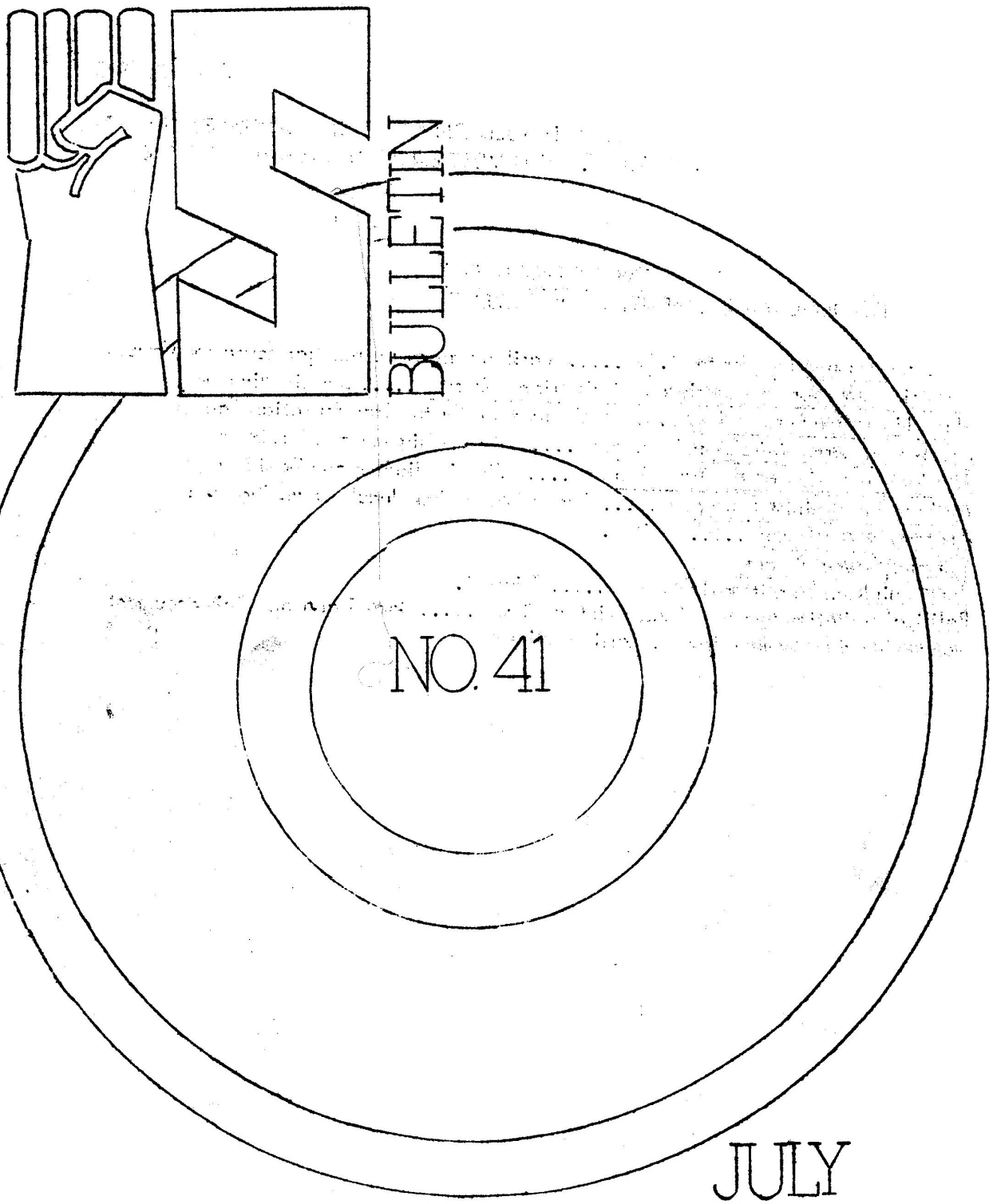
BULLETIN
NO. 41
JULY
22 '73

DISCUSSION BULLETIN #41 July 22, 1973

EXTREMELY IMPORTANT NOTICE!!! THIS BULLETIN CONTAINS DOCUMENTS OF THE LABOR DAY 1973 I.S. CONVENTION. YOU MUST BRING IT WITH YOU TO THE CONVENTION!!!!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

* ASTERISK DENOTES CONVENTION DOCUMENTS

* Tasks and Perspectives for the I.S. ..... Marilyn Danton for the Transformation Caucus
Education Director, A Description of his Primary Duties ..... Jimmie Higgens
* Black Liberation Perspectives ..... Jack Trautman for the Transformation Caucus
* Members at Large (MAL's) and Contacts ..... Jimmie Higgens and David Crees
* The Rank and File and the Trade Unions ..... Jimmie Higgens and David Crees
Reply to the Leninist Tendency ..... Emmet Casey, Ann Judah, Jean Diamond
Anatomy of a Wildcat ..... Neil C.
Chrysler Caucus Program
Some Points on Transitional Program ..... Brian M.
Political Agitation and the "Class Point of View" ..... Jack Trautman (This document was excluded by mistake from an earlier bulletin)

TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR THE I.S.

Marilyn Danton for the Transformation Caucus

NOTES:

This document should be read together with the Labor Perspectives and Perspectives for Black Liberation documents presented to the Convention by the Transformation Caucus. It has been put forward separately out of practical considerations.

We will be submitting a major amendment to this document concerning an analysis of the Left in the US today.

I. The Nature of the Period

The Economy

The crisis in capitalism is reemerging after 20 years of relative stability. The capitalist world faces increased monetary crises, growing inflation and unemployment that are all symptoms of increased instability. Increased competition raises the threat of trade barriers and trade wars, and a major depression or a third imperialist war cannot be ruled out as the historic contradictions in the capitalist system reappear.

The Permanent Arms Economy, an outgrowth of the war economy, is no longer able to lay the basis for the earlier relative stability. The introduction of the Permanent Arms Economy had the effect of postponing the reemergence of crisis after World War II. During the Cold War period, increased military spending, on a scale as yet unwitnessed in world history, made possible a 20 year period that was one of the highest growth periods in the history of capitalism. The Permanent Arms Economy laid the basis for this growth through increased government spending, enabling the use of productive resources, capital and labor, that would have lain idle without this direct stimulation. The impact of arms spending directly stimulated the capital goods industries and made possible a high rate of profit which laid the basis for continued investment. Moreover, the arms spending by the state meant increased concentration of capital since the large corporations were the only ones that had the technological and capital resources necessary for the development of the arms industries. Because the production was for waste, not for commodities that re-enter the cycle of production, the Permanent Arms Economy was able to increase production without the immediate threat of a crisis of over production.

The impact of the arms spending stimulated the economy in general both in the technological "spin-off" leading to the development of industries not primarily concerned with arms production, and in general on such industries as machine tools, communications and electrical equipment, the airplane industry and other capital goods sectors.

One important effect of the Permanent Arms Economy is that it places a floor under the economy so that the cycle of recession and boom is flattened out. It makes the economy more stable. This is accomplished partly through government purchases which account for one-fourth of wages. The state becomes a prop on demand. Even during a recession, the existence of government programs such as unemployment insurance, social security and welfare payments helps keep demand up. In addition, since military equipment rapidly becomes obsolete, continual investment for the development of new equipment means that the level of production in the capital goods sector remains relatively stable; and the technological sophistication and the intensive international competition in arms leads to fast growth in this sector of the economy.

But the Permanent Arms Economy only postpones the basic contradictions of capitalism, and additionally introduces its own contradictions into the system. Because investment goes into non-productive uses rather than productive ones, a tendency toward stagnation develops. Secondly, when there is an excellerating rate of arms production as in the Korean and Vietnam wars, demand is augmented, particularly through the wages of workers involved in arms production. There is a relative lack of consumer goods which gives rise to rapid inflation. Further, instead of prices falling with rises in productivity, which was typical of capitalism in the 19th century, the giant monopolies and arms economy keep prices at an artificially high level, thus there is the tendency toward permanent inflation. Moreover, since the arms industries become increasingly capital intensive, the ability to use labor resources declines, and the increasing technological specialization has meant that the spin-off to the productive sectors of the economy has also declined, and will continue to do so at a faster rate as military weapons become more sophisticated.

Another problem directly related to the Permanent Arms Economy is the huge tax burden concommitant with high government spending. This tax burden increasingly falls on those least able to pay: the middle classes and the working class, and a tax-payers revolt develops. The increasing tax burden resulting from arms spending means that government spending for social services is either not available, or is an unacceptable added tax burden. This leads directly to the cutback in the social services, which first showed up in the area of education. In addition in order to combat inflation, state spending in these areas is the first to go. The arms economy contributes directly to the decay in the social services.

The dominant role of the US in world capitalism both in industrial and monetary terms has meant that as stagnation begins to develop in the US, the concommitant inflation is exported to other capitalist countries. Today, although the position of US capitalism is still dominant, competition internationally especially from Germany and Japan is a serious problem for the US.

Following World War II the US as the only major capitalist country untouched by the devastation of war, was assured international domination. But the needs of US capitalism meant that the US had to rebuild those economies, both as political protection and to provide markets for its goods. The US as the creditor nation dominated world trade. An unparalled export boom insued as American goods went to rebuild these economies. By 1950 Europe was at its pre-war peak and Japan reached this level by 1954. These economies continued to grow rapidly and to spread into neighboring areas. In Europe this laid the basis for the Common Market, and in Asia, Japan began to penetrate the markets of South Korea, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. While Japan replaced the US in these areas, the Common Market began to compete with the US for the European markets. By the late 1960's Japan and Germany were

massively moving into the world market, and threatening the US in a series of important industries. For Japan these were steel, auto, electronics, opticals, textiles and ship building. Not only did Japan begin to take markets previously controlled by the US, but Japanese and European penetration began to take place on an increasing scale into the US market. This was partly due to the combined and uneven development in these countries which meant that the madern plants and technology rebuilt since 1945 had a higher productivity, and also to the relative lower labor costs in these countries, especially Japan. Thus, Japan, and to a lesser extent, Germany were able to sell their goods at lower prices abroad, including in the US, forcing layoffs and idle productive forces here.

This changing relationship in world capitalism has been reflected in the recurring international monetary crises which have come with increasing frequency since the late 1960's. Since 1950 the US has suffered a balance of payments deficit. This deficit was directly caused by US military expenditures in the form of military bases abroad, high foreign investment and speculative capital outflows. But the deficit was not a serious problem as long as a favorable balance of trade continued. But the Vietnam war generated higher inflation and the resultant trade deficit the US experienced in Autust 1971 for the first time in 70 years meant that the problems of the US economy could no longer be taken calmly. US goods were priced too high and had become non-competitive. The US was less able to compete with the growing efficiency of German and Japanese capitalism. This trade deficit will continue to grow sporadically.

In December 1971 the changes that had taken place described above resulted in a monetary crisis directly in response to the relative decline of US capitalism and the stability of the dollar. The Smithsonian Agreement made at that time formalized the abolition of the exchangeability of the dollar for gold. (This exchangeability was abolished in August 1971 with the beginning of the New Economic Policy.) The dollar became more central to the world monetary system. The Agreement also set up fixed exchange rates between currencies which were to vary only within a narrow range and devalued the dollar in order to raise US competitive position by lowering the prices of US exports and raising the prices of imported goods. But the high rate of inflation in the US at the beginning of 1973 further eroded the value of the dollar. This was exacerbated by international speculation, a continued trade deficit, and the weakening of wage controls in Phase III of the New Economic Policy. Those holding the seventy billion dollars in foreign banks, multinational corporations and government treasuries rushed to transfer the dollars into other currencies that were more stable. This speculation further reduced the value of the dollar, which meant that the offician exchange rates had to be brought into line with the new reality. The dollar was then further

devalued at fixed rates against the European currencies, while the rate of the yen was left unsettled with a joint float of the major European currencies. The yen would then tend to rise in relation to the dollar more than the European currencies. These floating rates are inherently unstable and only exacerbate the problems. Speculation between gold and the dollar continues to be a serious problem for international monetary stability. Devaluation of the dollar also has the effect of increasing inflation in the US by allowing the domestic corporations to raise their prices while still remaining competitive with prices of imports which become more expensive due to devaluation.

The effects of the dollar devaluation has been to place the US capitalists in a better competitive position. But it is only a matter of time before the German and Japanese capitalists will no longer allow the US to push its problems off onto them, and instead will demand that the US capitalist come to grips with their own working class. The fact that the "economic miracles" of the German and Japanese capitalists are coming to an end, means that this will not be long in coming.

Thus while the devaluation will temporarily put US capitalism in an improved competitive position, the fact that the dollar is the reserve currency of the world, together with the fact that it is much less attractive to hold be cause of the possibility of future devaluations related to rising inflation, leads to increased uncertainty. On the one hand American goods are less attractive because of the high prices, and on the other hand, the American dollar is no longer stable and the possibility of further devaluations exists. Thus, these dollars continue to float abroad leading to increased speculation, and to further shifts in the real exchange rates. This floating currency threatens to slow down world trade through these uncertainties, and regularly threatens to disrupt it. An expansion of trade is a must for healthy capitalism. Serious disruptions of trade brought on by a severe international monetary crisis could lead to a world depression.

Competition is not only on the increase within the advanced capitalist world. The detent that ended a decade of cold war when the threat of nuclear war hung menacingly over the world is changing in nature. The alliances between the capitalist countries and the Bureaucratic Communist countries are in a state of flux; the new detente between the US and China is an example of this.

In the Middle East, war threatens again to embroil the major powers. The Soviet Union, already in economic crisis demonstrated most clearly by the severe agricultural problems, continues to penetrate into Libya, Egypt and Yemen, while China is involved in South Yemen. The US in involved in Saudia Arabia and Kuwait, not to mention Israel. The Middle East is of important strategic significance because of the waterways and oil. Oil especially is becoming more important as witnessed by the developing energy shortages.

Finally the polycentrism caused by the dynamic of national stalinism continues to exacerbate the problems of eastern Europe as those countries under the control of the Soviet Union attempt to develop their own economies without Soviet domination. In general then the developing internal contradictions in the capitalist and Bureaucratic Communist systems will lead to increasing world political instability. Rising competition within these systems, and between them mean that in the long run World War III will be inevitable unless the ruling classes of the world are disarmed through international socialist revolution.

The most important significance of the problems today is the growing international instability. The defeat in Vietnam, internal economic problems and increased competition within the advanced capitalist world has meant that while the US is still hegemonic over the world economically and politically, this hegemony has been greatly weakened. It follows then that new alliances will grow up with continued shifts of power to different capitalist and Bureaucratic Communist powers. The recent developments between the US and China, which with increased competition, will lead to problems with Japan are part of this shifting situation. It is this increased instability internationally which will continue to be important as different countries vie for power in an unstable world.

In attempting any analysis of the current economic problems, it is important to keep every thing in perspective. The end is not at hand; we predict a slow sporatic development of the crisis. The capitalist class still has alternatives by which it can patch up some of the more immediate problems it faces. Further stabilizations of a short term nature cannot be ruled out. In the US nationalization of unproductive industries has yet to take place. Short of nationalization, the removal of anti-trust laws allowing for higher concentration of capital could help to rationalize a number of sick industries. While there is no campaign of the part of the capitalist class yet for general abrogation of anti-trust laws, this has been proposed in an attempt to deal with the problem of profitability in the Penn Central Railroad.

In order to place the US in a better position internationally, exports could be subsidized, the arms burden shifted to allies such as Japan and Germany, and cartels and marketing agreements accomplished. Any and or all of these could help temporarily to give a way out to US capitalists. Although these measures would help the US capitalists, shifting the arms burden especially would exacerbate the problems of those countries picking it up, and the system as a whole. The US is not the weakest link, but given the dominant position of the US in the world economy, problems in the productives forces in the US will disproportionately affect the world economy.

In the immediate future, we can expect to see rising unemployment in response to the coming recession, and the persisting problem of permanent inflation. The current boom is unstable. It is attributable primarily to the need for the US to become more competitive with Germany and Japan. In order to become more competitive, the US spends proportionately less on arms, a trend which has been developing since the late 60's, but which has now been accelerated. This removes the floor created by the Permanent Arms Economy to the economy. It is clear now that this boom has peaked and is out of coutrol. Cutbacks in government spending, hikes in the prime interest rates and federal discount rates are the latest attempts to solve this problem; ultimately there will be a recession - the only question is, how severe it will be. The fact is that now the Permanent Arms Economy cannot play the basic stabilizing role in the context of increased competition internationally. The boom/bust cycle will deepen as the basic contradictions of capitalism come to the surface once again.

The productivity offensive directed at the working class will continue as will the need for wage controls in the form of future phases of the New Economic Policy. Phase III with the "stick in the closet" has clearly failed as the rate of inflation for the first six months of 1973 indicates (consumer prices are now rising at an annual rate of 8%, wholesale prices at close to 20%). Phase 3.5, announced in mid June (60 day price freeze) will not alleviate the problems. Pressure will build up during this period and following the freeze, prices will burst skyward once again. Stringent controls on wages and prices will continue to be necessary. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear who is to blame for inflation, as the rise in wages does not even begin to approach the recent rise in prices. The threat of state intervention into collective bargaining will be increased in order to force the labor bureaucracy to discipline the work force so that the capitalist class can raise the rate of exploitation.

In summary, the reemergence of crisis in the system will result in increased competition between national capitals and tendencies toward trade wars; liquidity crises, the breakdown of the international monetary system and the revaluation of the major world currencies; massive spreading inflation, including in politically sensitive areas such as food; slower economic growth and rising unemployment, and a return to the business cycle in what threatens to be increasingly wild gyrations.

These circumstances do not herald the collapse of the capitalist system. It is not 1923 or 1929. Nor is it the end of capitalist expansion. We are not faced with absolute stagnation such as existed in the inter-war period, but with slower and increasingly fitful expansion. It is a period in which stability will continue to decline, in which the parameters of the system are closing, in which the tendency toward stagnation increases, but in which there is still

room for the capitalist classes to maneuver, in which absolute growth continues to take place. Gains or reforms can still be won, especially by the politically most important, best-organized sectors of the working class. Nonetheless, it is becoming increasingly difficult to win real gains by bureaucratic or class collaborationist means. Those gains already won will be harder to maintain.

While we do not expect a massive working class upheaval in the next period, we do expect a rise in the level of the class struggle. From 1965 to 1970, real wages stagnated, and inflation grew. The result was a rise in class struggle - strikes, wildcats, the formation of rank and file groups, etc. This peaked in 1970. The rise in unemployment due to the 1969-70 recession, the sharp growth in income in 1970-72, the success of the employers' offensive, the holding down of inflation all dampened the class struggle for two years - strikes, rank and file oppositions, etc. declined precipitously. The new sharp wave of inflation and the rapid drop in real wages together with the sharply increased productivity drive and general economic and political instability, all point in the direction of an increase in the level of the class struggle in the coming period.

In the future, however, as it becomes clear to the working class that it must fight harder and harder to even maintain what it has, and as new leadership is trained in the class struggle during this period, and new forms of rank and file organization developed, the real possibility of a massive upheaval exists. Such a development would signify the beginning of a new period in the development of the class struggle. Since the trade union bureaucracy is unwilling and unable to counter the employers offensive, it will be a roadblock. The rebellion will be on a general political level, and one form it will take is a massive struggle by the rank and file for control over the unions. The struggles of the future will take place on a higher level given the radicalization of the 60's, and the effect of the women's movement, and especially the black movement on the consciousness of those sectors of the working class. We will begin to see the development of the full spectrum of political ideas in the labor movement, from socialism to the dogmatic authoritarian right as the consciousness of the real nature of the capitalist system begins to develop. This development will begin to end the fear of socialist ideas generated in the McCarthy era, and will thus make socialist propaganda more important to the developing struggle.

U.S. Politics

The reemergence of crisis in the capitalist system has begun to effect political developments in the US. The weakening of US world hegemony, the changing face of liberalism reflected in the shifting constituencies of the Democratic and Republican Parties and the growing strength of conservatism and the right are some of these important developments. There is a

growing convergence in American politics as possible solutions to the problems narrow. The increasingly dominant role of the state will further remove the government from the people. But while recent events have shaken the stability and confidence of the government, its ability to rule and control society are still clear.

The failure of the old liberal ideology of the 50's and 60's can be seen in changes in both foreign and domestic policy. American foreign policy which aimed at furthering US imperialism through limited wars against national liberation movements has collapsed with the US defeat in Vietnam. This defeat signaled to the world, ally and enemy alike, that US imperialism is not all powerful. The costly defeat politically and economically has led to a breakdown of military alliances the US set up in the early years of the Cold War to "contain Communism." France withdrew from NATO, and the US is no longer interested in maintaining SEATO because of the recent rapproachment with China. The ability of the US to intervene here, pull back there, etc. has been greatly weakened. No longer is the American empire viewed as invincible, and this together with rising competition within advanced capitalism has brought to the fore again the centrifugal tendencies of world capitalism and the rise of nationalism.

At home the social movements of the 60's exposed the bankruptcy of the old liberalism. As these movements moved to the left and began to demand changes that were incompatible with the system, most of the representatives of this liberalism moved to the right. The liberal ideology of the 50's and 60's has been transformed. While the liberals of this period are now conservative, or corporate liberals, a new generation of liberals has come into being. The dividing line in this change was the reaction to the Vietnam war and the student and radical movements of the late 60's. These were the watershed mark in the changes in liberal ideology. The old bastions of liberalism such as the Americans for Democratic Action, the Democratic Clubs of California went into a state of demise, while individuals such as Hubert Humphery, Hugh Scott, and Daniel P. Moynihan have moved to the right. At the same time others have taken up the banner of liberalism. This new generation of liberals tend to think of themselves as radicals - but they are tied to the system. Their politics are the politics of consumerism, ecology and peace, but their program is middle class. Ralph Nadar best represents these new liberals. His program is basically to solve the problems of capitalism with more capitalism, ie to remove government regulations to allow for more competition. This new liberalism has some adherents and appeal inside the working class.

At the same time, the right oriented racist ideology of George Wallace has put forward solutions to the problems of the society, and also has appeal inside the working class. In the primaries in the summer of 1972, before an attempted assassination put him out of commission, Wallace received the

support of significant sections of the working class, including support from the Catholic, eastern European ethnic groups in the midwest. The appeal of this ideology inside the working class reflects the contradictory consciousness of workers and their alienation from the established parties and cynicism about the possibilities of change. It also reflects racism within the working class.

The growth of support for Wallace also indicates the growing self-confidence and credibility of the right. The failure of established liberalism and the growing awareness of instability today make real the possibility of even more dangerous developments on the right. This right wing will gain credibility as long as the working class is not able to politically pose as a pole of attraction in the emerging crisis.

These shifts and developments in American politics are reflected in the changing constituencies of the two political parties. For the Democratic Party this is most clearly seen in recent shifts in the traditional base of the Party: the old liberal-labor-black coalition. This is seen most clearly in the changes in liberalism itself and the response of the labor bureaucracy to these changes. The two wings of liberal ideology, ie the corporate liberals who see the statification of the economy as progressive, who oppose mass action because of the threat to stability it represents, and whose methodology is permeation; and the new liberals who are anti-labor, sympathetic to welfare rights and the struggles of the specially oppressed, but who advocate pressure group tactics and legislative reform within the system to solve the problems, form the two competing political poles in the Democratic Party today. The southern conservative, racist pole in the Party has been weakened by Republican inroads into that geographical base of the Party.

The capture of the Democratic Party last fall by the new liberals in the person of George McGovern represented its rise to power and the disenchantment with corporate liberalism by some sections of the society. McGovern tried to reform the Party by changing laws, and the New Politics forces took over the Party machinery driving out the AFL-CIO bureaucracy. This development led to a split in the bureaucracy, one of the traditional mainstays of the Democratic Party. The AFL-CIO refused to endorse McGovern and remained technically neutral, allowing for unofficial support to Nixon, and the IBT and Building Trades unions supported Nixon and the Republican Party. Liberal bureaucrats on the other hand like Woodcock (UAW), Beirne (CWA) and Wurf (AFSCME) supported McGovern. The fact that many of the rank and file workers supported Nixon reflects the passive support that Meany, Abel and Shanker still have in the labor movement. But the low turnout on election day indicates a growing recognition that none of the candidates have even partially progressive solutions to the problems facing society. Overall the elections reflected the deep apathy and cynicism that exists in the working class. This is a reflection of the apolitical discontent of most workers.

Blacks overwhelmingly supported McGovern, although recent poles indicate that blacks are quite disillusioned with the Democratic Party. This support was more a rejection of Nixon and the Republican Party, than support for the Democrats. At present, however, we expect this support to continue because of the lack of any real alternative for blacks and other oppressed peoples to the Democratic Party.

The opposition forces in the Democratic Party, the Coalition for a Democratic Majority representing the Meany, Abel, Shanker wing of the bureaucracy, and corporate liberals have now recaptured the Party machinery. The overwhelming defeat of McGovern in the election made this possible. In this period we can expect these forces to continue to vie for power in the Democratic Party with Henry Jackson best representing the conservative forces, and Vance Hartke, Ted Kennedy and Joseph Raugh representing the "left" liberals.

The Republican Party is also changing in response to these developments. Nixon's southern strategy which was by and large successful is a reflection of a major change in US politics. The South is no longer a Democratic Party monopoly - Nixon carried every southern state, and significant local Republican organizations exist throughout the South. Nixon was also successful in winning significant labor support for the Republican Party. His victory is a consequence of both the temporary capture of the Democratic Party by the McGovern New Politics wing of the Party, the current economic boom, the strengthening of alliances with the Soviet Union and China, and also of the growing conservatism on the part of sections of the labor bureaucracy. But Nixon's attempts to build up local patronage machines through his revenue sharing and neo-federal programs had a contradictory effect due to his refusal to campaign for local Republican candidates. Whatever success Nixon was able to achieve in rebuilding the Republican Party will be at least temporarily undercut by the effect of Watergate on the Party.

The conclusions to be drawn from analyzing these developments in American politics are two-fold. In the first place there is a tendency toward convergence in the solutions put forward to deal with the growing problems in American society. The basic support of all capitalist political tendencies for the New Economic Policy, for "law and order" and for welfare reform as solutions to the current problems are signs of this. Thus the liberal strategy of electing lesser evil candidates will mean less and less because all politicians are commited to similar policies. But while there is a growing convergence in political solutions, there are still divisions within the capitalist class on a broad range of questions. We will begin to see a really united capitalist response only when this class is faced with a united political working class opposition. Until that level of the class struggle is reached, social movements will continue to win lip service from the more liberal sections of the capitalist class in order that these can be in the position to coopt those movements.

The other important conclusion to be drawn from looking at recent political developments is the growing instability in political alignment reflected in the recent elections. This is especially reflected in the response of the labor bureaucracy to the two political parties. The lack of rejection of the Democratic Party by the labor bureaucracy indicates the general political bankruptcy of the labor movement today. Official labor used to make a big point of calling for the repeal of Taft-Hartly, today this is not even raised. Moreover, they had diffidulty in making a united stand vis-a-vis wage controls; while all wings of the bureaucracy gave lip service to the need for controls, different tendencies could be observed in the general response. Woodcock representing the liberal wing was the first to criticize the specific application of controls, while at the other end, the IBT and Building Trades bureaucracy were the staunch supporters of Nixon's economic game plan.

But despite the sell-outs labor has received at the hands of all liberal Democrats, most of the bureaucracy still continues to champion these politicians even though they continue to blame the working class for the failure of American capitalism to compete internationally. Today liberal politicians of all stripes are in the forefront of calling for more stringent wage controls and in appealing to jingoistic prejudices through protectionist arguments and policies like the Burke-Hartke tariff legislation. The rank and file meanwhile have begun to search for alternatives, and have found a partial one in the past in George Wallace, while the Building Trades and the Teamsters have begun to champion Nixon and the Republicans. But despite this divergency in the political leanings of the labor movement, we can expect temporarily at least an increase in support for the Democratic Party as it can put forward a more progressive face to the workers and oppressed while it is not responsible for the government.

Within the formal governmental structure, other developments are taking place: the growing predominance of the executive branch over the congressional and judicial branches is a response on the part of the capitalist class to "tighten-up". This always happens in the context of any developing crisis as a cursory look at American history will indicate. A recent example of this trend is the fact that Congress played little role in policy over the Vietnam war, all of its complaints notwithstanding. More recently, however, this trend has become clearer with Nixon's attempted extension of "executive privilege" to prevent congressional interference in his ability to make decisions more independently. The strong congressional role in the Watergate affair is an attempt to reverse this trend; but in the long run the trend is in the other direction, as increased instability in the system demonstrates the need for quick, strong action, which is by and large inconsistent with a strong congress. The Permanent Arms Economy and the importance of state intervention into the economy increases this tendency toward centralization of power. The "military-industrial-complex" will continue to play an increasingly

important role as the monopolization and militarization of capital increases. This means that the government will become less democratic and further removed from the people.

Clearly one of the most important developments in US politics in general has been the shaken confidence in the government, both in its self-confidence and in the confidence of the people in it. The defeat in Vietnam, the continuing monetary crises, the trade deficits, permanent inflation, unemployment and the inability of the New Economic Policy to alleviate the growing economic instability all have had the effect of shaking people's confidence in the ability of the government to solve the growing problems in the society. The recent and spectacular development in this area is the Watergate scandal.

The break-in at Watergate has burst into a general government crisis overshadowing even the infamous Teapot Dome scandal of the mid 1920's. Poles indicate that over half of the population believe Nixon to be involved in at least the cover-up, his popularity has reached an all-time low, and the possibility of his resignation or impeachment have been raised by a few. So far Nixon has not been able to stem the tide against him. Moreover, the realization that the criminal activities were not limited to spying on the opposition, but reach into practically every part of the federal bureaucracy has made many wonder where it will all end.

The Democratic Party and the liberal press establishment are still making hey of these continued revelations. In fact, Watergate is clearly part of a liberal political tendency to try to turn the national focus to this type of conspiracy as the primary cause of the ills of this society.

But what is important is the long term effects of the Watergate affair on the political situation. The most important aspect of this scandal is the paralyzation of the government at a time when strong action is required to deal with the growing economic problems. Runaway inflation and an overheated economy require such action, but the government's catatonic state means that it is essentially unable to respond effectively to these problems. Hence Nixon's response has been both sluggish and desperate. Against the advice of his economic advisors he announced the 60 day price freeze in response to the political situation, not the economic problems. With the growing demand for price controls to deal with inflation, Nixon did not feel strong enough to back the political pressure, and he also felt the need for dramatic action. But, as stated earlier, this is no solution from even the capitalist point of view to this problem.

Secondly, strong decisive leadership and international confidence in that leadership is required to restore faith in the American dollar. But the weakened role of the presidency has had the opposite effect. Speculation between gold and the dollar continues to be a problem; this is in part due to the effect of Watergate and the lack of confidence internationally in the American government.

Finally Watergate will play a role in undermining the general faith of people at home and abroad in the US. The immensity of this corruption will tend to make the American people more cynical about the system, and less open to the vision of the "American Dream." This developing consciousness is significant, and will have the effect of undercutting the general confidence of the people in the government's ability to solve the growing problems of the system. This consciousness will become more important as the government is forced to take on the working class more and more and increase the exploitation and oppression of the system in an attempt to solve its problems. It is in these ways that the Watergate affair will prove to be significant.

The crisis in confidence is not limited to domestic problems. As mentioned earlier, internationally, the US has suffered a loss of esteem in the eyes of friend and foe alike. The defeat in Vietnam and continuing economic instability are mainly responsible for this, but Watergate has added its impact. The weakened position of the presidency clearly raises questions about Nixon's ability to carry out his foreign policy decisions, and has brought about new monetary problems. Less and less can the international capitalist class look to the US as the leader of the "free world". At the same time this loss of credibility will effect relations with the Bureaucratic Communist countries. This increased international instability will mean more go it alone strategies, contributing to the nationalist tendencies alluded to earlier.

