

Community Work

Introduction

Today, the only mass organizations of the working class are the trade unions. The revolutionary movement has been unable to establish any durable organizations in working class communities. In its period of greatest influence, the Communist Party did function on a community level responding to the immediate issues confronting working people where they lived. During the Great Depression, Communists organized rent strikes and local councils that moved people back into their homes in defiance of the police who had evicted them. In later periods, Communists organized people to fight for better schools, community centers, child care centers, and even traffic lights at dangerous crosswalks. The struggle against the special oppression of Black people by the police and other repressive organs of the state was often conducted within the community. After the retreat and collapse of the Communist Party during the Cold War, however, none of the community organizations were to survive.

In the late 1960s, the Progressive Labor Party attempted to do community work in San Francisco and New York, but was unable to develop lasting organizations. There have also been intermittent attempts on the part of individual collectives to do community work, with only limited results. Today there is little clarity among Marxist-Leninists on why or how or

even *if* community work should be done. Most Marxist-Leninists agree that work in trade unions and at the point of production in workplaces will be crucial in building a revolutionary movement. Since there are so few cadre at present doing trade union work, particularly in the crucial industrial sector, organizations like ourselves are forced to confront the question of why and under what circumstances cadre should spend their energy in community work. Why shouldn't every group send all its members immediately into factories?

In addition, we face a problem today that was not faced to the same degree by earlier communist organizations. With the possible exceptions of the *barrios* and ghettos, and a few "company towns" like Fontana around Kaiser Steel, the areas where workers live in Southern California do not function on a community level as working class towns. In the atomized and transient West--and particularly in Orange County, where one in four houses changes hands every year--few people identify closely with their communities or even their immediate neighbors, and the workers in a given area may commute to hundreds of different workplaces within fifty to sixty miles. All this makes community work much more difficult.

Finally, a small Marxist-Leninist collective like ourselves lacks even the advantages in guidance, resources and national policy that a national party can provide to local community work.

STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE ON COMMUNITY WORK

Despite all the problems, we feel that there are powerful strategic reasons for engaging in community work, as well as practical and immediate reasons based on our own needs and social composition.

1) The struggle against political, social and economic oppression goes on every day in hundreds of ways in hundreds of areas, expressing the real needs of the working class and other oppressed people. Communists must be tribunes of all oppressed people, and must work with and help lead any group of workers or their actual or potential allies in motion in struggle for their real needs. A political party of the working class that does not or cannot respond to these needs is not a real communist party.

2) Communists must bring revolutionary working class politics to the broadest group of people involved in real struggle against oppression. There is always a contradiction in community (or, indeed, trade union) struggle between immediate or narrow aims and long-term objective goals. It is our responsibility in developing and putting forth a mass line to prevent the pressure of the immediate from diverting struggles into opportunism and dead-end reformism. The immediate needs of the people must not be belittled, but they must be expressed in such a way that in struggle for them the consciousness of the people involved is heightened and the necessity of an eventual revolutionary transformation of society is made clear.

3) Communists must help develop broad, democratic and lasting organs of struggle for the workers and their allies, and prevent these organizations from being hustled back under the wing of the ruling class where the organizations can be co-opted and the struggles defused. Communists must struggle against both the "you can't fight city hall" cynicism

that prevents any but the most spontaneous outbursts, and the illusions about the electoral system that continually lead community groups to hand their problems over to bourgeois agents--the liberal Democrats and local government commissions--where the problems are quickly tidied up and shelved. Only through democratic organizations of struggle, independent of bourgeois institutions, can the workers and their allies learn the tremendous power they hold in their hands. And only in this way can concrete reforms be won: the ruling class does not dispense concessions out of the goodness of their hearts, but when they are confronted with the threat of independent power and independent action.

The three considerations above are principled reasons for communists to engage in community struggles. There are, of course, differences between a national communist party and a small collective which cannot do everything that a party must do. A local collective must consider its own level of development, its social composition, its needs, the availability of its own resources and its concrete situation as a whole before deciding which communist tasks it is able to undertake. The principled reasons, however, remain valid long-term obligations for communists--whether a collective is currently capable of fulfilling them or not.

WHAT WE MEAN BY

Community Work

Community work is the attempt by communist cadre to become part of all the struggles that the working class face in the communities where they live: the problems of housing, police oppression, the general condition of the schools, working class children are relegated to, drugs, the lack of child-care centers for working class families, etc.--all the problems that working people face in their day-to-day lives away from the point of production.

TACTICAL PERSPECTIVE ON COMMUNITY WORK

In addition to the broad theoretical reasons for entering community struggles, we see a number of concrete practical reasons based on our own social composition and our needs. We, like most of the communist movement today, face two basic problems: acquiring the science of Marxism-Leninism and rooting ourselves in the working class. By and large, the communist cadres that exist in this country were propelled into political action by the anti-war movement, the Black liberation struggles and the women's movement. The majority of these cadres have an intellectual, petty bourgeois background, with no real roots in and little knowledge of the working class. The problem remains for these cadre to link up with and become part of the working class.



In the 1960s we witnessed a number of organizations attempt to send their cadres wholesale into plants and other workplace concentrations to overcome their objective lack of roots in the class. There was little consideration of their preparation for this commitment, or of whether some of them might not have been more valuable to the movement in other ways. The results were largely unproductive. The leaders of these organizations, unprepared for the years of patient base-building required, pushed their cadres into immediate adventurist maneuvers, into opportunist attempts to win trade union offices and other symptoms of a petty bourgeois impatience for "results." These actions helped further discredit "communism" for many workers. In addition, in recoil from this activity, the

"burnout" rate of cadres was extremely high. In Orange County in the early 1970s we observed the RU-RCP attempt to recapitulate this experience, with much the same results.

We still feel that petty bourgeois cadres should be encouraged to enter workplace and trade union work, but the communist movement should face the reality that many of the current cadres, whatever their momentary intentions, are not now prepared by their background for the patient, lifelong effort involved in entering the industrial working class. One of the ways cadres can be tempered and prepared for the long fight is to join with workers in struggle in such arenas as community work. This is certainly not the whole answer, but it can be a beginning. Working class roots must be developed on a lasting basis. If a party of the "working class" does not have a base in the class, it can have no real knowledge of the general class problems and cannot respond to working people--either at the workplace or in working class communities.

The allocation of cadres is an important question for a new communist party, which must give each cadre's abilities, level of development and concrete needs its serious and careful consideration. We feel that most cadres should be encouraged, if at all possible, to spend at least some of their lives engaging in workplace and trade union work, but for some, the transition must be approached gradually, and for others with valuable skills to give the movement, the commitment should not be considered a lifetime one.

This lack of a working class base was a living problem for us when we left NAM in mid 1976, and it still is. We were a young political formation with little serious Marxist-Leninist understanding, no working class base and no national ties. When one takes into account the area in which we live and work, Orange County, with its weak labor movement rooted in light industry, a county which lacks any serious Left tradition, and all this compounded by the general political quiescence across the nation--we knew that there could be no rapid resolution to our problems.

