Black Caucus names staff

The Black Congressional Caucus has opened the offices (415 Second St. N. E., Washington, D. C.), named a staff and is gearing up for a campaign designed to increase black participation in the national political process. The Caucus' recently appointed staff director, Howard T. Robinson, told RRIC that the staff's role would be to "flush out the facts and help to provide local elected officials with the information they need." Along with this supportive and consultative role, Robinson said, the staff would attempt to provide "profiles of the electorate" in the various states, with a view toward showing blacks "how to plug into the system where there are opportunities to do so."

Along with Robinson, 45, four other black staff members are now on board. Their salaries and the work of the Caucus are financed from the over $100,000 raised at a June 18 fund-raising soiree in the nation's capital. Robinson brings an extensive background in international relations and labor relations to his new job, which began officially on Aug. 1. Immediately before becoming staff director, he was labor attaché in the U. S. embassy in Tokyo. He has previously served as a staff member of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, an international representative of the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, and a lecturer at the Wesleyan Center for Advanced Studies. * * *

GI's protest military racism

A group of 236 black, white, Chicano and Indian GI's--all of them members of the 173rd Airborne Brigade that recently returned from Vietnam--have signed an open letter to Defense Secretary Melvin Laird accusing the armed forces of racial discrimination. The GI's tried to present the letter to Laird earlier this month when the Defense Secretary visited Fort Campbell on the Tennessee-Kentucky border to welcome their brigade home from Southeast Asia. But Gen. William Birdsong, the commander at Fort Campbell where the 173rd is now stationed, refused to allow the GI's to make the presentation. The GI's letter asserted that "throughout our time in the service we've seen minority group GI's discriminated against. In Vietnam that's been evidenced by higher casualty rates. Other times it takes the form of slower