In general the, while the confidence of the capitalist class has been shaken, it has not been defeated. While the American Dream no longer has the ability to sooth the growing frustration of workers, poor and oppressed, credibility and faith in the American system still exists. In fact, we can predict that the problems of the Republican government will lead directly to increased support for the Democratic Party in the 1974 off year elections both locally and nationally. Not in the position of having to take responsibility for the increasing attacks on workers and the specially oppressed, and without the Watergate scandal like an albatross around their necks, the Democrats will be able to appear progressive, and with false promises of reform, be able to win substantial support from these groups. Nonetheless, the American political scene will continue to be unstable and the bases of the two major parties will continue to shift in response to the developing problems in the capitalist system.

II. The General Tasks of Revolutionaries

The Tasks of a Sect

"Sects are justified (historically) so long as the working class is not yet ripe for an independent historical movement. As soon as it has attained this maturity, all sects are essentially reactionary." (Marx, in Marx & Engels, Selected Correspondence, p. 326.)

The IS is a sect. As a sect we have two major goals. All our immediate tasks flow from these goals: The creation of a revolutionary vanguard party as part of a self consciousness working class movement; and the creation of that movement itself. It is clear that we alone, as presently constituted cannot build the revolutionary party by recruitment, splits or fusions, or single-handedly build the independent working class movement. Yet it is important to understand that all our activity including our role in existing movements, and our propaganda work flow from these two goals. Our tasks, while related, will be significantly different when this stage in the historical development of the revolutionary workers movement is achieved. To say this is not to say that we do not see and point beyond this development, but it is to say that we see these twin aims as guiding all of our work today. Everything we do, in our day to day work and immediate tasks and perspectives flow from the absolute necessity of achieving this stage in the class struggle.

Secondly, it is clear that these two goals are integrally related. The creation of a revolutionary party and revolutionary leadership cannot take place outside the context of the creation of an independent working class movement. A black, Latin and working class cadre can only be trained in struggle. This working class movement will develop out of the class struggle itself. Working class struggle alters the objective conditions that form consciousness by changing the context from that of the powerlessness of the individual facing the capitalist system, to the power of the working class solidarity. This change in consciousness opens up new possibilities that in the context of powerlessness are utopian.

To counterpose these two tasks, and to see our role as related to only the building of a revolutionary party, is to misunderstand the relationship of that party to the class - the relationship of the leadership of the class to the masses of workers. The question of party and class does not arise only at the point of taking power, when the workers' state must be based upon the broadest organizations of the working class - workers councils - and the revolutionary party making up its vanguard elements - its leadership. Nor is it a question only when the masses of advanced workers are beginning to form and join the revolutionary party. It is as important today as at any of these other points in time. Thus the role we play in rebuilding a self-consciousness working

class movement, and our leadership role with the developing rank and file leadership is integrally tied to our task of building the revolutionary party. Only by playing an active role today based upon our program and perspectives will we be laying the basis for playing the role of the conscious revolutionary leadership of the class tomorrow. This is the correct relationship between party and class - it must always guide our work.

The Tasks of a Propaganda Group

Defining the IS as a sect is not enough - the IS is a propaganda group. By this we mean that the primary tasks of the IS in existing movements of the specially oppressed and the working class is that of propaganda. Lenin in Left Wing Communism had this to say about the propagandistic tasks: "As long as it was (and inasmuch as it still is) a question of winning the proletariat's vanguard over to the side of communism, priority went and still goes to propaganda work." Until there exists a vanguard of the working class won over to revolutionary socialism, winning the advanced workers and the advanced elements of the movements of the specially oppressed remains our task. But our self-conception of the IS as a propaganda group does not mean that we do not involve ourselves in the day-to-day struggles that exist now. Our propagandistic tasks are totally interelated with out participation and our leadership role in the developments inside the working class today. It is through our activity and our participation in the on-going movements and struggles, that we are able to get a hearing for our ideas, our propaganda.

We quote the following excerpt from the 1946 convention bulletin of the Workers Party on the nature of a propaganda group: "The first period /of a revolutionary organization/ corresponds to the inescapable necessity of assembling and consolidating the initial cadres of the party, its central core, around the fundamental principles and program of the party. The principle task of the organization, to which everything else is rigidly subordinated is propaganda, that is, the putting forward and the defense of a whole series of connected ideas (the basic principles and program) to a comparatively limited group of advanced elements. Organizations which seek to skip over this stage are sure to flounder and dis integrate. There is no other way of establishing the distinctive character of an organization, of justifying its independent existence (that is, its existence separate from all other organizations), of welding together the forces capable of eventually taking on the flesh and blood of an effective mass organization and of setting large masses into motion as a class."

Propaganda

But the question is, what does our propaganda consist of, and who are the advanced elements to whom it is directed? Our propaganda is broadly speaking our program in full, that is revolutionary Marxism, and all that that includes.

Because there are many false ideologies parading under the heading of Marxism, it is important for us to explain what we mean. We do this by explaining the fundamental conclusions that we draw from our analysis of the world, our world view, and which distinguish us from all other revolutionary oarganizations and individuals. Our goal is thus to win workers to our world view. In short hand it is the following, quoted from John Weber, "The Propaganda Group and its Tasks!', Bulletin # 27, p. 3. "We stand for revolutionary democratic socialism; for workers' democracy; for intransigent revolutionary opposition to all states in which the working class is exploited by hostile alien ruling clasees --both capitalism and bureaucratic collectivism; for the third camp; for intransigent opposition to the trade union bureaucracy--for an independent party of the working class; for anti-imperialism and the right of nations to self-determination; for the commitment to struggle for equality to blacks and other oppressed minorities and for defense of the validity of independent organizations and struggles by the oppressed; for the commitment to struggle for full equality to women and for the defense of the validity of independent organizations and struggles by women; for workers' control of production, for workers' control of the state; for building the revolutionary party; and for the necessity of revolutionary Marxists to make the working class the main focus of their political work."

We discuss these fundamentals of our principles and politics in terms of what is concretely happening today. This means that we do not simply have, for example, a pamphlet just on workers control of state and industry, but that we explain this in the context of a particular struggle around safety in a plant, how that would be handled by a workers government, how the capitalists solve that problem and why their solutions are counterposed to the basic needs of the working class. Or, to take another example, when we speak of the need for pension reform, we do so in the context of exposing what a piece of specific legislation does and why, and how pension reform should be handeled if it is to really meet the needs of the workers involved. In this context we can then explain the role of pensions under capitalism, the role of modern trust funds, the social forces behind these trust funds, the necessity for class struggle in order to fight, and important broader questions such as retirement under capitalism, leisure time, etc.

In general then, what we do in our propaganda is to show the way capitalism works, and expose it for what it is, explaining how it is in the interests of the system and is directly counterposed to the interests of the working class. We can concretely expose the role of the police, the press, the corporations and why they stick together, and the role of the state under capitalism. In this way we are able concretely to explain what revolutionary Marxist politics are and how the conclusions we reach are the only ones which meet the needs of the working class. Or, to put it another way, we use the positive component of the consciousness of advanced workers, that they are angry about the lack of safety, speed-up, corruption, etc. to show how the capitalist "program" is not in their interests, and thus open the way for demonstrating how their illusions about the system are in contradiction to their immediate self-felt needs.

Moreover, we attempt to convey the process by which these fundamental solutions are achieved, that is, the process of the class struggle, and how through that struggle we see the final aim of socialist revolution taking place. Conveying this sense of process, and the relationship of the minimal struggles of today to the struggle for socialism is what makes our propaganda begin to take on life in the eyes of the advanced workers to whom the propaganda is directed. Our involvement in the struggles today, and the leadership we attempt to give concretely in those struggles, including not just political leadership, but strategical, tactical and organizational, concretely flows from our final goal. It is in this context, for example, that we point out the need for building the revolutionary party, how we see this happening, our role in that development, and the relationship of that party to the working class movement. Thus, our role in directinr our propaganda to the advanced elements is not a literary one, but an active one. At the same time, we learn through our active involvement what specifically the illusions - false consciousness- that the advanced workers hold, enabling us to direct our propaganda specifically at those illusions. The propaganda, without the involvement in the building of a working class movement today, no matter how minimal that level of struggle is, is abstract. It only begins to become relevant when coupled with our activity, what we are actually doing to further the class struggle in order to achieve what our propaganda says we are for.

The Advanced Workers

We orient primarily towards those militants and activists who are actually involved today in the class struggle, who are actually attempting to give leadership, no matter how minimal, to the rank and file struggle today. The working class is uneven in consciousness and in the willingness to fight. Most workers are concerned with work and their private lives. But capitalist exploitation forces numbers into active motion to better their lives. It is these workers who are beginning to understand the need to organize and fight for their needs, they represent the future leadership together with us of the working class movement tomorrow. Moreover, they represent the bridge for us to the masses of workers who must begin to go into action.

Simultaneously, a new development in the working class is the appearance os small, but significant numbers of people who consider themselves to be revolutionary, ie, in fundamental opposition to the system. At times they are cynical and impatient with those workers who are engaged in the day to day fight to better their conditions. They may be even anti-union with a left cover on the grounds that the unions are tied to capitalism. These groups and individuals have been known to scab on strikes, or not participate in shop floor actions, because they consider them to be less than revolutionary. In addition to explaining our world view, we have something else to say to these "revolutionaries". We wage a relentless battle to get these people to engage in the day to day struggle.

Flowing from our understanding of our general tasks and its propagandistic nature today, our priority goes to attempt to reach those persons we hope may become receptive to our ideas – to winning individuals, especially workers

blacks and latins to our world view and what is necessary to accomplish it. Thus the aim of our propaganda work is to train and educate a black, Latin and working class cadre in revolutionary socialist politics. Integrally related to this is our political work which will help to build an audience in the working class and in the movements of the specially oppressed for our politics.

In this sense building our organization is a concretization of the task today of laying the basis for the revolutionary party and leadership. We mean by this not only building the organization numerically, and the transformation of the organization from its present state to a working class organization which increasingly includes significant numbers of workers, blacks and Latins, but also by increasing the theoretical, political and organizational maturity of the organization. We view the IS, despite its weaknesses and shortcomings and small size as the political representation of the revolutionary third camp movement in the US today.

The primary method of concretizing the second major task of this period, the building of an independent working class movement, is through our participation in the rank and file struggles today, and the developing struggles of the specially oppressed in the working class and the community. Our ability to participate and advance these movements today is crucial to the task of winning the advanced elements to our politics just as our success in winning these workers, blacks and Latins to our politics will enhance our ability to play an increasingly important role in the class struggle and thus in directing and advancing that struggle toward the struggle for socialism.

Specific Tasks in the Movements Today

It is clear that understanding our basic propaganda tasks offers little concrete guide to our activity in the struggles of workers or the specially oppressed today. While this understanding is the defining characteristic of our role today, we also need a guide for our day to day activity. This guide to our work today is the whole of our tasks and perspectives. It includes our analysis of capitalism, the trade union bureaucracy, the relationship of class forces, and the state of existing movements and struggles, their level of development, their current leadership, the consciousness of workers and the specially oppressed. Flowing from this analysis are specific tasks: strategies, tactics and programmatic ideas which will guide our general work and activity.

1. Organization

One of the most important concrete tasks we have today revolves around finding organizational expressions for the militant sentiment and consciousness of the movements in which we are involved. Organization is the crystallization of consciousness in concrete form. The dynamic of organization itself, with consistent leadership plays a role not only in reflecting consciousness, but also in building it.

The role organization plays in developing consciousness is the reason we place high priority on finding organizational forms for mass consciousness. Building organization enables us to begin projecting to the advanced militants and others what an organization that basis itself on the need to fight for workers' interests might look like. It helps to prepare a climate in the workplace or in the community that is more conducive to struggle, and it lays the basis for workers and the specially oppressed to see that their problems are not individual ones, but that they flow from the class structure of the capitalist system.

The concept of self-organization, ie organization of the masses for their self interest, is a central part of our politics that relates concretely to the task of advancing the level of struggle. It is why we put so much emphasis on the need for rank and file organization on the local and national level in opposition to the bureaucracy. This need for self-organization flows from our conception of workers' democracy - workers' control of the state and industry, and of a class for itself, ie an independent working class movement. Self-organization is crucial, because it is only through self organization that the working class can prepare itself to be the ruling class after the revolution.

It is through rank and file caucuses in the trade union movement and independent organization of the specially oppressed that workers, blacks and Latins begin to understand that reliance on their own power is the only way they can make sure that their interests are represented, struggled for and won. And that reliance on the state, one of the capitalist parties, the bureaucracy or a big name leader will insure that it is not their interests that will be represented. That these are counterposed will be demonstrated primarily in the struggle itself, and in the conscious role of revolutionaries in their activity and propaganda.

Many workers, blacks and Latins understand concretely that the bureaucracy, the capitalist parties, the state have sold them out in the past. Although they have many illusions about them, the major problem is that they see no alternative to reliance on these. They are cynical about the prospects for real change, and see the only practical solution to be choosing the lesser evil, whether it be one party over the other at election time, one bureaucrat over the other, or the state over the bureaucracy. The lesson we must bring home is that this is not the practical solution to the problems they face--that the only practical solution is self organization independent of reliance on anyone other than themselves--that this is the only way they can fight for their interests and needs.

Flowing from this general task then are the concrete strategies of building rank and file caucuses locally and nationally, the building of independent movements of the specially oppressed, the need for a class political independent movement, the need for a labor party. All of these are forms of self organization. All are crucial to the development of a class consciousness working class movement that will lay the basis of the fight for socialism.

2. Leadership and Direction

But the question of self organization alone is not enough. What is crucial in addition is the political basis of the organization, what defines it, gives it

direction, etc. This brings up the second part of our general tasks today in the existing struggles: providing leadership and arming the nascent organizations politically so that they will be able to advance, to grow, to develop stably. This task includes above all, helping to train the advanced militants who today are providual leadership to the class struggle.

In general then, this is the problem of leadership. Here we strive always to give leadership that advances the struggle on an independent class basis and points beyond that it the struggle against the state. Equally, if not more important, we demonstrate both through our propaganda and in our concrete political intervention in the existing struggles to the advanced militants what such leadership means and why our strategies, tactics and ideas are the only means of winning that specific struggle and preparing for the next one if that victory is to be maintained. We must show that this is not just a matter of choosing the best strategy of various insufficient ones, but that our world view arms us with the only winning strategy. It is through our participation in the partial, minimal struggles of workers and giving leadership in these struggles that creates a more developed consciousness - that demonstrates and helps to train the advanced militants in how to fight for these demands in a revolutionary manner. In our activity we attempt to gain support for those demands which are determined by the most advanced possibilities on the basis of existing consciousness of workers. It is in this way that we can concretely demonstrate the contradictory nature of the consciousness of these militants - between their self-felt needs and their illusions about the system - and begin to strip away the illusions those militants have about the system, the bureaucracy, or individual leaders.

We are for every gain that the working class makes, no matter how small, even if it is won through the bureaucracy or the state, because we understand that these victories, no matter how minimal, will increase the self-confidence and combativity of the working class, and thus prepare it for the more difficult struggles ahead. We point out, however, that reliance on any but their own organization, will ultimately mean defeat and why this is so. As Lenin put it in Russia in 1902: "In this sense we may, and should say.../to the police agents and their legal 'unions'/ keep at it gentlemen, do your best! Whenever you place a trap in the path of the workers....we will see to it that you are exposed. But whenever you take a real step forward, though it be the most 'timid zig-zag', we will say: Please continue! And the only real step forward, that can be a real step forward is a real, if small extension of the workers' field of action." (What is to be Done, CW, pp. 455-456.).

Concretely then, our immediate tasks today in our day to day activity in the working class and the movements of the specially oppressed involve: 1) attempting to build and crystallize rank and file caucuses in the trade unions and independent organizations of the specially oppressed, and 2) providing leadership and arming the existing leadership politically in order to advance the class struggle. The accomplishment of these two immediate tasks lays the basis for the stable organization and leadership needed to give coherence to the current unorganized militant sentiment and thus the means by which the working class can advance beyond industrial militancy to political action against the bureaucracy

and the state. It is the concrete role we can play in rebuilding the working class and specially oppressed movements; and thereby lay the political basis to play the role of the revolutionary wing of the leadership of these movements as they develop. At the same time such a role will make it possible for us to win the best of the advanced workers to our world view and to the revolutionary role they must begin to play inside the developing working class movement. These developments today will necessarily be slow because of the relative slow development of the emerging crisis in the system, the objective factor that will bring into being the working class movement.

3. Programmatic Demands

In our role of attempting to provide leadership and direction to the existing struggles we will put forward programmatic demands and ideas that will advance the struggle and point the correct direction of that struggle. The use of these demands today is primarily educational. They are not our only means of political intervention; they are to be used in addition to the partial and immediate demands of the concrete struggle and together with our general propaganda outlined earlier.

The following discussion of the major programmatic demands that we believe will be relevant to the level of struggle in this period is not exhaustive, and will rarely, if ever, be used in total. These demands must be placed in the context of our overall tasks in this period. They are generally not useful as slogans, but as means of raising what we believe is the necessary direction for the struggles to go in they if are going to advance. We raise them not just so this or that particular group or caucus can have a good program on paper, but so that we can begin to educate those we are working with on what will be necessary to fight for in the future as the general movement develops. Care must be taken to explain what these demands mean, and how they are relevant to the problems workers and the specially oppressed face. They are in fact a short hand means for us to raise aspects of our politics in a relevant manner in this period. From time to time one or another may become agitational in a specific situation, but this will be the exception, not the rule in this period. Moreover, these demands should be placed in the context of our specific perspective for the current struggle going on at that time.

These demands then will remain primarily propagandistic in this period, and should be seen in the light of our overall propagandistic tasks. Moreover, they should be argued over and fought for as extensions to the existing partial and immediate demands of the concrete struggle, and not counterposed to those demands or to the struggle around them.

I. <u>Wage increases without price increases, Opposition to all wage controls, No labor support to wage controls.</u>

These demands are key in the context of the emerging crisis in capitalism. Wage controls is one of the important ways that the state and companies attempt to raise the rate of exploitation of the working class, and to force workers to pay for the growing unproductivity of industry. They also raise concretely the question of class independence from the state and the system.

II. Open the Books; Nationalize basic industry under workers' control, nationalize the banks under workers' control.

While these demands can be extremely useful in demonstrating that workers must not accept the argument of profitability in a particular industry as a reason why their needs cannot be met, the second one must be used carefully. In the first place, outside the context of a specific struggle over safety, or speed-up, etc. the question of workers control is not particularly meaningful. Workers will seize upon the first part of the demand as the meaningful part and our basic point will be lost. At best they will think that it is utopian. It is only in the context of a concrete struggle over safety, when workers are beginning to assert their right to some control at the workplace that such a demand or slogan becomes meaningful. Secondly, care should be taken to dispe the illusion that workers' control of one industry under capitalism is possible, or that by this is meant the current bureaucratic trade union movement control over production.

III. Jobs for all, for a guaranteed annual job and wage for all, 30 hours work for 40 hours pay, end welfare and forced work schemes.

These demands all relate to the problem of unemployment, a problem which we see becoming worse in the immediate period. They are useful precisely because they are extremely reasonable. Moreover, they point out one of the contradictions of the capitalist system: its inability to provide for full employment and its need of a "reserve army of unemployed" to force down the living standard of all workers. Thus, putting forward these demands allows us to explain specifically how the system works, and why it must work that way - why it cannot even meet the most basic needs of society. Further, in the context of the emerging crisis they enable us to show how, in order to rationalize the economy, the system will be forced more and more to use planned unemployment to solve its problems.

IV. End speed-up, No productivity deals, Humanize working conditions through workers' control of production.

Some of these demands - end speed-up, humanize working conditions - are demands that have the most likely possibility of becoming agitational today; in the past they have been major demands of the rank and file. As a whole, they are very important because the growing use of productivity bargaining by companies as a means of fighting the growing unproductivity of industry. Moreover, they raise immediately and concretely the question of control at the workplace. The fact that the bureaucracy has been unwilling to bargain for these demands in the past indicates that they understand that the development of any rank and file control at the workplace is also a threat to their control over the rank and file, and hence to their privileged position. A sustained struggle around these demands leads automatically to a fight against the bureaucracy, as well as against management prerogatives.

V. Tax corporate and finance income, 100% tax on war profits, Steeply graduated income tax, No taxes on incomes under $12,000, Convert the arms economy to rebuild the cities and the environment, For a 100 billion dollar annual public works program for low cost housing, schools, childcare and medical care for free, mass transit and ecological reconstruction.

The question of taxation has become increasingly important since the late 60's. Because of the Permanent Arms Economy, tax burdens have grown enormously. There is a tx payers revolt. Raising the question of corporate and finance capital taxation allows us to explain who benefits from the system, and why pays for those benefits. It raises the queston of profitability. Moreover, it is a means by which we can show how the fight for improvements in education social services, mass transit, environment, housing are not counterposed to the interests of the small homeowner and the average taxpayer because there is another way to finance these improvements. Since the corporations benefit from the system, and are the cause of many of the problems, for example pollution, they should finance these improvements. It addition, it opens the way for us to explain who benefits from an economy geared to war and imperialism. Secondarily, it places the blame for these social problems where it belongs, and thus enables us to point out it is not the poor and oppressed minorities who are the cause of increased taxation in the form of social security, welfare, etc., but the system that cannot provide for decent jobs for all, and that refuses to pay for the destruction of the society it brings ab out. This explanation lays the basis for the need for workers and the oppressed to struggle together against their common enemy, and thus opens up one basis for class unity.

VI. Immediate withdrawal from S.E. Asia and all foreign countries, End foreign aid - the subsidy to foreign ruling classes, For the right of self-determination for all nations; Against imperialism east and west; No trade or tariff wars, for international union cooperation against the multinationals, For the full right of expropriation without compensation.

The question of international proletarian cooperation against imperialism in all its forms is very important to raise. Today with rising capitalist competition and the threat of trade wars together with the rise of nationalism make these demands even more crucial. They are useful especially against the growing use of "Buy Aemrican" slogans appealing to national chauvinism by the bureaucracy and point to the need for international workers solidarity against the international ruling class allowing us to explain the internationalism of capitalism, and the need for proletarian internationalism to counter it.

VII. For full democratic rights, For rank and file control of the unions, For the full right to strike anytime, anyplace, Organize the unorganized, Opposition to all legal restrictions on the trade unions.

These demands raise directly the principle of workers' democracy. Fighting for these allows us to counter bourgeois democracy and its fradulent nature to the only real democracy, proletarian democracy. In addition, they allow us to discuss the role of the state, the fact that it is not neutral, and that state intervention will be in the long run in the capitalist's interests, not the workers' intersts.

VIII. For full equality for the specially oppressed: For preferential hiring for minorities and women, equal pay for equal work, for armed self-defense against police terror in the ghetto and barrio.

These demands are crucial today in the context of a working class divided along racial and sexual lines. While we raise these together with class wide demands, we continue to support them, although critically, even if those demands are rejected. Moreover, we fight for these demands inside the white male sector of the working class, understanding that only through this sector's support for and struggle around these democratic demands will class unity be achieved. Moreover, in the case of oppressed minorities, we understand that the struggles at the workplace must be linked with the struggles in the communities, and we continually make this point.

IX. For an independent party of the working class based upon a militant working class program.

This demand, unlike the rest, is actually a strategy for the labor movement rather than a demand on the system. As a strategy it is crucial in that it represents the need for an independent class political movement. The achievement of class political independence represents a qualitative change in the development of a revolutionary working class movement. It is the key demand we raise in this period. Moreover, it is out of the struggle for and the struggle in a labor party that a revolutionary party may be crystallized; it is one possible road to a revolutionary party.

III. THE CRISIS IN THE IS AND OUR INTERNAL TASKS

(Note: This section is preliminary and will be revised by amendment)

The Crisis in the IS

The world is moving into a period where the historical contradictions of capitalism are re-emerging. Worldwide inflation, growing levels of unemployment, starvation, international instability, the threat of trade wars and the rise of nationalism are signs of this developing crisis. We are faced with an urgent situation: a revolutionary socialist organization rooted in the working class and a revolutionary socialist working class, black and latin cadre must be developed and trained, if we are to be in the position to face the historic tasks before us -- the development of a working class movement and a revolutionary vanguard party.

Today the IS is in crisis. This crisis has been in the making since the Founding Convention in 1969. At that time the IS was an amalgam of disparate groups recruited out of the New Left, student and radical movements of the 60's. One thing alone brought them together: agreement on and a commitment to building a revolutionary socialist, third camp democratic centralist organization committed to socialism from below. In 1969 that was a foundation on which to build -- but this agreement and commitment had to expand and develop, and it had to do this in direct relationship to the working class. This did not happen. Not only did this minimal agreement not expand, today it has totally broken down.

There are two main reasons why this happened. In the first place the few leaders that had ties back into the historical antecedents of the ISC-IS were not able to provide collective leadership, especially a struggle for revolutionary socialist theory and practice. But the overriding reason was the isolation of the organization from regular ongoing activity in the labor movement. Despite lip service to the need to industrialize and make the turn to the working class, very little progress was made. This isolation meant that the discussions of theory and perspectives were at best abstract. Moreover, isolation from ongoing working class activity, especially in conjunction with the inadequate training we received in the student radical movement, meant that our functioning was basically unstable and undisciplined. The abstract discussions and the inability to develop our theory and perspectives meant that no collective national leadership or national organization developed during these four years.

From the very beginning a relentless ideological struggle had to be waged for the development of our theory and perspectives. But this could only be done in connection with joint work in the labor movement. Discussions and decisions to be taken seriously must mean something to what people are actively involved in. Without common activity and the commitment to implement the decisions, discussions and decisions become abstract intellectual exercises. And this is what happened. And the resultant lack of national leadership led to the development of permanent tendencies.

The development of permanent political tendencies reflects the political instability in the organization. It is a symptom of the disease. The patient cannot be cured by treating the symptom; he/she can only be cured by treating

the disease, in this case the lack of a national cadre organization founded upon basic agreement on theory and perspectives for national activity with a collective national leadership and a cadre membership. The tendencies that existed in 1969 have remained, although the political definitions have changed. These tendencies have tended to remain geographical. They developed in isolation from one another out of the original groups and are based more upon clique dynamics and personal loyalties rather than clear political differences. These tendencies gave rise to regional baronies and parochialism -- only a few comrades in the organization understood or cared about what was going on outside of their area, and consequently, few comrades won the political respect of the organization nationally.

A bankrupt theoretical analysis of the role of leadership has developed based upon the existence of the permanent tendencies. This "theory" is the following: when a tendency receives a majority or plurality at a convention, it is given leadership based upon its political positions. The role of this leadership is to test its line in practice disciplining the rest of the organization to carry it out. If this line doesn't bring practical results, then those politics and leadership should be repudiated at the next convention and a new leadership based upon different politics put into power. In the first place such a theory is empirical and leaves aside the possibility that the line wasn't practical because of other factors such as the change in objective conditions. But this is not the main problem.

The bankruptcy of this theory is that it has more in common with bourgeois parliamentarianism than it does with the Leninist conception of collective leadership and democratic centralism. If the national leadership is repudiated during the year on this or that question, immediately it is assumed that that leadership should be changed -- the balance redressed. It is assumed that discussion and debate will have little or no effect on people -- that everyone in every tendency is thoroughly convinced of his/her politics -- that the tendencies will remain year in and year out. And in fact, there is some truth to this, since the only real discussion taking place is <u>inside</u> each tendency, not in the organization as a whole. At national meetings the various tendencies met more as waring factions than as comrades of a common organization.

The only question became which tendency was able to recruit the most delegates over the year and thereby have the ability to win the votes on perspectives at the next convention. This encouraged factions and an internal orientation. It meant, moreover, that no question was ever resolved, and that while superficially the debate changed, in fact it remained and developed over the same basic questions. The organization became an endless talk shop -- its growth stagnated, comrades became demoralized and dropped out or became cynical. This could only happen in a situation where the organization was isolated from real ongoing activity, since if that were not the case, comrades would demand concrete guidance, decisions would have to be implemented, and the debate would be forced to move on to questions that relate to reality concretely.

The final outcome of this internal political crisis was a clear reflection of the political instability of the organization. When the leadership of one tendency radically revised their political positions, one third of the organization adopted these with little or no discussion. Every question, including the

ones on which basic agreement had been assumed, was up for grabs. The crisis could no longer go unattended, it had to be resolved.

Internal Tasks

Our primary activity for the next few years must be to transform the membership into cadre elements. The key to this is the struggle for fundamental theoretical clarity and agreement on perspectives for common activity in conjunction with joint work in the working class. The nature of leadership, the development of theory and perspectives, the training of a cadre and the transformation of the social composition of the organization flow from this struggle. Clarity must be achieved on the trade unions, the specially oppressed, the relationship of party to class, Stalinism, the nature of the period, our tasks and our method. This is a minimum. It is through the struggle for theory and perspectives in connection with common activity that a collective national leadership and a cadre will be developed. It is only through such a political fight that the permanent tendencies can be broken down and a truly national organization be built.

We can become a revolutionary combat organization -- an organization actively involved in and providing leadership for the class struggle on a day to day basis -- only if we first become a cadre organization based in the working class. Today this fight will be successful if we can overcome our past problems and transform the organization.

But at this point to begin this process we must go back to the ABC's. What kind of organization are we trying to build? What in fact is democratic centralism? The following definition is taken from the Theses on the Structure of the Communist Parties, adopted by the 3rd Congress of the Third International: "Democratic centralism in the communist party organization should be a real synthesis, a fusion of centralism and proletarian democracy. This fusion can be attained only on the basis of constant common activity, of constant struggle of the entire party organization.

"Centralism in the communist party organization is not formal and mechanical, but the centralization of communist activity, that is, the formation of a strong, militant, and at the same time flexible leadership.

"Formal or mechanical centralization would be the centralization in the hands of a party bureaucracy of 'power' to dominate the other members or the masses of the revolutionary proletariat outside the party. But only enemies of communism can maintain that the communist party wants to dominate the revolutionary proletariat by its leadership of the proletarian class struggle and by the centralization of this communist leadership. That is a lie." (Documents of the CI, p. 258, emphasis added)

Industrialization

It is clear that the question of common proletarian activity is crucial for our development. But we are by and large isolated from working class activity. And it is only through being thoroughly familiar with and understanding the con-

crete problems that workers face today that makes it possible for us to be in the position of drawing up concrete perspectives that can guide our work. All our work will remain abstract, and in the final analysis irrelevant, if we are not involved in general working class activity. It is only through developing concrete knowledge about working class consciousness that we can be in the position of beginning to strip away the illusions workers have about the capitalist system. Secondly, we can only train and recruit a working class cadre, and transform ourselves into a working class, black and latin cadre organization, through our involvement in the day to day class struggle. Making the turn to the working class politically and organizationally is our highest priority. This cannot be done without industrializing a large portion of our membership.

Secondly and integrally related to this task is the task of transforming the IS into an organization where working class activity, in the broadest sense of the term, is the central activity of the organization. This means that our highest priority goes toward participation in activity which will bring us into contact with and involve us in general working class struggles. This is true wherever this activity takes place: on the shop floor, in the unions, in political movements around working class issues (wage controls, inflation), or in the communities of the oppressed groups. All other activity must have a lower priority, including participation in student activity and in general middle class type movements. These priorities must be carried out in order to make the turn to the working class complete.

