

The Alliance for Labor and Community ACTION!

Vol. I, No. 9

P. O. Box 21006, Washington, D.C. 20009

Jan. 29, 1976

Alliance calls People's Grand Jury



Peoples' Grand Jury subpoena server delivers a summons to Katharine Graham, Publisher of the Washington Post -- D.C.'s only scab newspaper.

Housing happenings . . .

Coalition fights project

Community groups are rising up to protest plans for luxury townhouses at the Henderson Castle plot at 16th and Florida, N.W. The Alliance is among tenants and other groups who are joining to demand a halt to construction now and the building of low and moderate income housing.

The disputed 6.5 acre plot was part of the Agnes Meyer Estate until Katharine Graham, one of four trustees of the estate, o.k.'d the land's sale for \$1.2 million to Larry Brandt. Brandt plans to construct 213 townhouses in the \$60 to \$80 thousand range, and 5 houses in the \$45 thousand range. Construction was originally scheduled to start right after the first of the year.

The Graham-Brandt plan for this tract fits into a pattern of buying up in the area around Adams-Morgan and building to attract a new class of wealthier homeowners while ignoring those who presently live there.

A coalition of opponents to the plan has organized a rally Feb. 8, beginning at 1:00 p.m. at the Morgan School, 18th and California Streets, N.W. After the rally, all will march through the community to the tract, where a press conference will be held at the site.

In the four long months of the Washington Post strike, the facts have taken a beating. The Post has fueled its union busting drive with half-truths and even outright lies.

But Feb. 7 the truth is going to make a comeback. On that day the Alliance for Labor and Community Action and the National Lawyers Guild will convene a People's Grand Jury on the Washington Post strike.

The People's Grand Jury will be a chance for the community to learn firsthand the real story behind this bitter strike. In its name, subpoenas have already been served on Post publisher Katharine Graham, Post labor relations director Lawrence Wallace and leaders of the striking pressmen. Other witnesses will testify on the "violence" and "racism" issues the Post has provocatively manipulated since the strike began.

The People's Grand Jury will be the audience, and each member of it will be able to question any of the subpoenaed witnesses. After the testimony is completed, the grand jurors--you--will vote on indictments.

All this will happen at the Metropolitan AME Church at 1518 M St., NW, right around the corner from the Post building, at 1:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 7. It promises to be a revealing afternoon.

On the unemployment line . . .

Labor Dept. axes D.C. benefits

The Alliance will present testimony this week to the D. C. City Council, protesting the cutting off of extended benefits to unemployed workers in the District. The Federal guidelines which are used to determine that D.C. is no longer a "high unemployment" area are full of loopholes and statistical fallacies.

The Unemployment Committee of the Alliance has developed a strong argument about why these federal extensions should be re-instated and is asking for the City Council's endorsement of this position.

Also, Alliance lawyers are confident that the courts will quickly reaffirm our Constitutional rights to leaflet and talk with unemployed workers inside the unemployment office. Meantime, the Alliance continues its daily presence at the Unemployment Board, working to build an Unemployed Workers Council in the District.

Union striking union

Professional Employees Union strikes CWA

125 members of the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) have been out on strike for a month against their employers, the international leadership office of the Communications Workers of America (CWA). The union versus union conflict is centered on cost of living increases which CWA says it can't afford.

CWA claims it's \$25 million in debt. But the strikers, mostly women who picket in 3 shifts around the clock, point to the Mercury Building, CWA's brand new headquarters, saying that CWA is pouring millions into lavish interiors.

The CWA Board of Directors' table cost \$17,000 alone. Chairs around the table went for \$1,000 apiece. And it costs \$50 a square yard for board room wallpaper.

The strikers insist that their employer can well afford the salary increases necessary to keep up with inflation. They point out that while some unions have recently lost significant numbers of members, CWA membership has dropped but two percent, a very small proportion in this time of heavy lay-offs.

Members of CWA from around the country are sending messages of support for the strikers. Other Washington area unionists have begun to join the strikers on the line. A striking Post pressman walked for several hours with a sister from OPEIU. He told ACTION, "I feel that so many people have come out to support us against the Post, that we just have to reach out to others in their fight."



Representatives of Central Labor Council and Pressmen's Union join OPEIU strikers at CWA's International Headquarters.

Local 2 OPEIU has opened a strike headquarters across the street from the Mercury Building. Phone 296-2495 for further information and strike support.

Meanwhile, CWA high-level staff are crossing the picket line, reportedly threatened with firing if they refuse. It is also reported that the alleged maker of the threats, CWA President Glenn Watts, has not come to work at his new posh office since the strike began so as to avoid being seen crossing the line himself.

Alliance Debates

Should the Alliance join a new, national Fightback Coalition? This question was debated at last Sunday's meeting. And once again the purpose and nature of the Alliance was further clarified. The vote was not to join.

The Fightback Coalition, and a local Fightback Committee, were formed in the past month with the leadership and organizational energies of the October League (OL). The OL and the national and local Fightback groups have all endorsed demonstrations which call for "Two Superpowers Out of Angola." A speaker pointed out that one of the "superpowers" is the Soviet Union, which is supporting the new government of Angola in its fight against two CIA- and South African-backed factions.

Most of the people at the meeting disagreed with this equating the Soviet Union to the CIA/South African intrusion.

But, more basic to the rejection of the Fightback position was the belief--expressed by several speakers--that the Alliance is a broad-based workers organization. Its basic purpose is to build strong ties between organized labor, unorganized workers and unemployed workers in the D. C. area.

It was pointed out that there is plenty of room within such an organization for major differences on international questions, as long as there is agreement on this purpose. The taking of political positions on international questions--unless a broad consensus exists among the membership--is unnecessary at this point.

The next meeting of the ALLIANCE will be held Sunday, February 1 -- 3 p.m. at Antioch Law School, 2633 16th St. N.W. The agenda includes a discussion of future meetings, when and where they should be held.

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Washington, D.C. 20009

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Permit No. 44427