The need for a patient effort to overcome these weaknesses led to the two main tactical reasons for our engagement in community work.

1) From the beginning we placed a strong emphasis on establishing national ties and reaching out in the county to find other cadre organizations or independent cadre who had the same orientation we did, that is, struggling to build a movement for a new communist party. Community work lent itself to exploring existing organizations and spontaneous movements, identifying political groups or individuals and judging from their practice whether we could unite with them or draw them toward us.

2) Because of the social composition of our group, which was largely students or other petty bourgeois intellectuals, with few workers, community work provided the initial opportunities for us to engage in political struggle and build contacts with workers in struggle. Even amongst our working class cadre, we had no workplace concentrations with more than one or two of our members in the same plant or workplace and they had not developed any real base. We felt that only in community struggles could the group begin to work *collectively*, and gain political experience collectively to analyze it within the group.

The rest of this section is a concrete evaluation of our work in community struggles in the light of these tactical and strategic considerations, the errors we made and the lessons we learned.



Frank Shuford Defense Committee

BACKGROUND

The Frank Shuford Defense Committee is a community based organization, largely from Santa Ana, composed of Black and white people who are trying to win the freedom of a Black community organizer from Santa Ana who was framed in 1974 for a shooting he did not commit and is now imprisoned in San Quentin. Frank Shuford led the Community Youth Council in Santa Ana, which organized as many as several hundred young Blacks into community activities, tutoring and free lunch programs, a drill team, campaigns against police in the schools, and an attempt to drive the dope traffic out of Santa Ana.



Shortly after he began the campaign against the dope traffic, he was accused of a non-fatal shooting that occurred while he was at home with friends and family. There was no physical evidence and one of those shot said Shuford was not the gunman. The first trial ended in a hung jury, but in the second trial the prosecutor used inflated rhetoric--calling him a revolutionary "troublemaker"--and other questionable tactics to induce the all-white jury to convict him. Immediately after the sentencing, Shuford's defense lawyer, who had not objected at critical points throughout the trial, became an

assistant district attorney. In prison, Shuford has been continually harassed, beaten and subjected to forced druggings. The Defense Committee has been working since his conviction to win his release.

Soon after his conviction, the RU entered the Committee, demanded the leadership and in many other ways alienated the Blacks in the community (for a fuller treatment of their behavior on the committee see p. 7.) Without even an explanation of their reasons, the RU cadre walked out and turned their backs on the continuing struggle. One of the primary results of their behavior was to embitter a number of Black people in Orange County toward people who call themselves "communists." The other white people on the committee, who had been close to the RU-RCP, broke with the organization because of its conduct and have remained on the committee to this date.

WE ENTER THE COMMITTEE

Almost as soon as we were formed in the fall of 1975, we approached the Defense Committee with the offer of our support. We saw the frame-up of Shuford as part of the ruling class attack on the Black community and the working class as a whole--particularly against those who attempt to build groups for independent political action. We felt that it was our responsibility as communists to help resist this oppression and to help build as wide a working class base of support as possible.

Knowing the past history of the RU-RCP in the group we made it clear that we were entering the group sincerely to help build the committee, and we made clear our limited base and the limited nature of the support we could give. The offer was accepted and we have functioned within the Committee for the past two years.

As weak as we were, we were still instrumental in giving the Shuford case some local and national publicity, in marshaling fairly wide support for Shuford in such white radical and progressive community groups as exist in Orange County, and in organizing a number of fund-raising events to help pay the Committee's costs.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE COMMITTEE

One of the main strengths of the Committee is the determination, not only of Shuford's family, but also of many others in the group, which manifested itself in the Committee's simple survival for over two years in an extremely hostile county. The Committee has also maintained its character as a political defense group that is part of a broader struggle, despite pressures and temptations to limit the nature of its work to the sort of narrow, opportunist approach that might appeal to uncommitted white liberals.

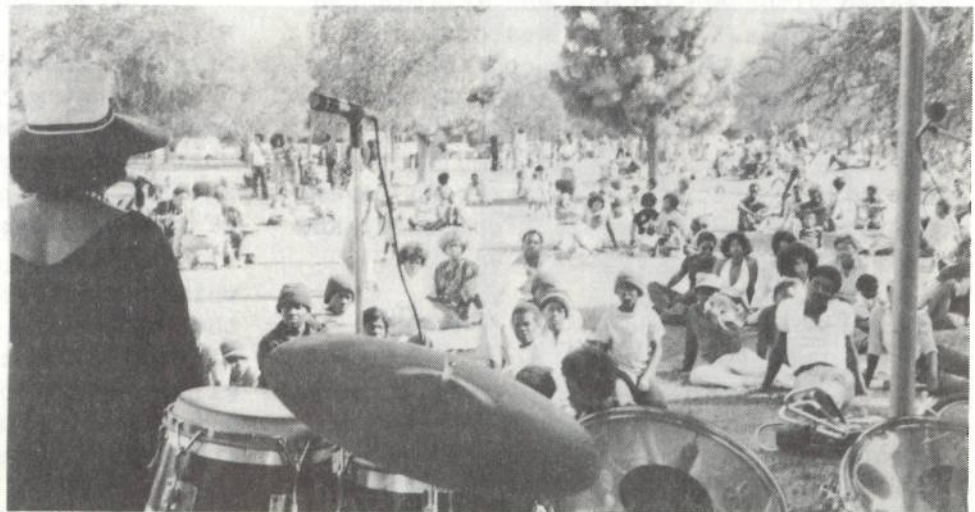
The Committee has come to the aid of another Black man accused of a crime in Santa Ana, has sought to link up with other Defense Committees in Southern California, has attended a coalition against U.S. intervention in Angola, has given active support to the struggle against the harassment of undocumented Mexican workers, and, with the SOC, played an important role in organizing the demonstration against the South African Davis Cup team. In addition, political questions, raised by SOC and others, have been discussed within the committee. These include discussions of the working class, the oppression of women, the struggle for national liberation in the third world and the meaning of socialism.

One of the major strengths of the Committee is its realization that both racism and sexism are not simply institutional bigotry, but deeply ingrained in American culture. The Committee stayed together and grew stronger because of open day-to-day internal struggles around questions of our own unconscious habits, attitudes and practices. In this way, what might have become suspicions and unacknowledged divisions were brought out into the open and largely overcome. This built a real sense of trust that made all our work stronger. This Defense Committee is one of

the few multi-national and male-female organizations we have seen in which women and Blacks have played genuine leadership roles.

The primary weakness of the Committee has been its inability to develop a wide base of support among Black people in Orange County, despite intense efforts. There was been a very stable core group, but it has been very difficult to widen this base in the community. There are historical reasons for this apathy within Orange County.