Lenin, writing in retrospect about the Russian social democracy in the period 1894-1901, clearly understood the centrality of establishing this priority: "At that time, indeed, we had astonishingly few forces, and it was perfectly natural and legitimate then to resolve to go exclusively among the workers, and severely condemn any deviation from this. The whole task then was to consolidate our position in the working class." (What Is To Be Done, CW, p. 429.)

This tactical question has profound theoretical implications. Understanding that the need to build a revolutionary party is our raison d'etre, we also understand that the proletarian leadership cannot be developed outside the context of the class struggle. Our relationship to working class activity today is integrally related to the role we and others will play in the working class movement tomorrow. In a concrete sense, we are literally involved in building the leadership of the class struggle. Through training a cadre in theory and in activity, including training and winning the advanced worker militants today, we are training the future revolutionary leadership. This leadership, to be real, must earn the respect from the masses of workers. To be in the position of earning this respect, we must be there now helping to build and lead the class struggle in any and all ways. Only by building such leadership today will we lay the basis for the democratic relationship between the vanguard and the masses. This is the question of party and class -- the democratic relationship of the leadership of the class to its rank and file. It is part of the theory of democratic centralism. The correct relationship between party and class is as crucial today as at any other time.

National Fractions

The primary areas of industrialization are those where we already have a

toe-hold: UAW, IBT, CWA, AFT. These areas must be fleshed out nationally in order to lay the basis for strong national fractions. The industrialization campaign we will undertake should therefore be concentrated on the east and west coasts for the UAW, in the midwest and the east coast for the IBT, in the midwest for CWA and the AFT. Comrades in the California AFT locals should transfer to the midwest and eastern big city locals where the heart of AFT activity takes place. Only on the basis of national fractions will we be able to develop national perspectives based upon common activity. The existence of cohesive national fractions will play a key role in developing a cohesive national organization based upon concrete activity.

A Professional Cadre Organization

The IS must become a professional organization. It is not that now. It is the responsibility of the current leadership to train new leadership. This has never been done adequately before. Every major branch must have an organizer. The role of the organizer is to organize outside activity for the branch -- to continually search out means of active intervention in the outside world. There should be a training school each year for organizers sponsored by the national organization in order to train comrades in the basics of organizing our activity.

In the context of making the turn to the working class and the ideological struggle for theory and practice, a national cadre organization and a collective national leadership must be built. The national leadership must conceive of itself as a collective leadership with the responsibility of leading and training the organization. Regionalism must be broken down. Concretely this means that the west coast branches must be integrated into the national organization. Concrete branch perspectives for activity must be submitted by each of the branches, relating national perspectives to that specific area. The national leadership must intervene in the branches regularly to insure that its perspectives are carried out. Branches organized primarily around campuses should be reorganized around work in the labor movement, specifically around one or more of the national fractions. National speaking tours must be organized regularly through the national office to insure better communication and knowledge nationally. Regular regional conferences and regional travelling can also aid in this development.

Education

The theoretical development of our membership cannot remain the task of the individual as it is today. The question of education and the development of our theory is crucial to our transformation into a cadre organization. A revitalized educational department must be set up in the national office. The responsibility of this department is to oversee the education of the entire membership. Specifically, its tasks are to (1) draw up class series relative to the different levels of development of the membership -- not only for new members but for older ones as well, (2) oversee the compiling of reading lists and bibliographies on a wide range of topics, (3) suggest forums and educationals that will be relevant to working class, black and Latin contacts, (4) oversee the publication of pamphlets that will be useful in outside activity, and (5) initiate a theoretical journal, a necessity for the internalization and development of our traditions and theory.

Women

Women comrades must be developed and trained to be local and national leaders. Our theoretical commitment to women's liberation must be made practical first in our own organization, if it is not to remain abstract. During the height of the women's liberation movement in 1969-70, some progress was made along these lines. With the collapse of that movement, however, much of that progress also collapsed. Only through a practical as well as theoretical commitment will we lay the basis for playing a leading role in the development of a women's liberation movement based in the working class.

National Newspaper

Workers' Power must become the organ of a national organization; today it is the organ of a few. Having a truly national newspaper is crucial to giving continuity to our work in a period where the level of struggle is such that there will be few national movements in which we will be participating. A professional staff of writers must be trained to write for the paper. This is a necessity for the development of a national newspaper relevant to our outside activity.

Recruitment

Recruitment has stagnated. The national organization must undertake a national recruitment drive immediately. The fact that recruitment has been taken less than seriously by the organization is an indication of the lack of self-confidence the membership and leadership has in the organization. This must be changed. The most important area of recruitment is those contacts we have in the labor movement, and specially oppressed communities.

The IS is practically an all white organization. Priority in recruitment must be winning black and Latin activists, especially workers, to our politics. A black-brown commission must continue in the NO to oversee those in the branches. Only by training and winning a black and Latin cadre will we be able to intervene effectively in and play a leading role in the movements of the oppressed. Theoretically we understand the cruciality of building the movements and winning individuals from them to our world view. It must now be reflected in practice. This is clearly related to the development of our theory and perspectives for blacks and Latins.

Candidate Membership

New members must be thoroughly integrated into the organization. A national candidate membership procedure must be established. The following procedure is suggested: There is a candidate membership period of up to six months. During this period the candidate member is expected to function as a full member of the organization. He/she may vote on all matters except those concerning the election of leadership bodies, including convention delegates, and questions of discipline. A comrade is assigned to work with the candidate member. This comrade assists the candidate in drawing up a perspective for his/her work, participates with the candidate in fraction work, and draws up an educational program based upon the candidate's needs. Full membership is not automatic. A candidate member must prove he/she has a serious commitment to revolutionary theory and practice, demonstrated during the candidacy period, by the time she/he is eligible to join. The 6 month period can be shortened by the local executive committee if this is clearly warranted.

EDUCATIONAL DIRECTOR:

a discription of his primary duties.

(Very first rough draft)

Introduction: In the years that the IS has been in existance it has attempted to build itself into a serious cadre organization capable of intervening at numerous levels in the class struggle. A central aspect of our conception of ourselves as a cadre organization has been that we are the early stages of the intellectual vagguard which will play a major role in the revolutionary movement. As an intellectual vanguard we have prided ourselves on our attempts at clarity of thought, a correct analysis of objective conditions, an historical awareness, and an ability to communicate our ideas of socialism and class struggle to the advanced layers of the working class and the mass of workers.

It, however, has been unfortunate that we have not been able or unwilling to turn our efforts inward in a effort to train our own members in the principles of revolutionary Marxism. To date the process of internal education has been one that has remained primairly in the hands of individual branches. This has had the effect of puting some branches well ahead of others in the level of cadre training, and to all intents and purposes isolating MAL and small branches from any sort of effective educational.

We would be less than honest with ourselves if we did not admit that no central guidance and direction has been provided by either the NAC or the Educationals Director. While things in Detroit may have been organized, this has been of no help to the majority of our membership. The closest thing that we have to an educational effort is the Bulletin. nd certainly none of us will agree that this form of discussion is any real substitute for a full educational program. Too often, and this may well be the case as long as we remain a small sect, the Bulletin is nothing more than a forun for factional warfare. There are much better ways to learn the real meaning and use of the Transitional Program than to read counterposed documents.

All of this is merely a few preliminary remarks which are some of the motivating factors in the presentation of this document. The author feels that to date not enough use has been derived from the post of Educational Director, that now is precisely the time when the efforst of such a position should be stressed even more, and that there are several concrets suggestions that can be put foreward that will attempt to correct this situation.

The exact nature of this proposal is unclear, even to the author, as he does not know the exact procedure in which it should be put foreward. It is assumed that the suggestions that follow are not constitutional amendmends, but are more in the order of guidelines

to be given the next Educational Director. However the author is more than a bit worried that they could simply be passed by the convention and then become dead letter for any number of reasons. Perhaps because the new Educational Director was not capable of performing the assigned tasks or because he or she saw the organization of their duties in a different light.

Whatever is agreed upon at the convention in terms of organizational structure and the Educational Director in particular it should go without question that certain standards are set for the various staff positions and that a failure to fulfill them is reasonable cause for removal. We certainly would not stand for a Workers' Power editor who did not put out the paper or for a National Secretary who did not provide guidance and direction for the organization.

This resolution is put foreward then to be voted upon by the convention and if passed to become part of the regular system of duties discharged by the Educational Director. It is not an attempt to define the whole office, but only those parts that have to date been ignored and unexplored. This is a very rough draft and any critizems will be welcome.

STAFFING

P R O P O S A L

1. The office of Educational Director should be seen as second only in importance to that of the National Secretary and of equal importance to that of the Industrial Secretary and the Editor of Workers' Power. This should be understood to mean thatthe position will be staffed with a fully qualified member of he organization. Qualification hear means not necessairly the most or one of the most advanced politically members of the organization, but one who has the ability and the drive to carry through on a long and difficult task. The Educational Director must not be a figure head, nor a way station for defeated national officers, nor a center of factionalism, nor a bureaucratic fixture. Some of the above have characterized this position in the IS in the past. We must now recognize the importance of this office, make the effort to build it as best we can, and then expect of those who serve in that position to do their utmost best.

2. The person selected as Educational Director does not have to be, and for that matter should not be, the most advanced politically in the organization. This is, I think, a mis-conception of the position that we have had in the past. An educational director is not the one who gives all of the lectures, forums, and internat education classes. He is rather the one who coordinates these happenings and sees to it that they are planned and carried out. Because of this misconception the duties of the position and the person who fills it have in the past become synameous. What we have come to expect of the Educational Director is whatever he or she can physically and

individually do. This in effect has meant that the Educational Director is the Detroit branch e.d. The talents and abilities of our most advanced politically and theorotically should be used in the ways that they are most productive. This means such things as being National Secretary, being Editor of the paper, developing an industrial perspective as Industrial Director, and in general doing the kind of research and writing that is most useful to the organization.

3. This then means that the kind of person who we desire to have as Educational Director, while certainly broadly developed on theorotical and political grounds, should be one who has an acute understanding of the importance of the office and what is required of their position. In plane and simple terms this means that he or she should be well trained in the necessity for organizational discipline and clarity, in the need for constant communication, and have the guts that it takes to prepare educational packets and educational series. This is a difficult and in many ways thankless task that does not carry with it the glory of a written document. In short then, it should be possible for many more persons the hold this position than we thought in the past.

4. In staffing the position we should not be content with merely knowing that it will be filled off of a majority or minority slate. Whatever the exact method it should be clear that a certain specific person or persons are being nominated for the position and that they are being nominated because of their qualifications and the confidence of the organization in them.

DUTIES

5. In general the Educational Director should be incharge of seeing that there is a healthy level of internal education going on within the organization. This, however, does not mean that it is his responsibility to set up every program. This task can only effectively be done by the individual branches. He or she should though advise the branches on their programs, suggest possible changes, and provide them with any reading material that they might require. If there is an unhealthy level of education going on within the organization, then it is his duty to find out why and attempt to correct it. This is a position of coordinating and sometimes initiating and does nnot carry with it the responsibility of carrying thru where the branches do not.

6. The specific tasks of this position are quite numerous and the best that we can do here is to list a few. More could certainly be named and even these that are mentioned will require a more perceise defination.

a) The history of our tendency is one that many members in organization are unclear on and is one that will have to be learned by new comrades as they join. The Educational Director should have it as a primary task the compiling of such a history. While a book on the subject would be the most ideal, this is rather unlikely. For the

present time it would be sufficient to have compiled the most important documents and questions that our tendency has debated over the years. The Educational Director should see to it that they are placed within the proper context and are prepared in such a way that they are easilly used for internal discussion educations.

b) Even among the left there is confusion about the left. It is probably only a handful of us, if any, who have any sort of full understanding of the politics and origins of the left groups. Certainly none of us have the time or money to read and keep up with every daily event in their ranks. However, it is important that we be informed, not because of any earth shattering historical importance of their politics, but rather from the lessons that are to be learned from their actions. The Educational Director should keep up as much as possible with developments in this area and relay on to the membership of the organization all of those points thare are relevant and that have a lesson to be learned.

c) A greate use must be made of the resources and talents that we have within the organization. To this end the Educational Director should encourage qualified persons within the organization to write documents and give presentations which are explicitly for the educational beflefitof the organization. Where possible tapes should be made of presentations so that other branched can benefit. This is not just a nice thing to do, but is something that the Educational Director should see happens.

d) A final task would be the gathering of materials which are suitable for a broad number of educationals. It is unfortunate, but most of the written material that is available to the members of theIS comes from the Bulletin. This all too often takes the form of documents which are claryifing political differences and only in the smallest of ways present an historical analysis. Old Workers Party and New International articles shold be gathered on a broad variety of questions.

ACCOUNTABILITY

7. Because we are an organization that is making a serious effort to transform itself into a well trained cadre it is imparative that our program of internal education be as well developed as possible. This means that if we feel that the Educational Director is nor performing his or her tasks to the benefit of the organization then he or she should be removed and replaced. This should not be seen as a political question contingent on new and old majorities and minorities. It is a simple organizational procedure to insure that not only our money is spent wiself, but that we are about the serious process of building a cadre organization.

8. While elected by and directly responsible to the National Convention, the Educational Director in his day to day activities is responsible to the NAC. Whether or not the Educational Director

is a member of the NAC is a question that should be decided by the convention at the time of the election. At the Convention and at all NC there should be a report made by the Educational Director. This has not been done in the past and is certainly one of the reasons why many of us did not know that we even had an educational director.

9. The position of Educational Director should be seen as non-factional. By this is meant that it is not a position where a member of the majority uses the time and resources of the organization to develope a line in defense of his or her politics. While it is certainly not possible to remain completely neutral the main emphasis should be placed on history and drawing lessons from it. It is more the function of the offices of National Secretary and Industrial Secretary to develope political lines that guide the organization. The work of the Educational Secretary should make it possible for each member to make his or her own decisions on what politics to follow.

CONTACTS AN D MAL'S

10. It has been a most serious failure of our organization to maintain regular communication with our own MAL members and with scattered contacts throughout the country. In the past it has been done by individuals and with no direction from the national office. While it may be too much of a task to expect the Educational Director to assume this task he should until some one else is assigned full or part time.

11. At a minimum MAL's should be given a brief introduction to the histroy of the IS and our tendency. Too many of our comrades have joined the organization merely of the basis of our current activity with little or no knowledge of where we have come from. The Educational Director should communicate with these members on a regular basis, help them assess the situation in their respective areas, and help in what ever ways are possible.

12. A similar form of regular communication should be maintained with contacts. The Educational Director should see it as one of his responsibilities to have printed materials and articles that are especially useful with contacts. In this effort he should work ~~ØØI ØIØ~~ closely with the pamphlet directo.

Black Liberation Perspectives

by Jack Trautman for
the Transformation Caucus

Black liberation is inextricably linked to the socialist revolution. Racial oppression in America is based on capitalist exploitation. There can be no end to black oppression without an end to capitalism. Only socialism provides the possibility of constructing a society free of racism, a society in which blacks can live in equality.

The struggle for black liberation is a prerequisite for the attainment of the socialist revolution. At present the divisions between black and white workers are so great, black oppression is so all-pervasive and as a consequence black distrust of whites stands so much in the forefront of black consciousness, that unified working class revolution is impossible. Unity of black and white workers is a prerequisite for proletarian revolution. That unity can occur only on the highest possible level, on the basis of raising black's to full equality with white's. Unless the bridge is made--- unless the working class takes up the banner of black liberation--- there will be no socialist revolution in America. It is vital for both black and white workers that that bridge be made.

Finally, there can be no bridge, no unity of the class except in the class struggle itself. Outside that struggle the inevitable tendency is toward isolation and parochialism of the various sectors of the working class. It is the struggle itself and the conscious intervention of revolutionaries in that struggle that tends to expose to the workers their real interests, the nature of the state, and their need to link up with other sectors of the class. It is through that process of struggle and through that process alone that new social relations can begin to take shape, attitudes change and a sense of class consciousness can develop--- meaning a conscious understanding that the battle is one of class arrayed against class, oppressed against oppressors, and that the only resolution to that battle can be the overthrow of the ruling class and the end to all class exploitation. The role of revolutionaries today is to further that process and press the necessity of a determined working class struggle for black liberation and the socialist revolution as the only meand of accomplishing it.

EXPLOITERS AND OPPRESSORS

What stands out foremost in black consciousness is the history and present existence of racial oppression--by all class and all political forces within white society. The whole history of blacks in America is one of shared oppression. All blacks have been common recipients of that oppression, though slavery of black workers and farmers who suffer both national and class oppression have gotten the worst of it; and virtually all whites, irrespective of class have participated in and benefitted in one way or another from black oppression.

Exploitation of black labor by ruling class whites is at the root of

black oppression in America. It was for the purpose of constructing and maintaining a social system based on the exploitation of labor that the ruling class created and developed an elaborate system of racial oppression that included the vicious ideology of racism.. Racist ideologies and institutions were established, strengthened and extended, usually in response to challenges to the right or ability of the ruling class to exploit labor. It is the exploiters who were primarily responsible for and beneficiaries of the system. Nor was it simply a case of their having initiated a system which then went outside their hands. It is true that racism -- both ideas and institutions took on a life of their own over which no one had control. But it is also true that at critical periods in American history the ruling class has been reponsible for massive increases in the depth, character and extent of racist oppression that blacks have been forced to suffer. The main periods in which this process has taken place were the enslavement period, the revolutionary war period, the abolition movement, the Civil War-Reconstruction period, the populist movement, and the period of industrial class conflict. Following the enslavement period, during which racism was developed as an ideology to legitimate the degradation of black labor, these increases were a reaction to the threats presented to the ruling class' controlover labor for the purpose of countering attacks on the exploiters' right or ability to carry out exploitation. They were instituted specifically for the purpose of either suppressing the blacks or of doing that and in addition of dividing the work force and thereby degrading both black and white labor. In either case these attacks on black people also tended to involve an attack on white workers and farmers as well, and insofar as they were successful, to degrade the latter and to worsen their standard of living.

The historic significance of all of these efforts is not only that the ruling class is primarily responsible for the creation, maintenance and extension of racist oppression; not only that it derives the greatest benefits from that oppression. It is also that the racial hostilities which have come to divide the working class are a crucial tool in its efforts to maintain itself as the ruling class. Thus, although they might make gestures to alleviate the racist oppression blacks face when confronted with a militant mass movement, they are fundamentally committed to its maintenance. That is so particularly in times of class upheaval when the necessity to prevent class unity becomes all the more crucial to them.

White workers have had a contradictory relation to blacks..They have been both oppressors of blacks and opponents of their oppression. Neither of these sontradictory actions was simply a mistake or error; they both follow from the relation of white workers to exploitation.

The tendency toward intra-class conflict is one of which Marx was aware. He knew that a competitive social system like capitalism not only tended to set class against class, but to set individuals against individuals in a continual battle for jobs, prestige, income, ets. As he put it

in one place: "The separate individuals form a class only in so far as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors." (The German Ideology, pp.48-9) And just as capitalism provides the material basis for pitting individual workers against each other, so it also provides the basis for pitting entire sections of the working class against each other. Thus, the racism of the white working class is not simply the result of racist education or ruling class ideology. It is that; but it also reflects an awareness of real benefits gained by it. The existence of these benefits and of the awareness of them on the part of the white working class tends to inhibit class struggle on the part of white workers, which is the aim of the ruling class.

But what is also true and is usually lost sight of is that white workers have and fight for these benefits as a way of alleviating their exploitation in a social and economic system based on exploitation. Because capitalism tends to maintain a pool of unemployed the job security of all workers is threatened to varying degrees. One response of white workers has been to protect their jobs by artificially restricting competition for the available jobs. In this context racial restrictions and the racism which was developed to defend the very system of exploitation against which they are fighting are quite naturally adopted.

Racist practices shield white workers from fears of unemployment and lay-offs because the disproportionate burden of these is carried by the black working class. Last hired and first fired for blacks means greater job security for whites. Similarly, within the plants racism means that whites get the better and easier jobs; the skilled trades, whether in craft or industrial unions are still overwhelmingly white.

Furthermore, the ideology of the society maintains that people get just rewards for their ability and efforts. A person's measure, then, becomes how high he or she has ascended in the social scale. Workers and lower class people generally are able to derive satisfaction from knowing that they are not on the bottom, that there are people below them. Thus, racism serves the purpose of providing white workers with a perverted sense of worth and dignity in a society that otherwise denies that sense to them.

All of this means that because of racism there is an artificial floor which keeps whites as a group from sinking to the bottom and prevents blacks as a group from rising. But the divisions between blacks and whites have kept the bottom for both of them lower than it might have otherwise been. Insofar as white workers have tended to accept the structure as a given(or felt no alternative possible), or were satisfied with it they have tended to act in a racist way. Furthermore, because of the more direct control that lower class whites had with blacks, particularly after slavery; and because of the more direct threat that blakks represented to the prestige and economic well-being of the lower class whites; and of the more di-

rect and apparent gain to the lower class whites of racist ideology and practices, relations between the two were particularly explosive and tinged with deep and bitter hatreds.

At the same time there has been an important counter-tendency running through American history. Capitalism pits individuals against one another in a continual war of each against all, with each person and group attempting to do its best within the exploitative system. Capitalism also tends to unite all workers in a struggle against exploitation. When white workers have fought their exploitation -- whether by attacking the exploitative system as a whole, or partially by attempting to change the terms of exploitation -- they have tended to see the necessity to reach out to blacks.

Thus it was only those white workers who did not take a craft but rather a class point of view, who opposed the whole system of wage slavery, that also opposed the slave system and favored black emancipation. Organisationally, this tendency was manifested in varying degrees in the National Labor Union which fell apart shortly after it was formed, the Knights of Labor, the IWW and the CIO. In particular the last three organizations found it necessary to take up questions of black oppression that went beyond trade union questions, or those pertaining directly to work.

Thus, for example, The Freeman, a black paper in New York City, reported in 1886:"The Knights of Labor in session at Richmond (Va.) at their opening session last Monday took Southern prejudice, arrogance and intolerance by the throat and gave it the most furious shaking it has had since the war." What caused the remarks was that a New York delegation which had one black miner was refused entrance into a local hotel. All the delegates then determined to stay with black families, stating "...they would only go where their colored brother was admitted on the same footing." (Dann, The Black Press, p. 222)

Acts such as these which began to address themselves to the broader aspects of black oppression were both forced upon the white workers by the blacks as the price for black cooperation, and they were an expression of the ideological commitment of the more conscious sections of the working class to black equality. In fact, for all its vacillations it has been through the agency of working class struggle against exploitation that the greatest advances against black oppression have been made.

Although these movements were able to register real gains for blacks they were ultimately either thoroughly defeated, or only able to make small (though significant) inroads for the working class. The basic system of exploitation remained intact, and the momentum of the movements broke down. As a consequence the basic fact of a brutal system of exploitation within which each individual and group was thrown on its own resources remained. The political significance of these facts was that, the movements to the contrary notwithstanding, the dominant tendency in American history among

white workers in their relations with blacks has been racism and racist oppression.

It was the derailing of the last of these movements -- the CIO-- that set the stage for the current situation. The CIO made real gains for blacks. But the movement very quickly began to be tamed under the wartime regime. It rapidly stopped being a crusading movement which promised significant social transformations; its leaders, under the guise of a national emergency entered government control boards and forbade strikes, etc.

As the economy tightened during war production, a few blacks were upgraded to fill vacancies. The frequent response of white workers was to strike in opposition to this change. The employers sought to break the strikes and frequently took the opportunity to blacklist strikers, a practice with which the trade union officials at times cooperated. Few union leaders made any positive efforts to get blacks in (in auto they only began going into the plants in large numbers in the mid 1960's; there are still virtually no blacks in the skilled trades) or to win white workers over to support for upgrading blacks. (For the union leaders and for the Communist Party such an effort was not possible, given that they were supporting the status quo).

The result of the failure of the CIO to go beyond trade unionism was its inability fundamentally to alter racial politics in America. The postwar period saw a working class conservatized by prosperity and disillusioned by Stalinism. The result was the acceptance of the status quo, the return to the dog-eat-dog existence under capitalism which, as argued, promotes racist tendencies among white workers: racism became again the dominant current within the American working class.

The problems created by this history were only compounded by the actions of the most conscious sections of the working class, the revolutionary socialists.

The attitude of even the revolutionaries within the Socialist Party was quite simple -- and thoroughly inadequate. Blacks were merely workers. The black question was only a labor question and the solution to black oppression was synonymous with the solution to class exploitation. In fact, the socialist movement considered any special appeal to black people as contrary to the spirit of socialism. Debs, the best of that tradition stated: "... there is no Negro question outside of the labor question -- the working class struggle. Our position as socialists and as a party is perfectly plain. We have simply to say: 'The class struggle is colorless.' The capitalists, white black and all other shades, are on one side and the workers, white, black and all other colors, on the other side." (Eugene Debs Speaks, p. 93)

As should be obvious, this attitude at best disarmed the socialists and made it impossible for them to come to grips with the totality of black oppression, or to develop the strategy that could develop a united class

movement. At worst, it failed systematically to campaign agianst either racist oppression or racist ideology. As a result, racism ran rampant, even within the Socialist Party.

The Communist Party had a better position on blacks, having been instructed by the Communist International to adopt the Bolshevik method toward oppressed nationalities to blacks. But the Stalinized party was no more capable of carrying through this line with integrity than it was any other. The line toward blacks shifted and changed according to the needs of the Russian bureaucracy just as it did toward the whole of the working class. The result was that a whole generation of black workers and intellectuals became disillusioned and cynical not only toward Stalinism, but toward revolutionary socialism, with which they identified Communism.

C.L.R. James recounts the story of how George Padmore, the highest black official in the Comintern broke with the Stalinists when they announced their popular front line in 1935: "And George told me that they had now told him that they were going to make friends with the democratic imperialists, Britain, France, and the United States, and that future pro-Negro propaganda should be directed against Germany, Japan and Italy, and played quite softly in regard to the 'democracies'. Padmore said, 'But that is impossible.' He said, 'Germany and Japan have no colonies in Africa, so how can I say that the Negroes in Africa must be emancipated, but they have friends in the democratic imperialists of France and England?' They say, 'Well, that is the line.' He said, 'Well, that may be your line, but that is a mess; and packed up and left." (Radical America, Vol. II #4, 1968, p. 25)

For all their failings the revolutionaries generally fought most consciously and consistently against the oppression of black people. Unfortunately, their consciousness on this question was backward. The overall impact of these experiences could only serve to deepen the antagonisms and distrust that divided black and white workers, and to carry any hopes of black-white unity even further from realization. The result was defeat for the working class, victory for the ruling class. Acciptance by white workers of racist ideology and failure to appeal to blacks for class unity meant worse living and working conditions for <u>all</u> workers, as well as the inexcusable history of misery for black people.

AN OPPRESSED NATIONAL MINORITY

It is this history of racist oppression which has welded black people into an oppressed national minority. Blacks were marked by their <u>color</u>, and that color made it possible to develop a whole ideology of racial inferiority. In its most developed form that ideology even proclaimed that black people were a distinct species from whites. This notion helped to legitimize the continued enslavement of blacks, and the slavery experience itself served to reinforce the idea and to further stigmatize blacks. Their color made assimilation impossible and thus has forced blacks into an historic condition of continuing oppression which canonly end by ending the conditions that gave rise to it: the racist capitalist system. Thus, black people have been shoved into the position of being a permanent racial minority.

For political purposes the meaning of this experience is fundamentally the same as that of an oppressed national minority. The shared experience of all blacks of racist oppression and the shared participation of all classes of whites in that oppression created the basis for blacks to view themselves as a distinct people set apart and in opposition to another people: the white racist oppressors. They share a consciousness and an experience not fundamentally different from that of the Irish in relation to the British, or the Poles in relation to the Russians. Their history is completely different from and runs in opposite directions from that of the rest of Americans.

It has been through a continual effort to end and overcome their racist oppression that blacks have created a political history -- a history that has made them the vanguard and most militant fighters of many progressive & social movements in this country.

Unlike the general tendency that Lenin observed for America to "grind down" nations and create a homogenous society, the opposite tendency occured among blacks. They did not arrive in this country with a group identity; their separate individual cultures were purposely broken up to prevent concerted action. What took place was the welding of the black groups together in opposition to the white oppressors: beginning with slavery was the process of building a sulture and consciousness.

That process built upon certain basics that pervaded African culture (in much the same way that it is possible to speak of European culture). It was extended in the post-slavery period in which many of the earlier forms of oppression and repression were retained. As blacks moved into the more central sections of the economy they had totally different experiences from the immigrant ethnic groups. For the latter the ghettoes served as way stations on the road to acculturation and assimmilation. But, for blacks they are permanent fixtures into which they are forced. Tremendous struggles are required either to get token sections out of the ghetto or to expand the ghetto itself and thereby at least ease some of the congestion.

Blacks in America have gone through a whole set of historical experiences during the past three and one half centuries which have created a national self-consciousness. The black community has its base in and is fundamentally created by the racist oppression blacks face and their resistence to it. It is necessary to begin with that understanding.

In the North blacks are usually forced into ghettoes because they cannot move wherever they want. In Chicago black migration outside the ghetto is met with a wall of fire bombs. Public housing is overwhelmingly black because whites refuse to live in intergrated housing (except for the liberal middle class). The resulting tremendous overcrowding and high rents for worse facilities are the result of the fact that the white community in its entirety -- state realtors, bankers, building contractors, bourgeoisie, middle class and working class -- do not want to live with blacks and force blacks to live in ghettoes.

In the ghettoes blacks receive an inferior education in the schools with less spent per pupil for racist reasons, with an education taught by racist teachers. They face an occupying foreign army, the police force, which self-consciously represents white people, which lives outside black communities, which oppresses blacks in ways entirely different from the oppression of white working people. Black people face a welfare system designed to demean them, to split up their families, and to put them in a subserviant position fitting to the white conception of black subservience.

In the economy blacks still participate to an extent in a separate, racist labor market with a job ceiling to it. They often do not get jobs in the same way, are not eligible for the same jobs, enter different job channels, are barred in reality if not in law from the highest, best paying, most prestigious jobs. Even when the economy expands blacks do not get their due share of the new jobs, but they do get twice their share of unemployment.

What black people are forced to cope with are not simply overtly racist acts of discrimination and oppression, though there are plenty of those. They also face what the black movement of the 1960's called <u>institutional racism</u>. Independently of indivifual racist ideas and actions, the economy and social, political and cultural institutions function so as to specially oppress black people. Given the widespread existence of racist attitudes in America today and the position of blacks at the bottom of the society, racism is built into the very marrow of the bones of this society and this fact is graphically demonstrated in any number of ways.

Malcolm X provides us with examples of this phenomenon in his autobiography: the social workers who destroyed his family and who were partially responsible for driving his mother insane did not necessarily do so because they were "evil" or self-consciously seeking to maintain black subordination. The pursuance of their own cultural values, which they not only assumed to be superior but saw as the only possible arrangement led them constantly to pressure Malcolm's mother. "The monthly welfare check was their pass" says Malcolm X, the key which gave them the power to enforce their will and to demean his mother, and ultimately to drive her insane.

Similarly, the teacher who told Malcolm to forsake his plans to be a lawyer ("....you've got to be realistic about being a nigger. A lawyer -- that's no realistic goal for a nigger. You need to think about something you <u>can</u> be.") was not <u>only</u> expressing his racism, He was also expressing his view of the overwhelming reality of the society. One must either accept that reality or attempt to smash through it.

The very nature of the institutions encourages racist attitudes and behavior, and makes it difficult to resist them. For example, teaching in a ghetto school tends to foster racist attitudes, even among "idealists". The individual teacher who accepts the framework of the educational system, does not oppose it, and therby ends up taking responsibility for it is pressed in

a racist direction even if the school administration does not intentionally foster racism.

