

SPECIAL BULLETIN NUMBER TEN

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For I. S. Members Only

February 28th. 1977

TOWARDS BUILDING A WORKERS COMBAT ORGANIZATION

The IS was founded as a national organization in 1969. For the first few years the IS was an essentially all white, middle class organization whose numerical strength was on both coasts. A sample percentage of our membership had already gone into industry, but for the majority industrialization, as well as midwest prioritization, raised many personal and political questions.

The IS, at the time, was also a collection of amateurs. For far too many members revolutionary politics was just one of many interesting pursuits. And at that time the organization was national in form only. In reality the organization was a collection of semi-autonomous branches, each doing their own thing and as often as not their activities had little relationship to the activities of other branches or the center.

The leadership was little better. Each branch had its own "stars" who achieved national recognition by developing their own peculiar point of view on whatever question was under discussion. This collection of national leaders existed in a state of constant competition instead of collaboration, each with his or her own base, politics, and national network.

Clearly this ragtag assemblage could not hope to lead workers or anyone else in struggle without major changes. Carrying out these changes - moving large numbers to the midwest, a serious program of industrialization and professionalization - was no easy task. For many the sacrifice proved to be too great and three and one-half years ago the IS lost a third of its membership.

Today we are a profoundly different organization. Our political and numerical strength is in the industrial midwest. 40% of our membership is in industry, 14% of our membership is indigenous working class, we helped organize and lead TDU, the most successful rank and file group in the country today (and in many decades), we have a youth group that is 95% working class and 75% black. The IS itself has recruited the first layer of black cadre - the overwhelming majority of whom are working class and have been recruited out of struggle - Gary Tyler, the Red Tide and our industrial work.

But at the same time the organization is in crisis and undergoing another major faction fight. The truth is that fundamentally the issue is the same - a section of the organization no longer believes it is possible to build a workers group now and therefore is no longer willing to make the necessary sacrifices.

The mere existence of the "left" faction and the possible loss of a significant chunk of the organization has led the entire organization to question and re-assess the last 3 ½ years.

This is understandable. We are a politically young and inexperienced organization. We do not have a layer of older experienced cadre able to gracefully guide us through the difficult transition to becoming a workers combat group. We are clumsy, there have been mistakes. But in the main our direction - toward becoming a democratic centralist workers combat group - has been correct.

It is important now to go back over the last period and restate those advances. In fact, it is crucial. The crisis in the IS today, is not only the fight with the left faction. Their politics have acted as a pole within the organization, pulling along other sections, in particular the third force, but also parts of the majority. Mistakes in execution are being seen as mistakes in method and we run the risk of throwing out the baby with the bath water.

It is crucial that the IS as a whole now reaffirm the direction charted 3 ½ years ago. It is clear now that no one, including the leadership fully understood the diffi-

*culties of making the ~~transition from a middle class student group~~ to a workers' combat organization. In trying to move too far too fast we didn't train the cadre deeply enough in what this transition means. We must begin to accomplish this training now. This destructive fight can yet have a positive outcome if we all come out of it better understanding how far we've come and how far we still have to go in building a truly democratic centralist workers combat organization. If we fail to do this, many questions will be up for grabs, and at best the new leadership elected at the convention will have little or no direction. At worst we will only end this fight to prepare for another. The remainder of this document provides the basic politics and methodology we must have to move ahead.

I.S. Work in the Unions

Before the "left" faction started their headlong dash to challenge every basic assumption of the I.S., it was common ground in the organization that the way forward for our politics and organization was in the key industrial unions.

We understood that the lack of revolutionary socialist traditions and organization in the American working class meant that the revolutionary party could not be built by the direct recruitment of socialist workers to a revolutionary organization. The witchhunts of the 50's had meant that there was no layer of socialist workers in the American working class. They had all been driven out of industry. Instead the revolutionary party would have to be built by the winning of the revolutionary socialist organization of sections of the rank and file movement.

To accomplish this two things were necessary. First, that revolutionary socialists enter the working class and second that a rank and file movement be built. Thus we approached our industrial work with a fairly sharp understanding of what we were about. Our goal was the building of a rank and file movement dedicated to class struggle unionism and recruiting out of that movement to the I.S.

In the last two years we have learned that this goal in and of itself was not sufficient. Business unionism permeated the unions right down to the level of the rank and file activists by merely understanding the principles of class struggle unionism we were still not fundamentally prepared to challenge the prevailing attitudes of the rank and file. Also, even when we were able to convert a fellow worker to ideas of class struggle unionism he or she was not automatically open to the solution of revolution.

We learned from our experience, and it was the recognition of these problems which lead us to the understanding that concrete agitation was the pre-requisite for effective socialist propaganda and consequent recruitment.

We learned that to recruit workers, to convince them to dedicate their lives to revolution, we had to demonstrate in practice that our strategy is more than just a good idea, but that it could actually work.

This meant leading struggle. A major advance of the last two years has been the turn to agitation and the notion that revolutionaries could lead large numbers of workers in struggles for limited goals. This is important for two reasons. The first is the correct understanding that workers learn through struggle. The process of fighting for even the most limited goals exposes far more sharply the workings of the capitalist system. Why is it that GM is making record profits while speed-up accelerates and working conditions worsen? If you don't ask you don't find out - and it is in the process of struggle that workers ask.

Also, it is in the process of struggle that working people learn about their own power. This is crucial. Because it is far easier to convince workers that they should run society than to convince them that they actually can, and that there is a strategy for doing so.

It has been through the turn to agitation and the method of mass work that the IS has been fundamentally changed into the embryo of a workers combat group.

In this context the question of priorities becomes even more important. It becomes a method by which we concentrate our still meager forces in such a way as to have enough weight to have some real effect on events. And industrialization ceases to be an abstract quest for knowledge, a process of a few years' extra schooling for middle-class revolutionaries as the "left" faction would have us believe. It is the only way in the United States today to have people in a position to give the necessary lead to have that impact. And although we acknowledge that the success of such organizing would be greater with a proletarian cadre, to wait for the spontaneous development of a layer of revolutionary workers in the American working class is to doom ourselves to irrelevancy as well as to jeopardize the development of a working class revolution in this country. /X

Having come to the understanding that revolutionaries can lead, in fact must lead we also learned that it is not generally possible in this period, for revolutionaries to lead alone. Over the last two years we have taken that tactic out of history (where all in the IS agree it was correct) and elevated it to the level of practice today. This has caused some in the IS (not only those in the left faction) to recoil and declare we are moving to the right. This notion of revolutionary purity must be rejected.

A major advance of the last period has been our growing understanding of how the class moves and how to lead that process. The tactic of the united front - temporary alliances with forces to the right of us in order to, both create motion that today revolutionaries socialists cannot create alone, and to reach their base - is as crucial a tool for us as it was in Lenin's day. In order to /X

In order to take, still in a very modest way, the important step of molding some minor events we have learned how to make alliances on a principled but limited basis with people like Weisman in auto or Meredith in UPS. These people will never be revolutionaries but we have learnt how to organize them so that they are not a barrier to the development of a genuine rank and file movement. So that they in fact, play a role in that development and thus open up the process by which other workers come to revolutionary consciousness. On an even more limited, single issue basis we have been ready to co-operate with even worse elements. The "30 and Out" committee in auto, PROD in the IBT, and Sadlowski in steel. /X

Our ability to do this will move the struggle forward - not to the right.

The Focus on Industrial Work

Our industrial work is the key to the successful creation of a workers combat organization. We have understood this, politically, for the last seven years. However we have not always put that understanding into practice. Over the last year we have struggled with the problem of how to elevate the industrial units of the organization without decentralizing. It is a problem we have not yet totally solved, however we are getting closer to an understanding of the correct balance. This understanding comes out of struggle between the central leadership and the leadership of the industrial fractions. The industrial work of the organization must become the political core of the IS, and have first call on our resources. We must also develop the organizing ability to involve virtually all our members, even those who do not work in

m priorities, in an understanding of our industrial work, and to a part in building a workers organization based in industry.

In each industry and union we need self-confident, political leadership on a national level which works side-by-side with the central political leadership; Locally the branches have to be divided into functional units around our main work and we need to have organizers who understand that their main role is to take that work forward. This method of industrial leadership is a pre-requisite for preventing the depoliticization of our industrial work, for only when the industrial leaderships are given overall political responsibility will they avoid the obvious and real dangers of economism. The central political leadership must also be more involved in the industrial work, collaborating, helping to provide a lead, helping to overcome the pressures to confine work to solely immediate, local needs, to help in setting political policy and integrating it with party building.

Since the convention we said that the development of the industrial fractions can produce. Although the process was aborted by the declaration of the "left" faction, it should be recognized that the fractions were giving real political content to the program of the periphery campaign. It was the auto fraction which provided the impetus to do serious solidarity work on Southern Africa, the teamster fraction who organized the political class series which resulted in the first significant recruitment of working teamsters and the steel branch in Gary which not only took the initiative to have a representative of ZANU do a meeting there but agreed to organize a ZANU support group after the completion of the Sadlowski campaign.

Today, our industrial work is organized thru national and local fractions. Our industrial cadre and leadership is trained in these units. In the future these forms may develop into work place cells or branches. But the central point here is that it is out of industrial work that our organization will get its greatest health and development/. We will not make the next steps successfully unless we strengthen the emphasis on the fractions, for it is through the fractions primarily that we will recruit workers. It is here that the real unity of the industrial and full-time leadership will be welded, here where Workers Power will reassert its central role in the development of our organization,. It is also out of strong local fractions in our key cities that we will be able to develop well-rounded districts which go beyond the industrial fractions and include the Red Tide and other functional units in real political districts. Districts which will not only be a part of the political life of these cities but also represent the next stage in the evolution of the IS as a workers combat organization. It is also through the national industrial fractions that the smaller branches will be able to connect to much of the work of the national organization.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

As discussed earlier, 3½ years ago the IS was a collection of contending baronies and indisciplined stars. A devastating faction fight and the political expulsion of the RSL forced much of the organizations leadership to realize that unless serious changes in functioning were achieved the continued existence of the IS was in question.

Most important is the fact that history was making greater demands on us. After several decades of relative economic stability, the contradictions of the capitalist system were once again beginning to emerge. Once again working class struggle would take center stage. Not immediately, but as Marxists we understood that was the direction. History demanded that a serious revolutionary socialist organization position itself to participate in and lead the struggles that would develop.