The Black community here is less than 10,000, not even 1% of the county population and about 4% of the Santa Ana city population. There has been very little militant Black organization in the area--except for a brief Black Panther episode in the late 1960s and Shuford's own work in the early 1970s--and the bourgeois Black organizations are very effective in limiting struggle. (For a time the head of the local NAACP was an assistant district attorney.) The Panthers were destroyed overnight around the charge of shooting a policeman, and Shuford's Community Youth Council fell apart after people saw what became of those in Orange County who took the lead in struggle. The level of fear and apathy in the small Black community is understandable in the light of its isolation, the immense visible police presence (the Santa Ana Police recently received federal funds and im-



A Free Frank Shuford Rally with music and speeches held in June 1976 in a Santa Ana park.

posed a city utilities tax in order to increase their patrol force by over 30%), a widespread system of informers and police snitches, plus the readiness of bourgeois Black forces to rush forward and attempt to co-opt real struggles. Part of the apathy is, of course, due to the lack of a communist organization with real ties to the working class that could bring significant sectors of the workers out in defense of oppressed Blacks.

The small size of the Committee-- a regular core of about 10--and the burden of work on its members has led to a second serious weakness. Though for some time we looked forward to, and called for, the linking of defense committees and similar groups in Southern California, when this organization was finally formed as the Coalition Against Police Abuse, our participation was only sporadic. Only with the Davis Cup Coalition, did we begin to develop closer ties to CAPA. We should have moved in this direction sooner.

The Committee looks forward to the possibility of overcoming these weaknesses. It has obtained on its own new evidence that demolished the testimony of one eyewitness--the only "evidence" against Shuford--and also new evidence from three separate sources on who actually committed the crime for which Shuford was convicted. This material was presented over five days of court hearings--before an unsympathetic judge who obviously had no intention of listening, and facing a DA's office which coached witnesses to lie and intimidated our witnesses. The writ was denied in Orange County, but we are confident that Shuford will win release through further efforts. This obvious victory for a people's organization will open up the possibilities for mobilizing broad layers of support within the Black community and the white radical community as well.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF OUR WORK ON THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE


The SOC has, as already mentioned, brought the Committee some publicity, outside support and funding, as well as raising a few political issues within the committee. We feel we have overcome some of the negative picture of "communists" created by the RU-RCP, and members

Third, we tended at many times to act pragmatically on the Committee. Though we did sporadically raise political questions, we were rarely sharply critical of people when we felt they were adopting incorrect positions on secondary through important issues. Our own weakness, caution, lack of theory and base, and lack of national ties, led us to behave too liberally on the Committee.



Our main weakness within the committee is also our main weakness as an organization: the lack of any real base in the working class. We have not been able to bring to the Frank Shuford struggle any significant participation of workers, and because of this we have objectively been incapable of turning the struggle into a working class struggle. In addition, in many of our public forums where the Shuford case was presented we took too opportunist a line and did not stress enough the necessity of a class line and a class base to win the struggle. Because of the lack of this base and the weak mass line, we could only have appeared in the eyes of many as "liberal missionaries and do-gooders" rushing in "to help," rather than communists engaging in struggle.

Our second major weakness on the Committee is also a general weakness of SOC: its weak grounding in Marxism-Leninism. We have not yet discussed the National Question, and we have no clear line on what is the correct way to tie struggles against Black oppression to the struggles of the whole working class.

We reject the idea of building an all-white communist party. The SOC recognizes the importance of building ties with the Black working class and other Blacks struggling against oppression, and recruiting Blacks to our organization and to the movement for a new communist party. Our work on the Defense Committee has laid the basis for beginning to understand the problems inherent in this task, and how they can be solved only through our own development and the development of a party. 

Orange County People's Coalition

HISTORY OF THE COALITION

The People's Coalition grew out of the efforts of SOC to gain a broader base of support for the Frank Shuford Defense Committee. In January 1976, SOC obtained the film *Attica* and drew in other organizations to sponsor a film showing and general meeting around the Shuford case. At the planning meeting were people from the SOC, the Defense Committee, a radical student organization at UC-Irvine that SOC members had helped form, the Faculty Forum, a teacher-based organization at Cal-State, Fullerton, and individual progressives from a local church.

SOC felt that because of the base of the Shuford Committee in the Black community and the nature of the film, the meeting at a local YWCA would draw people from the Black community as well as the relatively small white radical community that exists in Orange County. Wide publicity was given in these areas, but because of our lack of a working class base, no publicity was given in local plants. The Black community, however, did not respond at all, and the audience--a "success" in Orange County terms--was about 100, largely white students, teachers and other petty bourgeois intellectuals.

We had no preconceived plan for developing the meeting into a continuing organization, but when a section of the audience expressed an interest in doing something, we scheduled a second meeting for the next week. At the follow-up meeting, in addition to ourselves and members of the Defense Committee, there were about 20 white petty bourgeois people who were new to the Frank Shuford struggle. Some of these people had experience of the anti-war movement, but most were progressives and liberals with little experience of political struggle. Because of the social composition of this group we decided not to try to flood them into the militant and politicized Defense Committee, but to form a new and broader coalition which would support Shuford,

other victims of oppression and possibly work on other issues of concern in Orange County.

Rather than dominate this coalition, or back ourselves into a position where we headed a paper organization that we didn't have the base to support, we allowed much of the leadership to pass into inexperienced hands. Because of this, and because the other coalition leaders had no following of their own, over several months it held only one fund-raising dinner to support the Shuford Committee, held no meetings to conduct political education along any lines, and was in a state of complete inertia when SOC and a few close allies from the Shuford Committee decided to give it new "life" by finding a broader issue to raise in the county. There followed a whole series of meetings without any general plan on the part of SOC to find the right "issues" to begin political work in the community. After much discussion, it was decided to raise the issue of Senate Bill 1 as a means of mobilizing a movement. There was, however, virtually no response at all to struggle against SB-1. The Coalition soon effectively dissolved, and has done nothing since.



OUR WORK IN THE PEOPLE'S COALITION

Our formation of and work in this coalition was largely a pragmatic and opportunistic floundering of the worst kind. Pragmatic, because there was no serious analysis of the character of this formation, its potential or actual support in the county, who should be in leadership, how those in it should work to raise their consciousness, or who in SOC should function within the coalition. Opportunistic, because there was no real demand for this formation, but we still felt that by pushing it forward we would "find" new political people to work with.

Though we could have given more leadership than we did, we feel we were correct not to seize the leadership and make ourselves politically responsible for the organization, because we had no base of our own to bring to it. However, when the coalition manifestly failed to develop a following of its own, we should have re-analyzed much sooner that it had no reason for existence, and no possible future at that time. Ties with the people where you live and where you work are a prereq-

uisite for building any sort of organization--particularly in a period of general quiescence. These ties and the experience of common struggle are necessary before people will join with Marxist-Leninist cadre in an independent coalition for political action.