Moreover, the results of past generations of racism makes the institutions function in a racist manner as well. Thus, blacks have been for years systematically kept out of the job market. As a result, when lay-offs take place, because blacks have low seniority they tend to get laid off first. Thus the economy, in its normal ups and downs is racist (to take one example).

The machine grinds on in such a way as systematically to degrade and oppress black people and to maintain that degradation and oppression. As a result, black workers bear the same relationship to white workers that Lenin spoke of in comparing the workers of the oppressor and oppressed nations:

"Economically, the difference is that sections of the working class in the oppressor nations receive crumbs from the superprofits the bourgeoisie of the nations obtains by extra exploitation of the workers of the oppressed nations. Besides, economic statistics show that here a larger percentage of the workers become 'straw bosses' than is the case in the oppressed nations, a larger percentage rise to the labor aristocracy. That is a fact. To a certain degree the workers of the oppressor nations are partners of their own bourgeoisie in plundering the workers (and the mass of the population) of the oppressed nations.

"Politically, the difference is that, compared with the workers of the oppressed nations, they occupy a priveleged position in many spheres of political life.

"Ideologically, or spiritually, the difference is that they are taught, at school and in life, disdain and contempt for the workers of the oppressed nations." (Lenin, "A caricature of Marxism and Imperialist Economism", Works, Vol. 23)

The black response has been two-fold: on the one hand a history of heroic resistance punctuated by frequent angry outbursts of mass upheaval; on the other hand the creation of a network of closely-knit relations that created a solid community even in the urban ghettoes.

Especially important in this regard is the black church, which has never had the same function in the black community as it has in white society. The church has always been and remains to day at the center of the black community. To a significant extent social life revolves around it. It has historically been and remains today one of the few black institutions thoroughly controlled by the black community, and as such at least some church leaders have been continually involved in resistance.

The very material basis for the popularity of black capitalism derives from the cohesiveness of the black community. Success in this society derives from success in capitalist enerprises. Poor blacks often feel an obligation to strengthen black capitalists, their people, as part of the sucess

Of the black community. Not only that they should succeed in the white community but develop their own economy.

Because black culture is largely a culture of resistance to oppression, organizations of resistance have had a wide currency in the black community and have tended to help knit that community together. The ideology of "soul" which expresses a common experience of oppression and the efforts to surmount that oppression is one conscious formulation of the apathy that blacks feel for (and often act out toward) one another.

Moreover, the history of black people has been characterized by increasing self-consciousness. As their power in the society increases, and as they come more into the center of the society both geographically and economically their sense of national oppression does not decrease. Rather, their consciousness of their racial oppression and their resentment against it become greater, not less. And it has been and will be precisely in the periods of the greatest social tumult that black consciousness will come to the fore.

The result of all of this has been to weld blacks into an oppressed national minority. In any but a mechanical sense, black people possess most of the characteristics of a nation (though not a nation state). Specifically, they have a separate and distinct culture, common traditions, a community and a self-consciousness of themselves as members of a distinct people set apart from the rest of society, as well as an awareness of their common plight, as distinguished from the rest of the society. All of this is based upon objective conditions which created these phenomena and continue to reinforce them: the all-pervasive, all-inclusive, living reality of racist oppression which no black person can escape in this society.

Does this mean that blacks are a fully finished nation? No. They are not. Lacking a common, separate territory and a separate economy they are not a nation (and certainly not a nation state), but an oppressed national minority. Moreover, because of the lack of these important characteristics the tendency is not toward becoming a finished nation, though that possibility is by no means excluded, including their taking territory.

DuBois described the situation as one of two warring souls: "One feels his twoness -- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings . . ." (Souls of Black Folk, p. 17). The sentiment was echoed in harsher tones by Malcolm X: "Being born here in America doesn't make you an American . . . No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the twenty-two million black people who are the victims of Americanism . . . And I see America through the eyes of the victim," (Malcolm X Speaks, p. 26).

The question of which direction for blacks is as yet unresolved. But the fact that national self-assertion and even nationalism is not today in the forefront of black struggle is not necessarily a happy circumstance. It reflects, as much as anything else, the current backward state of the whole black movement. As Trotsky put it: "When today the Negroes do not

demand self-determination that is naturally for the same reason that the white workers do not yet advance the slogan of the proletarian dictatorship. The Negro has not yet got it into his poor black head that he dares to carve out for himself a piece of the great and mighty States. But the white workers must meet the Negroes halfway and say to them: "When you want to separate you will have our support." (On Black Nationalism, pp. 17-18)

As the class struggle intensifies black consciousness will not collapse into a generalized class consciousness -- nor should socialists urge it to do so. Rather, blacks will make the greatest demands in those periods upon the society in general and upon white workers in particular. Revolutionary socialists should encourage and support this healthy tendency, and lead it because it provides the only possible basis upon which the white workers can be forced to confront black oppression in all its dimensions even if doing so initially intensifies racial hostility. It provides the only possibility of constructing an understanding among white workers of the necessity for the complete liberation of black people, and thus for attaining the unity between black and white workers which is a prerequisite for the socialist revolution.

In the long run what determines the outcome is the actions of the whites. To the extent to which black oppression continues, or increases, the likelihood of the historic option of separatism being taken increases. To the extent that white workers adopt a position of championing black interests as part of a class-conscious strategy, and thereby present a real solution to black oppression this alternative is likely to be avoided.

A SUPER-EXPLOITED SECTION OF THE WORKING CLASS

Black workers face a dual oppression. They share the national oppression th which all blacks are subject, but that oppression is compounded and intensified by their class oppression as workers. They are a part of the working class but because of their national oppression their class experiences are qualitatively worse than those of their fellow workers. Not only do they face prejudices, discrimination, degradation and the deprivation of their rights, but poverty, poor health and huge unemployment rates as well. Not only do they suffer the speed-up, unsafe working conditions, and the political powerlessness of their class, but their oppression as a people means they are the least likely to get jobs, and when they do get them they get the worst, and they are the most frozen out of the political system. It is the oppression of blacks as a people that forces black workers to sell their labor power at less than its value as a commodity, i.e., forces them to be super-exploited.

It is their dual oppression, combined with their social weight inside the black community and inside the working class that makes black workers into a key agency for the black liberation struggle, and for the socialist revolution.

The social weight of black workers is even greater in the black community than is the weight of the working class in American society as a whole.

The black petty-bpurgeoisie is quite small (though it has grown substantially over the decades) and the bourgeoisie is almost non-existent. Their own independent strength is correspondingly small.

As a result of the overwhelming dominance of the working class in the black community the locus of struggle for black liberation has an inevitable tendency to move to the working class. That was the direction of the black movement of the 1960's before it crumbled. The League of Revolutionary Black Workers, which was born out of the Detroit insurrection was the most significant organizational manifestation of this tendency. It was Martin Luther King's recognition of this tendency that led him to lend his active support to striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was murdered.

Moreover, the black petty-bourgeoisie can be won to support for working class leadership precisely because it has a shallow base and is not, in most cases, based on the exploitation of black labor, and because its existence depends on the ecomonic health of the black community. It can be so wom when the working class presents itself as a viable leadership with a program for solving the social crisis (which is only beginning to emerge) and when it demonstrates the determination to carry through its porgram against all opponents. This is true of the petty bourgeoisie in general; it is even truer that the black petty bourgeoisie can be won over to the leadership of the working class because socialism opems the door to liberation from racist oppression. When glimpses of that liberation were presented by the social dynamism of the CIO movement many petty bourgeois leaders and institutions rallied behind it. The NAACP and many black leaders who played a significant role in encouraging black workers to join the movement.

In previous working class upsurges blacks were on the fringes of the economy, both in their geographical concentration.. and in the jobs they occupied. Today, because of their changed geographical and occupational concentration, blacks are more powerful than they have ever before been.

They are concentrated in the cities, the political, economic and cultural centers. One third of the whole black population of 22 million is concentrated in the 15 major cities. More and more, central cities are coming to have black majorities.

During the 1960's blacks began moving in large munbers into the basic production industries: auto, steel, packinghouse, electrical. They constitute significant percentages of the work forces of those industries. In many' places they are majorities, even huge majorities of plants; elsewhere, they often oonstitute large majorities. Moreover, among civil service workers, teachers and other public emoloyees, blacks are a large part of the work force.

In the CIO upheavals white workers were forced to take into account the needs and desires of black workers. Their failure to do so in previous occasions had led to disastrous defeats, most notably in the great 1919

steel strike and the lesson of those defeats had been learned. Unfortunately, even in this relatively favorable situation black workers did not put forward and demand of the whole working class a program to end all aspects of the national oppression of blacks. Nor was the labor movement likely to develop such a program independently of blacks advancing it.

Today, in their far more powerful position, with their heightened consciousness due to the black struggles of the 1960's, it can be expected that blacks will be unwilling to compromise on black questions and that they will be unwilling to limit their concerns to the job. Rather, as the class struggle intensifies, they will advance and demand support for a program to end the national oppression of blacks.

Black workers, with their strategic situation in production and services, are capable of fighting for community needs, such as housing, by using their organized power as workers. They can more effectively defend the black community, both by building workers' militias and by carrying out job actions and strikes that threaten the power of the corporations and government to keep things running. Such actions, of course, require political organization.

Black workers can, should and must take the lead in the struggles against national oppression. They are the only class capable of leading that struggle uncompromisingly, and of enlisting the active aid of white workers in order to carry through that struggle to its completion -- i.e., through the socialist revolution.

White workers can be won to those struggles <u>through the class struggle</u> because no movement of the working class can get anywhere unless it comes to terms with black needs and demands, and because the dynamic of that struggle tends to raise their consciousness, tends to create a class consciousness that overrides the racist consciousness, particulafly if there are revolutionaries there to draw the lessons. In the class struggle white workers are forced to work with black workers, to recognize them as allies and to understand the need for their support. But black support doesn't come free. Its price is the espousal by the white workers of the cause of black liberation.

Furthermore, blacks are in the position to be the vanguard of the workers' struggle, and in doing so to direct it toward black liberation.

Black workers, feel both their oppression as <u>blacks</u> and, as part of the American working class feel their oppression as <u>workers</u> most intensely. Because of their advanced social and political consciousness, they are in a position to articulate the needs of the whole working class, and to take the leadership of the working class struggle. They must do so, welding the struggles together and building a united movement committed to black liberation and the socialist revolution as the only way to attain it, committed to the socialist revolution and black liberation as the only way to reach it.

The necessity is to win black workers to an understanding of their task; for that a strategy is required.

THE RIGHT TO SELF DETERMINATION STRATEGY

> "The worst crime on the part of revolutionaries would be to give the smallest concessions to the privileges and prejudices of the whites. Whoever gives his little finger to the devil of chauvinism is lost." (Trotesky, On Black Nationalism, pp. 62-63)

> ". . .if the white man doesn't want us to be anti-him, let him stop oppressing and exploitating and degrading us." (Malcolm X Speaks, p. 25)

Given the history of black oppression in America, the role of the working class and the revolutionary left is the struggle against that oppression, and the consciousness of blacks regarding that history, the porblems that face revolutionaries are the same as those which have historically divided workers of the oppressed and oppressor nations. White workers and the revolutionary left have an enormous historical legacy to overcome in order to attain working class unity.

It is that history and its continuation into the present which create the nationalist tendencies among blacks. Consciousness of that history is, if anything, exaggerated by the absence for the past thirty years of a working class movement fighting against racist oppression and ideology. Seeing whites -- all classes of whites -- as their oppressors, a natural tendency is to opt for a political strategy, nationalism, that encourages reliance solely upon blacks, and on all blacks at that, and that sets them in struggle against all whites. Various expressions of that strategy have included tendencies toward separatism, pan-Africanism, black capitalism, or other efforts to carve out a black colony; or black 'exclusiveness' toward whites -- the belief that it is white workers who are the real enemy or the refusal to act in class solidarity with white workers or to appeal to whites to join blacks in a class struggle and in the struggle against racism.

All of these are unacceptable to us. They are utopian and/or reactionary, or simply thoroughly inadequate, and we must say so to blacks. These nationalist strategies and ideologies compete with the point of view that blacks can and should lead and ally themselves with white workers. They are counterposed to our perspective of black workers leading in the class struggle and winning white workers to support for black liberation. At the same time we recognize that nationalism has an important progressive character: it is and has been the vehicle in which black struggle against oppression has been carried out, the healthy black rage against oppression has beencarried out, the healthy black rage against their oppressors expressed, and black pride developed.

Our task is to devise a strategy which can break blacks from those nationalist tendencies and can win them to a class approach. It must be a strategy which can unite blacks and whites on the basis of full equality, on a basis that does not, in any way seek to maintain the subordination of

blacks to whites. Any such strategy must, as Malcolm X stated, "see America through the eyes of the victim" and address itself to the issue of black oppression in such a way as to guarantee to blacks that any movement of the working class will take the issue of black liberation as seriously as do blacks themselves.

The appropriate starting point for any such strategy must be that developed by Lenin for overcoming the divisions between the Great Russian workers and workers of the Ukraine, Poland, Georgia, Armenia and all the other nationalities imprisoned within the Russian empire. That strategy of the right of nations to self-determination was articulated by Lenin in dozens of works. Briefly, the main points of that strategy are as follows:*

It was necessary to break workers of the oppressor nation from their nationalism and win them to support for the national struggles of the oppressed nation. That would them make it possible to win the workers of the oppressed nation away from their nationalism and from their own bourgeois oppressors.

The problem is that the oppression of workers of the oppredsed nation is both national and class. The bourgeosie of the oppressed nation puts forward a program of struggle along national lines to end their oppression, a program which would permit it to become the exploiter of its working class.

Insofar as the working class of the oppressor nation benefits from and participates in the national oppression, appeals to the working class of the oppressed nation to reject nationalism and to adopt working class internationalism will ring very hollow. But, insofar as the working class of the oppressor nation breaks with its bourgeoisie and clearly and forthrightly supports the national rights and struggles of the oppredsed nation against its own bourgeoisie (that of the oppressor nation) it points out to the working class of the oppressed nation that it has international allies and that its emeny is not the oppressor nation but the international bourgeoisie. Under those circumstances the working class of the oppressor nation then has the right and the credibility to say, "you shouldn't do 'that' but rather 'this'. You shouldn't be for unity with your national bourgeoisie but rather for unity with us -- overthrow your bourgeoisie." But without having proven oneself such statements are the statements of an enemy.

It is important to note that Lenin's policy was to win the working class of the oppressor nation to internationalism as a way of winning the working class of the oppressed nation. That was because the nationalism of the oppressed nation was based on that of the oppressor nation and not vice-versa. Unlike the nationalism of the oppressor nation, that of the

*Note: The strategy is presented here in summary form; for a more complete exposition see the Trautman "Black Liberation" document in Bulletin # 36.

oppressed nation was based on its perceiving a unified national oppressor -- the working class of the oppressor nation being implicated in its national oppression. This can only be broken through by ending that unified national oppression.

Furthermore, the nationalism of the oppressor nation is only reactionary: it is the fight for priveleges, for the right to subject other peoples. For workers of the oppressor nation it is the fight to participate in the spoils that come from the oppressed nation. But the nationalism of the oppressed nation has a dual character. It has a reactionary character, as do all nationalisms. But it is also a vehicle for struggle against oppression, during the struggle against national oppression, even when the socialist revolution is imminent or taking place this progressive role is its dominant and overriding characteristic.

The recognition of this distinction which was the basis of Lenin's policy is vital. Trotsky made it clear that it applied even in regards to Spain in 1931 when a revolutionary situation existed: "At the present stage of developments, with the given combination of class forces, Catalan nationalism is a progressive revolutionary factor; Spanish nationalism is a reactionary imperialist factor. The Spanish Communist who does not understand this difference, ignores it, does not advance it to the front rank, but on the contrary covers up its significance risks becoming an unconscious agent of the Spanish bourgeoisie and being lost to the cause of the proletarian revolution." (The Spanish Revolution, p. 110)

What follows from this analysis is that the working class of the oppressor nation, including the right of self-determination, the right to secede. For them not to do so would be to put themselves in the camp of the oppressors, and to drive those workers into the hands of their own national bourgeoisie. On the other hand, if they do it it means that they are rejecting any benefits garnered off the backs of others and have placed themselves firmly in the camp of the oppressed.

It means further that they have the credibility to politically urge the working class of the oppressed nation tobreak from their nationalism and to adopt a class approach. In order to do this, however, their support must be unconditional (but not, of course, uncritical). Otherwise the old chauvinist relation is maintained: that is, whites say to blacks, "we support your struggle only when you struggle over what we think you should be struggling for." Once again, as Trotsky said in regards to Spain:

> "What is the danger of petty bourgeois national illusions? That they are capable of dismembering the proletariat of Spain along national lines, which is a very serious danger. But the Spanish communists can successfully fight against this danger in only one way: by pitilessly denouncing the violence of the bourgeoisie of the ruling nation and in that way winning the confidence of the proletariat of the oppressed nationality. Any other policy would be tantamount to supporting

the reactionary nationalism of the imperialist bourgeoisie of the ruling nation against the revolutionafy democratic nationalism of the petty bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation." (Ibid)

The main outlines of this strategy for building a united class movement are directly applicable as a strategy for uniting blacks and whites. Whereas we oppose black nationalism as an ideology or as a strategy for black liberation, we recognize that it is based upon white chauvinism. Black nationalism has been and still can be the vehicle for mobilizing the black masses in struggle for democracy and against their oppression. But white racism is only reactionary: it is the basis for black nationalism. Therefore, from the point of view of revolutionary socialism we direct our main fire against white racism as the means of breaking down black nationalism. Not to understand that and to act on the basis of it would be to capitulate to racism; it would be, to paraphrase Trotsky, (see p. 16-17) becoming an unconscious agent of the bourgeoisie and being lost to the cause of the proletarian revolution.

The white working class must be broken from its chauvinism, racism, and brought to the understanding of its unity of interests with the black working class, and it must become the champion of black equality, openly spurning all efforts to grant it small advantages at the expense of blacks. It is on that basis that it will be possible to counteract the nationalist tendencies in the black movement. It is no accident that, for example, at a time when the Garvey movement was sweeping the country it found no response among black longshoremen in Philadelphia organized by the IWW on the basis of full equality with whites.

The key task that guides our activity in the present period and which is an absolute necessity for building a mass revolutionary socialist movement in this country is that of building a black liberation tendency in the working class. Such a tendency could then give working class leadership to the black liberation movement and could win white workers to the struggle for black liberation. More specifically, what is necessary is the creation of a tendency among white workers that consciously understands the necessity for themselves and all white workers to join in the struggle for black liberation and which does join that struggle and seeks to involve the other white workers.

Such a movement will fight for all blacks as well as working class demands, no matter how small, that improve the conditions of the black masses. It will put forward and fight for a full program for the end of all black and working class oppression. This porgram will consist of the full range of demands: from democratic and partial demands to broader class demands. In keeping with the right to self-determination strategy the aim of this activity is a dual one. It is to begin to provide a solution to black oppression and to point to a full solution: class solidarity and socialist revolution. It is also to create the basis for black workers to see white workers as their allies and thus to create a unified working class movement.

The right to self-determination strategy implies more than the workers

of the oppressor nation fighting to end national oppression. As Lenin clearly argued, the right to self-determination means nothing if it does not include the right to secede and to form an independent state: ". . . 'self-determination of nations' in the Marxists' Program cannot, from a historico-economic point of view, have any other meaning than political self-determination, state independence and the formation of a national state". (The Right of Nations to Self-Determination, Works, Vol. 20, p. 400).

The reason for this should be obvious. Self-determination is a mockery if it does not include the right to rule oneself, or to determine under what state one will be ruled. Without such guarantees no oppressed nationality could take the claims of cameraderie advanced by the working class of the oppressor nation seriously.

The necessity for the support for this demand which is the ultimate extension of the strategy of the right of nations to self-determination is no less applicable to black people than it is to any other oppressed nation or national minority. The fact that blacks do not constitute a majority in any state or group of states, or that they are not concentrated in any one part of the country does not fundamentally alter things, though it certainly affects the outcome. It is more difficult for blacks to separate, and they are less likely to wish to do so. But, as the Jews proved, such circumstances are not precluded.

We expect it to be unlikely that the black population will opt for separation as an alternative. We encourage them not to do so, pointing out that such separation will not end their oppression and their exploitation, that their real ally is white workers. If nonetheless, despite our efforts blacks demand political independence we stand by them and fight for this right, even while we oppose this exercise of it. We state our willingness to do this today, and we attempt to convince white workers to state their support for this position today. This porpaganda is not, however, our dominant theme today because of the greater salience of the other issues of black liberation.

Adopting this perspective as our task does not mean we are adopting the white-skin privilege theory or methodology. A political program oriented toward white workers which is based on asking them to 'give up their white skin privilege' or on smashing their living standards or organizations so as to destroy 'the material base for their acceptance of the white skin privilege ideology' indicates a lack of understanding of the exploitation of the working class. Racism is embraced by white workers as a primitive means to ease that exploitation. A successful program requires focusing worker consciousness on their exploitation bu the bosses and not in reinforcing the false consciousness that they are privileged. A successful fight against racism among white workers requires them to begin struggling against their own exploitation.

The very act of collective struggle which is denied by capitalist ideology begins to strip away false consciousness. Workers begin to recognize

themselves as a class against the bosses and as the struggle deepens, the recognition of this distinction overshadows racial differences. The enemy also shows himself to be powerful and unrelenting. The success of the struggle then comes to depend on winning more mass support and allies. Overcoming barriers which divide the working class (such as racism) in this context turns from an idealist's dream into an immediate necessity for those involved. There is, of course, no guarantee that this will happen; certainly not automatically. Here, as in other circumstances, revolutionaries can play a crucial role of leading, helping to expand consciousness of the nature of society, pointing to the need for a united class struggle and fighting racism, but all within the context of supporting and expending a struggle which the white workers can see and feel is their own in the immediate sense. Indeed, what advances have been made against racism have occurred when the American working class itself was locked in militant struggle. In large part, the racism of the white working class today is testimonial to its failures to engage in militant struggle in its own interests.

But, perceiving the above to be the case does not mean that we do not commence forthrightly, from the beginning, the propaganda and agitational battle for black liberation. We must initiate struggles on all levels insofar as possible, and support (and attempt to win white workers to support) all struggles for black liberation initiated by blacks.

The unique set of historical events that occurred in the post-war period have presented us with perculiar problems. The conservatization and apathy of the working class as a whole led it to drop out of the scene as a leader in struggles for human liberation. Internationally, this development set the stage for the emergence of the peasantry, under the leadership of the Stalinists as the leading opponents of capitalism. In the United States a whole series of movements developed, sparked by the black movement, that grew up outside the working class.

Even today in a period of general lull the black movement is still the most dynamic, most militant. While the consciousness of black workers has been enormously affected by the black movement, white workers remain quite backward. Thus, black workers will tend to be in the leadership not only of black movements but of the working class as a whole.

This phenomenon, however, should not blind us to the fact that the task remains to win the white workers to the struggle for black liberation. While the road to accomplishing this task is leading the white workers through the struggle against their own exploitation, the basic task remains. Black workers, more advanced than whites, are in a position to play a major role in implimenting this strategy -- without subordinating their just demands to the conservative consciousness of whites. Our perspective is to win black workers to this strategy. But the fact remains that the conservative, racist consciousness of white workers is the biggest single obstacle to blacks being won to the socialist revolution. Until white workers demonstrate tangibly to blacks that they stand unequivocably for black liberation there is no reason to believe blacks will fight for a new revolutionary regime in which they will be a minority, subject to control

and potential oppression by the whites. Trotsky phraded it correctly: "The Negro can be developed to a class standpoint only when the white worker is educated." (On Black Nationalism, p. 17)

At the same time, simply putting forward the strategy (and actively attempting to implement it) provides us with a means of winning the most advanced blacks to collaborate with us in carrying it out.

THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIALISM

The struggle on the part of blacks for their democratic rights, for political, social and economic equality is a necessary part of the struggle for socialism. The former struggle helps to enrich the socialist movement, to raise the consciousness concerning black oppression. It serves also to raise the consciousness of the black masses concerning the nature of capitalist exploitation and the capitalist state. That struggle tends to impel the black masses against the capitalist state.

Any attempt to reduce the struggle for black liberation to the class struggle or the struggle for socialism -- to say that the one ipso facto is the other -- is incorrect. It is only by means of waging the struggle for democracy in the most uncompromising manner that it is possible to guarantee that the working class socialist movement will take up its banner. Anyone who thinks otherwise must explain away the whole history of the working class movement, including its revolutionary socialist wing, in relation to black people.

Some comrades claim to side with Johnson (C.L.R. James) in his discussions with Trotsky on this topic, in which Trotsky advanced basically the position in this document. They would do well to examine the position he advanced to the Workers' Party in 1945. In that document James advanced the Leninist method regarding oppressed nationalities as the key to the black struggle in America, and he stated the correct relation between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism. His position was as follows:

"Such is the development of American capitalist society and the role of Negroes in it that the Negroes' struggle for democratic rights brings Negroes almost immediately face to face with capital and the state. The Marxist support of the Negro struggle for democratic rights is not a concession that Marxists make to Negroes. In the United States today this struggle is a direct part of the struggle for socialism.

"All serious problems arising from the Negro question revolve around the relationship of the independent mass actions of the Negroes for democratic rights to the working class struggle for socialism.

"In the 2nd Congress of the Communist International, Lenin's theses singled out as examples of the national and colonial question the Irish question and the question of the Negroes in America. This Leninist approach was based upon close study of the economic situation of the Negroes in the United States and the Irish Rebellion in 1916. The whole historical development of

the Negro struggle in the United States and its relations to the social struggles of the revolutionary classes show that the Leninist analysis of the Negro question as part of the national question is the correct method with which to approach this problem. It is necessary, therefore, to have a precise and clear conception of the application of this method. The most concentrated example of it is Lenin's treatment of the Irish rebellion during World War I.

"Lenin wishes to illustrate the specifically nationalist struggle of the Irish rebellion in its relation to the socialist struggle of the British proletariat against British imperialism. He uses the experience of the Russian Revolution of 1905 which took place exclusively within the national boundaries of Russia. He uses also, not the struggles of the nationally oppressed minorities, but the struggles of the petty bourgeoisie, the peasants and other non-proletarian, non-class groups in relation to the struggle of the Russian proletariat. We have therefore a very concrete illustration of the applicability of the method to environments and classes superficially diverse but organically similar.

(a) "'The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois democratic revolution. It consisted of a series of battles in which all the discontented classes, groups and elements of the population participated. Among these were masses, imbued with the crudest prejudices, with the vagues and most fantastic aims of struggle; there were small groups which accepted Japanese money, there were speculators and adventurers, etc. Objectively, the mass movement broke the back of tsarism and paved the way for democracy; for that reason the class conscious workers led it.'"

"Within the United States the socialist revolution will ultimately consist of a series of battles in which the discontented classes, groups and elements of all types will participate in their own way and form a contributory force to the great culminating struggles which will be led by the proletariat.

(b) "'The socialist revolution in Europe cannot be anything else than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry of the oppressed and discontented elements. Sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will inevitably participate in it -- without such participation, mass struggle is impossible, without it no revolution is possible -- and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But objectively they will attack capital, and the class conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat expressing this objective truth of a heterogeneous and discordant, motley and outwardly inchhesive mass struggle will be able to unite and direct it, to capture power, to seize the banks, to expropriate the trusts, hated by all, though for different reasons....."

"In the United States social revolution is impossible without the independent mass struggles of the Negroes, whatever the prejudices, the reactionary fantasies, the weaknesses and errors of these struggles. The proletarian composition of the Negro people and the developing labor movement offer great opportunities for a continuing reduction of the prejudices of the Negro people.

(c) "'The struggle of the oppressed nations IN EUROPE, a struggle capable of going to the lengths of insurrection and street fighting, of breaking down the iron discipline in the army and martial law, will sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe infinitely more than a much more developed rebellion in a remote colony. A blow delivered against the English imperialist bourgeoisie by a rebellion in Ireland is a hundred times more [illegible]

by a rebellion in Ireland is a hundred times more significant politically than a blow of equal weight delivered in Asia or Africa.'

"Blows delivered by an oppressed national minority so entangled in the social structure of the United States as the Negroes, possess a political significance of greater importance in this country than a blow delivered by any other section of the population except the organized proletariat itself.

(d) "'The dialectic of history is such that small nations, powerless as an INDEPENDENT factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, which help the REAL power against imperialism to come on the scene, namely, the SOCIALIST PROLETARIAT

"Within the United Stated, the Negroes are undoubtedly powerless to achieve their complete or even substantial emancipation as an independent factor in the struggle against American capital. But such is the historic role of the Negroes in the United States; such today is their proletarian composition and such is their interrelation with the American proletariat itself that their independent struggles form perhaps the most powerful stimulus in American society to the recognition by the organized proletariat of its real responsibilities to the national development as a whole and of its power against American imperialism.

"The ideal situation is that the struggle of the minority group should be organized and led by the proletariat. But to make this a precondition of supporting the struggle of non-proletarian, semi-proletarian or non-class conscious groups is a repudiation of all Marxist theory and practice. Thus it is utterly false to draw the conclusion that the independent struggle of the Negro masses for their democratic rights is to be looked upon merely as a preliminary stage to a recognition by the Negroes that the real struggle is the struggle for socialism." (Emphasis original) (James, minority resolution to Workers Party, New International, January, 1945, pp. 15-16)

We concur with James' expostion. It has been graphically vindicated through the black struggles of the 1960's and the social impact they had. In the future we expect the black movement to again stimulate others to move into struggle and to reach revolutionary socialist consciousness.

We anticipate that the black movement will be rebuilt largely through the struggle for democratic demands. Indications of this tendency have already appeared: the "trouble" in the Navy, the "disturbances" at Southern University, the continued efforts of blacks to terminate school segregation and inferior schooling for blacks, continuing clashes with the police and the appearance of movements to curb their power.

Today these movements are indications of the fury that continues to seethe, unorganized in the black community. They also set the stage for the more organized movements of tomorrow.

We can expect such struggles to be one of the main focuses of battle. Whether they occur in the community or in the workplace (for equal access to jobs and job security, equality in working conditions, etc.) we support and encourage and lead such struggles. Our attitude toward such struggles is the same as last

same as it is toward all reform struggles. We participate in them not because gains won through these struggles teach the masses theri power and thus whet their appetite for more gains; because such struggles raise their consciousness and understanding of the society; because such struggles set an example for other segments of the society to engage in struggle; and because we are not indifferent to the fate of the masses of oppressed blacks.

Often democratic struggles which begin under the leadership of the petty-bourgeoisie can and do have the same impact. But the petty-bourgeoisie are today representatives in the black community of the interests and ideology of the ruling class. They tend either to steer movements in a reformist channel (remaining within the confines of bourgeois democracy) or away from an assault on the heightes of power (as in separatist or "cultural-nationalist" movements). Recognition of this tendency does not, however, lead us to avoid participation in movements for democracy which are under petty-bourgeois leadership, so long as we are able to maintain our independence. As Lenin said,

"It is particularly in regard to the political struggle that the 'class point of view' demands that the proletariat give an impetus to every democratic movement. The political demands of working-class democracy do not differ in principle from those of bourgeois democracy, they differ only in degree. In the struggle for economic emancipation, for the socialist revolution, the proletariat stands on a basis different in principle and it stands alone (the small producer will come to its aid only to the extent that he enters or is preparing to enter, its ranks). In the struggle for political liberation, however, we have many allies, towards whom we must not remain indifferent. But while our allies in the bourgeois-democratic camp, in struggling for liberal reforms, will always glance back and seek to adjust matters so that they will be able, as before, 'to eat well, sleep peacefully, and live merrily' at other people's expense, the proletariat will march forward to the end, without looking back....The party of the proletariat must learn to catch every liberal just at the moment when he is prepared to move forward an inch, and make him move forward a yard. If he is obdurate, we will go forward without him and over him." ("Political Agitation and the 'Class Point of View'", Collected Works, Vol. 5, pp. 342-3)

The aim of revolutionary socialists must be to promote the class independence of black workers and to encourage them to become the leading force in the struggle for black liberation. This task can only be accomplished by the participation of revolutionaries in these struggles. Otherwise we abandon the leadership to the petty-bourgeoisie.