The IS could no longer afford the luxury of being a discussion group organized around abstract political debate. We had several immediate tasks: to educate the organization on the basic political ideas of our tendency, which had been brought into question by the fight with the RSL, to bring to the center the top political talent in the IS and develop collaborative national leadership that could command the respect of the organization and lead the IS forward, to convince significant numbers to move to the mid-west and industrialize, and to build the IS.

The tasks were enormous. And it is important to understand that they were mainly subjective. The IS was not yet a national organization in reality. It had neither national work or a respected national leadership, most branches were used to doing whatever they pleased. Directives from the center piled up like so much trash. The specific accomplishments of the last few years concerning internal functioning and the development of the IS as a combat group has been the development of a collaborative national leadership team, the development of a professional center and staff, a highly professional weekly newspaper, and the development of a team of full-time organizers who have committed themselves to learning the skills of their trade, the start of collaborative fraction leaderships, and the growth of a cadre.

The fact that today a common complaint is that the organization is "too centralized" is a tribute to the advances of the last period. Before we rush to abandon these advances let us first understand what we are, why we are organized as we are and thus why abandoning the norms of democratic centralism is to go backwards more than four years to a thoroughly different, and for today's needs, useless organization.

* The IS is about working class revolution - that is overthrowing the capitalist system. Everything we do must be aimed at preparing us for that eventual act. That is what we mean when we say that we are struggling to become a workers combat group. All of our norms of functioning must flow from that understanding.

We need to build a well organized, tightly knit, disciplined organization - eventually a revolutionary party. And we are up against the repressive brutality of the world's strongest capitalist class. We must have no illusions about the power or ability of the American capitalist class.

If we are serious about our politics we must be serious enough to organize ourselves accordingly. We must be as well-organized, centralized, disciplined and professional as our enemies. That is our goal. We have not yet achieved it - but in the last several years we have come a ways down the road. The truth is we will have to become more centralized to accomplish our agreed upon tasks, not less.

Democratic Centralism: Democratic centralism is the norms by which a revolutionary socialist combat group governs itself. Simply put democratic centralism is freedom of criticism, unity of action. But the concept is far more dynamic than that.

Behind the notion of democratic centralism lies the understanding that a combat group exists to act. All our conceptions of both democracy and centralism flow from that understanding.

Our view of democracy is not a moral one, based on some notion of abstract equality. Our view of democracy is a proletarian class view.

The working class can only rule through democratic control - democracy only really exists when the working class has power. Proletarian democracy is an active concept, of the struggle to take power and rule. Without that, without the norms to make that effective, democracy is merely a moral abstract in an undemocratic bourgeois system. Democracy therefore is not primarily discussing interesting ideas, but discussion to strictly inform the taking of power and rule by the working class. The most "democratic" discussion without revolutionary struggle, and the means to make it effective, a disciplined, centralized, combat remains mere idle talk! Through our democratic norms, through the interplay of ideas and experience our action is most effective. Within the IS there is a wide range of political experience, talent and knowledge. It is through their interaction that our theory advances and our mistakes are corrected. For example in discussing the Teamster work there is a wide range of knowledge, and experience within the fraction, let alone the entire organization. In general the fraction steering committee has the most advanced understanding of both the specifics of the industry and our industrial method. They have been chosen to lead the work because they are the most competent to do so, and because they have fought for leadership and been tested in practice. But they are not always right. The newest member of the fraction has a great deal to contribute to developing the work. It is the feedback that he or she gives in trying to carry out the work, that advances our understanding and effectiveness.

It is also for this reason that we are a centralized group. The experiences of the entire organization must be pulled together, put in a context, analyzed and responded to. Without central decision making there is no limited action, nor is there democracy, the rule of the majority, the implementation of its line. Again it is the Teamster fraction leadership and experience that is best able to pull together all of the experiences of our IBT work and put forward the perspectives to move the work forward.

There is another aspect of centralization that is crucial to the effectiveness of a combat group. Once a line is decided upon, it must be carried out. Even if it is wrong, we cannot learn from our mistakes until we make them. For a combat group to develop, its ideas must be proven or disproven in practice. This means centralization - having a leadership with the authority and political experience to make sure that all sections of the organization carry out the line in an effective manner.

Understanding this that at all times the criteria behind all of our organizational norms is our ability to act - let us go back to the slogan of "freedom of criticism, unity in action". We are free to criticize because it is through critical assessment of what is correct and incorrect about our work that we advance our ability to effect the world. If that debate hinders our ability to act, then we have undermined our reason to exist.

For example, recently a ban was placed on discussion of our steel work until the election on 2/8. This was done because, although our line had been democratically decided at a national steel fraction meeting and supported by the EC, the opposition of the minority was so strong that their constant questioning was paralyzing the work. Unity in action was not possible with continued discussion. Therefore discussion was banned until the period of action was over. Although this was an extraordinary measure (usually disagreements are voluntarily put aside after a vote is taken and all loyal members then carry out the line) it was completely in keeping with the norms of democratic centralism.

Leadership: Precisely because our ideas must have practical results to have real meaning, all ideas are not the same. Those ideas that lead us down the wrong paths must be abandoned. And because the decisions we make effect peoples lives we do not have the luxury of trial and error to weed them out.

For this reason the question of leadership in a combat group is an extremely important one. Any worker will tell you that they do not want the least experienced naive union member running a strike. The same is * true for a workers combat group.

Within the IS, as within the working class itself, there exists a wide range of political consciousness and understanding. Newer members, in general, will have expertise only in the politics of the moment, the issue and struggles they are recruited to. It takes time to go through and learn ^{new} a broad range of political ideas in both theory and practice. ~~mine~~ *

Political struggle does not develop in a straight line. Today's questions might be building a united front. This will not necessarily be the question of tomorrow, when it might be splitting forces. A combat group must be able to make sharp turns as events unfold. To do this the group must have a seasoned politically sophisticated leadership and cadre.

Therefore although leadership on all levels must continually struggle to bring the rest of the organization to its political level, leadership bodies must be filled by the most sophisticated, tested members.

Because we exist to act, a crucial test of leadership is the ability to lead the organization in action. This understanding has been a major advance for the IS over the last period. When we could be nothing more than a discussion group, keeping ideas alive until the time when the working class would once again move, leadership bodies were charged with organizing discussion. Thus, they were organized around political differences. Once we were able to move beyond a discussion group, our conception of leadership also had to change.

Following the split in 1973 we chose a leadership team on the basis of its ability to carry out an agreed upon program of action. We demanded that the central leadership act as a collaborative leadership team. Very quickly we learned that we were a product of our past and the organizational norms of a discussion group. Those who disagreed with a particular line would lobby the EC member who also disagreed or was weakest on the question. Collaboration at the top was impossible when each leader felt responsible to a base that judged and lobbied for or against every position taken. Finally the forward motion of the organization ground to a halt as the EC and the organization debated what to do in the Coalition of Labor Union Women. The IS was paralyzed because the EC was split. In order for the organization to be able to act the EC had to take a line, be disciplined to carry it within the organization and end the debate. This was necessary to win a confused and divided membership to a program of action.

Learning from that experience the EC decided to discipline itself in general and face the organization with one voice. The EC argued that in a combat situation its differences out only served to hamper action, as in the CLUW debate when the organization polarized around opposing EC points of view and could not act. The EC carried the idea of disciplined leadership bodies to the convention and won the debate, although narrowly.

Today the notion of a disciplined EC is again in question. To end the idea of disciplined leadership bodies would return us to a discussion group atmosphere. If action is not the question, but discussion, then the thoughts and differences of each leader become important. If however action is the question, then the commonly agreed on program is key. And it is on this basis, the program of action, that a leadership should be judged on - not its differences.

We believe there have been mistakes in application, in particular a certain rigidity in the use of EC discipline, which has tended to isolate the EC. However we believe that the notion of internally disciplined leadership bodies remains correct precisely because we are a combat group, and should be continued within the IS, on a more selective basis. There have been mistakes and many of the problems and solutions are dealt with in the majority caucus statement.

In fact it is not just the EC who has come to the understanding. Other leadership groupings, the Teamster steering committee, and the Red Tide EC for examples, have functioned in a similar fashion. The reason is simple. In a situation of growth and activity a leadership must put forward a clear line around which to rally the rank and file.

It must give a clear lead, and be judged on the basis of that lead. It must discipline itself to carry out the majority view. The leaders themselves are not above discipline. Their strength and that of the organization, depends on collaboration. They must be forced to put aside differences and organizing around differences in the interest of acting, of leading the organization as a collaborative team.

A leadership team has to decide what is more important - to sow differences and confusion or develop clarity in the membership. When there is overall political agreement, most leadership groupings in the IS, either formally or informally have chosen to face the ranks with one voice.

Of course there will be times when disagreements are major and serious. Individual leaders will believe the generally agreed upon tasks a disaster and will break discipline. Whether they are right or wrong will be determined by events. If they only serve to paralyze and confuse they will be judged accordingly. If they are right and move the organization forward they will also be judged accordingly.

Let us simply state the principle involved. It is the responsibility of leadership bodies to assure that the will of the majority be carried out as effectively as possible, so that the organization can act. Therefore it is the responsibility of the leadership to decide when, how and if it chooses to bring its differences to the membership.

In particular, at times leadership bodies have acted without sufficient consultation, or leaders have failed to sufficiently politically motivate a specific line. However, it must also be remembered that often comrades were only one of many consulted and their point of view did not prevail. And in an over-stretched organization, which we have been for a long time, it is better to act quickly than to allow paralysis to take over.

There is one last point about leadership that must be made. As stated before, the organization is uneven. That means that sections of the organization will be more backward than others and possible resistance to specific lines adopted.

It is the responsibility of the leadership to assure that the whole organization carry out the line. Comrades in one city must feel assured that comrades in another are also carrying out their responsibilities. The entire purpose and structure of a combat group falls apart unless there is consistent application. Unity in action must be real.

In these cases the leadership must act. This means intervening in branches, to assure they carry out the policies of the organization, even if local leaders are slow or resistant to do so, or are upset and feel hurt if the national organization overrides their policy locally. If the leadership fails to do this they must be dumped. Again, we exist to act - if we cannot act our whole purpose is undermined.

The Machine: A major advance over the last period has been the development of a professional center. This means having a central leadership that has the political authority and ability to take a line and a staff that can aid the organization in carrying that line out.

