your building. You can also help support our campaign by passing out our

literature to union members in your building. You can contact us at the above address or at the phone numbers listed below.

Enclosed is a leaflet on an organizing meeting of the D. C. Student Coalition Against Racism. D. C. SCAR is helping to organize participation by D. C. residents in the May 17th "March to Desegregate Boston Schools" in Boston. This march, called by the NAACP for the 21st anniversary of the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, has been endorsed by the W. T. U. We both plan to attend this important event; we hope you can too.

In solidarity,
s/Erich Martel
s/Anne Powers
(phone numbers listed)

* * *

11. Michigan Federation of Teachers, Detroit

The Michigan Federation of Teachers (MFT) Convention took place in Detroit on May 2 and 3 in the political context of an unprecedented attack on teachers' collective bargaining rights. The central focus of the attack is the attempt to pass state legislation to destroy teachers' right to strike with the intent of forcing them into compulsory arbitration to settle contract disputes. Leading the bipartisan attack are Democratic party politicians elected with the support of the union movement. The AFL-CIO, UAW and Teamster bureaucrats have lent invaluable support to the reactionary move.

The MFT leadership has failed to meet the challenge, trying to reach a "compromise" with the reactionary forces and supporting limitations on collective bargaining which would relieve them of the responsibility of leading the teacher ranks in the fight for decent contracts. Their tactical orientation is to rely on lobbying and letter-writing to various "friends of labor" in the legislature.

A split has developed within the MFT leadership essentially over the question of how much to capitulate how soon. One wing, led by Mary Ellen Riordan, president of the Detroit Federation of teachers, and her hand-picked president of the MFT, Henry Linne, has favored a fast capitulation and immediate action to quiet the teacher ranks. The other faction, led by John Dele, president of the Taylor Federation of Teachers, composed of most of the non-Detroit locals, has favored taking a harder position for the right to strike and against compulsory arbitration, since in their opinion this will put teachers in a better position to "negotiate" with the legislature. It was this group which in February pushed through the MFT Administrative Board (the state executive board) a change in the MFT's position to favor the unqualified

right to strike and to oppose compulsory arbitration in any form, including court-ordered,

The central task was to bring the discussion on teachers' bargaining rights to the floor of the convention and to provoke a political debate and educational discussion on the questions raised. This was done through a resolution on the right to strike and through Paula Reimers' campaign for MFT president.

The MFT Convention was attended by 262 delegates from 24 locals with 729 votes. The Detroit local alone had 67 delegates with 435 votes, a mechanical majority.

The only significant floor debate on the right to strike occurred around a resolution introduced by Wayne County Community College Federation of Teachers (WCCCF), which included a final "resolved" which stated opposition to any legislation limiting the right to strike and imposing any form of compulsory arbitration. Riordan proposed a motion to delete the final "resolved" and demanded a roll call vote. (This entails voting by delegation -- not individually -- and gives the leadership the chance to whip the delegation into line.) The motion to delete passed by 492 votes for and 216 against, but the roll call showed that only 3 locals (DFT, Detroit Paraprofessionals and Dearborn) voted for deletion.

The deletion of the final "resolved" gutted the resolution and left a general position statement on the right to strike, essentially simply reaffirming by convention decision the change in MFT position passed by the Ad. Board in February. The amended resolution passed by dint of parliamentary maneuvering, with some opposition, mainly from Detroit.

The main discussion on the right to strike was around the Reimers campaign for MFT president against the incumbent Henry Linne. The final decision to run was made on Thursday, the day before the convention, when it was clear that no serious campaign would be waged by the Dele faction in the MFT around the political question of the right to strike. (John Dele had planned to run with the support of the non-Detroit locals, but pulled out when Riordan's slate won all the Detroit delegates and it was clear he couldn't win.) At the last minute on Friday May 2, the Dele forces decided to run Tony Kaiser, president of the Hamtramck Ft, with no literature and no plans to run a serious political campaign around the right to strike; the Reimers campaign had already been announced when the decision was made. They would clearly have preferred to avoid the political discussion altogether. They only decided to run under pressure, to avoid allowing the vote against Linne's policies from going entirely to support a socialist.

The purpose of the Reimers campaign was to educate around a clear principled position on the right to strike

and compulsory arbitration, and the tactical orientation necessary to win.

A campaign statement was distributed to all delegates as the convention opened on Friday. It created quite a stir since it was the only political statement of any kind at the convention. We found quite a lot of interest in it. Despite its length (two and a half pages), people read it all the way through; delegates discussed the points they agreed and disagreed on with one another and with us. Although most of the discussion occurred in corridors and restaurants, we noticed that during the floor debate on "the right to strike" resolution, some delegates raised arguments taken from the campaign statement.

A delegate from WCCCFT put a motion on the floor to give each candidate for president ten minutes to state his/her position. The time was cut to three minutes each in a close vote (76-61) pushed by Detroit. Nevertheless, we were able to bring the campaign to the convention floor.

The vote was Linne 523, Kaiser 161, and Reimers 33. This vote was considered significant and impressive by many delegates, since it represented forces from diverse locals willing to take a principled position, in contrast to the Kaiser vote which was based on personal and factional allegiance. Reimers was congratulated by a number of delegates on the campaign and the outcome.

We accomplished an important breakthrough with the activity around the election campaign and the "right to strike" resolution, drawing a clearly principled line and opening a broader political discussion on the question of opposition to anti-strike legislation within the MFT. The election campaign put Reimers forward as a pole of attraction for those looking for a more militant position. We also began a discussion of the importance of a mass campaign to win public support for teachers' union rights, and the necessity of joining in common action with the Michigan Education Association.

We will need to investigate ways to continue and broaden this discussion within the MFT as experience proves the correctness of our positions and analysis.

Inside the convention hotel, organizers of the May 17 March on Boston passed out 200 leaflets and 50 copies of the Mobilizer and sold about 20 buttons. They also passed out 200 copies of a resolution in support of the May 17 March introduced by WCCCFT, which was being considered by the convention. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Supporters of the 1976 Socialist Workers Party campaign passed out 300 copies of a leaflet with a statement in support of teachers' right to strike and a letter to delegates announcing available speakers for classrooms. They also distributed 100 copies of "Why Can't Everyone Have a Job?" Four copies of the Militant were sold.

A resolution supporting Joan Little, drafted by a delegate from WCCCFT on the Human Rights Committee, was passed unanimously by the convention, and \$101 was collected for her defense.

A resolution condemning the Michigan Supreme Court's decision upholding the firing of the striking Crestwood Education Association teachers, submitted by WCCCFT was also passed unanimously by the convention.

May 11, 1975