We wage a continuing attack on the petty-bourgeois black leaders not on general grounds but because they do not carry on a consistent fight for black liberation; rather they betray the struggle whenever it conflicts with the confines of the bourgeois economy or state. Black workers, precisely because of the nature of their oppression, are impelled to disregard those limits, and to press the struggle for black liberation regardless of its implications for the status quo. The problem now is to liberate them from the stranglehold of bourgeois ideology which the lengthy quiescence of the whole working class has helped to maintain.

THE STRATEGY APPLIED

The key strategic conception that guides all of our work in the present period is building a black workers organization.* Such an orgainzation is a vital necessity for carrying out the tasks we have outlined. It is the vehicle through which black workers give leadership to the class struggle and press for specifically black demands. Through this process blacks can win white workers to the black liberation struggle. It is the means by which black workers can take leadership of and give class direction to the struggles in the black community.

Given the racism of white workers it is insufficient for black workers to play an unorganized leadership role in a broader caucus: black faces leading a class movement. That is so because there will be no specific means to press for black demands, nor will white workers be forced to confront the self-assertion of blacks as blacks. Independent black organization is our strategic tool for building a movement to end black oppression and to win white workers as allies in that struggle, and to give leadership to the class struggle.

Today and in the past black workers have participated in, even led community struggles. But they have not been politically or ideologically struggles led by the working class or with a working class direction. What is necessary to attain this development is black workers organized as workers. It is only with such organization that the struggles in the black community -- struggles which are necessary, desirable, supportable and led by us -- can become part of the struggle of the working class movement.

As a consequence, our efforts are today directed toward building such an organization. Once again it is the main conception that guides and informs our work. We must regularly propagandize for it in our press. We do so not merely by tacking on a call for it at the end of an article, but by having special articles devoted to it, and by organically building it i to our analyses of black oppression and the currents in the black community. We raise it in our leaflets where appropriate. We must produce a pamphlet for mass circulation arguing for such an organization, describing it and its tasks as we see them, laying out the direction which we believe it should take, and presenting our program for it. We attempt to convince our black contacts and associates of the necessity and desirability of such an organization.

Of course, we cannot start such an organization today: at present the state of consciousness, organization and movement is not such to create the basis for it; and our resources are not great enough and we do not have sufficient contacts. Nonetheless, we should project such an organization to our contacts, encourage them to think in terms of it and should look for promi-

*Note: many of the ideas and specific formulations regarding the black workers' organization were provided by Kevin Bradley.

sing black recruits who could play the role of travelling, putting out a newspaper, etc. It is likely that such an organization would grow out of the struggles of the black community and of black workers, but no spontaneously. Active intervention, including prior propagandizing for such an organization is necessary. For example, had the Abolish STRESS campaign been made into something real it might have been possible to pull together a black workers coalition out of the various auto plants as a step in the formation of the organization; certainly that would be the line we would be pushing.

The organization should have its roots in local plant caucuses which would in turn be related to city-wide, regional and industry-wide sections. To establish and cohere itself it should publish a regular paper, The Black Worker. With its organized working class base it would be in a position to organize and lead black struggles and broader class struggles in the plants. In doing so it could give concrete leadership to white workers as well as blacks, enter into coalition with white workers, and at the same time appeal for support from white workers for black needs, comman respect for blacks, and firmly demonstrate that black oppression can no longer be ignored by white workers.

Such an organization should aim to link up in coaliton with white workers and should urge and call for such a coalition. It would lead struggles in such a way as to appeal to whites to join them or at least support them, thus opening the way for future collaboration. It would aim for complete organizational unity when there would no longer be any question of the subordination of black people and black needs or political or organizational domination of whites over blacks, and when blacks themselves no longer felt the necessity for such independent organization. Such unity might or might not take place prior to a socialist revolution.

Short of such complete organizational unity it is desirable where possible without subordinating our political aims in any way to seek out coalitions, united fronts, alliances, etc. with white workers. Included is the possibility of the local affiliate of the black workers organization becoming a caucus within another organization, e.g., a black caucus within the UNC. (In real life, of course, the actual chronological development might well be the other way: that is, a black caucus within an organization affiliating with the black workers organization). We encourage such developments, with the condition indicated above, and recognize that when they become possible they are a step toward the organizational unity of the working class on a principled basis.

In our local work we are in general for the formation of black caucuses for the same reasons given for a national black workers caucus. In some cases (we expect these to be exceptions rather than the general rule, or even frequent occurrences) such independently organized caucuses will not be nesessary. That will be the case where the black leadership is recognized, where the blacks are not dominated by whites, and where the blacks feel no need for

an independent black caucus. In those circumstances we encourage close collaboration and organizational unity.

Whether or not a black caucus is formed locally we urge the black leaders in the caucuses in which we are involved to look to being part of one, and to helping one to come into existence nationally and regionally. That is, we should not see the caucus as subsuming black issues into class issues simply because it has whites in it. It should raise, for example, getting rid of racist foremen and ending the assignment of blacks to the worst jobs in addition to waging a general struggle over speed-up. It should be prepared to mobilize black and white workers for community campaigns, such as the Abolish STRESS campaign that never really got off the ground in Detroit. And the blacks should be the local section of the national black workers organization. This is our conceptual direction. Concretely, it may not be possible. Black struggle in the community may require independently organized black leadership; black workers in the plant may have the same attitude. And so a black caucus may be inevitable in all circumstances. We must be sensitive to such possibilities and eventualities.

The basic programmatic goal of the black workers organization is to fight the racist-capitalist system. This phrase expresses the dual nature of black oppression -- racism, the oppression of black people through institutions and the conscious actions of white people; and capitalism, the exploitative system of production for profit at the expense of the working class and inextricably interlinked with racism. Black liberation means the destruction of racism and destruction of capitalism, and its replacement of a classless society where differences of color make no differences to the free interaction and cooperation of liberated humanity. The fight against this system means the strengthening of the black community; it means blacks as a people fighting against their oppression. It means the rebuilding of a black movement.

Blacks have always had organizations of their own, and have a need for them. Whites in this society have shown no sustained interest in fighting for black people. Blacks must organize and wage their own struggle; only when they do this will it be possible to win whites to that struggle. At the same time the black workers organization fights to rebuild the labor movement. Both because they are black workers and because the emancipation of blacks and of the working class as a whole will take the conscious self-organization of the working class, the black workers organization will contribute and take the lead in the transformation of the class collaborationist trade unions into fighting class struggle organizations, dedicated to the uncompromising advancement of the power of the working class.

The black workers organization will organize the black and working class fight through the various organizations it takes part in on the political, economic and social levels, combatting racism on the job, on the part of the company and the union. The black workers organization activists and caucuses they participate in will fight as well to make the unions serve the workers.

The struggle will not be limited to normal trade union demands nor to a narrow trade union focus. Thus the fight for 30 for 40 will be tied explicitly to fighting unemployment, and especially designed and argued for among blacks and whites as a way of bringing more blacks into the work force..There will be an attempt to organize political strikes when feasible. For example, in a case like that of Angela Davis which raised considerable interest in the black community, political defense committees would have been organized in the plants, propagandizing on the issue, holding rallies, collection money, etc. The campaign would have said (assuming it had enough strength to do so) "if she gets convicted we're going to shut this place down." A fight should be raised to make Martin Luther King's birthday a national holiday. Already many black workers take the day off. Committees could be organized a few months before his birthday to propagandize about it, organize political rallies and work stoppages on that day, demanding the company and the government make it a paid holiday for all workers. A real opportunity exists here to build political strikes, much in the way the labor movement built May Day.

In general the black workers organization will fight on economic and race issues in the shops, use the economic power of blacks in basic industry as a political weapon, try to link the various black struggles of the unemployed, welfare mothers, mobilize workers from a caucus to back them up, etc.

The thrust of such a black workers organization is a political one: it poses immediately not merely demanding a reform or a set of reforms, but contesting for power in the society in order to carry those reforms through. The ruling class and its political parties cannot be expected to do so. Rather, the more significant the reforms are the more necessary is the revolutionary transformation of the society. The formation of political parties contesting for power raise the necessity of attaining power and begin organizing and training people to do so. By exposing the limits of the bourgeois capitalist system they help to dispel people's reformist illusions.

We encourage the natural tendency of the black workers organization toward a political formation. The organization should run political campaigns and should aim to set up a political party. Such a party would, of necessity be a black political party. Our aim is that the leadership of the party be the black workers organization.

The programmtic basis of such a party is of a character similar to that of the black workers organization but advances it to the political realm. It advances both a program to end black oppression and takes up the general fight for working class needs: for example it would fight for equal educational facilities for blacks -- upgrade all education -- tax the corporations to pay for it. It will fight to make it illegal to discriminate against blacks in hiring, firing and upgrading and to end all government interference in the workers right to strike. It will launch a battle to end Nixon's multi-phased so-called economic policy and to press for a working class and oppressed peoples' economic policy to end inflation, unemployment and inequality.

Its further aim would be to break down the bourgeois notion that 'politics" is voting and that one's relation to a political party is to register in it and to vote for it. A political party is the expression of needs and interests. It's purpose for existing is to get power to attain certain ends. In order to do so it must, if it represents an oppressed section of the society be willing and able to carry out non-parliamentary, even illegal acts as a part of the struggle for power. Thus the black political party, the political expression of the black movement, would call for mass demonstrations, political strikes and other forms of direct action. It would organize the armed self-defense of the black community and armed workers' defense guards.

Needless to say, in the process of the fight for this program the party would split into a petty-bourgeois and working class wings, into a reformist and revolutionary section. Out of that struggle the revolutionary socialist tendency would emerge newly strengthened.

It is key that the party be based primarily on the black workers organization of which it should be the political expression. It should aim and call for a coalition between the oppressed peoples and the working class movement. Our long-term goal is a united working class and oppressed peoples party. But at present such a party is not likely to be a reality. Thus, a transition stage of a black political party (or an oppressed peoples party) is necessary. We should propagandize for both. In the black community our major propaganda is toward a black party which could link up with a working class party in coalition -- and an argument for the necessity of both. So if a possibility for the latter develops we seize upon it as a step toward our goal.

If a break from the Democratic Party comes independently of the black workers organization we participate in it, support it and contest for working class leadership within it. This is so even if the leadership of the party is petty-bourgeois so long as the party pepresents a genuine break and is not simply a pressure group on the Democratic Party.

Such a political formation is a step in the direction of a working class and oppressed peoples party, a gigantic step forward in the struggle of black people and of the working class. Just as the organization of black workers is the prerequisite for the unification of the working class, so the political organization of black people under black worker leadership provides the basis for a unified working class and oppressed peoples political party. It is a dialectical process in which blacks cohere themselves politically first and then proceed to unity. The step may be skipped just as the labor party step may be skipped by the working class as it comes to revolutionary consciousness and directly forms a revolutionary party. But our perspectives cannot be based upon any such eventuality.

Such a development would aid substantially in carrying out what has been for eighty years and more one of the key tasks of the revolutionary working class movement: the destruction of the Democratic Party, the historic graveyard of social movements

By contesting for power against the Democratic and Republican parties, the black party breaks people from the two capitalist parties, and opens, in the minds of blacks and of whites, the possibility of breaking with that system. By robbing the Democratic Party of its black base the party would seriously undermine the city and state machines which are based significantly on a black vote. By eroding their power and making it difficult for them to elect candidates it would make the Democratic Party less of a force capable of appealing to and capturing social movements. It would force other groups to begin thinking seriously of breaking, and could help to encourage working class independent political action.

Furthermore, in projecting itself as a contender for power, the black party would be forced to confront the question of how it was to be attained, which would raise the question of allies: who and on what basis? Our answer is that it project itself as the beginnings of a working class and oppressed peoples party, that it point the way to a working class movement as the basis for attaining power. This would help to educate the black movement and to catalyze the working class movement by educating and putting pressure on white workers. Once again, of course a fight for this perspective against the petty-bourgeoisie would be necessary.

To limit black independent political action simply to independent campaigns and to oppose the formation of a party is a mistake. In the first place it is a benighted effort which fails to recognize the tendency toward a party formation inherent in such activity. Secondly and more important such a perspective automatically limits itself to educational campaigns rather than being able to project a contest for power. People are aware that it is parties, not individuals, who rule even in this day of exalted presidential power. Simply to run campaigns would be not to project ongoing (including between elections) presence. That would mean an inability to recruit people and reinforcement of the idea that politics is simply electioneering rather than the maintenance of a regular organization which could lead day-to-day political activity, including calling strikes, demonstrations, etc.

The perspective of limiting black independent political action to "independent" campaigns makes the job of destroying the Democratic Party much more difficult. It ignores the importance of crystallizing political sentiments and movements in organizations. It makes it easier for black opportunists to run such independent campaigns which are in reality pressures on the Democratic Party. Once they accomplish their own purpose they collapse their campaign mechanism; their followers then have nowhere to go but back into the Democratic Party. The consequent organizational collapse that follows such an event often involves a political collapse as well. It tends to erase much of the understanding that the Democratic Party is one of the chief agencies of oppression and not a tool that can be reformed. It also tends to stop the dynamic of others being made aware of the oppressive character of that Party.

The black workers organization and the black political party will take up all issues that pertain to black oppression and inequality in particular

and to working class oppression and exploitation in general. Since blacks are on the bootom of the society they experience most intensely the needs of the working class. Thus any fight for black liberation will, of necessity raise and fight around the general questions. But it is an error to think that the struggle for black liberation and black needs are synonymous with the class struggle and general class needs. We raise both, without in any way subordinating apecial black demands.

We urge and lead blacks to press and to fight for their demands unremittingly. We accept no excuses: not the "poverty" of a corporation of government, not the difficulty of making the changes, not the resistance of whites to their demands -- there is no legitimate excuse for the continuation of an intolerable situation. Our starting point is the needs of the black masses, not those of capitalism.

Excuses that may be offered demand not capitulation but a stepped-up response.

* A corporation claims it cannot upgrade blacks because to do so would require extra training which the corporation cannot afford? Open the books--let us see if it can't afford it. If not, nationalize it under workers' control.

* A city cannot afford to provide better schooling for blacks? Take the money from the police budget funds, increase corporate taxation, provide state and national funding.

* A union persistently refuses to allow blacks in and insists on maintaining a monopoly on jobs? Form a new union, preferably open to both black and white workers. Fight to open up the racist unions to blacks and for unity with the black unions: for a campaign to organize the unorganized.

Of course, to raise such advanced demands in anything more than the most abstract propagandistic way requires a mass movement. Had the black movement of the 1960's raised and fought for such demands it could have had a significant impact on working class consciousness.

The main areas on which we focus an assault to end black oppression are the social and economic questions which most affect blacks: jobs, working conditions, housing, welfare, city services, education and police oppression. These are the issues ignored by the civil rights movement which are the key to ending black oppression and which blacks can be mobilized around. Even though black workers organized as workers are the key both to the black liberation and socialist movements, we don't limit ourselves to the work place..

Since the oppression of blacks is all-pervasive much of it is manifested in the black community. Struggles launched in and by that community(the civil rights movement, the ghetto rebellions) were the source of the advanded consciousness of blacks today. It was through the consciousness created by

the ghetto rebellions, for example, that revolutionary black organizations, like the Black Panther Party and the Dodge REvolutionary Union Movement were created. We anticipate that these struggles will continue and will continue to give life to the black movement -- in fact, they will be one key source for restoring it to vigor. We do not wish in any sense to discourage this activity or to counterpose to it working class activity by black workers. Rather, our aim is for black workers to take the lead in all facets of the black liberation struggle, including the struggle in the community.

Our aim is , as Lenin stated it, that the revolutionary socialists shouls be "...the tribune of the people who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class it affects...." (What is to be Done, Collected Works, Vol. 5, p.423)

JOBS

Organize the unorganized is a demand which has special significance for blacks who have been left in the worst jobs and often frozen out of the unions. It should be motivated as such in addition to developing its more general class meaning.

Jobs for all is one of the most fundamental of the programmatic points we raise. We wish to develop consciousness in the direction of united class solidarity that this demand implies. In most cases we cannot raise this demand as one for struggle today, especially among white workers. But the direction affects our propaganda.

No lay-offs also expresses the united class solidarity. Thirty for forty is one means of implementing this demand. We demand and must attempt to win the workers of an understanding of the necessity of a shorter work week for all before any lay-offs.

While we are resolutely for jobs for all and no lay-offs, recognizing that the fulfillment of these demands is what is necessary to fulfill the need of black people for jobs, we do not limit ourselves to these but raise specific demands for black equality. We demand preferential hiring for blacks to attain equality in industries, occupations, plants,etc., from which they have been systematically excluded. There are many blacks who are in occupations and industries that they have only recently entered(or will only shortly be entering). When setbacks come to the economy they are the first to be laid-off, and are thus subject to the greatest likelihood of continuing disproportionately high unemployment. We demand super-seniority for blacks to redress this situation.

The construction unions are racist in their policies. As a rule they refuse to admit other than token numbers of blacks. Those they do admit are often not treated equally in job allocations. We wage a fight inside the unions for admittance of black workers on an equal basis. Organize the unorganized. We tell blacks who are frozen out of such unions and thereby out of

skilled, high-paying jobs, to form new unions which we encourage to be open both to black and white workers, and to fight for admittance into the racist unions.

All construction projects in the ghettoes must take on a quota of black workers. It is in the ghetto that blacks have the power to open up jobs and to begin forcing them open more generally. We opt for quotas not because we especially like quotas but because they are a means of opening up jobs for blacks. Demonstrations, including direct action (e.g., sit-ins at contractors, and contracting corporations and governmental agencies to make the demands). All merchants and businesses in the ghettoes must hire quotas of black workers. The government should launch a massive public works campaign.. Demonstrations, possible march to Washington.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Workers control over working conditions is the direction in which we wich to point working class consciousness and eventually to lead fights around. We take opportunities to develop workers understanding of this demand and what it means by attempting to relate it to day-to-day experiences in our propaganda.

Associated with this fundamental struggle are a number of concrete programmatic points around which it is possible to initiate struggles today, including reform of the greivance procedure, speed-up, the right th strike over unsafe and rotten working conditions, the organizational strategy of a steward for every foreman and a stewards' council.

We also advance special demands for blacks to rectify inequalities. Blacks are usually assigned to the rottenest, hardest, dirtiest jobs in industry: we demand an end to such practices. Blacks frequently encounter prejudice and discrimination in the workplace: supervisors are often racist and use their positions of power to act out their racist tendencies. We demand the immediate firing of all racist supervisors and the right to strike ofer racist acts.

HOUSING

What is needed is a full-scale massive housing construction program. To finance it we demand conversion of the arms economy. This demand is once again more of a propaganda demand: it provides the opportunity to raise consciousness about the social allocation of resources and the necessity to tear down the war machine in order to raise the standard of living of the masses of the population.

The charging of outrageous rents for substandard housing in which no improvements are made must come to a halt: for a mass tenants organization to build rent strikes to force down rents and secure necessary improvements; for

mass demonstrations at city halls and state legislatures demanding rent ceilings and standards for all housing. Black people suffer the most from these conditions and this program will be of most concern and interest to them.

Blacks have been shoved into the worst housing. More and better housing is needed at reasonable prices. To get it a number of measures are required: Black people should have equal access to all housing. All real estate tactics designed to victimize both black and white homeowners to end -- for a mass action campaign to end block-busting. Rebuild the ghettoes and central cities, which are becoming central slums.

WELFARE

Current welfare provisions are a joke -- or would be but for the human tragedy involved. For complete reform of the welfare system to guarantee a decent standard of living for everyone. No welfare recipients to be forced to scab: only work at union wages under union working conditions.

CITY SERVICES

City services are dereriorating, destroying the quality of life of citizens. Much of this deterioration is occasioned by the fleeing of the white population to the suburbs and the corporations with them, thereby robbing the cities of important tax monies and intensifying the already serious fiscal crisis occasioned by the developing crisis of capitalism.

For a massive campaign to improve city services: improved garbage collection and pest control; increased medical care: free hospitalization and doctor care, a mass campaign of hospital construction; cheap, adequate, rapid public transportation to and from the ghettoes.

We demand these be paid for by shifting the tax burden from the working class to the corporations and the rich. Increase corporate taxation, raise taxes on interest, dividends, capital gains, inheritance. Abolish all sales taxes and other retrogressive forms of taxation; for a steeply graduated income tax above $20,000.

EDUCATION

The quality of education is decreasing for all sectors of the working population. What is necessary to reverse this trend is state and federal funding of the schools on an equal per capita basis and doubling the school financing as an immediate beginning. For mass demonstrations and direct action to win these demands. Again, the burden of taxation must be shifted.

1 Black schooling is consistently and decidedly worse than that available to whites. Though all public schooling is tending to deteriorate more rapidly. Within school districts funds are still allocated on a discriminatory basis. Black schools are prone to have substitute teachers and poored teachers, worse facilities, fewer supplies, etc.

An extensive program is needed to upgrade substantially all the schools, and in particular black schools. Any such program must be based on a perspective of blacks not having to wait to attain equality with white schools until such time as the deterioration of the schools ends and the whole education system improves.

We are for democratic parent-teacher-student control of the schools. The black community should have the right to get rid of undesirable teachers (i.e. racists; those who use corporal punishment), in the context of teachers having normal trade union rights. Teachers, especially black teachers in ghetto schools are in a particularly good position to initiate a coalition of teachers, parents and students. They can do so by combining a struggle for quality education with a fight over their own working conditions, both of which are currently on the defense.

We support bussing unless it is opposed by the black community. White bussing is no solution to the miserable education afforded to blacks the fact is that white schools, particularly in the suburbs, are qualitatively superior to the black schools. They are a result of whites leaving the cities and the sorporations following them. Blacks should be permitted to partake of the advantages of these schools until better arrangements are made available. We urge the whites to join the blacks in a fight to prevent any deterioration of standards that might occur as a result of the bussing program, and to extend the fight for an improvement in standards.

POLICE

The police are nothing more nor less than an occupying army on the black community. It provides no protection, instead, it is simply the agency of oppression. The proliferation of green beret type squads in the police forces of the major cities together with the stockpiling of advanced military weapons is simply further evidence that war is being waged on the black community because it refuses dociley to accept its subordinate position. We demand an end to this policy.

All police out of the black community. We will manage it ourselves.

Abolish the special "elite" units (STRESS, Tac Squad, etc.). Demilitarize the police; get rid of all armored cars, tanks and special weapons whose sole purpose is to make war on people.

Abolish the independence of the police from the people: for independent citizen's control of police through elected boards and independent elected commissions to investigate and punish charges of police brutality.

For armed self-defense of the black community.

The above is not an exhaustive list of demands for which we fight around the issue of black subordination and class exploitation. It does indicate some of the most central, most important issues. But, no demand to end black oppression is too small for us to champion and fight for.

In the struggle for these demands our perspective is to advance the struggle against exploitation and by means of it to win white workers to black liberation while at the same time waging the struggle for black liberation and not subordinating it. Therefore, in the struggle against unemployment we attempt to win black and white workers to the broader class demands (jobs for all, no lay-offs, 30 for 40, shorter work week for all before any lay-offs) while at the same time advancing the specific black demands (preferential hiring -- which we are for even in the context of jobs for all, and super-seniority, which is unnecessary if the broader class demands (any or all of them) become the focus of struggle and victory.

In carrying our the struggle we employ what we have called the right to self-determination strategy. Take, for example, the demand for preferential hiring. We support and lead struggles for that demand. In addition, we attempt to win white workers and any workers' organizations of which we are a part (caucuses, unions) to support of that struggle. Indeed, a major part of our propaganda is directed at white workers, attempting to win them to support of the demand. We show them the validity of the black point of view and we argue that they should support it from their own point of view. Such an argument can only be amde within the framework of the class struggle (the necessity to fight for jobs for all, 30 for 40, etc., the impossibility of doing so without black support; the prerequisite of united, solik black support is equality). We pose such struggles to white workers and point out the necessity for blacks and whites to be allied against their common emeny, the capitalist exploiters. We point out the historic subordination of blacks and their legitimate refusal to continue to tolerate it, and the necessity of white workers to champion black demands if unity is to prevail and workers are to get what they need and want.

Strategically, to win, blacks must move whites. Blacks must form alliances based on self-interest, not love. Out of such alliances mutual respect can develop. We urge blacks to raise class demands in addition to the black demands which have the potentiality of setting the white workers in motion around their own needs, for example jobs for all. If this is successfully accomplished under black leadership the possibilities of winning the whites to support for the black demands are greatly enhanced. However, we should have no illusions and should foster no illusions that advancing demands that directly appeal to the interests of white workers, like jobs for all, will be a talisman that will bring them into motion and/or win them to support for the black demands.

Blacks, however, may refuse to raise the demand of jobs for all. They may feel that they have no obligation to fight for jobs for white workers who often have jobs at the expense of blacks. For blacds to take

this attitude is wrong, destructive of class unity and in an error for the black struggle because it uneccessarily pits whites against blacks where there was a possibility of unity in the fight for jobs for blacks and jobs for all. We say all of this.

But our criticisms are not a reason for failing to support their struggle for preferential hiring or for failing to attempt to win white workers to support for that struggle, although the job is made more difficult.

To refuse to support their struggle because they are refusing to fight for jobs for all is to put the burden on blacks for ending the divisions in the working class. The working class is divided by the racist subordination of blacks, not by blacks fighting for equality. The burden is on the white workers who for years have participated in the exclusion of blacks from jobs and who often continue to do so, and who refuse to fight for jobs for all, including blacks.

To refuse to support their struggle for preferential hiring under those conditions is to perpetuate the old chauvinist relationship that whites only side with blacks when the blacks are fighting to end their own oppression. Particularly at a time when there is no working class struggle for jobs for all taking place it is to subordinate the legitimate demand of blacks for equality to the conservative racist consciousness of white workers. It is to guarantee that in the future blacks will not be won to such an approach. Only unconditional support to the struggles for black equality can provide a bridge to working class unity.

Thus we never ask blacks to subordinate their struggle for black equality to the backward consciousness of white workers in order to obtain class unity. (Such "unity" would be phoney anyway since it would involve one section of the working class being subordinated to another section.) Furthermore, we never make our support for the struggle for black equality conditional upon their raising class-wide demands.

A number of the demands mentioned here have been fought for in one way or another previously under the rubric of "community control." That was the fighting slogan of the late 1960's under which the black masses were frequently mobilized into struggle against their oppression. It reflected the blacks coming to a consciousness of their oppression as a race and their rejection of the white racist domination of every facet of black life. It was a healthy extension of the black power movement which rejected white control over blacks.

Around the turn of the decade, at the time when the black movement was ebbing, the call for community control at times became the cover for attempts to chain the black masses to capitalism through the agency of the black petty bourgeoisie. That tnedency became most manifest in Newark when the slogan was used by Baraka as a cover for his efforts to cooperate with the city administration in their efforts to break the Newark teachers' strike.

The slogan, then, like any nationalist slogan of the oppressed nation, has a dual character depending on who is wielding it and for what purposes. We therefore must exercise care in our use of it and never support it when it is used as it was by Baraka in Newark. (What facilitated Baraka's use of the black community in Newark was the failure of the AFT to forge an alliance with and to fight for the just aspirations of the black community, and its narrow trade union conceptions which allowed it to accept support from racist forces).

But caution does not dictate abandoning what was a fighting slogan of the blacks against racist oppression. To do so would be simply to grant an important tool to the bourgeoisie in the same way that giving up the term "socialism" because the Stalinists have so misused it weakens substantially our position, or that counterposing socialism to the black liberation movement needlessly isolates us and strengthens the efforts of the petty bourgeoisie to take the leadership of the movements against oppression. We support community control struggles that are real struggles for black liberation which have the potentiality of developing the consciousness and self-confidence of the black masses. We call for such struggles, putting our own content into them, and thereby enabling us to link up our political conceptions to the slogans which have currency in the black community. In our propaganda concerning community control we must be careful not to pander to illusions about power resting in the community and stress that the fundamental conflict is one of class.

Our general approach to the struggles for equality of the black community is the same as that for black workers. We urge them to extend their struggles to include not only black demands but class demands as well and to urge white workers to join them in the struggle for both. But our support for such struggles is not conditional upon their acceptance of that advice. We support them and we independently appeal to white workers to support them, and we continue to offer our point of view as we struggle alongside of them.

In all of these issues we strive for black workers organized as black workers to take the leadership. In no case, however, do we make black working class leadership a condition for our initiating or supporting struggles over such issues so long as a real battle for black needs is being waged. In those cases we participate in those struggles and fight for working class leadership. We are for this leadership because black workers are best able to carry out a sustained, organized struggle without betraying it and because of the strength they have as part of the working class. This strength is manifested in their own ability to affect production, especially where they are concentrated, and in their ability to involve the whole of the working class in the struggle for black liberation.

THE RANK AND FILE AND THE TRADE UNIONS

Jimmie Higgens
David Croes

A motion to the National Convention for the publication of a pamphlet dealing with the rank and file movement in the major areas in which we have been active during the past several years.

Resolved:

(1) That this convention, in its section on press and publications, vote that a pamphlet be commissioned on the rank and file struggle. The pamphlet should be seen as an update of the Stan Weir pamphlet, U.S.A. - The Labor Revolt.

(2) The pamphlet should include an introduction, three or four sections concentrating on particular rank and file situations, and a concluding section. The introduction would be basically our assessment of the current level and importance of the rank and file struggle. In it we would stress the importance of black workers and the role that they have played in the leadership of such struggles, the political character of attacks by the state, and the overall struggle of the ranks to free themselves from bureaucratic domination. In general, the introduction should convey the idea that there are certain trends in the development of the labor struggle and that it is imparative that the socialist movement recognize them for what they are. They deserve our support and even active participation even if they are not specifically revolutionary.

The middle three sections of the pamphlet would be the heart of the work and would concentrate on several of the industries in which we have been active in the past several years. The important thing in these sections would not be so much writing all that has happened in the most recent period, but rather concentrating on one or two of the most important aspects of the struggle in these industries. With only a minimal amount of over lapping it should be possible to have a treatement of such things as left labor bureaucrats, rank and file caucuses, government - union colaboration, the division of the skilled and unskilled, the spcial p roblems of women workers, and the leadership role that blacks have played in organizing.

The concluding section should be basically a restatement of the relevant sections of the Labor Perspectives Document. It is important that we show not only what has been happening, but also how it is possible to consciously raise the level of the rank and file struggle. In this context there should be a treatement of the relationship between the rank and file movement and the socialist movement. It is important that we continue to demonstrate to people that the relationship does not have to be a top down nor that the socialist movement has to lower the level of its politics to the lowest common denomenator of the class struggle.

(3) The four central sections of the pamphlet should be written on the United Automobile Workers, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the Communication Workers of America, and the United Mine Workers. There have been major labor struggles in all of these unions during the last three years. Each in its own way demonstrates a different aspect of the rank and file struggle. While we may have had no one actively involved in the UMW we have maintained close contact with the situation in the miners union and the lessons for the workers movement demonstrated by the Miners for Democracy are too important to pass over. Alternative or additional sections might include the United Farm Workers or the American Federation of Teachers.