Take for example, the GT campaign. It was begun through local initiative. The Detroit Red Tide heard of the case, called a local demonstration and got an impressive response. After their urging, the EC passed a perspective for building a national campaign which resulted in fairly successful GT work in 10-12 cities and the establishment of 2 Red Tide branches beyond Detroit and several Red Tide groupings.

A tremendous amount of material was produced in the center as was the co-ordination of demonstrations, speaking tours, and the release of information. In fact, our Midwest center was far better organized than was the national center in New Orleans.

The GT work definitely built the IS, as well as national support for GT which maintains Mrs. Tyler's respect and esteem. Our problem was that we were not professional enough. Political direction and material did not get out fast enough. If we had been better organized at the center, undoubtedly, we would have done even better with the work.

The same is true of all of our work that is national in scope, from the IBT to S. Africe. When the organization undertakes a national campaign or engages in struggle, comrades in one branch need to know that their work is being duplicated elsewhere. Motion in one place builds the struggle somewhere else. That is one reason why we are a national organization. It is also why a strong professional machine is needed to carry out the national line. In a country as large as this a weak center means a loose federation of branches each doing their own thing because of "Bay Area exceptionalism," "New York exceptionalism," "Detroit exceptionalism," - in other words the IS of 6 years ago.

Some comrades have become confused by the notion of a political machine within the IS. They see the development of a hard political center as similar to the political machine of their trade union bureaucracy. The question however is not one of having an effective political machine but one of politics. We oppose the trade union bureaucracy because of their politics not because they are well organized (as is the ruling class), we must be. *

But there is another question involved. The notion that a central political machine in the IS is undemocratic. That is exactly backwards. The development of a professional political center is the only way the IS can be democratic, because it is the only way to guarantee that the will of the majority is carried out. The center is organized to carry out the politics of the *

majority. If a new political perspective wins a majority at the convention then the central political machine would be organized around carrying out the line of this new majority.

To build an effective center means viewing working for the organization as important a political task as any other, instead of seeing working for the IS as a job one does in between jobs in the bourgeois world. It means recognizing that working for the IS is not "shitwork" but an essential part of building a well-oiled tightly disciplined organization and those who are called by the organization to serve or who put their lives at the disposal of the organization to serve are to be treated with the respect that their sacrifice deserves.

Organizers: Another advance has been the development of a team of organizers who see themselves as professionals and who are the agents of the national organization in each branch. It is their job to assure that the national line is carried in branches and not the peculiar position of a specific branch. Organizers should be appointed by the EC in consultation with the branch

The job of organizer is a highly political one and should be filled by comrades who have already won respect in leadership roles within the organization. In the past several comrades with less experience than others in their branch were placed in organizers jobs. In attempting to carry the national line inside the branch against more sophisticated local leaders they were often knocked back and thus isolated in their branches..Some now claim the solution is to elect organizers who would then be agents of the branches This is not a solution at all.

A less sophisticated comrade who acts as the agent of the local branch, will then simply become hammered by the more sophisticated center. The solution is granting the job of organizer the respect it must receive in a professional organization so that more sophisticated comrades will seek the job. And where this is not possible, branch leaders seeing their role as supportive rather than combative.

It also must be pointed out that many of the less experienced comrades ended up taking organizers jobs because the more experienced political people in the branch would not. This too is an argument for granting increased political weight and respect to branch organizers.

The real question is the proper political relationship between the organizer, the center, and the branch. The norms of democratic centralism clearly show that the guiding principle must be for all sections of the organization to carry out the the will of the majority. That is the primary role of a branch organizer - to act as the agent of the majority, that is, the national organization.

At the same time there will be many valid positions and correctives developed in the branch. It will be the job of the organizer to bring this understanding into the national organization. This too is an argument for developing a team of well-trained politically sophisticated professional organizers - not organizers as agents of their branches..

Recognizing the specific role of branch organizer as agent of the national organization does not mean that branch execs have no responsibility for carrying out the national line. Branch execs are also responsible for

assuring that their branches follow the norms of democratic centralism and should be working in a collaborative relationship with the organizer. Organizers, however have a specific relationship to the center in a centralized organization. That relationship is to represent and attempt to carry the majority point of view. This notion is opposed to a parliamentary conception which would see organizers as representatives of particular branch positions in the national organization.

Expanding the Leadership: We have already discussed the conception and role of the central leadership. But that is only one half of the leadership question. The IS is an organization of leaders and it is the responsibility of the central leadership to train and strive to bring new layers of the organization to its own political level. Leadership in the IS must be an expanding process. In this task we have seriously failed in the last period. It is not the purpose of this document to deal with the solution to this problem - (there are 2 full sections on expanding the leadership and cadre development in the majority caucus statement). However, in a discussion of the advances of the last period, in the process of becoming a democratic centralist group we must clearly state that not all of the programs have been successfully carried out. Expansion of the central leadership is one of our major failings.

At the same time there has been real growth of the secondary leadership of the I.S. A high percentage of the organizers and branch execs are made up of comrades who have been in the IS less than 3 years. And as our industrial work has grown and our roots in the community deepened much of the responsibility for leading the day to day work has fallen on an expanding secondary leadership and cadre. Our task in the next period is to build a collaborative national leadership including the EC, CC, NC fraction and commission leaderships and organizers. This expanded national leadership will draw heavily upon the developing talent pool within the secondary leadership.

In turn, it is also the task of the secondary leadership and cadres to strive to bring the rank and file up to its level.

Red Tide: In the last period the IS has learned concretely the enormous value of a revolutionary youth organization. The Red Tide today is potentially one of the most dynamic sections of the organization. The development of the Red Tide must be much higher on the list of IS priorities in the post-convention period. When the objective possibilities arise for the creation of a workers combat organization, it is felt most immediately by young people. They do not have to throw off the weight of years of reactionary conditioning. It is therefore no accident that the growth of the RT has been primarily amongst working class and black youth. In a very real sense that growth represents the future of the organization. The next period must therefore produce a development of the RT perspectives in Cleveland, Chicago and Detroit. There must also be the creation of a limited number of new branches and the integration of our youth section into the political and industrial life of the developing IS districts.

Workers Power: A discussion of the advances of the past must include Workers' Power. Today, WP is a prime target of factional debate. In fact, it is so in that it criticizes the paper that much of the organization has lost sight of how far the paper has come and how good a paper it still is.

This is not to say that WP does not have problems - in particular the need to raise its political level and to develop a much greater integration

between the paper and the organization. These were the two themes developed at the October NC and is again discussed in another document. The point here is to go over the advances of WP so that we can build upon them.

In the six months following the split with the RSL, we made many decisions that fundamentally changed our conception of the role of a revolutionary socialist paper in this country, in this period, and the kind of paper we wanted. Most importantly, we decided that WP was to be addressed to a working class audience, not students, and not the left. Making WP attractive and useful to workers meant breaking with our past and the typical sectarian press of the Trotskyist left. Articles were edited to eliminate rhetoric. Shortness of length was important. We did not try to say everything in one article. Instead, we attempted to have the paper, in totality, present our full politics.

We also understood that the layer of worker militants we were attempting to reach were not politically homogenous and had to be appealed to in different ways. We attempted to have varied coverage, humor, news, analysis, culture, socialist education, working class history, class hatred and outrage, and human interest. We also wanted the paper to have a working class feel to it and not seem weird or foreign. We filled our pages with pictures of workers, interviews, quotes, letters, everything we could to show that WP was a workers' paper.

We also changed fundamentally the way we used the paper. Instead of our press being seen only as a tool to educate our new members and immediate periphery, we said that our paper could be used to attract workers to the IS and to build the organization. We pushed factory gate sales in an aggressive manner for the first time. And we began sending WP reporters to strikes to get stories. Our members in industry began to sell the paper inside the plants, to declare themselves revolutionaries and to attract their workmates to revolutionary socialist ideas.

In general, we produced an exiting, professional revolutionary socialist, working class paper and for some time WP was in advance of the organization. But the truth is that much of what we achieved, was done in isolation from the rest of the organization. The success of the paper was achieved through the creativity of the staff and with the aid of the very excellent Socialist Worker as a model.

The public press of a socialist organization is not simply a good or bad product to be rated by some standard of journalistic or artistic excellence. The paper of a socialist organization is a tool and must be judged by its effectiveness in accomplishing its task. WP brought pride in the IS and a new confidence that it could speak to and recruit workers. To that degree, it was highly successful. But as the work of the organization caught up to the paper, the development of the paper began to falter. Its role became more complicated and its direction less clear. In addition, WP did not make the next crucial step.- to be integrated into the work of the organization. There was only so far the center could take the paper alone. WP could no longer lead the organization and in fact became peripheral to much of what was healthy and exciting in our work.

Workers Recruitment: The last, but highly important advance of the last period has been the commitment and ability to recruit. This is both necessary and clearly possible in the next period. There is no doubt that revolutionary politics can find firm supporters in the working class. And the truth is that if we can recruit worker comrades we can also retain and

train and the fractions will be the main vehicle for this. We are committed to the steps we have outlined in the original majority platform. We understand that we have still got much to learn and many mistakes to make. But our basic program cannot fall into the trap of either giving up on worker recruitment or pretending that a return to the discussion group politics is the solution. For this is what the other caucuses in our organization are saying. We have the beginnings of the answers to these problems of worker recruitment and turnover. It is the majority which will complete the task as well.

Conclusion: Much of what is new in the majority position appears in the Majority Caucus Statement already published. Much of what is contained in this document is merely an attempt to understand our immediate past and extend it into the future. The majority must stand on both these elements if it is to give a serious lead to the organization as a whole. The new must be anchored to the old or the IS will remain in a state of continued confusion.

There is one last task that this document must address itself to - a summary of our perspective for the next year. Much of this is developed elsewhere: WP perspectives, Black liberation perspectives, womens liberation perspectives, economic and political perspectives, perspectives for specific industrial priorities and the Majority Caucus statement which speaks to the organizational development of the IS.