In addition, we learned that it is indispensable for a Marxist-Leninist organization to have an absolutely clear understanding of the concrete nature of a community group, the amount of support it can develop, and the forces that the organization can commit, before considering joining or forming such a group, and before deciding how much of the leadership its own cadre can assume. (A recurring problem in coalition and united front work is communist groups who insist on total dominance of the organizations they work in, driving away not only other communist groups but many sincere people who are willing to engage in struggle, but are not yet prepared to accept the total leadership of Marxist-Leninists.)

We were unprepared on all these questions and wasted a great deal of effort that might more profitably have been put into other activities.



WHAT WE MEAN BY

Opportunism

Opportunism is the sacrifice of the long-term interests of the whole working class for some temporary advantage or for some narrow interest of one section of the class. The temporary advantage might be avoiding necessary political struggle within a coalition, or trying to gain leadership of a coalition based on personal friendships rather than political following. Whether intentional or not, American opportunism has classically shown itself in an adaptation to conservative labor leaders and to a relatively better-off section of the working class that felt it had material reasons for not struggling against the capitalist system. This section of the class, and the labor leaders in particular, are inevitably under the

influence of capitalist ideology. Ultimately, opportunism sacrifices working class interests for capitalist interests.

Many forces contribute to opportunist practice: the heritage of pragmatism and a desire for quick "results," careerism, or the desire for safer and "easier" forms of struggle, and the straightforward personal ties and friendships within alliances and coalitions. Some examples of opportunism in the U.S.: the old Socialist Party yielded to the racism of the better-off white workers, and the Communist Party adapted itself to conservative labor leaders and to the Democratic Party, hoping for short-cuts to wide influence and "easy" methods of fighting for reforms.

July 31 Coalition

BACKGROUND

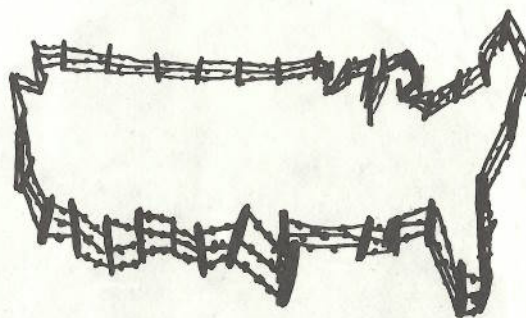
In the spring of 1976, the Santa Ana police raided a densely populated area of low-rent apartments and rounded up over 100 undocumented Latino workers (Mexican nationals without work permits) to be handed over to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for deportation. The raid was an immediate reprisal on the area on behalf of the landlords because a number of tenants had got together to complain about abysmal health and safety conditions in the buildings.

In the longer run, however, the raid was a part of the overall ruling class strategy of using harassment and racism against the undocumented workers. Because of their "illegal" status, they cannot organize to fight their super-exploitation in the factories and fields of this country, and they provide a labor reserve that can be allowed in or deported to fit capitalism's current needs. The general level of racism, plus token border searches and periodic raids keep them frightened and unresisting, and the INS is often called in to raid workplaces when Latino workers participate in strikes or organizing drives (strikebreakers are oddly immune to INS raids.) The level of racism and harassment is stepped up in times of capitalist crisis for at least three reasons: 1) to raise the level of fear and push wages down further, 2) to deport some of the "excess" labor, and 3) to blame unemployment on the undocumented workers and divide the working class.

Capitalism cannot recognize and acknowledge the crucial contribution of labor to society. Mexican and Chicano workers have for a long time been an important part of California labor in the basic and light industries; they have produced many of California's goods and services, built many of its buildings and roads, tended and picked its crops, and they have far more "right" to remain here than the parasites who exploit them. The SOC believes that everyone who works in this country should be considered a citizen and their trade union and minimum wage rights should be actively defended.

The ultimate root of the 1976 raid in Santa Ana was probably a ruling class

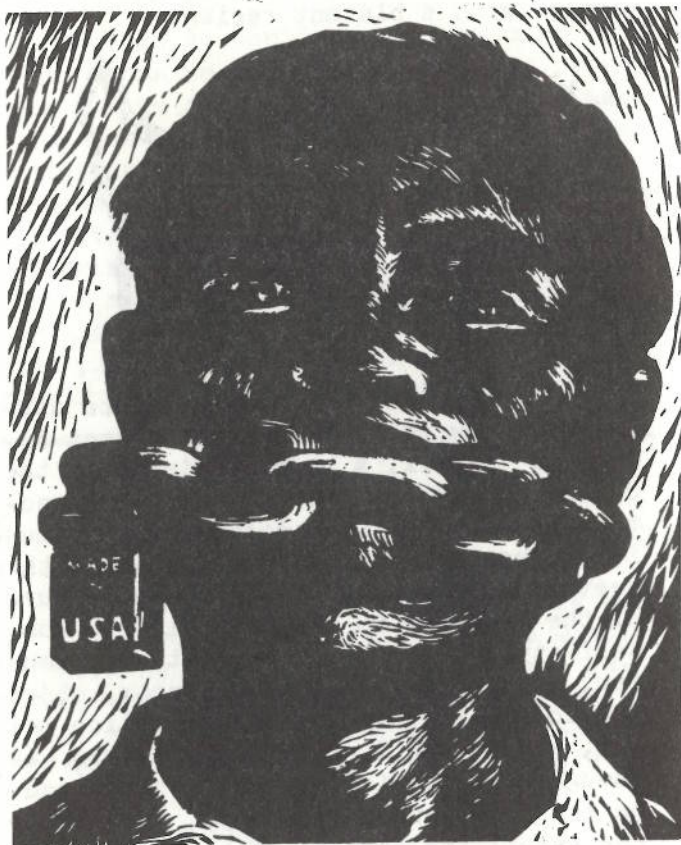
decision to take advantage of the high level of unemployment at the time. The fact that harassment was increasing was clearly demonstrated at about the same time when the Santa Ana Police Department announced a new policy, Department Order 23A, which declared that the police would pick up anyone they had "probable cause" to think was an undocumented worker and hold them for the INS. "Probable cause" included such things as unusual clothing or behavior, faulty English, and failure to look the officer in the eye! This order combined the basic policy of harassment with a blatant racism.



A public meeting was called to discuss the new policy before the Human Relations Council, a body appointed by the County Supervisors whose objective function is to co-opt and defuse real community struggles. SOC members attended this meeting and were surprised at the nature of the response to the new policy. Some self-styled leaders of the Latino community, mainly middle-class Chicanos, objected to the racist form of the police policy, and to the idea that anyone who was thought to look Latino could be stopped on the street without reason, but not to the underlying content of harassing undocumented workers. They said the policy "threw the baby out with the bath water"--*they* obviously being the baby and the "illegals" the bath water. They suggested more refined methods of determining who was a citizen, the police department apologized for the racist statements, and everyone went home happy--except for the SOC, which was composed wholly of Anglos and had little understanding of this division between Chicanos and the undocumented Latino workers.

THE JULY 31 COALITION

A few weeks later, SOC members were invited to another meeting, where an organization was forming to take up this struggle. About fifty people were there, mostly young Chicanos who saw the new police policy as a racist attack on the Chicano community, but most of whom were also interested in defending the undocumented workers. At this meeting it was decided to form a coalition that would hold a mass demonstration July 31 against the police attack on the undocumented workers.



