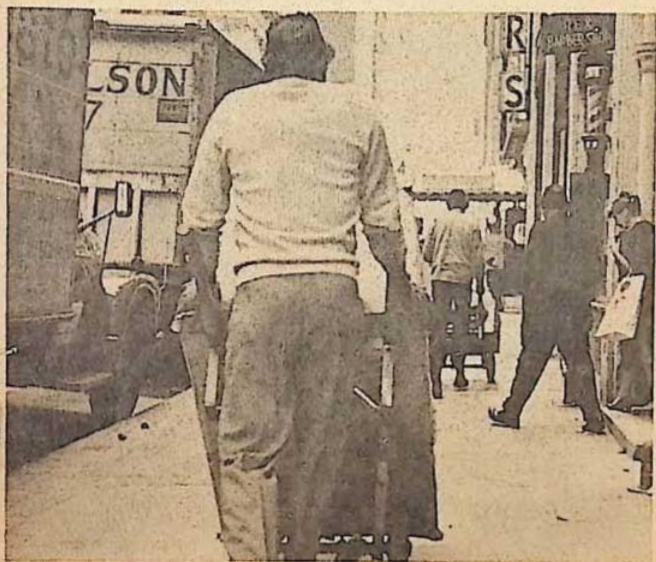


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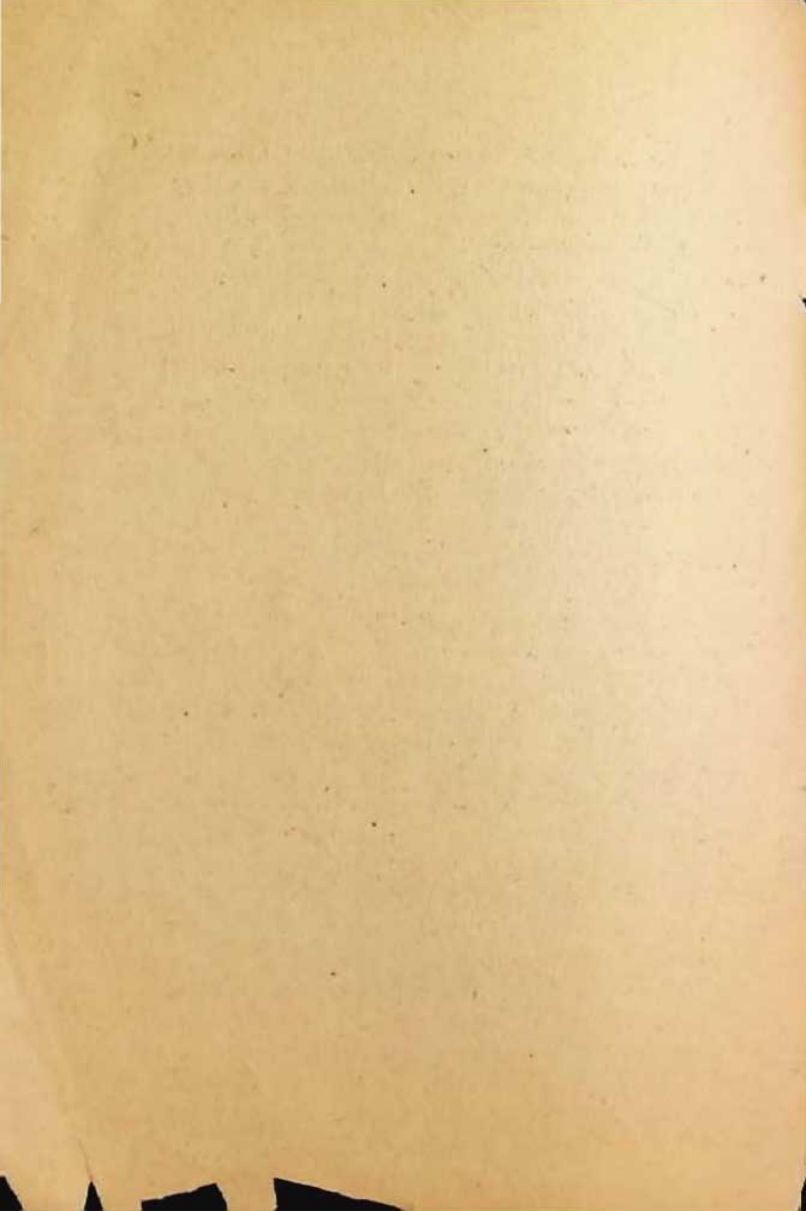
BLACK

WORKERS

COUNCIL



ORGANIZES TO FIGHT!