There are several other key elements of the road forward that must be addressed. In particular building the IS. Before going further we must state, again, that we are on the right road. Turning an all white middle class, group of ex-students into a multi-racial workers combat group is an extremely difficult task. We have made many mistakes, undoubtedly we will make more. However, we affirm that the strategy we have, in both the long term and short term - including industrialization, priorities and mass work - is correct. Many of the specifics problems and lessons were addressed in the October NC documents, which we are reprinting. But it is also necessary here to summarize some of the tasks for the next year. } *mistake*

Industrial Work: In the summary the objective pressures on the working class will be strongest at the level of the work place and in terms of job security and unemployment. Big explosions over national wage settlements are unlikely for 1977. However, pressure on the unions with contracts yet to expire will be strong from both the employers and the rank and file in the areas of working conditions, grievance procedures and shop floor organization, and job security. The generally fragmented nature of these issues, however, indicates more motion on the local level than on the national level. The general state of rank and file organization in the USWA, CWA, and even the UMW is very low, which also points toward local based, rather than national resistance. Political events in the USWA could change this for that union. But generally, while the issues may be national in reality, actual organization, motion, and developing consciousness is likely to occur at the local (or in the UMW, regional) level for the next year or more. This will be even truer for unions whose contracts are now or don't expire for a long time. There is in trucking, auto, and the post office, local resistance to the employers offensive can be used to lay the basis for future initiatives. In trucking, where TDU already exists, local action as well as some national company-wide campaigns - can help build the national movement. But even here, the bulk of real activity will be local, Like the last couple of years 1977 will be a year in which various struggles, local and to a lesser extent na-

tional, will continue the process of developing a small rank and file leadership composed of revolutionaries and of militants willing to work with them on a common program. This process has not been and will not be, an unbroken string of successes, . Many things will "not work", campaigns will be defeated, and initiatives will fail to get off the ground. But there will also be the possibilities of small victories.

Periphery Building' Recruitment to the IS out of our industrial work will come from a small but growing layer of rank and file militants who will be developed out of local activity - both the failures and the successes. But to do so means politicizing that work and building a political periphery for the IS.

Every movement has its own politics - they arise out of the struggle itself. For example, during TDC, key political questions arose as the struggle unfolded: whether or not to strike, building an ongoing opposition in the IBT, injunctions, reds in the rank and file movement. Throughout the TDC, one of our strengths was our ability to bring to consciousness what these questions were and put forward the correct answers at the right time. In the process we carried with us a layer of militants who were politically trained in the struggle.

At the same time we must be politically educating these militants on the political context of their struggles - the employers offensive, the role of the courts, class against class. It is these ideas that provide the bridge between their understanding and revolutionary socialist politics.

There are other political questions that a developing rank and file movement must address to survive. These are the political questions of the day, like busing, the Carter campaign, racism and sexism, S. Africa. Many militants will want to avoid dealing with these questions as they will see them as divisive. We must show them that precisely because they are divisive they must be addressed, political agreement developed, or they will split the movement.

If steel worker militants do not deal with the questions of racism and sexism they will be crushed by division around the issue of affirmative action.

Last, but equally important to building the IS is teaching this layer of militants socialist ideas. Many will come to hear what we have to say because we are the best fighters in the rank and file movement. They will want to know "what this socialism stuff is anyway." Some will be convinced.

In many other documents we have gone through the variety of ways we can bring people around the IS: Workers' Power, dinner discussions, classes, film shows, conferences, etc. The point is not to dictate which fractions will do what, when - but to chart a general direction.

At this point, the dislocation caused by the faction fight makes it impossible to list specific areas for recruitment, targets and dates. However, we believe that excellent methods for periphery building is being charted by the national teamster fraction, even during this fight. Following the special convention specific perspectives must be developed for other fractions and the lessons of the Teamster work brought into the organization.

Southern Africa: The developing revolution in Southern Africa is of extreme importance to us on many levels. We support, without condition, the black struggle for liberation and national self-determination in Southern Africa. In addition the revolutionary process effects and will reshape - as it already has in Portugal. - all of Western capitalism.

Here, it is beginning to have a profound effect on the consciousness of a growing number of blacks. The process will continue as the revolution unfolds and the role of American imperialism becomes more explicit. The revolution in Southern Africa will be on a smaller scale, the Vietnam of the 70's.

For us it provides tremendous opportunities for growth in numbers and political development. The revolutionary process in South Africa will concretely train our membership in a full range of revolutionary socialist politics of self determination, reform or revolution, Stalinism.

Following the convention we will undertake a serious and major campaign around South Africa support work. Some branches have already begun. Specific perspectives will be worked out after the convention. However, the following is already in preparation.

We are planning that the major branches set Southern Africa Support Committees. SALC's will be non sectarian and will orient toward working class people. They support ZANU in Zimbabwe, SWAPO in Namibia and the many groups now engaged in the struggle in S. Africa. SALC's will be educational and activist.

Where similar groups already exist, ISers will work to build those instead. A Midwest Center has been set up in Detroit which is distributing two films, buttons and posters. A wide selection of S. Africa Lit. (the best in the US) will be distributed through Sun. The Center will also provide limited research facilities.

We are planning a series of activities, the most important, thus far, being the ZANU shoe drive.

A handbook on building SALC and activities is now in preparation.

WORKERS POWER

Gains of the Past

Three years ago, Workers' Power was a monthly paper ill-suited to the job of transforming the IS into a workers combat organization. Its labor coverage was mostly recognizable as the work of outsiders or inexperienced new-comers. Rarely did workers or black people appear or speak in the columns of WP in those days. Our international coverage was either hot-housed from the New York Times or simply reprinted from Socialist Workers. It did not always come out on time, there was no production schedule, indeed, it was produced in the home of its editor.

Since the 1973 split, WP has gone through a rapid and thorough transformation. Beginning in early 1974, it was produced on a professional basis. That is, it was brought into the center of the organization (the National Office) and a regular staff was brought responsible for regular, dependable production. It soon became a bi-weekly, and only a year later a weekly. In this period, both the content and style of WP changed enormously.

Working class people and an on-the-spot view of workers' struggles became a regular feature of WP. To a greater extent than any American radical or socialist paper since the 1940's, WP brought real workers struggles into its pages in a vital way. High quality expose material also became a regular feature of WP, as did a number of educational columns. The international coverage improved immeasurably as we learned more about Portugal and, most recently, Southern Africa.

The Oct., 1976 N.C. decided that WP had still another turn to make. This turn was not to be a retreat from the gains of the past three years, but step toward deepening the political content of the paper. This turn was never made because the faction fight intervened to prevent it. The demands of other political work, in particular, prevented the editor from playing the leadership role she had played on the paper in the preceding three years. The staff, now reduced and without its editor was more overworked than ever. The fact that WP has not declined significantly in quality or dependability is a tribute to the talents and sacrifices of the staff in the last few months.

Neither the staff, nor the editor of the paper, however, could sweep aside the damaging results of the current faction fight on the organization. The disappointments and failures of the preceding year have produced a lack of confidence in our perspectives. The result of this has been confusion in many sections of the organization. With more and more sections of the leadership tied up in factional matters, political clarity about the direction of some of our industrial work has been lacking or has not been for gazed for. Instead, questions the circulation and use of the paper suffers even more. No staff or editor, caught in the shill-wind of factionalism and increasingly isolated from our industrial work as that becomes a political football, can move WP forward until the fight is resolved and our direction re-stated clarified. Obviously, one thing that needs to be clarified, or re-stated is what we believe WP should be.

General Conception and Agitational Style.

The conception of a revolutionary paper that we wish to work toward is Lenin's Pravda. Pravda was, after a process of development, a real workers paper. Its pages were filled with articles by workers, workers sold it, and even non-party workers took up regular collections for Pravda. Over the years, it was the readership of Pravda that became, finally, the membership of the party that lead the Russian Revolution. It became in time, what Lenin had argued for in 1903, an organizer for the party. But it did not become this overnight. It took years to make the paper an effective organizer. The most important aspect of its development that allowed it to become a real workers paper and party organizer, was that reflected and acted on the life of the working class. Lenin had only contempt for clever, sectarian papers where "there is not a trace in it of either workers' initiatives, or any connection with working

class organization." Lenin described a part of the process of becoming a workers paper. The chronicle of workers' life is only just beginning to develop into a permanent feature of Pravda. There can be no doubt that subsequently, in addition to letters about abuses in factories, about the awakening of a new section of the proletariat, about collections for one or another field of the workers cause, the workers' newspaper will receive reports about the views and sentiments of the workers, election campaigns, the election of workers delegates, what the workers read, the questions of particular interest to them, and so on.

To be a real organizer for the party, its paper must reflect the workers' life, their struggles, etc. Papers like those of most of the revolutionary left in America papers that just comment on, analyze and educate about grand matters, or grand strategies, will never be party organizers in the Leninist sense. The paper must not only reflect working class life, but it must be, itself, a tribune of the people. That is, it must take sides, be ferociously partisan on all the questions of the day. As the party grows and sinks its roots in the class, its paper will become more and more of a real agitational tool for the masses of workers.

We, of course, are not at the stage where WP is, in practice a mass agitational tool or a real workers paper. For now, it is still paper for workers. But we know where we want to go. If we are to get there we must do as Pravda did and bring the life of the working class into the paper, as well as bringing our ideas into the working class. Most left-wing papers are sectarian and sterile because they believe their sole task is to bring their ideas to the workers. In fact, to this effectively, the workers must be able to see themselves, their struggles, their needs in the paper. So, there are two sides to developing a real revolutionary newspaper.

We have made, in the last three years, some important strides in moving WP in that direction. When WP was at its best, it was filled with interviews and letters from workers. We emphasized pictures of workers in struggle, rather than the usual sectarian practice of featuring photos of all our enemies. We tried, not always successfully, to have our work appear in WP in a way that would be recognizable to those workers we were actually working with.

All of this explains the agitational style of WP. It is true that WP cannot move thousands of workers around most of its appeals and calls to action. But this is completely beside the point. We never believed that WP could substitute for Convoy, shop bulletins, or strike leaflets. But WP must be able to speak to those workers among whom we are doing agitational work. And it must do so in a way that attracts, rather than repels them. It must do so in a way that shows our support and identification with their struggles and that points ways forward. That is also why the paper has an agitational style.

II. A Weekly Paper, With a Political Line

Equally important to the Leninist notion of a paper as an organizer is the fact that it carries the line of the organization. Naturally, there will be interviews, letters and even some articles that do not represent the line of the organization--but are printed to bolster one or another aspect of that line, or to aid the process of bringing the workers into the paper. But for the most part, WP is the broadest public forum in which we present our line on questions big and small.