Without any real discussion in SOC, two of our comrades committed themselves to work within the coalition, and then sought to draw the rest of the group in through a hard-sell talk on the importance of the coalition to SOC. Thus we became involved without any real discussion of the struggle, the politics involved, the relationship of forces within the coalition, or which of our forces could be committed.

The coalition had been initiated by an Anglo professor from a nearby state college who had been active in the anti-war movement and had some contacts with Chicano activists, but not by Chicano leaders themselves. While the coalition immediately filled up with young Chicano and Chicana students and community activists, the Anglos at the center did not see the importance of building Latino leadership.

The SOC began a struggle to change this, but it succeeded only in form. While the Anglos conceded formal meeting leadership to Chicanos and Chicanas, they continued to be the de facto leadership right up to the demonstration. The SOC didn't feel there was any "moral" reason that Anglos should not have been in the leadership of a mainly Chicano group, but we felt in this case that Chicano leadership, linked as closely as possible to the community, was essential for the July 31 Coalition to mobilize the huge Latino community and contribute to an ongoing movement rather than a one-shot demonstration. (Latinos are a majority of the 170,000 population of the city of Santa Ana.) We don't feel the Anglos "hoarded" the leadership so much out of personal motives as out of a feeling that they were the most experienced and articulate, and thus the best "means" to the only real "end" they saw--the demonstration itself.

This attitude led them to see political consolidation of the group as secondary or even counter-productive. They looked upon political discussion as divisive and time consuming, and constantly sought to "get down to business." The SOC believed strongly that some ideological consolidation was necessary if the coalition was to survive beyond the demonstration. More immediately, there had to be some consolidation before the July 31 Coalition could have any clear political line to make demands on the police department. Politics and differing political lines exist in any united front, and when they aren't discussed they definitely do become divisive.

We were in no position to carry on any sort of consistent political debate in the coalition, partially because we had

had little experience of Chicano struggles, and partially because the issue had never been fully discussed within the SOC. The entire coalition membership was united on the question of fighting anti-Latino racism, but we felt that the harassment of undocumented workers went beyond the question of racism. It was fundamentally a class question--the use of racism and harassment to support the super-exploitation of one sector of workers, undermining the wages and working conditions of all Latino workers and ultimately all workers. We were not opposed to fighting racism, but we did oppose the view that made this the entire question and tended to "forget" the undocumented workers themselves.

Unfortunately, we never developed and articulated this point of view into the sort of concrete position necessary to identify us as an independent current in the coalition. It wasn't until weeks after the demonstration, when the SOC was invited to provide one of the speakers for an open meeting in front of the Santa Ana City Council, that we bothered to work out any sort of informed, coherent analysis. (The gist of our statement is in the first three paragraphs of the "Background" section above.)

The political content of the July 31 Coalition was a mixture of cultural nationalism, liberalism and working class politics. Most of the young Chicanos in the group recognized the new police policy as another example of the police harassment they had felt all their lives as Chicanos growing up in Orange County. Some of them argued that mentioning the "illegals" at all would be divisive to building the demonstration among the politically active Chicanos in the barrios, since they felt no one would come to a demonstration supporting the "illegals," and the "illegals" certainly wouldn't come themselves for fear of arrest. They wanted to phrase the demands of the coalition in terms of racism and "human rights" exclusively.

The long struggle of the Farmworkers, however, has forced many Latinos to see themselves oppressed as a class and not just as a race, and many of the Chicano students were familiar with working class politics and would support demands relating to the undocumented workers. The



groups backing this line the strongest were CASA, a Chicano worker/community organization that is relatively large in Los Angeles but has no branch in Orange County and could not play much of an active role, the SOC, and a *teatro* group from a nearby state college.

The ideological differences in the group came to a head around the adoption of an agitational leaflet. SOC members and allies drew up a draft of a leaflet in English and Spanish that exposed the myths about undocumented workers rampant both in the Chicano community and among white workers. ("They steal jobs, cause crime, use up welfare, etc.") The leaflet called for broad support, explaining that the attacks on undocumented workers actually undermined the position of Chicano workers and the entire working class.

The liberals and their allies rushed out a counter-draft of their own, a "less political" leaflet espousing "human rights." Both leaflets were brought before the coalition as a whole and we won overwhelming support for the original, and several thousand were eventually distributed.

At this point, we made a mistake in overestimating this victory as a sign of

general support in the coalition for a working class line. We did little further work to consolidate the level of understanding and continue the ideological struggle against liberalism and cultural nationalism (admittedly a difficult task for Anglos in a predominantly Latino united front.) Because we overestimated the level of unity, we were continually surprised when other political statements of the coalition, such as press releases, and even signs and banners of the demonstration, reflected liberal or nationalist politics exclusively. So while we were able to win support for a working class line in a particular leaflet, the politics of the coalition remained confused.

A few weeks before July 31, it became clear that the coalition was not really reaching the Latino community. The SOC at this time had no base nor even any sizeable periphery to commit to the demonstration, so we leafletted and stuck up posters with the Chicano students and pinned our hopes on others. The most we could do on our own was encourage a tenuous link to the Black community through the Frank Shuford Defense Committee and draw a handful of interested Blacks into the demonstration.

Unfortunately many coalition members did not live in Santa Ana, the students who did had little more contact with the community than we had, and the community organizations in the coalition apparently had not built the sort of base of support that would allow them to mobilize for a demonstration.

The demonstration went off peacefully and drew a little over 300 people, about half of them Anglos, which was a disappointment to many of the leaders but was



Part of the crowd at the July 31 rally, listening to a speaker from the Frank Shuford Defense Committee.

in fact a fairly respectable showing for Orange County at this time. CASA from Los Angeles brought 30 to 40 people, and the chants they initiated along the march were distinctly more working class-oriented and anti-imperialist than those of the coalition leadership. The SOC did not participate directly in the group in charge of making banners and signs, and when they arrived we noticed that the majority were cultural nationalist in character ("Viva la raza!") These were further indications of the lack of political discussion and consolidation in the coalition. Throughout, various groups continued to follow their own inclinations toward working class politics, liberalism or cultural nationalism, rather than uniting around a common political line.

A number of *teatros* performed anti-racist and anti-deportation plays, one an excellent satire on the divisions between Chicanos and undocumented workers, and the demonstrators then marched about a mile and a half to the Civic Center to present petitions to the police chief. For the march, the SOC had explained that we had no Chicano members, no Spanish speakers and no roots in the Chicano community, and we felt that we were not in a position to provide security monitors along the route. (The march crossed a gang boundary and there had been reports of possible trouble which had never been cleared up.) This seemed to be accepted at the time, and most of the groups did provide monitors. Later, we learned that a number of people had privately expressed hostility to the SOC because of this stand.