The major weapon bosses use to keep black workers down is racism. We experience this racism in our run-down housing, in our terrible schools, in lousy medical care and in high prices for inferior quality food and clothing. We see this racism in the draft and with the war in Vietnam.

But most important, we see this racism where we earn our bread and butter every day: ON THE JOBS. We get the lowest paying, most menial, dirtiest jobs with the worst hours, worst working conditions, and abuses from the bosses. This racism shows its filthy face in the following ways:

WAGES

In many shops and industries workers get different pay for the same work. It is most often black workers who wind up with the low pay. There are very clear reasons why this happens. Government figures show that the *difference* between the average wages of white workers and of black workers amounts to \$22 billion each year. This money winds up in the bosses' pockets. This is their profit from racism alone—not counting the profit they get from their regular business. This is one of the big reasons the bosses need and push racism on the job and in the country.

In the auto industry, for example, the menial jobs and low pay go to black workers while the white workers get the better jobs and higher pay. At the end of every hour, at the end of every day, the bosses take the money that he *doesn't* give to black workers and puts it in his own pocket.

White workers get tricked by the bosses and their union hacks who tell them that in order to keep their jobs white workers must help the bosses keep black workers down. Often white workers fall for this phoney logic and use their strength to fight the black workers—thus bosses divide all the workers. This is another big reason why the bosses need and push racism.

The boss screws all workers with poor wages. And he screws black workers especially.

The Black Workers Council says that we can wage a fight in our shops and in our unions to:

1. Equalize wages of workers working in the same shop and same industry.
2. Have equal pay for women doing the same work as men.
3. Get a \$4.00 minimum wage, which is still short of the \$5.00 an hour the government ways a worker with two children needs.

WORKING CONDITIONS

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

Black workers especially face the lousiest, most unsafe, most oppressive working conditions on their jobs. We face speed-up and long hours, both of which leave us with lots of accidents on the job and bad health. For example, there have been more than 100,000 workers killed and 14,000,000 injured since 1960 in industrial "accidents." You can be sure that these victims were in the dirtiest, hardest and most menial jobs. And for every worker listed as injured in industrial "accidents" there are a

hundred who are being poisoned daily on the job. Here's the reason: The bosses' main concern is with making profits. Every dollar he spends on workers' safety means one dollar less profit for him. There's no profit for the bosses in keeping the workers healthy.

On top of all of this black women go to work and must face bosses who feel that they can do and say all kinds of degrading things to them. Many black women feel that they have no protection if they fight back.

As another part of the bosses' method of keeping workers divided, certain job categories in a shop are reserved for "white only," while the worst jobs are kept for black workers. This is called the "tracking system." This system means that certain categories of workers are not able to move up to cleaner, safer, better-paying jobs. (The "tracking system" worked so well in big business that the Board of Education has adopted it and put it to work in the public schools.)

STATE, COUNTY AND CITY WORKERS

Because of the lousy wages, unemployment, poor health and racism that we experience, the power structure is forced to create certain services to try to keep us quiet. For example, welfare, the public schools and poverty programs are all set up to keep us from fighting the power structure. And the power structure hires other workers—service workers—to administer these programs.

These service workers, therefore, are hired essentially, to help keep us down.

The power structure tells these workers and us that service workers are "professionals" and that they are better than the people they service. Once again, worker is used against worker. Some service workers fall for this lie and their attitudes help keep working people—especially black working people—divided.

Those who work for "non-profit" businesses face different working conditions from other workers. On the job service workers are forced by tight budgets to give lousy services. For example, the recent budget cuts not only hurt welfare clients, school children and patients at city hospitals. They also made the jobs of welfare caseworkers, school teachers and hospital workers harder because workers must fight other workers in order to keep their own jobs.