(4) Except where it is impossible those within the organization who already have written major documents on these areas should be asked to write the articles for the pamphlet. The idea of the pamphlet is not to make it all inclusive nor politically exhaustive. Hence, those who are called upon should not feel that thay are being asked to accomplish a major project. Several days work in an area in which they are already familiar will be of several years benefit to all members of the organization.

(5) A editor should be choses who would oversee the entire writing of the pamphlet. He or she should write the introduction and perhap s the concluding section (although the final section may merely be a re-print from the Tasks and Perspectives - Labor Document). The editor should also see to it that all of the other sectionl flow together, stressing several common themes without repeating themselves too often.

(6) The pamphlet should have a specific orientation to rank and file militants and those independent elements within the socialist movement who are engaged in work place organizing. It should be seen not only as an attempt to speak to them about what we have learned about socialist organizing in the plants, but also those lessons that are central to the building of a strong rank and file movement.

In general some of the ideas that should be stressed are the need for national opposition to the companies and union bureaucries, the fact that certain groups within the work force and particular industries are more likely to play a vanguard role in the class struggle, the potential that the unions have for being class struggle unions, and the role that socialists should play within a rank and file organization.

(7) Upon adoption of the above points the designated editor should contact those who are projected to write the major sections of the pamphle. He or she should obtain from them a brief outline

of what they project writing. These outlines togehter with the introduction should be presented to the first following NAC meeting for debate and discussion. Once the overall thrust of the phamplet has been decided upon it should be a relatively small matter to see to it that the various sections get written.

(8) A deadline of no later that Christmas should be set for the p ublicatio n of the pamphlet. Its lengeh would probably be somewhere between 30 and 50 pages. Every effort should be made to keep the cost of the pamphlet down.

MEMBERS AT LARGE (MAL'S) AND CONTACTS

Jimmie Higgons
David Crees

A motion to the National Convention reguarding the relationship between the National Office and the membersat large in the organization and the contacts of the International Socialists.

Resolved:

(1) That the NC immediately following the convention appoint one p erson to be responsible for maintaining regular communication between the National Office and the members at large in the organization. To a lesser extent this person should be responsible for remaining in touch with the various contacts that we have made across the country.

(2) This position should be a part time position with the person selected directly responsible to the NAC. Regular reports should be made to the NAC on the state of the MAL's in the organization.

(3) In the long run this person should be working towards the development of a perspective which can provide guidance to the day to day activities of the MAL. A special effort should be made to systematize the lessons MAL's have learned in various cities so that the IS can begin to put foreward a perspective for revolutionaries isolated from one another and the class struggle.

(4) Closely related to contact with the MAL's will be the question of our relationship with other left working class groups in various cities. The MAL will often find his or her self working with these groups or supporting their activities. In these instances it is imparative that the National Office communicate with these groups, explaining our position on various topics. Such a dialogue is most necessary to support the MAL.

(5) In cojunction with the Educational Director the MAL coordinator should develope an educational program that will keep the MAL's on an even basis with the rest of the members in the organization. This is especially crucial for new members.

(6) The MAL Coordinator should be collection information about the various cities in which we have MAL's and contacts. This should include such things as possibilities for industrialization, local union activities, rank and file militancy, left organizing and other information that would be relevant to making such decisions as re-location people to that city, suggesting that the MAL move, or sending a person or persons in for a short period of time to work with local rank and file militants or left activists.

(7) The MAL Coordinator should assist the MAL with whatever resources the National Office has. This would generally include speakers, literature, and relevant information in areas in which the MAL is active.

Motivation to MAL and Contacts proposal.

As MAL's we realize the special problems that others in our position feel. Because we do not have the resources of a branch or the political exp erience of other members of the organization we are often left feeling frustrated in what preceisly is our role as revolutio naries in the 70's. The political development of MAL's is moro uneven than the rest of the organization and the situations that they face are generally more varied. Finally, regular channels of communication within the organization are not designed for the specific problems of the MAL.

These are just some of the reasons why we believe that it is most important for the o rganization to staff a position in the National Office whose main responsibility is that of maintaining contact with MAL and assisting them in their educational development and day to day activities. In the past this work has generally been done in a haphazard way if not at all. Various members of the N.O. communicated with various MAL's. While this is good there was no consistant effort to aid the MAL's and to learn from their experience so that we would know better in the future.

The position that is being suggested is a part time one, but this is not to detract from its importance. This is mainly out of consideration of the financial condition of the organization and the fact that a number of months will be required merely to decide what exactly has to be done and how much time it will require.

It is most important that the MAL coordinator be responsible to the NAC and that he or she give regular reports to he organization of their work. This is to insure that not just another bureaucratic post is created where either nothing is done or where the person uses the information and contact to benefit their own personal gain. We must begin to break down the conception that information belongs only to those who gather it.

Finally, a test of our politics and organizational ability in the future will be our ability to grow without having to re-locate many members in a city so that a critical mass is established. Not only will have objective (economic and sunjective included) conditions have to change, but also our ability to function as an organization that easilly attracts workers and left elements. A crucial part of this process is the way in which our MAL's develope, our relationship to them, and the lessons that we can learn about how to operate in areas in which we are not even a significant minority. While there will be no short cut to growth a MAL Coordinator could pinpoint much of signifance in the process.

AN IDEALIST CARICATURE OF LENINISM: In Reply to the 'Leninist Tendency'

We are grateful to the 'Leninist Tendency' for having opened a discussion of the organizational ideas of Lenin and Trotsky, a discussion which is all the more welcome for being long overdue. Without questioning the seriousness or dedication of these comrades, our reply is vitally necessary inasmuch as the conclusions of the 'Leninist Tendency' represent, in the guise of orthodoxy, a break with the method of revolutionary Marxism.

> "A Marxist must take cognizance of real life, of the true facts of reality, and not cling to a theory of yesterday, which, like all theories, at best only outlines the main and the general, only comes near to embracing life in all its complexity. 'Theory, my friend, is gray, but green is the eternal tree of life'"
> (Lenin, Letters on Tactics, Collected Works (CW), Vol 24, p 45)

The LT's viewpoint on the necessity of the party is formally correct, but proceeds from a quite different philosophical orientation than that of Marxism; "gray theory", not the "green tree of life", is uppermost in their minds. Such an orientation is called idealism. Like all idealists, they have great difficulty reconciling their ideas with reality.

The LT repeats organizational formulae memorized from the past in order to shield itself from a consideration of the essential practical task for revolutionaries in 1973: In an era when the revolutionary movement, as a material force in the working class, has been almost entirely annihilated in every country in the world, how do revolutionaries re-establish a presence in the working class?

From this standpoint, we plan to discuss the following aspects of the 'Draft Program of the Leninist Tendency': 1) The need for a concrete social analysis of modern capitalism ; 2) Lenin and Trotsky on the Marxist method; 3) Unity of theory and practice; 4) Who is the vanguard?; 5) Lenin on the trade union question; 6) The myth of 'spontaneity'; 7) Trotsky on the trade union question; 8) Revolutionaries in the unions today; and 9) Capitulation to Stalinism.

1) THE NEED FOR A CONCRETE SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF CAPITALISM

In order to rebiuld a real revolutionary workers' party, we must develop a revolutionary theory. The theoretical struggle is just as important as any other struggle, political or economic. It can no more be decided by reference to past struggles than any other struggle. We study the methods of Lenin and Trotsky as a guide to action in the class struggle, not to "codify","elaborate" or "bear" that knowledge as a substitute for the working class.

Any theory of society worthy of the name 'Marxist' must begin with an analysis of the economy. But, in place of a concrete analysis, we are told by the LT that "We have left behind the post-World War II period of relative capitalist stability, a period allowed in history largely by the criminal betrayals of the stalinists and social-democrats, and the weakness of the revolutionary forces. Thus the surface appearance of the epoch, the epoch of world wars and revolutions, of imperialist decay, is being decisively stripped away."

For these phrasemongers, capitalism consists of two epochs, and only two: 1) capitalism which is expanding and therefore progressive, and 2) capitalism which is stagnating, decaying, and therefore reactionary. To "those 'old Bolsheviks' who more than once already have played so regrettable a role in the history of our party by reiterating formulas senselessly learned by rote instead

of studying the specific features of the new and living reality" (Lenin,CW, vol 24, p 44), we continue to patiently explain; What are you going to do when confronted by capitalism that is expanding because of arms spending, and is therefore reactionary? What are you going to give up: your "theoretically correct" abstractions or living reality?

Unable to analyse social forces, they resort to conspiracy theories which have the effect of absolving the capitalist class of responsibility for its own reactionary policies. For idealists, betrayel is advanced as the only reason for the continued existence capitalist injustice. The head of Marxism has been chopped off, and the LT is worried about it losing its hair!

(We refer the reader to "A Case of Retrograde Motion" by Emmet Casey (Bulletin #40?) for a fuller explanation of the abstractness and superficiality of a scheme which substitues "sonorous but empty phrases" for a concrete analysis of social reality.

2.LENIN AND TROTSKY ON THE MARXIST METHOD

When challenged by a new historical situation, Lenin and Trotsky did not retreat into old dogma; on the contrary, they challenged dogma and returned to their tools, their method, in order to arrive at new, more realistic conclusions. A case in point is Trotsky's The New Course, written in 1924 when he first began the fight against Stalinism, a fight that ended only with his death at the hands of a Stalinist agent. In contrast to Stalin's dogmatism, Trotsky affirmed that

> "Marxism is a method of historical analysis, of political orientation, and not a mass of decisions prepared in advance."
> (Trotsky, The New Course, New International Pub. Co., p 52)

Unlike their idol, the LT finds that "the elaboration and codification of that knowlege (Marxism--ec) occurred after the October revolution, in the documents of the first four congresses of the Communist International, and was defended and carried forward by the Trotskyist movement, and by it alone".

A little learning is a dangerous thing-- for its possessor. The comrades of the LT have zealously studied 'a mass of decisions prepared in advance' and believe that because this knowledge "has been developed historically and verified, positively and negatively, in struggle" in the past, that they have mastered, however imperfectly, the method of Marxism.

> "Where will you get a conception of society and progress in general if you have not studied a single social formation in particular, if you have not even been able to approach a serious factual investigation, an objective analysis of social relations of any kind? This is a most obvious symptom of metaphysics, with which every science began: as long as people did not know how to set about studying the facts, they always invented a priori general theories which were always sterile"
> (Lenin, Who are the 'Friends of the People'?, CW, vol 1, p 144)

In their infatuation with metaphysically correct politics, the LT has set aside, without realizing it, the fundamental method of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky.

3. UNITY OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

For Marxists, theory and practice represent a unified whole. Practice is the expression of theory on a higher plane, the realm of interaction of material forces. For the LT, practice is an emanation of theory, which is liable at any moment, if not guarded by a supreme effort of will, to become 'incorrect' or

'unprincipled'.

No one doubts or can doubt that the IS is an organization badly affected by an amateurish approach to both theory and practice. We all share the blame for this and we must all work to correct it. But we cannot correct our problems solely through internal debate, cutting ourselves off from the working class, whose social being as an oppressed and exploited class is an essential guarantee of the rebirth of Marxist theory and a Marxist movement. As Tony Cliff states,

> "Lenin's contribution to showing how a revolutionary party should work is contained in the history of his activity, not in some abstract theory."
> (Cliff, Lenin and the Revolutionary Party, International Socialism #58, p 10)

Almost all of Lenin's writings were written for concrete polemical situations in which he was trying to achieve some concrete task, vanquish some concrete opponent, or establish some concrete alliance. Therefore, as Marxists who study the writings of Lenin inorder to gain some guidance for our own concrete, but different, historical tasks, our first duty must be to separate the immediately polemical matter, which is conditioned by the specific historical situation, from the conclusions which can be generalized to have relevance to our own epoch. And the only way to do this, without degenerating into total subjectivism, is to analyse Lenin's thought historically, see his activity first in its own historical context, noting that which changes as conditions change and that which remains the same.

> "The whole art of politics lies in finding and taking as firm a grip as we can of the link that is least likely to be struck from our hands, the one that is most important at the given moment, the one that most of all guarantees its possessor the possession of the whole chain."
> (Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, CW, vol 5, p 502)

The art of grasping the key link is too much for the LT. The movement of revolutionary Marxism has lost touch with the working class. Instead of trying to reestablish contact with its vanguard elements, the LT proclaims itself to be the vanguard, hoping to recruit to itself by a process of splits and fusions while remaining in isolation from the class! In 1917, Lenin appealed to the Bolshevik Party, to cast off the arguments of "bureaucratism, routinism, and inertia":

> "Yet we are afraid of our own selves. We are loath to cast off the 'dear old' soiled shirt....But it is time to cast off the soiled shirt and put on clean linen."
> (Lenin, The Tasks of the Proletariat In Our Revolution, CW, Vol. 24, page 88)

4. WHO IS THE VANGUARD?

In Shakespeare's Henry IV, the magician Owen Glendower claims, "I can call spirits from the vasty deep." Hotspur replies, "Why so can I, or so can any man; But will they come when you do call for them?"

By saying that the vanguard is "that political current which bears the programmatic knowledge necessary to implement the historic goal of the proletariat, the socialist revolution," and "its possible small size, social composition (emphasis added - ec) and isolation from the working class do not necessarily deprive it of its ability to bear the revolutionary program, despite objective pressures toward programmatic deformation thereby created. Such weaknesses are rather barriers which this

vanguard must overcome if the program is to be carried out. "These phrases all indicate a willingness to set free the vanguard from its class, to conceive of the vanguard not as Marxists do; that is, as a specific section of a specific class in motion, but as a free-floating group of intellectuals bound together only by a set of ideas. By thus separating the vanguard from the class in theory, the LT capitulates to the ideaology of the bourgeoisie. For in practice, it is the bourgeoisie which is constantly, and in our epoch successfully, seeking to separate the proletariat from its vanguard. Lenin did not succumb to this illusion. For him the proletariat was indissolubly linked with the vanguard. Speaking in 1907, in the preface to the collection Twelve Years, he discussed the victory of the party's central core on the task of building the vanguard party:

> "Basically, of course, their success was due to the fact that the working class, whose best representatives built the Social-Democratic Party, for objective economic reasons possesses a greater capacity for organization than any other class in capitalist society. Without this condition an organization of professional revolutionaries would be nothing more than a plaything, an adventure, a mere signboard. What Is To Be Done? repeatedly emphasizes this, pointing out that the organization it advocates has no meaning apart from its connection with the 'genuine revolutionary class that is spontaneously rising to struggle.' But the objective maximum ability of the proletariat to unite in a class is realised through living people, and only through definite forms of organization."
> (Lenin, CW, Vol. 13, pp. 103-04)

This testimony of Lenin's is all the more valuable because he himself considered the essential link between the proletariat and its vanguard to be the important point long after the immediate polemical occasion.

> "It is not enough to call ourselves the 'vanguard,' the advanced contingent; we must act in such a way that all the other contingents recognise and are obliged to admit that we are marching in the vanguard. And we ask the reader: Are the representatives of the other "contingents" such fools as to take our word for it when we say we are the 'vanguard?'"
> (Lenin, What is to be done?, CW, Vol. 5, p. 426)

5. LENIN ON THE TRADE UNION QUESTION

The LT's confusion here is of a truly classic nature. Their method consists of lifting out of context Lenin's dictum of spontaneity (1902), a position he himself later admitted, "I had not quite adroitly or precisely formulated," (CW, vol. 13, p. 107) and raise this to a level of principle in order to justify the most absurd sectarianism. Are the LT comrades totally unaware of Lenin's and Trotsky's own writings on trade union activity?

In 1897, due to the success of the new agitation policy which had proved itself during the big 1896 strike movement, the Russian Marxists were for the first time in command of a sizable following in the working class. This agitation proceeded in an extremely low-level manner. Lenin's appeal To the Working Men and Women of the Thornton Factory contains the following classic lines of reformist deceit:

> "In defending these demands, comrades, we are not rebelling at all; we are merely demanding that we be given what all the workers of other factories now enjoy by law." (Lenin, CW, Vol. 2, p. 85)

Buoyed up by these betrayals, he went on to advocate a particularly unsavory variant of the utterly discredited "next step" theory:

> "agitation among the workers means that the Social-Democrats take part in all the spontaneous manifestations of the working-class struggle, in all the conflicts between the workers and the capitalists over the working day, wages, working conditions, etc, etc. Our task is to merge our activities with the practical, every-day questions of working-class life, to help the workers understand these questions, to draw the workers' attention to the most important abuses, to help them formulate their demands to the employers more precisely and practically, to develop among the workers consciousness of their solidarity, consciousness of the common interests and common cause of all the Russian workers as a united working class that is part of the international army of the proletariat."
> (Lenin, The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats, CW, Vol. 2, p.329)

Of course, inevitably, such gross insensitivity could only lead to "workerism:"

> "Russian Social-Democracy must not dissipate its forces; it must concentrate its activities on the industrial proletariat, who are most suseptible to Social-Democratic ideas, most developed intellectually and politically, and most important by virtue of their numbers and concentration in the country's largest political centres. The creation of a durable organization among the factory, urban workers is therefore the first and most urgent task confronting Social-Democracy, one from which it would be highly unwide to let ourselves be diverted at the present time." (Lenin, ibid., p. 330)

But, as he saw a new trend, Economism, emerge in both theory and practice, Lenin not only changed his attitude towards the party, but also his approach to the trade unions. He accused the Economists of "bowing to spontaneity," that is, the consciousness which exists at the given moment, with confusing the trade union struggle with the political struggle (to overthrow Tsarism and establish bourgeois democracy), and of amateurishness in their practical work. Lenin at this time held to a two-stage theory which had been the decisive achievement of Plekhanov's struggle against Narodism. In this theory, the proletariat first had to struggle to achieve political liberty; then, and only then, could the struggle for socialism be undertaken.

Unlike the Economists, however, Lenin (and Plekhanov) did not counterpose the economic and political struggles, nor did they think that this bourgeois-democratic revolution would be the work of the bourgeoisie, but of the proletariat in a democratic alliance with the peasantry. To combat Economism, Lenin changed and developed a number of his earlier positions. In doing so, his method was not abstarct or sectarian, but related to changes in objective conditions:

> "Have we sufficient forces to direct our propaganda and agitation among <u>all</u> social classes? Most certainly. Our Economists, who are frequesntly inclined to deny this, lose sight of the gigantic progresss our movement has made from (approximately) 1894 to 1901. Like real 'tail-enders' they often go on living in the bygone stages of the movement's inception. In the earlier period, indeed, we had astonishingly few forces, and it was perfectly natural and legitimate then to devote ourselves exclusively to activities among the workers and to condemn severely any deviation from this course. The entire task then was to consolidate our position in the working class." (Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, CW, Vol. 5, p. 429)

But he goes on to develop a position on critical support that sounds suspiciously like the discredited "muted cheer" theory:

> "In this sense we may, and should say...(to the police agents and their legal "unions") Keep at it, gentlemen, do your best! Whenever you place a trap in the path of the workers...we will you see to it you are exposed. But whenever you take a real step forward, though it be the most 'timid zigzag' we will say,: Please continue!' And the only step that can be a real step forward is a real, if small extension of the workers' field of action." (Lenin, ibid., p. 455-56)

Lenin calls this process "separating the wheat from the tares", and, as if suspecting that some small future group of sectarians might decide to name a tendency after him, adds, "It is not our business to grow wheat in flowerpots." Even with increased forces at his disposal, Lenin still did not contemplate setting the party, and the workers under its influence, off from even the most reactionary police-run unions. He poses the 'next step' as a concrete strategy for winning the workers under the influence of the secret police.

6) THE MYTH OF 'SPONTANEITY'

It is only within this framework that Lenin's dictum on spontaneity can be adequately understood:

> "The history of all countries shows that the working-class, exclusively by its own efforts, is able to develop only trade-union consciousness." (Lenin, ibid., p 375)

Lenin was correct for the period in which he was writing. When political activity in the working class is at an ebb, as it was in 1903 in Russia (and even more true it is in the USA today) there is nothing but the socialist movement to remind the workers of their historic mission to abolish capitalism. It is a characteristic of non-revolutionary periods that working-class consciousness advances very slowly and in quantitative steps. In such a period,

> "To belittle the socialist ideology <u>in any way</u>, <u>to turn aside from it to the slightest degree</u>, means to strenghten bourgeois ideology." (Lenin, ibid., p 384)

The crime of the Economists was precisely that, by use of abstract arguments that were valid in an earlier day, when the tasks of the movement were different, they moved the class a step backwards to earlier forms of struggle, catering to the more backward elements of the class, those most under the sway of bourgeois ideology, whose expression in the working class was trade unionism.

> "But why the reader will ask, does the spontaneous movement. the movement along the line of leqst resistance, lead to the domination of bourgeois ideology? For the simple reason that bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than socialist ideology, that it is more fully developed, and that it has at its disposal <u>immeasureably</u> more means of dissemination. And the younger the socialist movement in any given country, the more vigorously it must struggle against all attempts to entrench the non-socialist ideology, and the more resolutely the workers must be warned against the bad counsellors who shout against 'overrating the conscious element', etc." (Lenin, ibid., p 386)

With the revolutionary situation in 1905, and the tremendous spontaneous upsurge of the Russian proletariat, socialist consciousness made a qualitative leap and burst the narrow organizational framework of revolutionary Social-Democracy. Non-party workers suddenly also became capable of planned, conscious organizational activity. It is in revolutionary periods, dear members of the LT, that history is capable of refuting the charge that socialist consciousness is brought into the working class from without. Although no party, including the Bolsheviks, called for the Soviets (some Mensheviks were at the founding meeting of the St. Petersburg Soviet, and Trotsky was at its second meeting), they were created inan organized, conscious way to pose the question of state power in its most immediate form.

Lenin, realizing the demands the new period placed upon the party, first had to sharply oppose new elements of routinism and inertia that clung to the schema outlined in What Is To Be Done? even where it had become inappropriate. To the 'committeemen' who looked with suspicion upon the new organizational form, Lenin replied,

> "It seems to me Comrade Radin is wrong in posing the question ...the Soviet of Workers' Deputies or the Party?... the decision must certainly be: both the Soviet of Workers' Deputies and the Party. The only question-- and a highly important one-- is how to divide and how to combine the tasks of the Soviet and those of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party."
> (Lenin, Our Tasks and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, CW, vol 10,p 19)

The October Revolution of 1917 was to provide the answer to the latter question.

Used to underground, conspiratorial work, the 'committeemen' feared the democratization of the party, the changeover to legal work, and the influx of newly radicalized workers. They feared the program would be watered down. Lenin had a better idea:

> "The working class is instinctively, spontaneously Social-Democratic, and more than ten years of work put in by Social-Democracy has done a great deal to transform this spontaneity into consciousness. Don't invent bugaboos, comrades! Don't forget that in every live and growing party there will always be elements of instability, vacillation, wavering. But these elements can be influenced and they will submit to the influence of the steadfast and solid core of Social-Democrats."
> (Lenin, The Reorganization of the Party, CW, Vol 10, p 32)

The question of whether the proletariat could achieve socialist consciousness on its own was solved not in theory, but in practice. The sudden leap in consciousness would have been impossible without the formation of a vanguard party and the slow, patient work of the preceeding period. Yet when the crisis came, the aevanced elements temporarily found themselves behind the less advanced ones of a moment before.

From this point on, Lenin's thinking is dominated, not by the increasingly sterile counterposition of spontaneity and consciousness, but by the role of the party in fusing the consciousness of the 'deeper and lower' layers of the class to that of the vanguard workers organized into the party. History has since shown other examples of the mass of workers leaping forward to socialist consciousness under the pressure of a revolutionary situation. But it shows only one example where the workers were able to seize and hold state power for a number of years.

In Russia - in October 1917 - Lenin and the Bolsheviks raised the dialectic of party and class to "its highest level of concreteness" (Cliff) - in both theory and practice. The masses, organized behind the Soviets, with Trotsky at their head, voted for the Military-Revolutionary Committee - their vanguard, the Bolshevik Party - with Lenin at its head - to seize state power and expropriate the expropriators.

7. TROTSKY ON THE TRADE UNION QUESTION

Trotsky also emphasized the need to work with less advanced layers of the class, and not counterpose the transitional program to every striving of the class for independence from its reactionary leaders. Even though he wrote in a transitional period, when [illegible] direct programmatic agitation in the working class was possible (and necessary) in a way that it is not today, he did not walk into the sectarian mousetrap like the LT has done, lured by the savory but poisoned cheese of abstract principle.

The LT claims, "The basis for such (i.e., union - ec) caucuses is the program by which they are distinguished from other trade union groupings, the transitional program for working class power." The LT in its metaphysical urge to clarify principles does not realize that it has undermined its own concept of a vanguard party, by fobbing off its historic task, the struggle for a revolutionary program, onto a transitory and intermediate formation, a trade-union caucus.

The LT in effect turns its back on the working class by demanding that all workers who wish to struggle with it against the union bureaucrats must first accept the transitional program before they begin to struggle! But this is preposterous! It is precisely <u>through</u> struggle and <u>in</u> struggle that we can ever hope to get workers to agree with us on anything. Is it clear to you now, esteemed "Leninists," why we are forced to call you idealists?

If the program of the caucus cannot differ from the program of the party, such caucuses are in fact not caucuses at all, but party fractions. Why does not the LT tell the truth about this?

What is worse for the LT, Trotsky in the transitional program, does not even advocate this:

> "Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against bourgeois society; and, if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. If it be criminal to turn one's back on mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian fictions, it is no less so to passively tolerate subordination of the revolutionary movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative ('progressive') bureaucratic cliques."
> (Trotsky, The Death Agony of Capitalism..., Pathfinder, page 11)

"To create in all possible instances independent militant organizations"? Or just in cases where the militants already accept the transitional program? Do you see the difference, O wise "Trotskyists"?

In his unfinished essay, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay," Trotsky formulated some demands that were adapted to the "concrete conditions existing in the trade unions." There are just two: "Complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the state" and "trade union democracy." (Trotsky, On the Trade Unions, Pathfinder, p. 70) It's unbelievable! Just TWO slogans! Utterly NO ATTEMPT to go beyond the bankrupt framework of "militancy - honesty - democracy"! Nor, if I may be allowed to put it this way, can it be otherwise for a Marxist, who proceeds from the actual level of struggle. Idealists, of course, are free to do anything they wish. The sky's the limit, when your main concern is creating clear lines of demarcation between yourselves and other sects. The masses, after all, are hungrily waiting to choose the most spotless banner, gloriously inscribed with the motto of the Red Queen; "Sometimes I can think of six impossible things before breakfast."

8. REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE UNIONS TODAY

To say we are for the working class advancing the next step does not mean that we are blind to the dangers of co-optation. It does not mean that we do not see the possibility, in a revolutionary situation, of skipping stages. It does not mean that we are opposed to all the other steps, up to and including the classless society of the future. It means only that we have a definite strategy for action.

In this strategy,, the first step, establishing a presence in the class, is the precondition for a whole series of other steps - engaging in shop-floor struggles, building rank-and-file caucuses, raising our program, struggling for alternative leadership, forming open socialist fractions - all the way up to struggling for workers' power and a socialist revolution.

In order to establish this presence, which is the task of a propaganda group, we must be totally honest about our intentions. "We must be sensitive to and combat suspicions that our socialist politics is an ulterior motive and that we use the class struggle for our own ulterior and essentially foreign ends," as John Weber states in his Auto Perppectives (p. 11). We must not only "raise our program" but point out to these workers, in deeds and not just in words, that the program of revolutionary Marxism is not a froeign program, but in fact the best expression of their own needs.

At the present uneven, incoherent level of consciousness, most workers, including the most advanced, think of the union not as an arena of struggle, but as an attorney, a professional hired by them to do a job they think they do not have the skill or knowledge to do. "Under such circumstances, we could easily end up talking only to ourselves, testing our effectiveness not by our ability to influence consciousness, but rather merely testing it against some abstract standard of correctness or other preconceived notions which we brought with us into the class." (Weber, p. 12)

Without sensitivity to the current level of consciousness, all our attempts at "raising our program" can very easily have only the effect of increasing the hold of bourgeois ideaology over the workers, not weakening it. We cannot fight the class struggle or lead the working class to victory with a theory which is divorced from current levels of struggle. Such notions represent a turning away from Marxism towards elitist substitutionism. Any program can and has been ridden to victory by shrewd opportunists looking for a left cover, as long as the rank and file remain steeped in passivity. Our task is to break through that passivity.

> "Only those who are not sure of themselves can fear to enter into temporary alliances even with unreliable people; not a single political

> party could exist without such alliances...but an essential condition for such an alliance must be the full opportunity for the socialists to reveal to the working class that its interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the bourgeoisie." (Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, CW, Vol 5, p 362)

We cannot guarantee in advance that we will not make mistakes. No one can or should deny that. But we must find the road to the working class. We are sure that we must establish real roots in that class, not out of mystical longing, but out of a material necessity to alert that class to its historic role.

For the Russian Marxists in 1902, the main obstacle was the secret police. The workers were generally receptive and wished to be educated. They respected and looked up to educated people. The road to the workers lay through illegal, conspiritorial work. Lenin, seeing the key link, built the part that could march upon that road.

We are now in a different place. To seek the same goal, we must march a different road. The workers, being better educated, have lost a lot of their awe of intellectuals, but do not see their own ideas as being influenced by bourgeois ideology. It is not the whip and the knout that isolates us from the advanced workers, but a wall of ideas. We can break down that wall. We must break down that wall.

If we were entering a pre-revolutionary period as the LT claims, to talk of our work being mainly propagandistic would be a fatal mistake. Precisely because we are entering into a period where reforms are not impossible, but are getting increasingly harder to win and demand a higher level of struggle, a propaganda group which actively intervenes in the class struggle to the extent of its resources is the mode of action best suited to our historical tasks. Today, grasping the key link means 'going to school in the working class'. By bridging the gap between the revolutionary movement and the advanced layers of the working class, we can contribute to the formation of a real working-class vanguard in the USA, that will not be a "plaything, an adventure, a mere signboard."

We do not know how to abhieve this in practice as yet. Scientific socialists--who analyse real social forces--professional revolutionaries-- who commit themselves to a given line, and then attempt to carry it out-- can afford to experiment. Windbags and phrasemongers-- whose supreme virtue lies in being suprahistorical-- cannot, without compromising the purity of their theory.

The LT has not completely broken with the elitism that underlies the general movement of radical intellectuals. They shy away from the immensely important task of breaking the workers from the hold of bourgeois ideology, for fear of losing their intellectual exclusiveness, that which sets them off from the class.

When the LT accuses the IS majority of 'workerism', of following a 'next step' theory, of advancing a 'muted-cheer' concept of critical support, it merely demonstrates the silliness and stupidity of its school-boy method of learning Marxist formulae by rote and repeating them mechanically. We must learn to use Marxism creatively, as a lever which we introduce into a social situation in order to change it.

The Marxist movement of the past is dead as a material force. The bureaucbatized shells of once-proletarian parties are now roadblocks, not allies on the road to revolution. The Russian workers' state is dead. The First, Second, and Third

Internationals are stinking corpses, and the Fourth is stillborn triplets. It is no use trying to revive any of them. And the sooner we begin to realize this fact the better.

The way to go is forward-- to a new revolutionary theory, a new revolutionary party, a new revolutionary international. In terms of our practical tasks, we are back at the beginning, where the Russian Marxists were in 1894, only in a reactionary, decaying capitalism, not a forward, living one.

We do have a backlog of accumulated experience and theory which can be an invaluable guide if we apply it wisely, with a correct Marxist understanding of our historical situation, our historical tasks. But this same backlog can be a horrible stumbling-block if we apply it unthinkingly, mechanically, and idealistically, like the "Leninist" Tendency.