WP is also a weekly paper. That is, it is not a theoretical journal, a magazine, a monthly, etc. As much as possible, WP tries to stay abreast with events. Long ago we abandoned "timeless journalism" and the Jehovah's Witness School of journalism--wherein every article draws the same conclusion: the Kingdom is coming; build a rank

and file movement, or you need a labor party. In most cases, the line we present, therefore, is not one of those slogans or ideas that is always correct. No. As a weekly, WP presents the line, the idea that is relevant at the moment. And, in most cases, this will be the line we are carrying out in practice.

As often as possible this line, like the line of our actual work, should center around a step that workers can actually take--and not just one of the all-time strategies. Furthermore, the argumentation must be based on ideas that find a response in the real experience of workers. For this reason, WP articles often cover the same ground as various rank and file publications. There is nothing wrong with this because the use and purpose of WP and, say, Convoy, are not the same and the fact that their arguments overlap can be an advantage.

The main purpose of Convoy, for example, is to provide a link between Teamsters by giving them the information and ideas that show the need for a national organization like TDU. The purpose of Workers' Power on the other hand, is to link many kinds of workers with socialist ideas and organization.

Our agitational strategy tells us that the same consciousness that makes workers feel the need for something like TDU, makes them open to socialist ideas. So it is natural that both papers address the same level of consciousness and the same experience. What makes WP different is not necessarily every individual article but the far broader scope of subjects addressed and ideas proposed. Workers who read or thumb through WP will get, first of all, a much broader view of the class struggle, not only in the US, but internationally. WP also presents explicitly socialist ideas, which CONVOY, etc. cannot.

By and large, the weakness of WP articles is not overlap. The weakness tends to be that we do not link these agitational arguments to broader political ideas: transitional ideas, explicitly socialist and anti-capitalist ideas. This is the direction pointed to at the Oct. NC. There are many ways to do this, whether it is more skillfully weaving these ideas into an article written in the agitational style, or whether it is shorter or longer accompanying many articles. But here again, a warning, not every political idea, not all aspects of a strategy can or should be presented in each article or issue of the paper. The political idea, the one that will not appear in Convoy, must be chosen from among many as the idea that will provide the best "next step" in the political development of the reader. For most WP articles the grand analysis is to be avoided.

Our ability to present broader political ideas is not reduced by WP's agitational style, but is enhanced by it. For one thing, it allows things to be written and presented in such a way that the workers see themselves and their experiences in the article. In some cases it is even possible, using interview methods, to have non-ISers present our line or one aspect of it. Additionally, the fact that the arguments are basically the same as those we use in actual agitation or in rank and file papers gives more credibility to the additional ideas and politics we present. That is, we are entering the discussion at the point where the workers, at least the ones we most want to reach in each situation, are--and not must where we think they should be.

Workers Power as Educator

While Workers Power is primarily a line paper with an agitational style, it can also play an important educational role too. That is, WP can present socialist ideas in popular form. Various columns, special

features, and occasionally, centerfolds can present some of our most basic political ideas in different ways. However, it is important to try to present these in a way, once again, that brings the real experience of workers into the articles. WP is not a textbook or a "college outline" on socialist philosophy, complicated economics or world history. In general, educational articles or features should have a strictly limited focus.

Our recent experience dictates what the main areas covered by articles should be in the coming year. Roughly there are three areas, that we need to emphasize: 1) articles that help re-establish the political and class struggle traditions of the American working class, 2) those that explain, simply, certain basic concepts in the IS view of the period (for example, the employers offensive generally and in specific industries, or the post-war prosperity as the material base for working class conservatism, or the roots of racism and sexism, etc.) and 3) educational pieces on socialism and revolution.

As often as possible the lecture/ monograph format is to be avoided and other more lively forms used. For example, it is proposed to have a regular feature on socialism. But instead of using the "What is Socialism?" format in which an idea is explained in a lecture, we plan to use a dialogue format. This will be an on-going dialogue between an actual worker and an experienced ISer--two real people, with real names and faces, having an on-going discussion. Similarly, instead of just running descriptive articles on incidents in or aspects of the working class' revolutionary and class struggle traditions--like the annual piece on the Minneapolis strike--we could run interviews and discussions with older workers who experienced these. This could include the role of socialists and radicals in past struggles. Of course, WP has done some of these things in the past; the point is to systematize this into an ongoing educational plan.

What to Change, and What Not to Change

In general then, we propose to keep the same format and style that has characterized WP for the past two years. What we propose to change is primarily the political level of the paper and its coverage. To some extent, we propose to give more emphasis to educational material than in the past. In our view the political changes are not a matter of tacking on additional, timeless slogans like the WP of a few years ago. It is more a matter of illustrating certain political ideas, like the employers offensive, by building articles around the movement of conflicting forces--rather than just around the intellectual conceptions or the counterposition of programs (the union wants this, the company wants that).

The general scope of coverage, that is, the areas covered will not be much different. But, here again, the political level of our coverage of domestic politics, general social issues and struggles, and expse material can be improved--and tied in more directly with the industrial coverage to help politicize it.

We feel that WP needs some central themes for the coming year. In line with our perspectives for the next year, WP will emphasize the following themes: 1) the employers offensive and worker resistance, 2) exposure of the Carter administration, 3) the struggle against racism, 4) the resistance to the offensive on women's rights, 5) growth of world revolution, 6) political traditions of the American working class, 7) the crisis of the capitalist system--more or less in that order.

Raising the political level of the content of the paper is a two sided process. Much of the initiatives and first experiments--and that is what we will be doing--will have to come from the staff. But

the staff will be limited in its ability to move the paper forward if it cannot get help, information and feed-back from the membership of the organization. The staff can only know what will work if the members tell them and make suggestions. This means that branches and fractions will have to take greater responsibility in discussing WP and the coverage that is most relevant to them. In particular, the fractions will have to make a consistent effort to prepare and suggest materials and articles for WP. Naturally, even the ability of a fraction or branch to know what is useful in WP, depends on its success in getting WP around and getting feedback from workers--that is, WP must be used again consistently even before it is "perfect" so that it may become more so.

To aid the staff in taking initiatives it must, it is proposed, as soon as possible, to add a writer with considerable political and hopefully industrial experience. This writer would be expected to help raise the political level of various articles, but also to get into the field and help bring the staff in closer touch with working class life and struggles. It is also proposed to make Kim M. editor. It is felt that Kim's political experience and knowledge, as well as his long-time involvement in the industrial work of the organization, can help him move the paper in the direction proposed by the last October NC. Gay will remain on the editorial board to provide continuity and also to help bring the paper into the organization in her new role as National Secretary.

The Functioning of the "Left" Faction

CHECK IT OUT - THE RECORD STINKS!

Glenn Wolfe.

There are many disadvantages to being national secretary of the I.S. One of the greatest at this point ~~in time~~ is the inordinate amount of time I must spend in answering all the questions from around the organisation about the functioning of the "Lefts" in the past six months. I have therefore decided to write up the main elements of their record in the hope that I will then have the time to get on with my real job. I also still maintain the hope that once this is in the hands of every member it will provide at least a partial barrier to the flood of gossip, lies and slanders which seem to constitute the overall political method of the minority. For there is nothing in this document which cannot be said openly to everyone, there is nothing that cannot be clearly demonstrated by the facts and there is absolutely nothing wrong with ~~the record~~ placing the record of a disloyal faction into the above-ground ~~EA~~ debate. The actions of the "lefts" speak far more eloquently ~~than their~~ and clearly on their basic politics than their stack of mistaken documents.

The "left" faction first came into existence in August of last year. In the beginning its politics were far from clear on many, many questions. Indeed it wasn't until they took the decision to accept the criticisms raised by the ISGB that they had anything approaching a program. Before then their basic position was a set of liberal objections to what they termed the "regime". They have openly admitted that for three months they existed underground without a clear program but have made the unprovable assertion that any hint of criticism from any of their members would have resulted in expulsion. The fact is that their very formation reeks of lack of principle and dishonesty and the record demonstrates they have not improved since then.

In the formation period the members of the faction who were on national staff used the time, not to do their jobs but to travel around organising the secret faction. Their dereliction of duty was so blatant that there was not a single objection throughout the organisation when the EC took the decision to remove them from staff. The political dishonesty of their initial operation is also astounding. Their four NC members made not a single objection to the NC answer to the first British letter, even though all NC members were shown it in advance and asked for amendments. Even in these early days, before they surfaced as a faction they already had elements of a separate organisation. Their leadership was totally disciplined. Todd, who is now in Atlanta for example, raised ~~MX~~ some of his pro-ISGB views before he left Louisville. He was instructed however that he should not expose himself when he went to Atlanta and for many weeks he portrayed himself as a supporter of all the major majority positions. From the very beginning they had their own line, their own discipline, their own organisation and their own financial structure. It should come as no surprise that when they finally came out into the open they did it on the basis of a document which had a clear perspective of splitting the I.S.

Many comrades will agree so far but claim that since then they have cleaned up their act. Even rank and file "left" faction members will sometimes sincerely claim that they have no aim of becoming a separate organisation. The record since November however demonstrates just the opposite. Their later statements that they were against a split came ~~about~~ solely as a result of the tactical advice given to them by Steve Jeffries when he visited from Britain. In short he agreed with them becoming a propaganda group but argued that

their first arena for propoganda as a separate organisation should be the I.S. Given the fact they had no loyalty to the I.S. they could stay in long enough to destroy work, rip-off members and therefor start their life as a trully independant organisation with more members and a leadership tested in a long-term political struggle.

In the branches they have total control over, fortunately only Seattle and Cincinatti, they have broken off all contact with the centre since the beginning of the fight. The organisers no longer act as the carriers of the majority line and the organisation as a whole has no mechanism for ensuring that majority politics are being acted on in these branches. In Seattle the branch organiser flatly refused to organise any meetings between branch members and the acting womens commissioner when she was visiting the west coast branches. She was able to organise some limited contact with some of the women herself but the overall value of her visit to that branch was seriously reduced because of the organisers blatant sabotage. In Cincinatté the organiser is no longer the organiser. Without any reference to the centre, without any warning, let alone discussion, she abandoned her post and took a full-time job. She has since argued that she was short of money, isn't everyone who tries to live on \$400 a month that all staff receive? That is irrelevant for such questions have to be decided by the elected national leadership in a serious organisation.