And service workers are overworked because the bosses are too busy putting money into their own pockets to pay for enough service workers to do the job. So services exist on paper but not in fact.

And even if there were more service workers and more equipment the "services" would only be a drop in the bucket—the bucket of troubles that black workers are faced with trying to make a decent living. It is a lie that "services" are available to black workers and their families. And service workers should know this best.

When we see the lousy shops in which we work and the lousy jobs we are supposed to do, we see the bosses' racism in action!

We can fight against these lousy working conditions and win—around the following demands:

1. End the "tracking system" within the shops, where certain category of workers are not able to move up to higher paying jobs in other categories.
2. End discrimination in hiring and upgrading of women workers.
3. A shorter worker week with no cut in pay—"30 for 40."
4. End speed-up, "incentive bonuses" and "piece work" with no loss in pay.
5. And for service workers, more workers to give more services.
6. Service workers should build alliances with the people they service. For example, parent-teacher alliances in day care and public schools, and worker-client alliances in welfare.

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Black workers have been on the last-hired-first-fired-merry-go-round for years. Not only does this keep us out of work a lot. It also means when we are *on* a job we get a raw deal. When we are forced to change jobs often we have no job security, we can't get seniority and, therefore, can't get promoted to the *safer, better-paying jobs*. And we never have a chance to gain the skills we need to keep these jobs.

Because of this cycle, bosses more and more try to use black workers as scabs *against* their fellow workers. In an attempt to break out of this cycle, some people are forced to take two jobs at low wages or to collect supplemental welfare. People

find that the wages they make on these jobs are not enough for them to take care of thier families. They have to find another source of income.

Workers are led to believe that most of their tax money goes to support people on welfare. The opposite is true. Only pennies go to welfare. The rest is used to fight other workers here and around the world.

The bosses make thousands of dollars by underpaying workers. These workers in turn must go to the welfare department in order to provide for their families. So, in fact, the money we pay for welfare is subsidizing the bosses for paying low wages.

Sometimes we can get welfare or we take a second job with pay just as bad as the first job. The result is that we get trapped in the welfare cycle or work ourselves into an early grave.

No sooner than we get on a job, we get laid off again and we must look for other work with low pay, no security, no seniority.

BUILDING TRADES

In the building trades the union and the contractors discriminate against black workers by excluding black people from the apprenticeship training programs in the building trades. In addition, the apprentices work as hard, if not harder than journeymen. Why should bosses reap all of these *extra* profits from the apprentices?

Black teenagers don't get any jobs. More than a third of all black teenagers who are not in the service and not in school cannot find work.

Most black workers are either just on a job or just out of a job. Unemployment rates for black

workers are sky-rocketing. And not because we "don't want to work," but because the bosses can get fatter and fatter by running the merry-go-round and putting what they *don't* pay us into their own pockets.

The Black Workers Council will fight to break out of this cycle in the following ways:

1. To end racism in hiring, firing and upgrading.
2. To prevent black workers from becoming scabs, in support of the bosses, against our fellow-workers.
3. In the building trades, demand that all apprentices get the same pay as journeymen.
4. And demand that in the building trades, workers be hired on a first-come, first-served basis.

UNDEMOCRATIC UNION LEADERSHIP

The major ally of the bosses has been corrupt union leadership. This alliance has helped to keep black workers down and increases the bosses' profits.

The only weapon the working people have to fight for their needs is their unity. This unity takes the form of unions. Without the organization of unions, many of the advances (no matter how small) we have made would not have been possible. The bosses knew that if they were going to increase their profits they had to find a way to bring these organizations under their thumbs. Through bribery, corruption, deceit and anti-labor laws, like the Taylor Law, the bosses were able to turn these so-called labor leaders into servants of the bosses and against the workers in general, and against the black workers in particular.

How does racism manifest itself within unions?

There are many non-union shops in N.Y. which employ primarily black and Puerto Rican workers. Racist union leadership does not push to unionize these shops because they are not interested in fighting in the interest of black and Puerto Rican workers.

