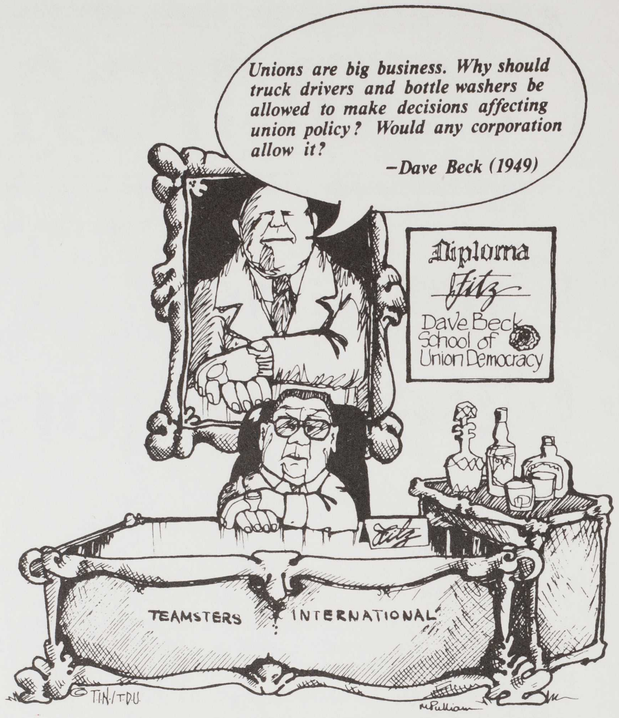
Conference threatened to sue because several trades were not represented in the negotiations. So the agreement was expanded to include all 14 unions in the Western Building Trades Conference.

In the Laborers Union, the International level of the union then stepped in to negotiate the agreement with Alyeska. Local union members were not given a chance to vote on the new contract. The move is typical of recent trends in many unions to centralize decision making in the hands of fewer and fewer labor bureaucrats. Some of the other unions have not yet signed their contracts but they are expected to do so and hiring should proceed around mid November.

There were several other issues that surfaced during the strike that show us that we must continue to press forward if we are to crush the union-busting movement in Alaska. Of prime importance is the relationship between the trade unions and the native regional corporations. Many native workers joined Alaska trade unions during construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and supported unionism to the extent that many of them struck and picketed their own corporations.

Ahtna Corporation, in a joint venture with Rogers and Babler, was a union contractor during the construction phase of the pipeline. Ahtna-Rogers and Babler originally had the contract for maintaining the southern section of the pipeline. Then Alyeska scrapped AR & B in favor of a non-union Outside contractor, Voss, and convinced Ahtna's management to side with them against the native and other union workers. During the strike Ahtna repeatedly attempted to win over the Copper River Indians with statements like 'what have the unions ever done for you? Without the unions at least we have local hire.' But the natives stood by their unions and now it is time for us to stand by them.

In the growing atmosphere of anti-unionism in Alaska, it is crucial that we promote the common interests of Alaska's natives and non-natives. The native regional corporations are becoming a more powerful economic and political force in Alaska. If we union




people turn our backs on Alaska natives then the power of the native corporations will be used against unions in their contracts and possibly in supporting 'right to work' legislation. The only way we can break the anti-union sentiment among Alaska native peoples is to accept them into the unions on a work-sharing basis when construction is going on in their local communities. This would mean that part of the workers would be locally hired and part would come from the union halls in the cities. Good training programs should be an integral part of this agreement.

Many union workers will ask 'how can we take new members into the union when there is not enough work for our current members?' If Alaska unions and the native corporations can cooperate in the development and marketing of Alaska's resources and free us from the control of Outside corporations, there will be plenty of work for all and the profits would stay in Alaska to circulate for the benefit of Alaska's people. If more emphasis were placed on local economic development of renewable resources, we would enjoy more stable work for a decent union wage and under decent work conditions. The resources of Alaska's land and seas, the native corporate funds, state money, the funds of our unions, and the unity of all Alaskan people, native and non-native, are the components of a more self-determined and economically just way of life for all of us.