In Louisville, where the "lefts" are a minority, a member of their faction is the paid organiser. This situation only arose in the first place because of bare-faced lies. Christina, who was already a part of the faction, was appointed in the summer after she gave clear assurances that she would carry the majority line in the branch and not take part in any factionalism. Since then she has attempted to use her position and the majority that her faction held temporarily on the exec to institute "left" policies. Fortunately shw was defeated and the majority perspective was passed 8 to 3. At that stage she took her responsibility as organiser so seriously that she secretly took a part-time waitress job to supplement her income. She has categorically refused to give up that job once the centre learned of it and she has made no move to resign her post. Every single staff member in the organisation gives their full time to the IS, she refuses. Every member lives on \$400, she demands more. These are the actions of someone who has no loyalty to I.S. Finally, before going on to the record in other branches, a word should be said about the "lefts" perspectives for L'ville. Under their plans the teamster work was to be reduced to fourth or fifth priority for the branch, we were told that black work was going to be very important. The truth is that the black fraction, which they control, did not even meet from Nov. to Feb. In fact the program, in reality, was to down-grade teamsters and replace it with nothing. Check it out, the relevant documents have been published in the internal bulletin.

We have already mentioned Allanta, but a single mention is not enough; for with the "lefts" in that branch there is more overwhelming evidence of their disloyalty and irresponsibility towards the I.S. The picture of "lefts" demanding the right to do whatever they like is repeated herw. When a time was decided, democratically, for a meeting of the womens fraction, they boycotted it because it did not suit one of them. When this question was taken up by the whole branch in a general motion on functioning in the fractions their line was one of contempt. Contempt to the point that they refused to even vote. Two of them refuse to pay even minimum dues, the other two pay the base minimum. One of those, Todd an exec member, has made several attempts to convince majority members to reduce the amount of dues they pay. This breach of discipline is now being dealt with by the branch.

In Cleveland, our teamster centre, we have an excellent example of another general "left" phenomena - the "work to rule". This is less than breaking discipline, but no less harmful to our work. These comrades are responsible for UFSurge, three months ago a perspective, including soliciting articles, writing a special pamphlet, etc was passed. To date, they have done ~~xxxxx~~ nothing about it. Problems of this kind would be bad enough in themselves but the behaviour of the "lefts" in Cleveland goes further. They have raised their factional differences in a situation in which members of the Communist Party were present. At a party following a Coalition meeting on Zimbabwe they spent the whole evening pushing their factions politics in the presence of CP members. They would not even accept the basic norm that our internal differences have to remain within the I.S.

In Gary the work to rule has been total. "Lefts" will only attend "Fight Back" and steel fraction ~~xxx~~ meetings they are actually instructed to attend. In a local where they have the only member, after doing some pro-Sadlowski work at the beginning, they announced that the workers were not interested in the election campaign, they were only interested, surprise, surprise, in actions against racism and sexism. [After arguing for weeks that the branch was doing nothing on racism to which they could bring their contacts, they brought not a single contact to the first showing of the Attica film and themselves refused to attend the second] showing. And this nonsense has been going on for months, right thru the important campaign around the Sadlowski election. It should also be understood that the two leading "lefts" in Gary only came back into the I.S. to fight the faction fight. Pat had resigned and Kadi was on a leave when the whole thing started. Kadi came off her self-appointed leave merely to do factional work. Pat was told he could be a part of the branch and actually re-join after working with us for a period. He hasn't even attended the branch and fraction meeting he was supposed to do under this program, though he has found the time to be a major spokesperson for the "lefts".

One could ~~xx~~ write many more pages on the functioning or non-functioning of the minority. In New York the only "left" is on leave. In Boston the branch exec has a case for suspending the only "left" for refusal to ~~sorry~~ ~~xxx~~ accept assignments and for internal functioning which damages and demoralises the ~~xx~~ branch. Only the very existence of the faction fight could prevent this suspension from being carried thru. The point however is that the picture is clear to anyone who has the eyes to see. The only question is whether the I.S. has the guts to defend itself from the enemy within.

The "left" faction is an organisation within an organisation. They do just enough work to stay in and factionalise. In place after place (Gary, Atlanta, Cincinnati, etc.) they pay minimum dues to stay members of the I.S. and place the rest of their financial resources at the disposal of the faction. Wherever possible they try to apply their own perspectives and not those of the majority. They justify this undemocratic behaviour by their attitude of hostility to the rest of the organisation. Their separation from the I.S. even at this point is to the stage where they are trying to set up independent external activity. In the Cincinnati/Bloomington/Indy region they have set up a series of external womens conferences without even telling the national womens commission, let alone discussing it. They have separate relations with the ISGB. (That organisation no longer sends its documents to the IS national office but only to the "left" faction. They have stated that the ISGB will send people to help them when they become a separate organisation and the ISGB is in favor of such a step. When Jeffries was here he stated publically that unless the IS accepts the politics of the "left" faction, then the two groupings are incompatible.

The leaders want out of the IS. In Springfield Ben made it clear that unless they get a majority at convention he will not stay in the IS. In Louisville Micheal made it clear that no matter what decision the majority made they would carry on fighting for their politics within the IS. That IS had no right to discipline them on this question.

It was Micheal too, who while abandoning his post as leader of the Red Tide tried, unsuccessfully, to start a faction inside to destroy it. It is he who has continued to make every effort to undermine the RT. Where the "left" were in control they flatly refused to bring young people to the RT convention (Cincinnati and Louisville). Only last week after their latest attempt to factionalise the RT the "lefts" refused to have an open debate with the RT leadership.

The leadership of the faction, though resident in Detroit, refuses to have any contact with the IS centre. When instructed to meet with the EC at the beginning of the fight, Cal and Barbara (though still on national staff) refused to come to the office and insisted that the EC meet them in the back room of a restaurant. Since then the only contact they will maintain with us is the constant demands for money. Demands in which they have been all too successful by the simple trick of claiming travel expenses for factional speakers that were never agreed.

The whole thing adds up to a disloyal faction with no responsibility to the IS with a secret program for actually destroying the IS as a step to forming an organisation based on their own middle-class politics. They are an organisation within an organisation and they have a separate leadership to run it. Now it is true that not all their rank and file are in on the real program of the faction. For all the work to rule it is the case that "lefts" in LA and Indianapolis are not working to rule. For all the dues cheating it is the case that Seattle has MX not reduced its dues. But all that shows is they haven't yet got it all together and that's precisely why they still wish to stay in the IS after the convention. The only question left is whether those in the majority caucus and third camp faction who support the basic politics of the IS will be foolish enough to allow the "lefts" to stay in. On politics and practise they have proved their incompatibility with the IS time and time again. The IS should pick the time for the split, it would amount to criminal negligence to allow them to pick the best time for the final separation.

February 20th. 1977.

ORGANIZERS SHOULD BE AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION

In the current debate inside the IS one of the things that has come under attack is the conception of the role of the organizers as political agents of the EC. The Left Faction began the assault by contending that "it is inevitable that the organizers must become hacks". The "Toward a Political Solution (TPS) document continues the attack by denouncing what it calls "pseudo-Bolshevism" which it defines as "attempting to develop centralist organizational methods and disciplined norms without having the political content of active (not formal) democracy." It charges the EC with "building a network of EC loyalists throughout the organization in a way that has hindered, not helped, the true development of a real secondary leadership capable of implementing IS political policy with initiative and independence." Its solution includes the proposal that there should be veto power for both the EC and branches over the appointment of organizers. The "third force" document continues in this vein, telling us that we have "strayed far from the norms of democratic centralism." It proposes as part of the solution "an end to the training of our organizers as the political agents of the EC." Joel contends that many branch organizers "could not develop collaborative relations with the members of their branch due to this mistraining." This is because, he tells us, "organizers have been trained to see their role as mainly to carry their exec and their branch to the line of the EC". Instead, he proposes a "fully collaborative relationship between the organizers and the branch membership." And, of course there is Mike P's point of view, which he has long held (most recently articulated in his "In Defense of Democratic Centralism"): "We have to end any conception of the local organizer as the internal agent of the EC. Instead the stress must be on the organizer as part of a local collaborative leadership which sees its responsibility to collectively lead and carry out the politics of the whole organization -- whether the local leadership is in the majority or minority."

This assault, which takes place under the guise of "putting the democracy back into democratic centralism" is really proposing moving to a much less democratic form of organization, and also one which is much less capable of carrying out our task: overthrowing an immensely powerful ruling class that has shown it is willing to stop at nothing to defeat us.

DEMOCRACY

By democracy I presume that the acid test is whether or not there is rule by the majority. Without majority rule all the other trappings which are means to that end are just that: trappings. That includes participation, discussions, elections, the right to organize, etc., etc. All of it is for the purpose of ensuring that it is possible for the majority to make decisions and for those decisions to be carried out.

If we bear this starting point in mind it becomes clear that all the complaints about the EC building itself a machine, a network of loyalists, a group of political agents really miss the point. Or rather there is some sleight-of-hand involved here: the EC is referred to as though it were some alien body trying to impose its will on the IS. After all, they are all asking, what right has the EC got to build themselves a network of loyalists throughout the organization. Aren't they building them-

selves a machine, and isn't that undemocratic? Doesn't it smack of bureaucracy?

And it might appear to be so until we step back and ask ourselves, who is the EC and what is their job?

The ED EC is the democratically elected leadership of this organization. They are elected on the basis of policies that are voted on by this organization in yearly conventions. The basic policies of this organization are decided upon by majority rule. Every year. The EC is elected to continue making policy day-to-day, based on the policies decided upon in convention. It is also the job of the EC to see that these policies are carried out. To see that they are carried out everywhere, in every branch, in every fraction. Whether or not the local branch leaderships agree with the policy and whether or not the fraction leaderships agree with the policy. Of course this is to be done intelligently; of course it is to take into account what is possible. But its job is to carry out the majority positions. The majority has the right to demand that of the EC, and to demand of the minority that it cooperate with the EC in carrying out its task. The minority should also demand that the EC carry out its task, because that will ensure that majority rule is the norm in the organization and that if and when it becomes the majority it will be able to have its program carried out by the whole organization, including the minority.

CENTRALISM

We are a centralized organization. That means that policies that are established are established for the whole organization. We are not a federation. Branches and fractions do not have the right to set for themselves what tasks they will carry out. Nor should they. Naturally, not every branch or every fraction can carry out a particular line. A branch of 8 cannot do the same as a branch of 50. A branch in a city where there is no steel cannot send its people into steel. But the decision is not and should not be its alone. Ultimately, the responsibility rests with the EC. The rest of the organization has the right to ask of the EC why it permitted the Bay Area not to do Gary Tyler work as the rest of us were doing, knowing that their failure to carry it out weakened the rest of our work -- both the Gary Tyler work itself, and the recruitment of blacks. And the EC had better have a satisfactory explanation.