And in shops where unions do exist, contracts are negotiated which freeze black workers in the tracking system. Thus union leaders perpetuate the bosses' racism which keep us in low-paying, menial jobs.

It is through these sell-out hacks that the bosses are able to make "sweetheart" contracts that last two, three, and four years and increase his profits.

Thus, we find these corrupt union leaders as a barrier for the development of the fighting potential of black workers. Unless we, the black workers of New York City have a unified fighting organization to fight in our interests we will be bound and shackled forever to these fake union leaders.

What can be done to combat undemocratic union leadership?

We must build strong rank and file movements within the shops, the locals and within the national unions with a fighting program geared to fighting the bosses and the corrupt union leaders in the interest of all workers. The core of these rank and file movements must be strong rank and file black caucuses. The program of these black caucuses must be centered around fighting the bosses and union leadership corruption with particular em-

phasis on fighting the racism of bosses and union leaders and combatting the racism of white workers.

This will be a tough uphill fight. These union hacks want to continue to ride the gravy train at our expense and the only way for them to do it is to keep the unions firmly under their control. But the rank-and-file can win it! The same unity that we used to fight to have unions and to fight the boss can be used to fight these undemocratic union crooks.

In an effort to combat these situations in our shops and unions, the Black Workers Council will work actively in our unions to raise the awareness of our fellow black workers in order to fight for better and more effective union leadership. We will also fight:

1. To join other workers in their fights against their bosses and against their corrupt union leaders.
2. To encourage workers in unorganized shops to form unions, with a strong rank-and-file base, to fight for their interest and needs.
3. To build a strong rank-and-file movement in the shops and in union locals around those demands that are in the interest of all the workers.

WHAT IS THE BLACK WORKERS COUNCIL

In the past, people have claimed to fight in the interest of black workers. But in reality, they have been fighting for their own interests. We have had all kinds of "leaders"—ballplayers, preachers, singers, comedians, professors—who claim to speak for us. We reject them.

If we look back at the fight that black people have made for a better way of life, we see that these so-called "leaders" have *always* sold us out and wound up on our enemy's payroll. This is the reason why the bosses prefer to deal with them and not with us! Recent examples show how black workers are a key force in leading and winning fights for all workers.

- Sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn. were the leading force in organizing the entire black community around workers' demands and shut that city down.
- In Cicero, Illinois, Hotpoint workers, led by black workers shut down that plant in a battle against speed-up and racism.
- In Newport News, Va., black shipyard workers led the first strike in 88 years that closed down the entire shipyard industry. They led this fight against the firing of their fellow black workers.
- A caucus of black workers led a number of wildcat strikes against speed-up and racism in Ford's Mahwah, N.J. plant.
- Right here in N.Y.C., some of the most militant strikes—in sanitation, transportation, hospitals—have involved unions that have large numbers of black workers. The list could go on and on. It becomes clear that black workers are a key force in keeping this city and its industries going. And we can make them stop. If we can do this, we can win our demands!

The Black Workers Council is being formed by rank and file black workers from many different kinds of jobs in and around New York City.

On many of these jobs, we, the black workers of this city, are either in the majority or represent a large minority. Putting our strength together will help to guarantee that our gripes and grievances against our bosses and our union leaders will be taken up and fought for. This is the job which the Black Workers Council is setting out to do. It is our combined strength that will make this organization and its fighting program a reality.

We will be an organization run by rank and file workers who will fight against the bosses and union leaders in the interest of workers.

We, the black working people, are a key force in keeping this city and its industries going. And we can make them stop. If we can unite to build our Black Workers Council we can utilize this force to fight for our demands and the demands of all working people.