The speeches that were given before the group dispersed presented a final example of the opportunism that characterized the entire campaign. Local politicians--Chicano city council members and the like, most from outside Santa Ana and none of whom had had anything to do with building the demonstration--were invited to speak. After the usual self-aggrandizing speeches, and numerous mentions of the importance of "working inside the system," one lapsed into outright anti-communist remarks.

AFTERWARDS

Immediately following the demonstration, campus and community groups and many individuals began to leave the coalition. The leadership, having expended all its energy in building one demonstration, and without taking the time for political consolidation or preparing long-range work, was unable to combat the feeling of many that once the demonstration was over, their "duty" was done.

At this point, the SOC compounded earlier errors and followed suit. The SOC members who had originally involved the group in the coalition, and who had been pressing the other members to involve themselves, now turned around and became extremely pessimistic. They were disillusioned by the lack of a base the coalition had shown, by the sudden contraction of the group and by the small number of friends the SOC had made.

The July 31 Coalition still exists, though it is very small and does not meet regularly, and works for the most part with the Human Relations Council in a very liberal fashion, going to the city council and protesting continuing attacks on Chicanos or the undocumented workers.

ANALYSIS

We found the situation within the July 31 Coalition extremely confusing, as is the work in any real struggle, and it took us quite some time to come to terms with the errors we made. We knew there were major errors that could be laid to "pragmatism," but at first we could not see how concretely to overcome this weakness except through "more analysis and discussion," which was true, but it was too abstract and also not very helpful in a fast-developing situation. (On the other hand, we resisted the tendency to leap to the other extreme and say we should have entered the coalition waving a perfect blueprint based on the best Marxist-Leninist quotations.) Though many of us had a sense that something basic was still missing from our analysis, a number of our initial self-criticisms were undoubtedly correct.

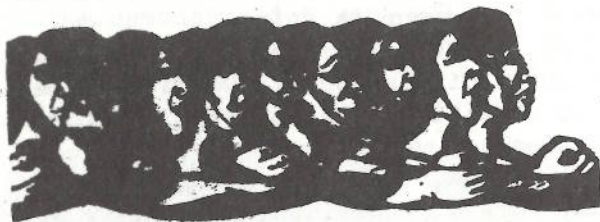


- 1) We felt that our main weakness, though not our "fault," was the lack of a real political base in the working class or the local community, which kept us from bringing people to the struggle and building the struggle in the community, and through these activities contending honestly for a significant share of the coalition leadership. (We understood that we had no "right" as self-described Marxist-Leninists to try to seize leadership and substitute ourselves for the community leaders who did exist, whatever their weaknesses. This would have been a sectarian disaster of the worst order, leaving us isolated and incapable of winning either the pre-existing leaders or their constituencies.) Of course, one of the ways to develop a community base is to take part in community struggles such as this, even without a perfect understanding of what the group is doing.
- 2) We felt there should have been some prior discussion by SOC as a whole of the coalition, its purpose, its possibilities and what forces we had to commit. Instead, some comrades had taken up the work on individual initiative alone and then tried to pull others into it. They also left the coalition on the basis of their individual feelings. This self-criticism came from the cadres who were involved themselves, and they have taken the lead in insisting on much more thorough discussion before SOC makes or changes the nature of commitments to mass work.
- 3) We felt that we needed much more prior understanding of the national ques-

tion in general and the Chicano movement in particular. Again, this was an objective weakness at the time, rather than a "fault" we could have quickly overcome. We have scheduled a study of the national question for the near future.

4) We should have worked out a clear political position on the undocumented workers, presented it as our independent identity and tried to consolidate forces around it. This became self-evident as soon as we did so in the presentation to the city council. The speech was praised by a number of coalition members as a particularly clear statement of the problem.

5) It is probably true to say that we entered the coalition in the first place primarily on a "moral" commitment--people were in motion in a living struggle and we felt we had to move with them--rather than a political analysis of what the "motion" was and how we could contribute. Secondly, we entered to win friends and allies for SOC. Both of these were relatively pragmatic reasons. We should have realized that, given our inexperience and lack of base, the possibilities were very limited. We should have acknowledged that we were going in simply to work honestly among the people over a long period of time, to try to understand where they were and how they saw their needs, and to try to win acceptance for some Marxist-Leninist ideas. With this in mind, the results would have been far less disappointing.



This is the way the matter sat for many months. The self-criticisms and the lessons were extremely helpful to the comrades who worked in the Davis Cup coalition (see next section) in which we played a far more conscious and effective role. But, in fact, it was not until we began writing this document and bringing the lessons of the Davis Cup coalition and of

our trade union and women's work to bear on the July 31 experience, that we began to struggle our way toward a concrete summation of the lost opportunities and mistakes--toward a *method* that could guide our future united front work.

What was missing in our approach to overcoming pragmatism was the real content of what "more analysis" means--a sense that we began to acquire through further practice and summation:

In the July 31 Coalition we had failed to make a conscious identification of the various forces in the coalition, who they represented, what they represented politically and ideologically, and how to work with them to build long-term ties and raise the level of struggle. More precisely: We should have identified the left forces we could ally with directly (those with a strong working class consciousness) and then met with them to discuss their ideas and perceptions and develop joint work in the coalition. We should have identified who was in a center position in the coalition (cultural nationalists with some class consciousness), what this center position meant in terms of ideology, and how to work alongside them to support their progressive aspects and struggle against the negative. And, finally, we should have identified the rightmost forces (consolidated liberals) and try to support *their* progressive tendencies or unite the left and center against them, as necessary. With only a few exceptions, we did not do this.

The above is not a concrete analysis, but we feel it is the beginning of a *method* toward the sort of concrete analysis that can help overcome pragmatism in united front work. The guidelines are not a complete method nor can they be applied mechanically. There may be any number of peculiar factors and forms of unevenness to consider, such as the sort of base various forces represent, ties they may have to state institutions, specific antagonisms or alliances that already exist, etc. A concrete analysis can only emerge through a great deal of practice. Still, to the degree that any of our work in the coalition was effective, it was because we "instinctively" approached this method.



Davis Cup Coalition

HISTORY OF THE DAVIS CUP DEMONSTRATION

In early 1977, SOC learned that the South African Davis Cup tennis team was planning to play its match against the U.S. team in Newport Beach, Orange County in mid April. Because of the problems we had encountered in the July 31 Coalition, we discussed the question at length in SOC and were hesitant about launching a struggle by ourselves. In early March, we contacted many radicals and liberals in Orange County and scheduled a tentative exploratory meeting to discuss the possibility of initiating a coalition to demonstrate against the match. We planned to go ahead only if there was a good response and if others were willing to take responsibility for the organizing effort as well.

The only principle of unity on which we called the meeting was opposition to the South African team's presence--though we later struggled for a much higher political level in the open meetings. Before the Orange County meeting could be held, we learned that a similar meeting had been called in Los Angeles by a largely Black-led, independent anti-police abuse group. We delayed our own meeting and sent representatives to the Los Angeles meeting, which formed the Committee to Stop the U.S.-South African Davis Cup Games. At the meeting, attended by about 70 people from many groups, we and the Frank Shuford Defense Committee took the responsibility to handle all investigative and liaison work in the county, plus building a local Orange County wing of the coalition.