---Paul Fuhs

COMMON GROUND is published by the Common Ground Collective in Juneau and Anchorage. Friends contributing to this issue were Bob, Ruth, Dalee, Phil, Melissa, S.H., Paul, Mike, Frank and Bill. We encourage you to write articles on your workplace, village, or region, or anything else you feel is important. Letters of criticism and financial support will assist our cause. Send in your name and address, or your friends', and you will be placed on the mailing list.

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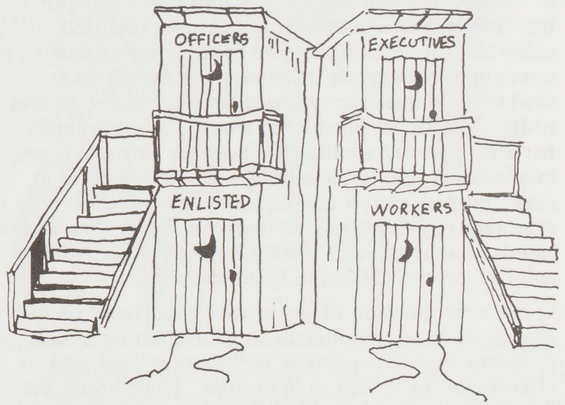
# BrASS Attacks GI Organizing

Some crucial developments in recent weeks reflect a more concentrated attack on organizing in the military. Three events have combined to create a difficult new situation: AFGE's decisive vote against accepting GI members, the passage of anti-union legislation by the Senate, and the new DOD directive prohibiting union organization. These three developments must be seen as part of a general right wing comeback in this country in responce to the economic crisis. These measures are a severe attack on the democratic rights of soldiers and are part of a concentrated effort to roll back the gains won in GI struggles of the 60's.

The attempts by the BrAss and its cronies in Congress to prohibit our rights to organize are a more immediate threat. The Thurmond anti-union bill is out of the Senate and is awaiting action by the House. Even more pressing, and probably more dangerous, is the new DOD directive that recently went into effect. Both the bill and the directive contain the same repressive language and are direct attacks on the rights of enlisted people. The directive, for example, forbids any organizing effort which seeks to "represent members of the Armed Forces to the military chain of command with respect to terms or conditions of military service." It also bans membership in any organization which "presents a clear danger to discipline, loyalty, or obedience to lawful orders." If a group even proposes the idea of unionization it would be judged a threat to discipline. Although seemingly intended to prevent unions, the directive is actually a broad repressive net designed to stop all forms of GI organizing. It seems specifically aimed at groups who support GI organizing and should be viewed as a major step in Pentagon efforts to make sure they won't again face the kind of resistance among GI's they ran into in Nam.

Enlisted people will now have to organize independently. All of us will have to work together on an organizing approach which can achieve our goals and build an organization capable of defending enlisted rights. We recognize the danger, but are not going to lay down. Fierce efforts on the part of the brass to destroy the rank-and-file movement in the military are inevitable and may just as well reflect our strength as our weakness. In the long run, the only means of combatting this kind of repression is strong and militant mass action. Only if enlisted people and their supporters stand up and oppose these measures and continue to struggle for democracy and justice can we really protect our rights.

The campaign for a GI union has entered a new phase, based on a longterm more independent approach, but it will not cease. Enlisted people must control their own lives, not just to win justice and democracy in the ranks but to fight against plans to use the armed force against the people of this country. The military establishment wants an army where enlisted people stay in their place and quietly do whatever they are told(like Lt. Calley).




We want a military where people are treated with dignity and respect and where soldiers can speak out against unpopular or criminal policies -in short, a military whose members are firm allies of all working people.

Article from Enlisted People's Organizing Committee-updated by Bob Thompson(E-4, uscg)

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