9. CAPITULATION TO STALINISM

We must learn from social reality. Otherwise, we are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past. In a world that has gone through so many calamities in the wake of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, where the Stalinist bureaucrats control one-third of the world's people and the second most powerful national aggregate of capital, failure to understand the sources of that degeneration will doom us to impotence in the revolutionary struggle.

By struggling now to build a democratic, revolutionary Marxist movement that conceives of itself as being in solidarity with the oppressed classes and peoples of the entire world, and in revolutionary opposition to the ruling classes everywhere in the world, we provide the best possible guarantee against capitulation to Stalinism. This and only this, is the meaning of the slogan, "For a third camp."

Workers' democracy in the workers' state and workers' parties, workers' management of production - these are not superficial embellishments on the proletarian dictatorship, but its very essence. A workers' state that does without any of these for any length of time is not aiding the world-wide revolutionary movement of the proletariat, but hindering it. It is deviating from Marxism, not advancing it. At best it is "marking time," waiting for the situation to become more favorable to the revolution. At worst it is signing its own death warrant. In Russia, the worst has happened.

The class does not rule through the party, but through the workers' councils, its own organs of class rule, in which all workers' parties are represented. To demand anything less in advance means to bear complicity for, to capitulate to those objective tendencies to degeneration which are present in any revolution until the bourgeoisie has been defeated all over the world.

If workers' states can be created by some other road than that of proletarian revolution, then the need for a revolutionary party becomes a "matter of taste." The concept of degenerated workers' states which last for generations, have no traces of workers', or even of bourgeois, democracy, and were not forged in revolutions led by the working class, is nothing byt pompous gibberish designed to deceive the unwary.

Such a theory cannot stand even the kind of cursory, superficial analysis typical of the LT's appreach to western capitalism. The LT thinks, "We believe the a achievement of a nationalized, plannable economy to be a victory for the working

class, as it is the mode of production appropriate for the rule of the proletariat, and for it alone." This is entirely wrong. Resonant phrases have been copied down at random from textbooks of Marxism without any conception of what they mean. The mode of production, e.g. feudalism, capitalism, socialism, can be described as a definite stage in the development of the material productive forces. To quote Marx,

> "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness."
> (Marx, Preface to the Critique of Political Economy, Selected Works, Vol. 1, p. 363.)

The capitalist mode of production distinguishes itself chiefly from the feudal mode in that small-scale artisan production is oversome by large-scale factory production and by wage labor replacing serfdom. The socialist mode of production will distinguish itself from capitalism as free co-operation and collective management replace individual management and free, self-determined labor replaces alienated, commodity wage-labor. We have seen societies in a process of transition from capitalism to socialism, but we have never seen, and never will see, an "intermediate" mode of production between capitalism and socialism. To postulate such a stage means capitalism is not the last stage of class exploitation, that all along the line, every revolution, every society must pass through some formof 'degeneration'.

An 'economy' cannot be 'nationalized', but the property relations typical of a given economy or set of production relations can and should be. These property relations are part of the legal and political superstructure which rests upon the mode of production and is determined by it. Changes in the mode of production are gradual and quantitative, but eventually reach such a quantity that a change in quality, a revolution, becomes inevitable, if further changes are to occur. In a revolution the superstructure becomes transformed, making further quantitative change towards the new mode of production possible.

Thus, although nationalized property relations are necessary for socialism, they are not sufficient to bring it about. History provides us with many examples of nationalized property forms coexisting with a capitalist mode of production. In such cases, the nationalized property forms are stripped of their socialist character and forced to assume a capitalist one. It has not yet occurred to any Marxists to designate the British Coal Board as a 'degenerated workers' corporation'!

The Russian revolution provided us with the example, and we hope it forever remains unique in history, of a proletarian revolution which degenerated to a capitalist mode of production without the property forms being altered and without the bougeoisie being restored to power. But labor power has reacquired its commodity nature, and factory production has lost its free, and reacquired its compulsory character. And all hopes of reforming the state that has introduced this mode of production are gone.

The LT is free to ignore history if it wishes. It is free to be confused about the correct way to use the interrelationship of base and superstructure. But it has neither the freedom or the right to call itself Marxist or Leninist as long as it does so. Because the LT cannot analyse Russian society, or any society, in a Marxist scientific way, it vilifies with personal slanders. "For lack of a clean, principled weapon, they snatch at a dirty one."

The IS is denounced for 'Shachtmanism', with a history of adaptation, opportunism, vacillation. We see as a basic characteristic the willingness to drop key parts of program when it seems opportune, and we npte a literally congenital ability to recognize the class line." And this from people who go on to consider many of the world's most brutal and oppressive dictatorships to be some (adjectival*) form of x workers' states!

Unfortunately, this kind of denunciation is not new. Leon Trotsky faced it in 1924, when, long after he had broken with Menshevism, Stalin threw in his face his old quarrels with Lenin. Trotsky replied as only he could:

> "To make out of the traditions of Leninism a supra-theoretical guarantee of the infallibility of all the words and thoughts of the interpreters of these traditions, is to scoff at genuine revolutionary tradition and transform it into official bureaucratism. It is ridiculous and pathetic to try to hypnotize a great revolutionary party by the repetition of the same formulae, according to which the right line should be sought not in the essence of each question, not in the essence of each question, not in the methods of posing and solving this question, but in information...of a biographical character." (Trotsky, The New Course, pp 56-57)

Shachtman broke from his own method, that of revolutionary Marxism, when he liquidated the Independent Socialist League in 1958. He formally renounced both Trotskyism and Leninism in the ISL's dissolution statement. In order to form the IS we had to break from Shachtman, and we did. That this should be construed to invalidate the entire struggle of the ISL and the Workers' Party is the vilest kind of innuendo.

Our road to the method of Leninism and Trotskyism lies along much of that road. And it is not the worst one. In 1973, it is no longer how you came to the method of revolutionary Marxism that matters. It is what you do when you get there.

--Emmet Casey
--Ann Judah
--Jean Diamond

We welcome comments and criticism which will be useful in preparing the final draft.

*Grammatical footnote-- Adjectives, such as 'degenerated, or 'deformed' merely modify the nouns they precede. They do not change them into their opposite.

ANATOMY OF A WILDCAT

Neil C. - Detroit

Introduction

One of the clearest symptoms of terminal sectarianism is a loss of contact with reality. The real world becomes subordinate to one's own ideology. One looks only at those facts that support one's perspective; and if these do not exist, they are invented. Contradictory facts are ignored or denied. The NCLC is a perfect example of the final degenerative stage of this plague.

The most virulent strains of this disease thrive during internal faction fights, such as the one now going on inside the IS. Everything is said and done is directed towards winning a majority. Every lie, slander, distortion and invention is sanctified if it changes enough votes to give the perpetrators control over the organization. One tactic used by such sectarian opportunists is to put down only the vaguest generalities in writing. Concrete questions are only discussed orally; both to protect the faction leaders from exposure by the people they lie about, and to allow them to adjust their ideas to every branch or individual they want to recruit.

It is a grave matter to have to charge the leadership of the RT with showing symptoms of this disease, with using such tactics in regard to the Chrysler wildcat strike we were involved in in March. Nevertheless, as the wildest rumors float in from the outlying branches (the TC started a wildcat, the TC got 9...15...23...many Black workers fired, the TC is playing into the hands of management, the TC is providing a left cover for opportunists), and as even RT'ers in Detroit come out with similar nonsense, it is difficult to draw any other conclusion.

Therefore it becomes necessary to put out in deatil all the facts about what really happened during the strike and what our actual role was. Only names will be witheld for security, and we ask the RT leadership, from whom we hope to get a <u>written</u> reply, to observe the same, elementary precaution.

Sequence of Events

The strike started at the south side of the plant on the second shift. A worker named Jim was fired in a workload-speedup dispute. Jim could not be considered a militant shop floor leader, but he was well known and popular. When he got fired, about 20-30 of the workers in his department walked off the job. This was enough to shut down the department, and therefore the whole plant, for the rest of the shift. This happened on Feb. 28.

On March 1, the workers of this department passed the word to management that unless Jim were brought back by 6 p.m., there would be another walkout. At 5:40, the stewards got a promise from the company that Jim would be back the next day.

On March 2, half an hour before the end of the shift, a worker named John was discharged, accused of being the leader of the Feb. 28 walkout. John was singled out because he was foolish enough to punch his time-card on the way out, giving the company concrete evidence of when he left the job. A dozen other workers were given write-ups or time-off. These were mainly people that various foremen held grudges against.

March 2 was a Friday. By Monday, March 5, we had put out a leaflet calling for John to be brought back by unspecified means. The workers in John's department were ready to walk out again, but this time the local bureaucracy was prepared. They sent down local officers to talk the workers into staying on the job, and to promise that they would bring John back through the grievance procedure. The workers reluctantly agreed to give the local a chance, but warned them that they wanted to see some action by Wednesday, or else.

On Wednesday, March 7, 200 workers gathered at the union hall before the second shift. They demanded to know when John was coming back. The local president said that he was still working on it, go back to work and give him more time. After some speculation about the ancestry and habits of the local leadership, the workers decided to stay out and shut the plant down again, which we did.

On March 8, we gathered in the parking lot before the second shift to see if management was ready to make any concessions yet. They took a hard line and refused to negotiate while the plant was shut down. We refused to go back to work without a general amnesty for all those who had walked out since Feb. 28.

On March 9, we turned up at the South Gate as the day shift was coming in, told them about the situation, and asked them to stay out in support. They did so, and that Friday the plant was shut down for both shifts.

Up to this point just a few departments had been actively involved in maintaining the strike. Over the weekend we held meetings trying to organize a strike committee representative of the whole plant. We wanted to formulate a set of demands that went beyond amnesty, and we also wanted to organize a demonstration at Solidarity House to demand that they support the strike. Unfortunately the strike was losing momentum at this point.

Over this weekend, the company sent out telegrams firing eight more workers. All had participated in the strike, but none were among the real leadership.

We managed to shut down the day shift Monday morning, but many on the second shift were losing heart. They had already lost three days' pay, made no visible gains, and felt threatened with discharge. A heavy contingent of UAW bureaucrats contributed to their demoralization with sound-trucks and slanderous leaflets urging people to go back to work. We were unable to keep the second shift out, the strike was over.

Background

A number of factors have to be studied to understand the significance of this strike, and to determine our policy towards future wildcats.

The plant in question contains more than 6,000 workers. Over 70% are Black; less than 1% are women. There are also a number of Gays, Chicanos, Serbians, Greeks and Arabs. About half the work-force is under 30 years old.

Among the older workers are some good trade-union militants, probably some ex-socialists of one type or another. Many are disgusted with the decline of the UAW, but have been unable or unwilling to do anything about it. Some of the older whites associate the decline of the UAW's militancy with the large scale entry of Blacks into the plant.

The younger workers, Black and white, are harder to classify. The young workers are naturally hostile to the oppressive conditions of the plant. Many have absorbed some of the style and rhetoric of the Black, anti-war, and student movements of the 60's. They are willing to fight back against the corporation whenever they see a chance; and are not afraid of anything, including the company, the UAW, the police and the government. They refer to themselves as the "new breed," and tend to despise those older workers who they think let themselves get pushed around without fighting back.

These are the positive aspects of young auto workers; the negative ones are equally important. Most of them think, incorrectly, that they will be able to get out of auto and into something better in a few years. They have no conception of the potential power of a labor movement and no knowledge of labor history. They are cynical and hostile towards the UAW, which they identify with its present leadership. Even those who consider themselves revolutionaries have little idea of the organization and discipline needed for building an ongoing movement. It is almost impossible to get them to a weekend meeting. When a walkout occurs, instead of getting together to plan future action, they tend to go home.

Few of the younger workers have any money saved. They tend to live from payday to payday, plus take off as many days as they can get away with. This means that even though they are always willing to walk out, they can't afford to stay out very long.

Plant management seems to have a conscious policy of defusing rank and file militancy by offering foremen's jobs to the most capable young workers. Most of the foremen appointed recently have been Black workers from the line.

The Local

The leadership of this local is almost entirely Black. The International, after the DRUM scare, follows the same policy as the company in co-opting potential militantsleaders. This leadership was elected on a highly militant

program, and still puts out such a program at election time. This has made the membership highly cynical about even the best programs, unless they are backed up by action. Whether or not the leadership was ever sincere, they have now been completely absorbed into the International bureaucracy and are totally worthless. They keep office through inertia, demagogery, patronage, and occasional violence.

The fact that the new militant Black leadership sold out just like the old reformist white leadership, has had a highly demoralizing effect on the rank and file, reinforcing their cynicism and apathy. There is hardly ever a quorum (125) at union meetings, except during times of crisis. Department meetings rarely happen either.

The Caucus

(This is an outline. A separate document detailing our functioning in the caucus is in production.)

The IS'ers at this plant took part in the formation of a rank and file caucus, to serve as our main arena and the main vehicle for our industrial work. A great deal of controversy has been generated in the IS about this caucus and our role in it. An understanding of the caucus is central to an understanding of the problems and potential of our functioning at this plant.

First it must be understood that the caucus is composed of a number of disparate elements:

(1) IS members,

(2) members of radical sects or isolated revolutionaries (discussed below),

(3) trade union militants, ranging from radical to reformist, and all shades in between,

(4) young shop-floor militants, with all the virtues and vices listed above,

(5) opportunists trying to use the caucus to gain union office.

Naturally no individual in the caucus wears a classification on the forehead. Few besides ourselves even think in such categories. Mostly they just have a few goals to work toward, and will use whatever methods seem reasonable to do so. It is the struggle itself, together with our intervention, that forces people to abandon their natural pragmatism; to systematize and concretize their perspectives.

The difficulty of working in such a formation are obvious. Our task has been to try to bring the radicals around to our conception of industrial work, to teach the trade union militants the necessity for shop-floor action, to teach the shop-floor militants the need to win control of the local, and to weed out the opportunists. This is not, of course, any kind of final goal, but a pre-condition to enable us to build a socialist movement inside the caucus and the plant. Nevertheless, it is a task that will take several years of argument, education, struggle, splits and mergers, before such an organization can be built. This is inevitable. No get-rich-quick scheme can compensate for the decades that workers and socialists have been kept apart.

The IS is responsible for the creation of this caucus. Considering the material we have to work with, we have not done a bad job. This is not to say that there are not a great many serious weaknesses within the caucus. We have been able to push through a good program (see appendix) easily enough; the difficulty lies in getting the others to use that program as the basis for their shop-floor and union activities.

Membership in the caucus is open to any who endorse the program. This makes it difficult to keep out the embryonic bureaucrats who have no compunction about endorsing any program that will get them elected. A more effective screening device, though not the only one, is to discipline caucus members to take part in the illegal shop-floor activities that are necessary to win any gains, such as slowdowns, walkouts and wildcats, such as the wildcat under discussion.

This strike was invaluable in revealing the strengths and weaknesses of every member of the caucus, plus those of the organization as a whole. Some people that we considered almost completely dependable developed cold feet when they saw that this wildcat wasn't going to be the usual one shot deal. Some of our most super-political members devised the most ingenious political arguments for capitulating. Other caucus members, who we had written off as useless, showed surprising courage and determination to win the strike.

Because of internal dissension, the caucus did not carry out the organizational role that it should have during the strike. Its intervention was limited to the distribution of leaflets (written by us) and personal appearances at the gates when we shut the place down. Nevertheless, the work of the IS'ers in the caucus and a few others gave the caucus a much better repuration than it deserved in the plant, as the militant leadership of the wildcat. This reputation attracted a number of shop floor militants to the caucus; and they in turn served to noticeably stiffen the spines of our "politicians".

Undoubtedly there is more than one split in the future, but if we force the caucus to intervene in every crisis that arises in the future, we can replace our defectors with the kind of workers we really want.

The IS

The IS contingent in this plant did not start the wildcat, but once it started we were the ones who fought hardest to win it.

Aside from our caucus work, most of our activity has been one-to-one contact work on the shop floor. The task of making our ideas understood, much less accepted, is a long and arduous one. Not just the concept of revolutionary socialism, but class consciousness and even trade-union consciousness* are as unfamiliar to most of the work-force as the tactics of guerrilla

*I consider a worker to have trade union consciousness who feels a high degree of allegiance to the ideals of unionism, who actively participates in his union, and who knows that he should support every local and every member in any struggle. Among most workers today, consciousness does not go beyond the local, if it goes that far.

warfare would have been to the medieval chivalry. I am referring to the real proletariat, not the few ex-student radicals in the shop. It would be a grave mistake to concentrate our efforts on them.

Even though our universe revolves around the IS, we must remember that this is not the case for the other workers in the shop. There we are in competition with a great many other people, pushing their ideas as hard as we push ours: bureaucrats, jesus-freaks, nationalists, racists, youth culture, dope culture, reform democrats, Black capitalism, co-op living, every hustle the mind can conceive. This is not to mention the CP, SWP, NCLC, PL, etc., etc., etc. What makes our program different from everyone else's, to the workers on the line?

We must build a bridge between our program and the present consciousness of the workers. We must do this by intervening in the class struggle at its present level and trying to move it to a higher level. To gain revolutionary leadership in the future, we must first show leadership in the struggles that are now going on.

Our role in the wildcat has improved our position in the shop tremendously. For one thing, we've shown ourselves willing to put our ideas into practice, to do just what we said we would do. This immediately distinguishes us from the usual union politician. For another thing, the strike itself was a good example of the potential workers' power we spend so much time talking about.

The worker who enters an auto plant for the first time feels himself diminishing to ant-like stature. He is a tiny cog in a vast inhuman machine. It seems impossible for any individual to interrupt its operation to the slightest degree.

We did it. We stopped one of the biggest plants of one of the largest corporations in the world for five solid shifts; without the help and against the opposition of the mighty UAW. The inexorably moving line that sometimes haunts our dreams was halted, by those that it had daily enslaved. Only those who have never experienced the soul-destroying nature of industrial work under capitalism could minimize the importance of this change in the consciousness of the workers. It was a heady moment, both for those who never experienced power and those who had forgotten the taste. It left an appetite for more.

Already workers in our departments are bringing their problems to us instead of the stewards. In any future crisis, we will be looked to for leadership.

Nevertheless, the in-plant IS fraction made a number of errors during the strike. We failed to establish a communications network to inform every department of what was going on. We failed to initiate active participation in the other departments. We failed to put maximum pressure on the other members of the caucus to do the utmost to build the strike. We failed, until too late, to mobilize the workers to demand that the International support the strike.

There are concrete reasons for our failures. We had no idea, from day to day, just how long the strike would last. Most of our efforts, twice a day,

had to be devoted to holding out the department where we had the greatest (in extremely relative terms) strength. We feared that to divert our activity from this area might have weakened it enough to end the strike prematurely, without compensatory results from the other departments.

It is impossible to say now whether the strike would have been more or less of a success had we altered our tactics. Only practice can settle that. It's more important that the workers understand that the strike was ended because of the betrayal of the local leadership and the lack of organization of the ranks. Next time we may not have to carry the entire burden ourselves.

The Detroit Branch was fully mobilized for strike support, and performed well with the exception of a few individuals. However, it was not mobilized as soon as it should have been. It took a few days for the leadership to realize the magnitude of the events at the plant, and their inherent potential. We will know better next time.

On the last day of the strike, IS people from outside the plant were used to distribute strike leaflets at the gates. This was done to protect the strikers, since we had learned that the company was firing those it thought were the ringleaders. The leafletters did not conceal their identity as outsiders, since they could not have pretended otherwise. The local leadership seized upon this to claim that the wildcat represented a plot by outside agitators, rather than the feelings of the workers themselves. This claim had no effect in the department actively involved in the strike, how much weight it carried in the rest of the plant cannot be determined.

In any case, it is difficult to balance the values of giving a weapon to the bureaucracy against endangering workers more than necessary for the potential gains involved. The question of whether we acted correctly in this instance can never be resolved.

Other Sects in the Plant

The IS has little competition for political hegemony over the activities at this plant. There are several members of the Communist League (ultra-Stalinist, nuttier than most) and one member of the Labor Committee. Both groups tried briefly to convert the caucus to their full program and withdrew when they failed. We were glad to see them go since the dubious benefits of possibly recruiting them were outweighed by the fact that their long sectarian arguments would just drive ordinary workers away from the caucus. The CL'ers actively tried to sabotage the wildcat since it was not in their program. The LC'er paid no attention to it for the same reason.

Our main political obstacle remains the pragmatic reformism, or reformist pragmatism, accepted by most of the non-IS'ers in the caucus (including one old CP'er) and most of the workers in the plant.

After the Strike

Of the nine workers fired during the strike,* four have won reinstatement, indluding John, whose firing sparked the wildcat. The other five are

still enmeshed in the grievance procedure. Getting back the Five remains one of the focal points for our work in the shop.

The first union meeting after the strike was large and angry. The workers forced the local leadership to agree to hold a strike vote. The bureaucracy has managed to delay implementation of the vote, and it is doubtful that it will come off before changeover. We are still pushing it.

The local had an election in May. The leadership clique was split, which gave the caucus a great opportunity to run a principled election campaign. Unfortunately, against our strenuous opposition, the majority preferred to gather in every stray they thought would draw a few votes. The IS was given the choice of splitting off ourselves and a few others; or remaining on the slate, running our own campaigns as we thought best, and postponing a showdown until after the election. We chose, correctly I feel, to do the latter.

The caucus made a respectable showing in the election, gaining an average of 33% of the vote plant-wide, but only a few of its candidates were elected. We believe that a less conventional campaign would have won more victories, and we will do our best to rub the lesson in.

One member of the IS was elected chief steward of his department, the department responsible for the wildcat. This position will offer him a great deal of latitude for building the kind of rank and file organization we feel is necessary to carry on both the union and the political struggles. Hopefully this department may come to serve the rest of the plant as an example of what can be won with shop-floor organization.

The Wildcat Strike in General

Wildcats can be classified in two ways, spontaneous and planned, or one-shot and extended. Spontaneous wildcats are just that, one straw breaks the camel's back, one spark sets off the flame. One person heads for the door

---

* (From previous page) John was fired March 2. Sever other workers (5 Black, 2 white) were picked out for discharge during the parking lot confrontation March 8. The IS did not take leadership of the strike until the morning of March 9 when we shut down the day shift. After IS'ers took the lead, over the next 3 shifts, only one person (see below) was fired. RT charges that we acted irresponsibly and endangered workers are completely false.

It's more probable that our actions, in spreading the strike, leafletting other plants, minimized the number of victims. We have heard that both Chrysler and the International were extremely worried about the strike spreading. Remember that much larger numbers of people have been fired for much shorter walkouts.

The only worker fired under our leadership was Don, a leading member of the caucus. Don has been fighting the company and the local bureaucracy for quite a few years, and they have been looking for a chance to get rid of him. In fact, he did not play a leading role in the strike, but the only way he could really have protected himself would be to stay home in bed with a lawyer and a priest for witnesses.

and others fall in behind. Under other circumstances, a group with the same grievances may get together and plan to walk out at an agreed time. We must learn to analyze the situation and take leadership under both conditions.

Whether the wildcat lasts one shift or two weeks, how long we should try to make it last, depends on the cause. Most wildcats are not intended to last, but to deal with a specific, limited problem. It may be too hot, extra overtime may be scheduled one day. Bang, we walk out, we've solved our problem for that day. Next day we come back to work. There is no question of our trying to prolong the strike until the boss provides air conditioning or voluntary overtime.

Other wildcats raise one or more demands with the company: get rid of that safety hazard, fire that racist foreman. This is where we have the greatest opportunity to provide leadership and organization. Whether or not we start a strike, it is our duty to help win it. This means organizing it, spreading it, and keeping it going.

We must be perfectly frank with the workers about the danger and difficulty of winning such a strike; most of them know those as well as we. If the strike is partially or totally defeated we must admit it, and explain what should be done differently next time. But we must never look for an excuse to capitulate while it is still possible to win a victory.

This is especially true when the demand of the strike is to bring back militant workers that have been fired. The contract specifically excludes the possibility of a legal strike over discipline or discharge. The wildcat is the only protection that militants have in the plant, unless one wishes to depend on the feeble reed of the grievance procedure and the appeal board.

If industrialized comrades do their jobs properly, both the company and the union will be very anxious to get rid of them. We are going to be extremely dependent on the workers in our departments to protect our jobs. If we want them to defend us, we will have to take the lead in defending others.

It is true that the company is reluctant to openly concede to the demands of wildcatters. They are also reluctant to provoke wildcats. If it can be demonstrated to them that certain actions may cause a walkout, they will be less likely to commit them. The threat of a wildcat can be as useful as the strike itself, even though its effect may not be visible.

Some comrades allegedly consider the wildcat strike as a snare and a trap to be avoided. Ron in his document said that wildcats are provoked by the company to allow the workers to blow off steam, and to expose and victimize the militant leaders in the shop. See Insert Page 12

(1) A company might try to provoke a strike if it had produced much more than the market could absorb and wanted to shut down production without paying unemployment benefits. This is not the case in auto, where demand is at an unprecedented high and most plants are working overtime to meet it. Under such conditions, companies go to great lengths to avoid provoking a walkout.

(2) A wildcat is a fortuitous event, involving a great many subjective and objective variables. It is not the kind of thing that management can plan

or control. The risks of it "getting out of hand" outweigh the alleged advantages.

(3) A wildcat disrupts the cozy relationship that usually exists between management and the local bureaucracy. Either the leadership is forced to take up the workers' demands, or they are exposed as labor fakers and a less friendly set of officers may be elected. Management wants very much to keep a tame local leadership in power.

(4) Shop-floor militants usually know how to cover themselves well enough to make it difficult for management to single them out of mass actions. There are much less expensive ways to set up an identified militant without shutting down the whole plant, as Joe F. can testify. In the wildcat described above, none of the people fired was a real leader of the strike; none of the real leaders got so much as a reprimand.

(5) Far from being a safety valve, a wildcat increases the combattiveness of the workers involved. For every militant fired, a dozen or a hundred other workers are awakened to their potential power. One must remember that most young workers are not afraid of being fired, and are willing to run risks for a chance to hit back. This does not mean that we encourage adventurism or carelessness, of course. We urge people to use every precaution consistent with advancing the struggle.

(6) We must preserve the UAW tradition of walking out whenever a fellow worker is fired. Even a single hour of lost production means a significant financial loss to a plant. This is bound to make them think at least twice before they fire anyone. This is one of the best ways we have to protect militants on the line; to make it as expensive as possible for the company to fire them.

To win adherents to socialism in industry we must gain respect for ourselves as socialists. To do so we must take our places in every battle against the company and the union bureaucracy. Moreover, we must seek to win the leadership of the workers on the basis of our ideas. This inevitably means that we are going to run risks and take casualties. Asking anyone else to take the lead means asking them to take the risk. They are unlikely to appreciate the argument that our jobs are more valuable than theirs, since we are a rare breed of pedigreed socialist.

Anyone who hopes to become a rank and file leader without risking his job, not once but many times, should find a more rewarding hobby. Only in struggle can one build the base of support that provides a modicum of security. The quickest way to lose this base is to place personal safety ahead of the demands of the struggle.

Trying to organize in a plant is not unlike trying to turn a bunch of raw recruits into a combat unit ... at the front line. We try to avoid a serious battle until we are fully trained and prepared, but if attacked we must defend ourselves with all our power. A retreat is a much more difficult operation than an attack; unless very well organized it can turn into a rout. A well organized local can decline battle against heavy odds, to fight again another day. A weak organization may run the risk of falling apart if it fails to defend its members.

Conclusion

The wildcat strike is not a panacea, but neither is it a trap. The wildcat is a valuable tool in the class struggle. It is presently the most prevalent method used by the working class to carry the class struggle beyond the liimits imposed by the corporations, the government, and the union bureaucracy. We support, defend, and participate in this struggle. We seek to win leadership of the struggle, as socialists and militant trade unionists, and carry them to a higher level. We attempt to build organization out of spontaneity, but we do not counterpose a non-existent state of organization, to participation in the spontaneous struggles now going on

Insert for Page 9

This is a tactic that the boss can use, but only under the most favorable conditions. Even then, it is risky and expensive at best. Usually management fears wildcats, and tries to avoid them, for the following reasons.

The following is the text of a leaflet handed out early in the strike, edited for security purposes.

Once there was a farmer who had a very stubborn mule. No matter how much the farmer yelled and screamed, the mule paid no attention and wouldn't do what he was told. Finally the farmer had to hire a professional mule-skinner. "I'll take care of it," said the mule-skinner. "All I have to do is talk to the mule and reason with him and he'll do what he's supposed to."

So the mule-skinner walked into the pen where the mule was standing around looking stubborn, and the first thing he did was slam the mule over the head as hard as he could with a 2-by-4. "Wait a minute," said the farmer, "What is this? I thought you were going to reason with him?" The mule-skinner said, "That's right, but first I have to get his attention."

The wisdom of this mule-skinner's policy was shown by the events in Dept. __, 2nd shift, last week. On Wednesday, Feb. 28, Brother Jim was unjustly fired. Usually it takes a man weeks or months to get back, if he ever gets back, but this time we caught the company's attention.

As soon as Jim got fired Wednesday, his department walked off the job. On Thursday word went around that unless Jim was back by 6 p.m., we were going to close down the plant again. By 5:40 p.m. the company agreed to take Jim back with no loss of pay or penalty. The company was willing to listen to the Steward, because the rank and file union members were holding a club over their heads in case they get stubborn.

We were willing to leave it at that, but the company hadn't had enough, which shows how stubborn some mules can be, On Friday, half an hour before

quitting time, some of the men who walked out Wednesday were called into the office; not everyone who walked out, and not the first ones out the gate, just a random sample. Of these, Brother John was fired, and others were given between three and twenty days off, or given written warnings.

We know how to get John and the others back; by standing together and sticking up for each others rights. If the stewards want to sit down with management, to talk to them and reason with them, that's fine with us. Just let us know if you can't get their attention. We hope to hear that all disciplinary actions have been reversed by 6 p.m.

Let every worker remember: in Unity there is Power. The fellow worker that you defend today will be defending you tomorrow. All for one and one for all.

The following leaflet was handed out on both the morning and afternoon shifts, Monday, March 12.

On February 28 Jim __, a Brother in Dept. __, second shift, was fired after more work had been added to his job. His department walked out and Chrysler took him back the next day with no loss of pay or penalty. Then two days later thirteen of the workers who had walked out were called into the office for discipline. Of these, John __ was fired and the rest were given time off or written warnings.

The workers in Dept. __ agreed to stay on the job and give the Union and the Company time to negotiate. On Wednesday of last week, the local told them that the Company had agreed not to rehire John. The second shift was shut down that day when Dept. __ stayed out, and they have stayed out ever since. On Friday the day shift was out as well.

The Company still refuses to negotiate. Management has already sent out notices firing at least 8, and possibly 16 or more, workers. The people chosen by the Company to be fired are well known plant militants. These people have not necessarily played any role whatsoever in the events of the past few days; but, Chrysler Management, with the complicity of our local union leadership, is using this as an excuse to get rid of people they don't want around.

It was the unity of the workers in Dept. __ that won Jim __ his job back. It is only that kind of unity that can win back the jobs of the people that Chrysler has fired since then. If we let them get away with this, who knows whose head will be on the chopping block tomorrow?

____ ____ is a hell hole to work in. The line speed has increased some 20% in the last six months and our working conditions get worse and worse. Harassment has increased and there has been a crackdown in discipline. We are penalized for the most minor alleged infraction of company rules.

We are all in this together. An injury to one is an injury to all. But we can win. Our victory today will be one step in a long, hard fight to win human working conditions here at ____.