This procedure is the only democratic one. If branches can decide for themselves what they want to do and not do, what has happened to majority rule?

The very notion that somehow an individual branch or fraction should have the right to decide for itself what it wishes to do is profoundly undemocratic. It is as though any individual had the right to refuse to be bound by the decisions of the majority. This is a national organization, not a federation of locals who have the right to nullify decisions.

Our centralism flows from our politics. We are one political tendency representing one class, fighting against one enemy, the bourgeoisie. Leaders, delegates, individuals in the organization do not represent different "interests" as they do in bourgeois politics, whether geogra-

phic, occupational, racial or otherwise. We stand for unity.

In particular, we stand for unity in action. And in particular the need for centralism grows out of the needs of an action organization. A discussion group does not require such unity. And as long as we were a discussion group we could afford to be centralists only in the most abstract sense. It was when we began to become an action group, when for example we decided on a teamster campaign -- not just in Cleveland and Pittsburgh, but in Chicago, Detroit, Seattle, the Bay Area, and every place we could -- that the need for centralism, for centralized decision-making, with those decisions respected and carried out by the entire group, became absolutely crystal clear. Anything else would have been both undemocratic and destructive to our efforts. Because we know that the effort to build a movement in Cleveland is in part dependent on what is going on elsewhere. And the more that is going on the more effective are our efforts in any single place.

Centralism is absolutely essential to democracy. Without centralism there is no democracy, no majority rule. It is not as though there were democracy and centralism; put them together and you have democratic centralism. There is no democracy without centralism. It is as simple as that.

ORGANIZERS AS AGENTS

So, when the EC intervenes in branches and fractions and builds itself a network of agents they are representing the wishes and policies of the majority of this organization. It is the majority which has agents in the branches. Why? Because policies don't carry themselves out. Because they need agents to carry them out. Agents who are committed to the policies. Because without such agents to carry through policy centralized decision-making goes on in a vacuum. Decisions might as well not be made.

The organizers are not free agents, to do anything they wish. They are employees of the organization -- as is the EC. Their job is to carry out the policies of the organization. Not the policies of a particular branch which may or may not be in agreement with the national policy, but the policies of the national organization, of the EC, of the fraction leadership, too. (E.g., when the teamster fraction steering committee makes a decision to be implemented nationally by the local fractions, part of the job of the organizers is to see that it is being implemented -- and part of the job of the EC is to see that they are doing just that.

We don't hire a staff for Workers' power and then tell them to produce a newspaper, whatever they may like. We all agree that WP is our paper; it belongs to the whole organization. In fact, there are many who feel WP is not closely enough supervised by the EC. Why is there a different standard for organizers?

The job of the organizer is to lead the exec's and the branches. That means that, more than anyone else, the organizer is responsible for overcoming the localisms, the parochialism of the local group and fitting it into the national perspectives.

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Any other conception ends in disaster.

In particular, for the first time the IS is developing a corps of professional organizers: people who are making that their life's occupation. That is an enormous step forward for the organization. It is a part of the effort to create a professional organization. But it could also hold great dangers with any other conception of the role of the organizers. Unless they are seen as agents of the national organization, under its control and responsible to it there would be the danger of local baronies, power bases, etc. Professional organizers can have an enormous impact on the development, direction and politics of a branch, especially a new branch. What should they be representing when they have this influence? Themselves? Their local execs? Or the national organization?

Let's take one concrete example. I'm the organizer of the Atlanta branch, charged with starting a Southern region. We here in Atlanta are the only representatives of the organization in the South. Should it be up to me, or the local exec, or the branch to decide what the IS is going to do in the South and how we are going to present ourselves? Should the rest of the organization have any input into this matter? And if so, how will it do so except under the direction of the EC?

And let's look for a moment at what happens when the organizer does not act as the EC's agent -- i.e., as the agent of the majority of the organization. In Cincinnati and Seattle the organizers are not agents. There are no EC agents. The result is that we will lose virtually the whole of those branches. Comrades who are opposed to the organizers being "EC agents" must ask themselves if that is really a good thing.

These examples all point to something that is of great importance. There is tremendous heterogeneity in the organization. Different experiences, different time spent in the organization and in politics means many ranges of political development. Because some branches are more advanced than others in terms of their roots in the working class, their communities, building a movement, the development of people in one place tends to be different from the development of people in another place, and left unchecked the unevenness would tend to grow and to produce an organization whose different sections would be increasingly with different needs and perceptions, having learned different lessons, growing apart. It is the job of a strong center to knit these sections together, to make sure that lessons learned in one place are brought to another. And it is on the organizer more than anyone else that the task rests for making sure that the lessons from the center are brought home in the branches, to assure that we have a unified organization.

DO AGENTS = HACKS?

Once it is clear that there is no acceptable alternative to the organizers being agents of the EC -- i.e., to their being agents of the majority politics of this organization -- the next question is what does that mean? What does an agent do?

The Left Faction says that being an agent inevitably means being a hack, and they have several people in their camp who were agents and proclaim that they were hacks in order to prove the contention.

The TPS document complains of politically inexperienced organizers being forced to "kick ass" against more experienced comrades, and of necessity their doing it in an unpolitical way -- i.e., of their being hacks.

The third force tells us that if organizers are agents they cannot collaborate with their local execs, and so does Mike P., who also implies that to be an agent is to be mechanical -- i.e., to be a hack.

So, there is a pretty clear consensus that if we're stuck with organizers as agents, we're stuck with hacks. Are they right? The truth is, nothing could be further from the truth.

To be an agent does not mean that one must mechanically apply directives. The contrary is true. The job of the agent is to bring the line, the campaign, whatever, into the branch life; to make sure the line is being applied. The job of the agent is, furthermore, to make sure the line is being applied creatively, with reference to local circumstances. A mechanical application of the line will guarantee a very low level of success in carrying it out.

We are not like the capitalists, who prefer their employees to be bodies with hands and without heads. We cannot do without the heads of our agents; they are crucial to us. A directive to be part of the Gary Tyler campaign, or the South Africa campaign, to begin a rank and file group, to do mass work is not the end of the matter. It is the beginning. How do we start a South Africa campaign in our city? That depends on what our opportunities are. What are our contacts, who do we know, what access do we have to the press, how can we fit it into our industrial work -- these and a thousand other questions have to be taken into account. By the agents.

Say we meet a hospital worker who we can influence in his or her work. Do we devote the time and effort to that person? Of course we do, if we have the time and resources. Who decides that? The agents, based on our priority demands, what we are doing, who we have available, etc., etc. If we decide we can handle it, we must then work out a strategy for the work. Such a strategy involves creatively taking our general line on mass work and applying it. Of course, in this situation there is less guidance from the center than if the person were in a priority industry. But even in the priorities it is those in the branches who must figure out how to apply the mass work strategy in a particular shop, how to move people, around what specific issues, using what form of activity. (Incidentally, it is the same people who assume that being an agent must mean being a hack, that is, that agents could never make such independent judgements and decisions who also heap blame on the EC for failing to provide every comma of instruction on these matters.)

Being an agent includes giving feedback to the EC about problems with the line, so that we can be more effective in what we are doing; so that the line can be changed if it is necessary. It includes making specific assessments of individual members and contacts and doing what is necessary to recruit, hold and develop these people.

Those who are attacking the conception of the organizers being agents of the EC believe that these tasks are incompatible with the job. They are wrong; these tasks are part of the job. We do not want our agents to be automatons; we do not want them to be mere transmission belts, just relaying orders. If that were all that agents were expected to do why on earth would we need them? We could just have the EC pick up the phone and give the orders for the day -- or, if we wanted to save on phone bills we could just have them give weekly orders. Having a leadership does us no good unless that leadership has a mechanism for bringing its policies into the organization and having them creatively applied and tested.

CAN AGENTS COLLABORATE?

But what about collaborating with the local exec? Shouldn't the organizer do that, and doesn't being an agent impede that effort, as both the third force and Mike P. allege?

Of course the organizer should collaborate with the local exec and with the branch! That should go without saying! No one is saying they should be pitted against one another; quite the contrary. The norm should be that they should work together, and being an agent should not impede that collaboration one bit. Nor is there any reason to believe that it need do so.

The question is, what are they collaborating about? And the answer should be that they are collaborating about how to apply the line of the organization to the branch, fraction, local woman's caucus, local rank and file group, etc. That is to say, it is assumed that the local exec and the local branch are also aiming to carry out the majority policy of the organization, whether or not they agree with it because they are committed to the democratic principle of majority rule in the IS. It also means that if collaboration breaks down the fault does not at all necessarily rest with the organizer and certainly not with the organizer's being the agent of the EC, i.e., of the majority of the IS. It depends on why the breakdown occurs.

What happens too often is that a policy is established, and the organizer attempts to carry that policy through in the local arena. Other local leaders, whether exec members, fraction leaders, or whatever, oppose the policy. The organizer is then called a hack for attempting to carry through national policy. What is not a hack then is finding ways to avoid that policy. If the organizer refuses to participate in that politically incorrect activity then it is charged that collaboration has broken down and that is a result of the organizer being an agent of the EC, i.e., a hack. This is a bankrupt method of functioning.

"KICKING ASS"

The TPS document complains about less experienced organizers "kicking ass" of the more politically experienced comrades. What is remarkable is the incorrect method of this complaint.

When a policy has been adopted it is assumed that all comrades will aid in putting it into practice. In particular, the more experienced comrades should be putting their talent and experience into implimenting the policy. But what happens if they refuse to do so, if they abdicate their responsibility? Worse yet, if they try to obstruct it? What are we to do? A less experienced organizer may not be able to counter every nuntial criticism that the more developed comrades may come up with. Do we have to send in someone who is equally developed as the critics? What if we don't have someone? Are we then forced to give up the policy?

When put this way it should be clear. If the more developed comrades refust to accept their responsibility to lead in implimenting national policy; if they instead try to obstruct it, then we shall have to attempt to carry it out however we can. Anything else would be to hold us back. It would mean either that we would drop the policy or that the only ones who could be organizers in this organization are those who have been around 5-10 years. And if there are not enough of them, or if they refuse to do it, then we would be in a bad way.