Because of their position as an independent group and their non-sectarian leadership, the Los Angeles initiators were able to draw into the coalition several local political groupings, plus representatives of Trotskyist and revisionist Communist Party organizations (though the CPUSA never had more than a token presence), Prairie Fire, and eventually the Revolutionary Student Brigade of the RCP. They also tried to draw in the October

League [now the CP(ML)], but even when this organization was given permission to march under its own "two superpowers" banner, it refused to attend the coalition meetings--except once when it spent the entire time denouncing other organizations--and it held a separate and much smaller demonstration.

Working with the Shuford Defense Committee, we were able to play much the same organizing role at the exploratory meetings in Orange County, though on a smaller scale. Because we had held lengthy discussions of the potential of the demonstration, how to relate to the various forces we might draw in and how to develop a genuinely democratic united front, with other forces taking leadership and organizational roles, we were soon in a very different position than we had been in July 31. We quickly learned that SOC as an organized and disciplined collective *could* take a leading role, and our work experienced a qualitative leap. Through a number of political discussions in the coalition, we argued for and won a high level of unity around opposing racism and U.S. imperialist complicity in apartheid. (The agitational material we developed for the back of the major leaflet, also used in Los Angeles, is reproduced on the next page.) We eventually drew into the coalition, in addition to individuals and campus groups, representatives from Tom Hayden's Coalition For Economic Democracy, a small group of Marxist-Leninist students, and a local wing of the RSB. (There are no Trotskyist or CPUSA organizations in



Why are South African sports segregated?

All of South Africa is segregated. Apartheid--or strict racial segregation--has been the official policy of the white South African ruling class since 1948. Not just in sports, but in schools, housing, jobs, restaurants, theaters, and all areas of life. South African Blacks cannot vote, cannot join trade unions, cannot own property in the cities, do not even have a right to live in the cities and must carry passes at all times. They are aliens in their own country. When they resist, as students and workers did last year, they are shot down. Over 2,000 peaceful demonstrators were killed last year. Apartheid is maintained by the police, spies, arrest without trial, torture and open terror against Blacks.

Why is South Africa segregated?

Segregation equals profits. The 3.5 million whites are the upper and middle classes of South Africa, the 21 million Blacks and Asians are the working class. Through total segregation and total oppression, this working class is kept unorganized and super-exploited. Wages of Blacks living in Soweto, just outside Johannesburg, average \$25-\$30 per month. Wages of whites in Johannesburg average \$700-\$800 per month. Over all, the average white makes ten times more than the average Black. Black labor has built South Africa, but they have one of the lowest standards of living in the world. The whites one of the highest. This super-exploitation is maintained by apartheid.

Why is the U.S. welcoming a team from South Africa?

South Africa is part of the U.S. Economy. U.S. firms are the main prop and the main beneficiary of South Africa's system. More than \$10 billion of U.S. capital is invested in South Africa, with an annual return of 20% as opposed to 3-4% in the U.S. The South African army has many links to NATO and the U.S. defense establishment. Together, this alliance controls the vital route from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean--and to the major oil supplies of the world. The CIA co-operation with the South African secret police has been convincingly documented by ex-CIA agent Phillip Agee and the European press. South Africa is an arm of the American Empire. Whenever the area is "in danger," U.S. ambassadors like Kissinger and Andrew Young hurry there to support the South African regime in order to protect American profits and interests.

Why demonstrate against a tennis match?

In South Africa sports is politics--a "good-will" gimmick to sell South Africa as a profitable investment. This is the official government tennis team, approved by the Minister of Sport, chosen at segregated matches and sent here to convince us that South Africa is a happy, peaceful, sports-loving country--and a good investment. Progressive people all over the world have shown their disgust against what South Africa represents by refusing to play this public relations game. Sports matches have been stopped in Canada, Sweden, New Zealand, Australia, England, India and all over the third world. The U.S. is one of the last remaining countries willing to play South Africa--thus endorsing the apartheid system. The South African government was deeply frightened by the protests, and they now claim their sports are integrated. This is a lie. Only the teams for international matches are "integrated."

THE MAIN PROFITEERS FROM SOUTH AFRICAN SEGREGATION AND OPPRESSION LIVE
IN PENTHOUSES AND MANSIONS IN NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ORANGE COUNTY.

THAT IS WHY THE PEOPLE OF NEW YORK, CHICAGO AND ORANGE COUNTY MUST PROTEST.

Labor donated

Educational material for Davis Cup Coalition

the county.) We also actively struggled to draw women into all the coalition work, including security, liaison and propaganda work.

When Trotskyist groups, particularly the National Student Coalition Against Racism, began distributing materials, here and in Los Angeles, implying that they were the leaders of the demonstration and listing only other Trotskyist organizations as participants, we led an attack at the public L.A. meetings on this opportunist behavior and the politics that stood behind it--but without trying to drive them out of the coalition. In this we were supported strongly by the L.A. initiating group. Through what we felt was principled struggle within the coalition on this and other issues, plus a great deal of active work to build the demonstration and prepare numerous educational materials, we built contacts and informal alliances with a number of individuals and small groups.

The demonstration itself--though we had argued for a single concentrated show of militance--was spread out over three days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. There were token picket lines of 75 to 100 on Friday and Sunday, but a very successful mass demonstration of over 1,000 (by actual head count) on the Saturday. This was the biggest demonstration in Orange County since the general agricultural strikes of the 1930s, and though the majority of the demonstrators did not come from the county, at least 200 did.

The October League held its own separate demonstration of about 60 on the Saturday. The bourgeois media managed to confuse this demonstration with the main one, and the *only* one of OL's five demands the media quoted related to opposing the Soviet presence in Southern Africa. This selective quotation was, of course, not OL's "fault," but it shows fairly clearly one of the dangers of doing mass work based on a class-collaborationist line.

On Saturday, two protestors not connected with the demonstration outside threw cartons of motor oil on the tennis court, which delayed play for about 40 minutes. Afterward, though we had argued earlier against provocative and individ-

ualistic acts, the Orange County coalition decided on this statement: "Individual and exemplary action has a place in the armory of political protest as long as it does not substitute for mass action. While the protestors were not part of the mass demonstration outside, we understand the deep outrage that lay behind their acts and we will support their legal defense within the limits of our time and resources."

On the last day, Sunday, another sectarian organization made a sudden appearance without prior work with the coalition--perhaps 20 to 30 people from Progressive Labor's Committee Against Racism. They attempted to sit in on the court with a banner, but the police prevented this and arrested them. (Ironically, the television cameras had left Saturday.) PL cadres outside attempted to lead the demonstration away to the local courthouse to defend their arrested members--without consulting the coalition leadership. Only a few followed them.