The following leaflet was handed out to the afternoon shift, Monday, March 12.

Did you see the statement put out by the Local __ Elected Leadership called "Important Notice"? They are trying to send us back to work. They are trying to destroy our unity. We are told that they will work out a just settlement after we go back to work. But these hypocrits have been around long enough to know better. IF CHRYSLER GETS PRODUCTION GOING BEFORE A SETTLEMENT IS REACHED MANY OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WILL FIND THEMSELVES PERMANENTLY FIRED. And they will be able to make all of us crawl around on our bellies like slaves.

No one likes to miss work with all the sacrifices involved. It was provoked by Chrysler with their arrogant discipline andfirings. They are trying to break our spirit so they can jam more speed-up down our throats. All we, the rank and file, did was have the dignity to stand up and stick together. All the rank and file said was "No One Goes Back Until Everyone Goes Back." This is just simple UNIONISM -- something our Local __ Elected Leadership doesn't seem to understand.

All recent experience points to a simple fact. Whenever workers go back in without a settlement, people are permanently fired. But we also know of cases where workers demanded guarantees in advance, and through unity and solidarity they got these guarantees.

It's very simple for Chrysler to get production going again. All they have to do is promise NO DISCIPLINE; NO ONE WILL BE FIRED. Anyone who tells us to go back without this promise is telling us that we should be willing to accept permanent firings.

The statement from the "Elected Leadership" accuses us of confusing and dividing the union in its fight with management. This is doublt-talk. We know that there are people at ___ who this Elected Leadership would like to see fired. This leadership has had a cozy relationship with management and would like to get rid of anyone who threatens it. This is what they mean when they say going back to work will lessen tensions. It will lessen their tensions. It will get them out of the hot seat and back into the cozy chair.

But what will it do for the tensions of those of us who must face the foremen and the production line very day? It won't lessen tensions for us -- it will break our backs.

This would never have happened if the Union was doing its job right along. It was brought on by their failure to deal with our problems. Now they want us to go back to work so that they can once again blunder along unmolested.

The following leaflet was handed out after the strike had ended.

On Feb. 28, Jim __, a Brother in Dept. __, second shift, was unjustly discharged after more work had been added to his job. His Department walked out to get his job back and the next day Chrysler rehired him with no penalty.

Then, they discharged another Brother, John __, for taking part in the walkout to defend __. It was the firing of this second Brother that led to the series of walkouts last week.

In their latest leaflet the Local __ leadership accuses those involved in the walkouts of denying everyone at __ the "right to decide when they should or should not work." Their accusation is a vicious slander designed to divide and confuse the Membership of Local __ as to what really happened.

To begin with, it was not a "handful of people" who took part in those walkouts. It was several hundred people who decided that they had had enough of Chrysler's inhuman treatment of its workforce. No one stood at the gates with clubs driving people away from jobs they were fighting to get to. There wasn't even a picket line; people voted with their feet.

Every time people stand up for their rights the same old line comes down: "It's just a handulf of troublemakers raising all the fuss." It wasn't a handful of people that began the Civil Rights Movement and it's not a handful of people starting this struggle for human rights in the plant eigher!

What they do not tell us is that they denied us the right to use our own Local Union Hall for meetings during the walkouts. They held one Union meeting last Friday, March 9. That meeting got out of hand from their point of view. Speaker after speaker stood up to denounce the Local __ Leadership. They didn't have to take a strike vote to find out how the Membership of Local __ felt, -- people were determined to stay out until John __ had his job back with no penalty;

After that they denied us use of the Hall. When some of us went down there last Sunday for a meeting we found five men, presumably International Reps, on the steps of our Hall telling us it was closed -- that there wouldnt'b be any meetings there! We wanted democratic meetings. They didn't.

And in case our Local __ Leadership has been out of the plant so long they can't remember, Chrysler has been "going too far" for quite some time now. Working conditions here and at every other plant in town are inhuman. Management treats us like children, dishing out whatever discipline they feel like for even the most minor alleged infraction of company rules. The line speed has been increased 26.4% since January alone.

And where has our Local __ Leadership been while we've been in here slaving our guts out? If our Leadership really fought for our rights we wouldn't be forced to take actions like those taken last week. But they don't.

Chrysler has now fired at least 8 more people. The Local __ Leadership accuses us of causing those firings. But it was the Local __ Leadership and their cowardice that prevented us from winning a victory. They ordered us back to work. They used every trick in the book to get their way. Did they take a democratic vote before ordering us back to work? Which is more intimidating, fellow workers standing at a gate asking you to stay out; or the Local __ Officers yelling at you from a sound car, ordering you back in?

It is sad but true that we will have to fight the Local _ Leadership as hard as we will have to fight Chrysler to win these men their jobs back. The Local))

Leadership asked for a chance -- they have it. But we must be prepared next time -- when they fail to deliver. We must organize ourselves to fight back. Demand Departmental meetings to find out what's going on in negotiations. If your Steward won't call one, organize it yourself and march over to the Union Hall to demand to know what's going on.

And we accept the Leadership's challenge. There's going to be a Union meeting Sunday, March 25. If these men are not back we demand that a strike vote be taken there. If the Local __ Leadership still needs a vote to know how people feel, we'll give it to them. Come to the Union meeting and vote STRIKE!

We had unity. We still want unity. We still want a democratic strike vote taken. We're glad to see the Local __ Leadership out there negotiating for us. All we ask is, why did you wait until nine people were out on the street?

UNITED JUSTICE CAUCUS

This country is in a social crisis. Pollution, war, taxes, racism, and inhuman working conditions are but a few of the problems that working people face. In order to cope with these problems, it is necessary to unify the labor movement to fight for social justice. But before the unions can play that role, they must be changed.

In the U.A.W, we have witnessed the rise of a bureaucratic clique who feel that their their job is to mediate between workers and management, rather than fight on our behalf. These people have sold us out time and time again. As a result, UAW members have lost faith in their Union, have become cynical.

Our response is a different one. We intend to fight the bureaucrats who run this union and put control back into the hands of the rank and file worker. If you want to make this union serve the workers, then join us.

1. END SPEEDUP. In order to cut costs and boost profits, the corporation tries to make us work harder and faster. They do this in two major ways: (a) by speeding up the line, and (b) by eliminating jobs and spreading the various functions of those jobs out among the other workers.

Working people have the right to decent working conditions. In order to insure decent working conditions, we need freezing of work standards within 30 days of model change and only with membership approval.

As a result of working so fast, we are overproducing. We allow the Company to stockpile cars. As a result, our tri-annual strike is impotent, because the Company is still selling cars and making profits while we walk the picket line.

2. JOBS FOR ALL--END UNEMPLOYMENT. The unemployment problem is directly linked to speedup. To further cut costs, management eliminates jobs.

We say that management should create more jobs, not eliminate them. The best way to create more jobs is to shorten the working hours of workers. To this end, we propose that the UAW fight for 30 hours work for 40 hours pay. End compulsory overtime.

3. HEALTH AND SAFETY. We can no longer allow Chrysler's profits to run roughshod over our minds and bodies. Safe, clean working conditions are not too much to ask for.

An additional full-time union health and safety man on each shift with authority to have work stopped under unhealthy conditions.

The right to strike over working conditions.

We also need improved health care benefits. A family dental plan!

4. DEMOCRACY. Every important decision made in this union is made by the International leadership--Leonard Woodcock & Co. This same bureaucratic clique has played footsie with management and sold out the rank and file for the past 20 years. It's time for a change.

*All testing for skilled trades to be relevant to the job

*Work standards to be frozen within 30 days of model change, with operator approval

*Innocent until proven guilty in all disciplinary disputes

*A steward for every foreman

*Workers'Councils in every department to help the union protect working conditions

*A full-time union health and safety specialist on each shift, authorized to shut down dangerous or unhealthy jobs

*Election of all union leaders, local and International, by direct referendum vote of the membership

*No retiree voting for local offices; retirees to elect their own representatives to the International

*No union official to earn more than a skilled production worker

*Unemployed members to keep good standing without need for reporting or paying dues

*Right of locals to strike by majority vote of the membership

*No dues increase without consent of the membership

*No contract ratification vote unless changes are publicized in advance

*Family dental and eye-care plans

*Sickle-cell anemia blood tests for all employees

*The UAW to take the lead in organizing the unorganized

*Immediate withdrawal of all US troops from Southeast Asia; the UAW to build a general one-day work stoppage to enforce this demand

*10 percent premium for second shift; 15 percent for third shift

*An adequate program to help those addicted to heroin, alcohol, and speed

*A worker may remain on sick leave until certified OK by his family doctor

*The International to establish a production workers' council to fight speedup

*The UAW to build for a general strike to smash the wage freeze and eliminate anti-labor laws

*Tax the corporations and the rich, not the workers and the poor

*No stock piling before contract negotiations

The only way to change this impotent leadership is to change the method by which International officers are elected. Instead of allowing delegates to make those decisions at the UAW Convention (where they're wined and dined by the bureaucrats in exchange for votes), we need election of International board members, officers, and national negotiating teams by direct referendum vote of the membership.

Another important question regarding union democracy is the retiree vote in local elections. Retirees shouldn't have this right, because they don't know what's happening in the plant. Eliminate retiree voting in local elections!

The only way to cope with the political problems that labor faces is through using the strength we have, where we have it. If the government insists on representing the interests of big business, as its actions in Vietnam and in the domestic economy indicate, then the only real way to influence the government is to cut into corporations' profits with political strikes.

5. END THE WAR. The majority of the American working people are sick and tired of that dirty war. Enough said.

6. END THE WAGE FREEZE. Under the disguise of stopping inflation, the government is doing the dirty work of the corporations. Nixon's New Economic Policy is nothing more than an attack, both on wages and the right to strike.

For a UAW-led one-day work stoppage against the war and the wage freeze, aimed at building a general strike of labor.

PLATFORM AND PROGRAM

*A four-day, 30-hour work week with a guaranteed annual income of at least $11,500

*End the 90-day probation; all benefits, including union membership, SUB, medical, and insurance, to start on the day of hiring

*End compulsory overtime

*No overtime while other workers are on layoff

*Double pay for overtime during the week, triple time on weekends

*The right to optional layoffs by reverse seniority

*30-and-Outregardless of age; full cost of living protection and not cut in benefits at age 65

*No plants to be shut down or relocated without the consent of the workers involved

*Fire racist and sexist foremen

*All skilled trade openings to be posted and filled from the rank-and-file

SOME POINTS ON TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM

by Brian M.

1. The method of transitional program has been the basis of a number of different programs. These programs were different not only in their specific demands, analysis, tasks, etc., but in their scope, relative "completeness," and purpose. The various "theses" of the first four congresses of the CI were not actually formulated as a program, but as theses concerning the specific tasks of the CI in the various countries for specific times (the early 1920s, the immediate period). The program of the International Left Opposition formulated by Trotsky in 1933, based solidly on the same method, is no longer than two or three pages and is meant to be essentially the program of a faction of the world communist movement, i.e., a propaganda group within the communist movement but independent of the CP. This program opens by stating its relationship to the first four congresses of the CI:

> The International Left Opposition stands on the ground of the first four Congresses of the Comintern. This does not mean that it bows before every letter of its decisions, of which many had a purely temporary character and in individual practical consequences have been refuted by subsequent practice. But in all the essential principles (relation to imperialism and to the bourgeois state; the dictatorship of the proletariat; the relationship to the peasantry and to all oppressed nations; soviets; work in the trade unions; parliamentarianism; the policy of the united front) remain even today the highest expression of proletarian strategy in the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism.
>
> (quoted from Hallas, "Against the Stream," IS #53, p. 31)

Thus what mattered for Trotsky in 1933 was the principles established by the early Comintern, not the specific demands, tactics, analyses passed at the first four congresses. The list of principles Trotsky produced makes it clear that he meant essentially the method. In other words, he preserved and based the program of the international propaganda group of the early 1930s on the essentials of revolutionary socialism and its method. Point 7 of that program deals with the transitional demands--though in a context different from both today and the early 1920s. Two things about this program of 1933 illustrate how off base the RT is in its approach.

First: in a recent debate on transitional program held in New York on June 3, Jack G. of the RT corrected Walter D. of the RT by pointing out that they, the RT, do not simply stand on the "method" of transitional program--an idea common to Mackenzie and Geier, he said--but on the programs of the first four congresses and the 1938 Draft (Trotsky's "Death Agony of Capitalism..."). How far this is from the spirit of Trotsky himself! While most RTers recognize that the specific analysis of the 1938 program or the first four congresses is not relevant today, they will still

try to argue that the program stands--indicating, once more, that to them program really is just a list of demands.

Second is the fact that RTers are generally reluctant to admit that anything Trotsky said might have been wrong--at that time --or that anything he said or wrote about transitional program could possibly have had a "temporary character." An example of that came up after the June 3 NY meeting, when Jack G. of the RT insisted that the notion that transitional demands are "algebraic" was not simply an analogy that Trotsky used in an informal discussion with American comrades, but a definite method, i.e., a principle of Marxism.

Finally, of course, the method of arriving at program was used to develop the 1938 draft program of the Fourth International, called by Trotsky's followers--though not by Trotsky--the "transitional program." While many of the demands in that program would certainly be in any revolutionary socialist program, a cursory reading is enough to show that the analysis is wrong, many of the tasks posed are too sketchy (for example, our relationship to the unions --even then!), and some questions (racism and sexism) are scarcely dealt with at all. Yet the revolutionary principles and the underlying method of that program are absolute essentials in developing a program for today and for the future. The 1938 program, however, differs from the 1933 program in that it is the program of a world party, the Fourth International, and not of a propaganda group within a broadly conceived communist movement. It should not surprise us that we do not, and cannot, have a program of a world party. We are a propaganda group.

Even more central to our reality today is the fact that we are a propaganda group attempting to build a national section of a movement that has been in total eclipse for a generation--both here and internatonally. How could the RT think that developing a program of the sort Trotsky wrote in 1938 is simply an act of will? The development of that particular kind of application of the method of transitional program must be coexistant with the task of rebuilding that international movement.

Our program is essentially the documents we pass at our conventions, plus the political heritage we are attempting to redefine for today's world. All wishes and discussions to the contrary, that is the reality. The fact that even these programmatic documents are not taken seriously by ourselves is but another indication of the crisis we are in - one that appears more severe than that of capitalism at the moment. The RT, like many "orthodox trotskyists", don't understand that an organization's program cannot be embodied in historical documents. Certainly we stand on the Communist Manifesto, but that does not make it our program. We can learn much from the 1938 draft, indeed, many of its demands would be the demands of a revolutionary party or even those of a propaganda group (whether or not we can agitate for them in the unions today). But we cannot say, as does the RT leadership, that the 1938 draft is the program for an epoch - by which they mean the program for all time until the revolution. The objective

conditions of world capitalism and the objective needs and tasks of the working class are not identical today to those of 1938. So, if we are true to the method and are not talking in programmatically meaningless abstractions (like the workers always need more income, or the revolution, etc.), the program for this end of the epoch, that is for the period we are in and those to come, cannot be the same as the 1938 draft. We don't hold to that draft program per se, but we stand on its "essential principles."

2. The method of transitional program is, at root, the method of revolutionary socialism revived by Lenin, Trotsky and others in the face of its abandonment and ossification by the likes of Kautsky. Related to this method is Lenin's conception of the combat party - a departure from the ossified view of the revolutionary workers party, a change in the pre-1900 view of the party, but one which embodied the method and principles of Marx and Engles even though it departed from their words. Specifically, the notion of a system of transitional demands, of course, is a departure from the notion of "minimal and maximal" programs. It maintains the spirit of the revolutionary wing of the old social democracy, however, because they, unlike the reformists and centrists, never believed that you limit your demands to the requirements of capitalism. But, because the actual program of the social-democracy had become minimal in the reformist sense, the early CI abandonsd that formulation - and, of course, the reformist content - not be rejecting minimal demands, which it never did, but by aggressively raising demands that would force the struggle beyond the limits of capitalism (that is, beyond reformism) in so far as the workers actually fought for them.

These demands were essentially formulations of what the working class really needed, both for its living standards and as tasks in the struggle to advance those standards. They were not based on what workers thought they needed. But these demands and tasks addressed themselves to the subjective mood of the class, by formulating those needs in class-wide political terms. It is true that those demands were aspects of the policy of a workers state expressed as specific demands. Similarly, the tasks posed were those needed to win political power, but put in specific forms that related to a lower level of struggle. But at the same time, the various programs based on the method of transitional program posed concrete tasks in the context of analyses of specific times. None of them was a program for all time, or was ever drafted as such. Only scholastic sycophants can argue that the 1938 draft, or the 1933 program, the theses of the first four congresses of the CI, had some sort of timeless quality other than their method and principles.

3. The other side of the debate, the point of view of the Transformation Caucus (TC), is almost as literal in its approach to program. Noting, as they do, that the theses of the first four congfesses of the CI and the 1938 draft all say that the bridge provided by their program is one that leads "unalterably" (Trotsky, 1938) to conquest of state power, they conclude that transitional demands or transitional program or a system of transitional demands cannot

be a part of our program for today. Pointing out, quite correctly, that most of today's struggles are around "partial" or "minimal" demands, they say that transitional demands have no meaning. Some of them even say that what we call transitional demands are really minimal because we are still in a reformist period. I will not attempt to explain what this is supposed to mean; that is up to the TC, but I would hasten to point out that from a Marxist point of view, demands do not change character according to what the working class thinks about them. The sliding scale of wages and hours (30 for 40, COL, etc.) is a transitional demand even when it is not popular. At any rate, it should not surprise anyone to know that the character of our program does not change according to what the workers are fighting for at this moment.

What may be true is that because the crisis is not fully ripened, because the workers are still burdened with the reformist consciousness of the past 25 years, and because there is not a revolutionary party of mass proprtions anywhere to be seen, that a direct, short-term, one might even say "unalterable" fight for state power will not grow out of today's strike movements. That is, this is not 1921 (the year of the third congress of the CI) or 1938. We cannot enter the class with an immediate perspective of mobilizing the "milti-millioned masses" in the struggle for state power. This means that we cannot, regardless of the unrestrained thumping of our hearts, mobilize masses around the system of transitional demands--assuming we actually had one. Does this mean, as the TC leaders argue, that these demands, tasks, and ideas should not be developed as a part of our program--that is, the program of revolutionary socialism? To say this is to say that the idea of a workers state, or socialism, or the abolition of the wage system, etc., etc., etc. is not a part of our program. Woudl the TC write a program that escluded our real goals--socialism, communism? No, they would not. So why do they insist, because of the nature of the current period, that a system of transitional demands should be excluded? Why is that aspect of the revolutionary Marxist program relegated to a specific period--February to October is the r old way of putting it, a prerevolutionary period is their new way (you will note that February to October was a period of revolution f there ever was one). We don't chuck socliasm because you can't mobilize the "multi-millioned masses" to fight for it today, so why does the TC think we chuch a part of the program that leads to that goal?

In fact, there is confusion about what a Marxist program is and what we raise today as immediate and intermediary tasks, demands, and ideas in the tradd unions. The program of revolutionary socialism includes many things we do not push either agitationally or propagandistically in the labor movement today--though we may discuss them in our press, etc. This does not, and <u>cannot</u>, mean that they are not a part of our program.

Let us take the idea of armed self-defense, for example. This idea or tactic can be formulated in a range of demands, from armed pickets to the establishment of a Red Army. The idea is part of our program. In fact, we have raised this idea for several years in the context of the struggle of black people in an agitiational and

propagandistic way, because it was and is relevant and of immediate importance to advance and defend the struggle of that section of the class and of blacks as an oppressed people. Yet we do not, as a rule, raise this idea in our union work. The reason we don't is simple. It would, in today's context, be adventurist to do so. Does this mean it is not part of our program? Nonsense! Armed self-defense is an essential principle of our program. Not a single day goes by when we would not utterly oppose pacifist notions of how a movement conducts itself. But the specific situation today makes it wrong to push this idea as a practical proposal in the labor movement. So it may not be an immediate task, but it is certainly part of our program--in all its forms.

To put all of this another way, there is a confusion between what our program is and what our immediate, intermediate and long-range tasks are. One of the things a specific draft of a program does, of course, is to order tasks. In this sense it is true that today's tasks are not identical to those of 1938, 1933, 1921, etc. But the fact that different drafts propose different orders of priority for tasks does not mean that they are supposed to (as TC would have it) exclude those tasks. It would be absurd to begin the task of developing a serious program if all we are talking about is short-term perspectives. One of the shortcomings of our program (as a written body of literature--which, thank Marx, is not really our full program) is precisely its "purely temporary character." We won't get very far if we exclude in advance those tasks, ideas and demands needed for the future development of the revolutionary movement.

4. Let us here look at what some comrades are saying about what a transitional demand is. Quoting Trotsky from the 1938 draft, Duncan Hallas of the British IS notes the part about the "bridge" leading unalterably to "the conquest of power by the proletariat." Since Trotsky has already defined the "bridge" as the "system of transitional demands," Hallas asks:

> Are there such demands? And, if so, what are they? The answer is clearly that it depends on the circumstances. In a period of massive economic expansion, for example at the height of the postwar boom, it is very difficult, indeed, generally speaking impossible, to find demands that both 'stem from today's conditions and consciousness' and lead to the 'conquest of power by the proletariat.' The whole nature of the economic and, therefore, political, situation excludes them.
>
> Hallas, "Do We Support Reformist Demands?" IS, #54, p. 18

It would hardly be a mischaracterization to say that the leaders of the TC would agree with this--though I would like to be proven wrong. The problem with this formulation is that Hallas is approaching the matter incorrectly (excuse the presumption). Of course there was at the "height of the postwar boom" a "system of transitional demands" that both stemmed from present conditions and would have led to "the conquest of power by the proletariat."

That is never the problem. In reality, that is the way the RT poses the question, not the way the British IS, or Duncan Hallas, usually poses it. The problem is not in the demands, as we all know, but in the consciousness of the workers. This consciousness, decidedly reformist at the height of the postwar boom, was not to be led to the seizure of state power for the very simple reason that it was not going to fight for that program. Hallas would agree. He night even say! "Well, that's the point." Good. But then reformulate your position.

Further, Hallas, answer this question: In a reformist period, the "height of the postwar boom" do we abandon the goal of socialism or even of "the conquest of power by the proletariat?" Of course not. Does the "conquest of power by the proletariat" cease to be part of our program--indeed, the very core of our program? Of course not. This very revolutionary notion even appears in the IS-USA "Program in Brief." The demands for jobs for all, 30 for 40, Cost of Living, Open the Books, etc., etc. were not minimal demands in the postwar boom, not even at its height. They were transitional demands. The fact that you cant mobilize the masses for revolution in a period of prolonged prosperity does not make them "minimal" or "partial" or "reform" demands any more than the fact that you can't ride the NY subway without 35¢ makes the NY subway a taxicab.

What Hallas is confusing is the question of immediate, intermediate and longrange tasks with the matter of what a specific demand or set of demands means in history. What Hallas wants to say, against the sectarian tendency he was polemicizing against, is that you can't mobilize the masses around transitional demands when they are satisfied with minimal reforms. That is, so that this is clear, the masses had no desire to fight for 30 for 40, open the books, armed self-defense or very many other transitional demands at the height of the boom, any more than they wanted to fight for socialism itself. That doesn't mean that the need for socialism ceases to exist or that transitional demands disappear or become minimal, it simply means that your tasks are different. It means that your "system of transitional demands" does not have the immediate character or the political efficacy for the period that Trotsky granted them in 1938. Tell us, Duncan Hallas, in the period from 1940-45, when the "multi-millioned masses" of Europe and Japan would not even fight for "democratic demands," did the transitional demands cease to be transitional? Did they become transitional again with the postwar upheaval in 1946-48? Do "socialist" demands cease to be socialist when the workers won't fight for them?

To confuse the nature of demands or of an aspect of the total socialist program--in this case, transitional demands--with the immediate perspectives of the period is to leave us disarmed for the future. Hallas, like the rest of the British IS leadership, will tell you that they are engaged in the task of fighting for and building the basis for a revolutionary party. There are those to the right of the IS who would say,"But today the workers--yes, even the militants--are reformist. To pose a revolutionary party

is fantasy." Well, if you don't pose it and don't work for it, it won't happen. We in the US are many steps away from where the British IS stands in time and accomplishment in relation to the formation of a revolutionary party. Does that mean we dismiss the idea, the task, from our program? No! It means that the task of rooting our politics in the working class by intervening in the struggles of the class is of greater immediate significance today than the actual formation of a party. The program? The same. The ordering of tasks? Necessarily different. Just as the ordering of tasks was different in the programs of 1921, 1933, and 1938, it will be different today. Perhaps, it will even be very different, but it will be based on the same method and principles.

5. The fact is that today we don't have a really full program committed to paper. Of course, committing a program to paper will not solve our problems, create a revolutionary party, mobilize the masses, etc. But it will force us to take more seriously our programmatic ideas and the manner in which we address ourselves to the working class. It can, additionally, guide our work in a way that year-by-year perspectives, as necessary as they are, cannot.

In line with the method of Lenin and Trotsky, our program should be a statement of principles, an ordering of tasks for ourselves and for the class, a system of demands that--over time--can help to mobilize struggle and eventually lead to "the conquest of power by the proletariat" even though we know that is not on the agenda today, and an analysis of the condition and likely course of the two major systems of class rule (capitalism and bureaucratic collectivism). But we, the IS-USA, are, in reality, a propaganda group within a world movement composed of revolutionary socialist groups that disagree on many questions and, at best, have only a toehold in the working class of their respective nationas. Wish what we will, we cannot therefore have the program of a world party, or even a draft upon which to found one.

That does not mean that we cannot begin the task of formulating a program. We can. Further, it can, to some degree, be based on a limited international experience. It can locate the immediate and intermediate tasks of revolutionaries in the advanced industrial countries, and with perhaps even less accuracy those for the third world nations and Stalinist countries. It can formulate transitional demands that best fit the direction of capitalism, and assess the likelihood of seeing struggles around them; i.e., their agitational and propagandistic value for now and the future. Successive drafts can spell out in more detail the strategy for building both a world party and, before that, nationally based revolutionary parties based in the working class. These are difficult problems to set down in writing. The way to begin this process, remembering that we are a propaganda group not a world party--is to begin with a critique of our past perspectives, program, etc. and those of our closest international collaborators.

The truth right now, however, is that this task cannot be taken up until the current "faction fight" is concluded. That is, we cannot really begin to formulate a program, including a system of

transitional demands, until this organization knows what it is, until it shares a common enough set of assumptions to discuss program, instead of endlessly repeating historical and philosophical discussions that dodge the concrete. In particular, we have yet to see the RT move beyond quoting Trotsky to dealing with the tasks of the IS in the working class today and how our program would relate to them.

# # # #

Political Agitation and the "Class Point of View"

by Jack Trautman

Chris H. in his addendum to Clarence Jones' reply to Kevin Bradley's reply to Clarence Jones' allegations concerning the behavior of TC comrades in St. Louis unfortunately continues in the manner that the RT leadership has chosen to conduct the fight: a set of organizational charges designed to draw lines on those questions rather than a political debate. (see national report #) A whole welter of them have already appeared in NAC minutes and elsewhere: one can assume that they will continue. It is unfortunate that they chose to function in this way.

I do not propose to continue the organizational debate. Kevin's statement answers the RT allegations adequately. Kevin makes it crystal clear that he was not charging Jones with subordination at the conference. He points out that Jones had repudiated the Sy-Ron-Chris leadership on the question of opposition to preferential hiring (see motion below) Since nobody spoke for <u>them</u> it is difficult to see who Chris believes Kevin was attacking, particularly so that people at the conference would get the impression that such an attack was taking place. If anyone has a problem, I presume it is comrade Jones who has solidified himself with people who hold a position he felt it necessary to lead a fight to repudiate.

What is more interesting than the organizational charges is the little bit of political discussion we have managed to force into this exchange concerning the question of one's attitude toward black demands and the black struggle.

We say the RT <u>is</u> for subordination. We document it by the votes on the NAC. That is, their motion: "We urge black and brown workers to reject and repulse efforts on the part of the ruling class through government and private agencies to mobilize them against white workers around the issue of preferential hiring and in counterposition to the slogan of jobs for all (such as the Philadelphia Plan in the construction industry.) In these cases we urge black and brown workers to place the demand for preferential hiring in a abordinate position behind the call for jobs for all." Divided at Part 1, 6-0. Part 2, 3-3 (Sy, Chris, Ron for; Joel, Jack, Dave against; Mike absent)

Also, the section from my "Theses on Canarsie": "But in keeping with our general methodology of never asking oppressed groups to subordinate their special demands we do not make our support conditional upon their acceptance of that position (i.e., "seek to build a movement to launch an offensive for a general quality education", etc. from theses #7) nor upon anything else." Ron moved to change the word "demands" to "rights". The addition of rights passed 7-0. The deletion of the work "demands" failed 3-3-1 (Ron, Sy, Chris for; Joel, Jack, Mike against; Dave abstain). The second sentence failed 3-3-1.)(Same vote as deletion of "demands").

Chris chooses not to repudiate these positions, yet he considers the charge that they are for subordinateing black demands to be a slander. Let us examine the arguments.

Chris attempts to explain away the motion on preferential hiring by saying that "black demands should be subordinated when the ruling class utilizes them in an attempt to mobilize black workers against white workers". What is his implication here? That the TC is for such mobilization? Or doesn't care? That would be a difficult position to substantiate. We voted for the motion that urged black and brown workers to repulse efforts on the part of the ruling class to mobilize them against white workers. What we objected to was the coupling of that sentiment with the struggle for preferential hiring and our attitude toward the Philadelphia Plan.

What does such mobilization constitute? Presumably, organizaing black workers to attack white workers or their rights, to undercut and/or destroy their organizations (unions). In fact, that is precisely the content which Chris gives to the concept. "When black demands are used specifically against white workers and to undercut union rights they constitute reactionary demands in that specific context and socialists do not support them."

Is that what was involved in the Philadelphia Plan? Not at all.* For years black groups had demanded that Federal monies should not be given to Jim Crow companies or building contractors for Federal jobs. Blacks pay taxes and To spend their money, much the money of whites to create jobs where no or few blacks are employed is a criminal injustice. Socialists supported this legitimate demand. During the height of the Vietnam War at a time of high interest rates, money went out of the housing market into the bond market and other avenues of making higher returns. There was a tremendous contraction in housing, and at the same time a big cut back in federal construction projects, throwing many thouseands of construction workers out of work. At the same time, the building contractors took the offensive against the unions, extending open shop operations, breaking strikes and enlisting a sympathetic aid from the Government. In this context the Department of Labor initiated the Philadelphia Plan.

All this Plan said was that any contractor receiving $500,000 or more in Federal monies must have 5% black and Latin workers the first year and 10% in later years. The Plan was in the form of a mandatory executive order. In no way was the collective bargaining arrangements modified or interfered with. Most contractors the Government deals with have binding collective bargaining agreements with construction unions which supply all their labor through a hiring hall. Any contractor who was going to get a contract for over half a million had to come up with 5% minority labor. If the union had the members, fine. If not, they had to admit that many or they would not get the job.

If in a city there are 14,000 building trades members in unions and 12,000 jobs at any one time, 2,000 members are in the hiring hall waiting for jobs, and they rotate through the hall. The addition of 600 blacks, 5% of 12,000 would mean that 600 or more workers would be unemployed at any one time. The average white construction worker would be out of work a few days more a year, while 600 blacks would now be working the average number of days that every construction worker worked. There is no question of whites being fired, simply a question of sharing the work.

*Note: the following material on the Philadelphia Plan is supplied by Kevin Bradley.