In addition to the demands listed above, here are some of the things that the Black Workers Council will fight for:

1. To help our fellow black workers organize and form caucuses in their unions and shops.
2. To assist other unions and shops in struggles against the bosses.
3. To assist other black caucuses and rank-and-file committees in their fight to oust corrupt union officials.
4. When the time comes to negotiate contracts, the BWC will assist our brothers and sisters in formulating demands and fighting for those demands.
5. To work with unemployed workers towards their organizing themselves as a force to demand the

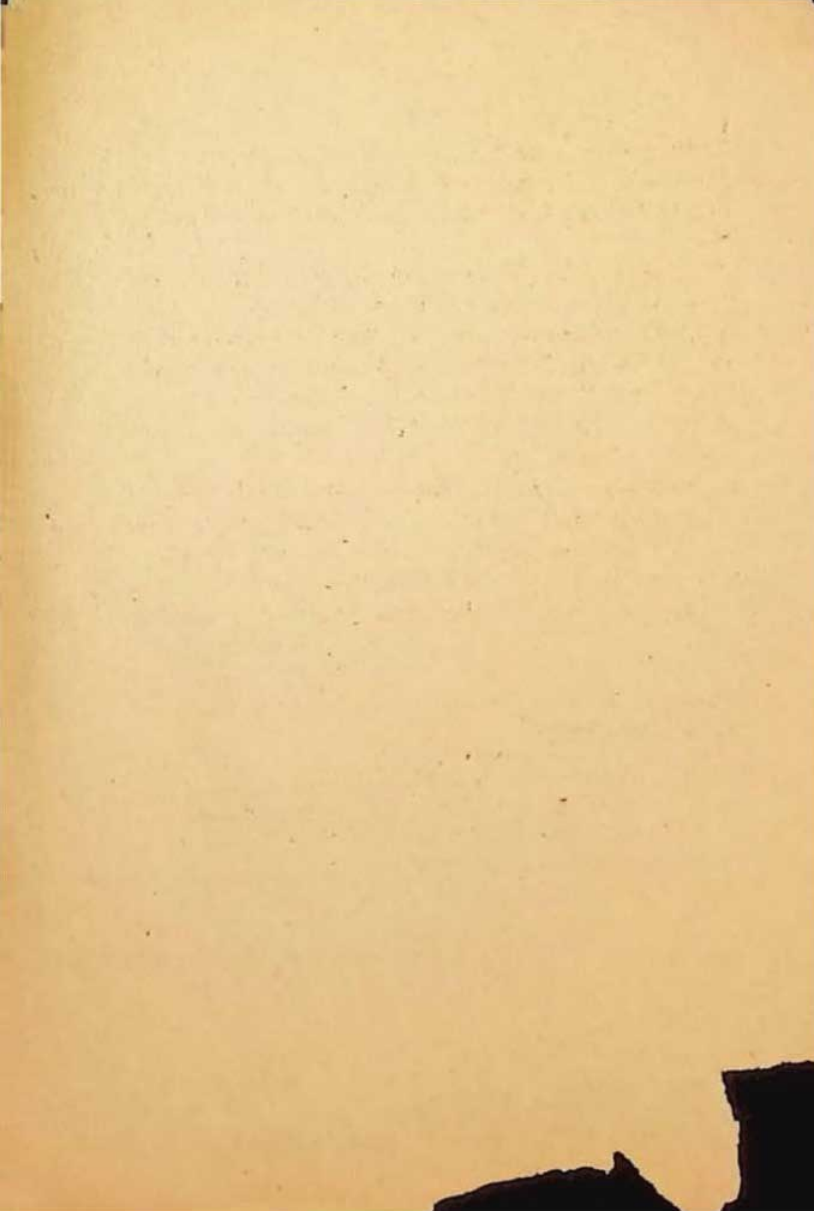
right to have a decent job with adequate pay.

6. To work with, help the formation of and coordinate the work of black caucuses in and around N.Y.C.
7. To fight against "run-away shops" and demand that the shops in the south be organized.
8. To fight the bosses and city hall in their attempt to use black foremen, black cops, black supervisors, black politicians, black union hacks, anti-poverty agencies, etc. to keep us down, in the name of "blackness."

In addition to the organizing work we are doing in our shops and unions to building fighting caucuses, we will also become active in our communities where we live—in PTA's, tenant organizations, etc. The fights are all the same and can be united.

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DEFEAT THE BOSSES!

**DEFEAT THE CORRUPT
UNION LEADERSHIP!**

**JOIN THE
BLACK WORKERS COUNCIL
AND FIGHT!**