Throughout the three days, local police harassed the Black coalition leaders from Los Angeles with numerous warrant checks and minor traffic citations, and on Sunday we had to send cadres on emergency runs to collect a bail fund for one of the Black leaders who had been jailed on a five-year-old traffic warrant. (The police carefully held this until the demonstration had dispersed on the last day and he was nearly alone.) The police made no attempt to shut down the main demonstration despite the fact that it was extremely loud with chants and only 40 yards from the open tennis court.



THE SHIP BOYCOTT

Another important action carried out by the L.A. and Orange County coalitions at the same time was the picketing of the Dutch ship *Kingston* which was carrying South African cargo to be unloaded in L.A. Harbor. This action developed a few days before the Davis Cup demonstration through contact with militant rank and file workers of the ILWU who understood the importance of working class action against imperialism. A few days earlier, the *Kingston* had been unable to unload its cargo in San Francisco because of a large picket line in the Bay Area and the refusal of ILWU workers to cross the picket line. (We are unaware of the exact political character of the organizers of this action in the Bay Area.)

The L.A. and Orange County committees set up a picket line at L.A. Harbor, but for a number of reasons it was unable to do more than delay the unloading of the ship. After the events in San Francisco, the ship owners kept the exact date of the ship's arrival in L.A. secret until the last minute. None of the Trotskyist organizations sent any of their supporters for the picket line and only one CPUSA ally showed up. Despite the disinterest or sabotage of these organizations, 30 pickets did arrive at 6 a.m., including a handful from Orange County, and they established a picket line on the dock. The ILWU workers refused to cross the line, thereby expressing their true class position.

After an hour of the picket line, an ILWU business agent arrived and ordered

the longshore workers to unload the ship, telling them that they were in violation of the union contract, that they had already lost an hour's pay and that the union could be fined. In addition, the Harbor Police told the picketers that they were all subject to immediate arrest as trespassers.

The picketers discussed the situation and made a policy decision to leave. The workers had already gone aboard to work, the Davis Cup demonstration was only three days away, and it did not make sense to get most of the coalition leadership arrested when there was still a great deal of work to be done in preparation for the demonstration.

The action was not a total loss because we knew we had cost the *Kingston* an extra hour of dock time, which cost the operators about \$15,000. And most important, the workers--before the arrival of their business agent--had taken a direct part in an anti-imperialist action. (The demonstrators had given them leaflets explaining the economic and political ties with the U.S.) We believe that one of the keys to developing working class support for national liberation movements rests on concrete struggles such as this. Waterfront workers, teamsters and other transport workers possess an enormous power to cripple U.S. imperialism. An important task for the new communist movement is to build a base in this sector of the working class and establish links with these workers wherever possible so that the working class can respond whenever there is an opportunity to assist the liberation struggles in Southern Africa and elsewhere.

The fact that we did not have closer ties to the longshore workers and did not understand the problems that might arise with their business agent was another indication of our weak base in the working class.

LATER DEVELOPMENTS

Immediately after the demonstration, there was an initial enthusiasm in both coalitions carrying over from the spirit of the demonstration itself. Both the L.A. and Orange County leaderships understood that there is an ebb and flow of enthusiasm associated with demonstration coalitions, and both had prepared *before* the demonstration for continuing work on southern African issues--study, extending the shipping and Del Monte boycotts, support work for Frank Shuford, and an event to commemorate the June uprisings in Soweto. After a time, however, both coalitions had trouble carrying on. In Los Angeles it was largely Trotskyist groups that continued to appear at mass meetings--in addition to the initiators, ourselves and a few small groups--and after a fairly successful Soweto Day educational that drew about 100 in June, what was left of the Los Angeles coalition merged into the pre-existing, independent Southern Africa Solidarity Committee.

In Orange County, it was largely only ourselves and the small Marxist-Leninist campus group, plus a few individuals, and the coalition carried on as the Orange County Committee Against Racism and Apart-

heid (OCCARA.) We put a lot of effort into direct group-to-group contacts, and tried to develop further work. Closer unity with the campus group was hampered when basic disagreements surfaced--primarily around the relationship of theory and practice and the importance of mass work--but we continued to work together. OCCARA itself could not build much work in the summer, but we are hoping that the campus movement against apartheid and U.S. complicity which is growing in California and elsewhere will help us breathe life into the organization in the fall.

POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE COALITIONS

We believe it is not a coincidence that a Black Marxist-Leninist collective initiated and assumed leadership in the struggle against the Davis Cup match. This Black collective, whose main practice before the demonstration had been in leading struggles against oppressive police actions in the ghettos in and around L.A., understood the connection between the struggles for national liberation in southern Africa and the struggle for Black liberation and democratic rights in this country.



We believe the national liberation movements in southern Africa are already a major focal point of the struggle against U.S. imperialism, and we have seen evidence of response to this issue among students--particularly at Stanford this spring. Our cadres have also attended a state-wide meeting to prepare for university protest this fall. This movement is similar to that combination of anti-imperialism and direct personal involvement (the threat of the draft) that had such a powerful effect in the anti-war movement of the 1960s. When the Stanford demonstrators were able to link international solidarity with the issue of cutbacks in Black and Chicano programs (the Bakke court case that threatens all minority admission programs), the movement there developed a powerful impetus.

Other groups such as the RSB who have a much weaker strategic analysis of the movement and how to organize, relying on their "single spark" theory rather than the mass line, have developed less response. We realize that southern Africa is not the same as Viet Nam, particularly since the U.S. military forces are present only in the guise of "mercenaries," and it is premature at this point to predict the scope of this growing movement. More experience is necessary. Nevertheless, it is important that the new communist movement give serious attention to this development and seek to support and lead it.

There is a real connection between oppression and racism in this country and in southern Africa, but it is not automatically or immediately apparent and only an organized movement can make the connection. We learned this lesson ourselves in taking our leaflets and educational materials into the Black community. Few Blacks--like most of the U.S. population--knew about apartheid or knew that South Africa was a white-ruled country. The fact that we did not immediately recognize this shows once again our tenuous base in the community. Without this base, it is impossible to develop a correct mass line. When we saw the response, we redesigned and tested

new agitational materials with the co-operation of members of the Frank Shuford Defense Committee. The new materials carefully explained the situation in South Africa, drew parallels with the slave era in the U.S. and showed the links to U.S. corporations more concretely.

In general, we felt that our participation in this action was on a much higher and more effective level than a lot of our earlier work. The July 31 experience had helped us considerably in understanding how to do united front work. We still have a long way to go in building a base and in building consistent long-term work.

Another more general lesson we felt we had demonstrated in this action dealt with the nature of united fronts and sectarianism. We believe our experience showed the importance of Marxist-Leninists working and struggling in united fronts with all people who claim to oppose imperialism, racism and sexism, including revisionists and Trotskyists. To build a new communist movement, mistaken practices and the politics behind them have to be met and exposed. This cannot be done by hiding in a sectarian closet, but by carrying on principled struggle within the framework of living political work.