For example, there was a fight in L.A. a few years ago when we were making the turn, to organize the branch around the industrial wrk. Some of the more developed comrades obstructed that turn. The organizer who was not as developed as they, fought them, and was not always able to answer their sophisticated arguments. But she was right and they were wrong. And there was no one more sophisticated who we could replace her with. Should we have given up on the attempt to transform the branch? Obviously not. With whom did the responsibility rest for the breakdown? Not with the organizer.

SHOULD BRANCHES HAVE VETO POWER?

The TPS document proposes as a way of organizationally guaranteeing that organizers will not be EC agents that both branches and the EC have veto power over the organizers. This propisal, too, is wrong.

The organizer is not an elected position, anymore than is the WP staff, the women's commission, the black commission, etc. The ~~of~~ organizer is an agent of the national organization and the national organization has the right to have its agents in the branches in order to be sure that we have a unified organization.

At the same timr the reality of the matter is that under normal circumstances branches do have a veto over organizers. That is, an organizer who is unable to win the respect of the branch, who cannot win the cooperation of the local members, will find it hard to stay in the position, and the EC would find it hard to keep supporting that person. This is concretely brought hom if the organizer cannot get elected to the exec. If that happens and the branch cannot be convinced to change its position it would be virtually impossible for the organizer to stay in. Of course, refusing to elect the organizer to the exec is a very serious step and one which is not lightly taken, but the reality remains that branches have the right and the power to do it. Which means that they have a form of veto power.

What the TPS document is proposing is something different, something much more far-reaching, something that smacks of federalism, of saying the branches have the right to turn their backs on the national organization and ignore its policies. Because what happens if a branch is doing just that, is refusing to carry out national policy? Under that circumstance, naturally after attempting to persuade them, after negotiating with them, it would be the duty of the EC to step in and essentially take over the branch, put it into trusteeship to make sure it is carrying out the national line. (Of course this is a course of action that would not be taken lightly; it would be a last resort as it would be a very serious action. It would be so serious and so infrequent that to date it has never happened, or even been suggested proposed. But if it is necessary it must be done.) The medium for doing it would be the organizer. The TPS proposal would be to say that such a course of action would be impossible. And that result would be in the end to say that we don't have a national organization in which the majority rules.

by Jack Trautman, Atlanta organizer

Supported by:

Mike U., New York organizer
Dennis, Pittsburgh organizer
Eric, Cleveland organizer
Val, Detroit organizer
Marilyn D., national organizer
David L., Gary organizer
Executive Committee

TOWARD A BLACK PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

The growth of the US economy since World War II, the rise of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements and the resultant changes in the structure of the Black community have created a set of objective conditions in which the potential for a united class struggle of Black and white working people is greater today than in any other period of American history.

The economic boom which began with arms production for the second world war and developed into a permanent arms economy intensified the tendency toward the proletarianization and urbanization of Black people. Jobs opened up in the very guts of the American industrial machine. Blacks, who through the 20's and 30's had been relegated to the service sector or to small, low wage sweat shops, now entered basic industry en masse. The auto and steel industries are two of the most obvious examples of the central role Black labor plays in American industry.

No general movement in the trade unions today can possibly ignore the special status of Black workers, if it has any intention of winning. In previous periods of American history Blacks were exploited and labored as Chattal slaves or share croppers while whites engaged in wage labor. Today there is only one 'laboring class' the working class and it is Black and white. This is a fact which white workers, no matter what their ~~partia~~ personal ideologies are, can not ignore.

The social (Civil Rights & Black Power) movements which accompanied the economic changes in the post war period not only served to clear the barriers to the mobility of Black labor, but fostered the development of a Black middle class which could base itself on the new "purchasing power" available to Black workers. The political mobilization of the Community opened the way for higher college enrollment, poverty projects which ~~for the most part, have not~~ needed to be staffed, "Black Capitalism" development projects which further strengthened this development. Most important was the rise of a major urban Black political machine which took "power" in cities like Detroit, Newark and Gary.

The white power structure made those concessions to the Black movement which created a petit bourgeois layer of professionals, foremen, shop keepers, teachers, city politicians and union bureaucrats who have asserted themselves as the leadership of the Black community. Much like the trade union bureaucracy in the labor movement, this social layer serves as a privileged, conservative buffer between the masses of Black working people and the white capitalist class. It is at once the product of the development of US capitalism and the fruit of years of Black struggle. It is the agency of the white racist system, yet its roots are in the Black community.

In sum, the post war period has not only seen the development of a Black industrial proletariat, but also differentiated classes within the Black population. This twin development creates the possibility of a consciously working class response by Blacks to the onslaught of the economic crisis and the growing racist offensive.

THE EMPLOYERS OFFENSIVE AND THE BLACK COMMUNITY

The world economic crisis hit the Black community more severely than any other segment of American society. As a disproportionately larger sector of the working class, disproportionately confined to its lowest levels, Blacks are hit with the full intensity of the employers' offensive. As a discriminated against nationality, racism intensified the effects of the crisis a new racist offensive strikes at the economic, political and social gains the liberation movement of the 60's won. Those gains and reforms, won through struggle in a period of an expanding economy, are now being eroded.

Black unemployment is traditionally double white unemployment. Today it is 14%, and among Black youth in the central cities, government estimates are that it is 40-50%.

The opening to more and better jobs won in the 60's, is now closed by massive unemployment. Indeed, young working class Blacks often cannot get jobs as good as those their parents hold, reversing social mobility. Real wages of Blacks as well as all workers have declined. They are now back to the level of 1965 in real terms. The impact of the liberation movement was to cut racial wage differentials from 51.3% of which wages in 1963 to 61.3% of white wages in 1970. By 1975, under the impact of the economic crisis Black wages had declined to only 57.7% of white wages. The general decline and neglect of the central cities is a key aspect of the general economic crisis. The cuts in social services has meant a deterioration in the environment for Black survival as American capital focuses on areas of Black life to make the sharpest cuts.

THE RACIST OFFENSIVE

There is a racist offensive that also threatens the Black community. One sign of lower status Black people are afforded is that while the Black vote was crucial to Carter's election, Black demands and issues of concern to Black people were absent from the campaign. But it's not just words either. On the one hand, integration of education and housing is being met with white racist organizing and the growth of the KKK, ROAR, and the Nazi party. On the other hand there has been an intensification of official governmental repression especially directed toward Black youth in the last couple of years. The Gary Tyler case, the curfew imposed by Coleman Young in Detroit, even the harrasment of our own Red Tide are all examples of this.

The racist offensive is part of the general economic crisis. It is one aspect of the employer attack on the working class, which through the mechanism of racism allows cut backs on the gains of the 60's. In periods of economic crisis the pattern of American capitalism is for the ruling class to pit white and Black workers against one another to prevent class unity and common struggle.

THE RESPONSE OF THE "OFFICIAL" BLACK LEADERSHIP

The middle class elements of the Black Community have failed to lead any serious response to these attacks. To do so requires a radical break from their liberal, reformist, integrationism. It means a struggle for more than the system is prepared to concede. As a result there is a tremendous vacuum of leadership in the community. The nationalist of any variety have been and are unable to create any realistic alternative to the Democratic Party strategy of the middle class. The nationalist groups have been reduced to a sectarian existence.

The Carter administration may give the Black middle class renewed credibility, temporarily. Carter will grant a few token concessions and actively look for ways to strengthen their position as the spokespeople for the Black community. But, Carter is not willing or able to create the massive public service, job and educational programs needed to make any real improvement in the Black condition. Black people will remain on the defensive until Black workers begin to move independently of their "official" leaders.

A NEW BLACK MOVEMENT

The role of the middle class and the impact of the economic crisis meant that revived Black struggle will have much more class content than the movement of the 60's. In the 70's Black workers have gone through the experience of being hired, fired, bossed and harrassed by Black foremen and supervisors. They have been sold out by Black politicians and labor officials. They have learned the hard way that "Black visibility is not Black Power."

The issues have changed too. The struggle for "civil rights" or even "community control" belong to a previous period. It will be economic issues on the job or in the community in the form of resistance to unemployment or further cuts in social services which will fuel Black militancy.. Because these are problems which are not unique to Blacks, the possibility of Blacks allying with and leading white workers on these issues is quite real.

None of this should be taken to mean that the struggle for Black liberation will simply dissolve into the melting pot of class struggle. There will always be a need for an independent Black movement. Special demands, special appeals and independent organization to confront the dual offensives employer and racist, are as valid today as they were during the 60's. What we are saying is that independent organization and struggle will take place in an entirely new economic and political context.

All this points to the need for a new working class leadership that understands the economic and class realities of the 70's as well as having drawn the lessons of the movements of the 60's. A strategy for revived Black liberation movement must be a working class strategy. As a result it will emphasize class struggle and unity, the need for a unified rank and file movement as well as a united revolutionary party. Today our strategy for Black liberation - the working class struggle for socialism - has more relevance than ever.

ASSESSING OUR PAST WORK

"Any strategy for Black liberation must flow from the dual nature of Black oppression. It must be focussed around the critical fact that Black workers are the most dynamic and powerful sector of the Black community, and that they are an important section of the American working class -- and that is where their social power and leverage lie. What follows from that analysis is that Black workers should take the lead in the struggle against the national oppression of Black people, and in the class struggle. Both activities are necessary and vital from the point of view of Blacks."

A Perspective for Black Liberation, Jack Trautman, adopted by the 1973 IS Convention

After the split with the RSL in 1973, the IS adopted a Black perspective. Unchanged and unchallenged that perspective has been the official line of the IS since then. It is not the intent of this document to call into question that line nor to offer an alternative. In brief the document did several things. It analyzed the relationship of Black people to American society. Black people are both a super-exploited section of the working class and a dispersed unformed nation within the confines of the United States. This view includes the Leninist conception of the right of self-determination. In looking at the state of the struggle for Black liberation, the perspective saw the increasing class nature and failure of Black organizations to take full advantage of rapidly developing material conditions. It was clear in its support of the right of Black people to organize independent of the white working class. This would include the right for an independent Black political party, national workers' organization and local shop floor caucuses if desired. The Black working class will be the vanguard of the coming working class movement. They could and will lead white workers in the battle against capitalism.

Several years have passed since the adoption of the formal position of the organization. The IS has gone from a propaganda-discussion group into the infancy of agitation. From a sect that in reality was outside the world of the ~~maxing~~ working class, we have progressed to the point where we are able to recruit workers and lead struggles in the work place.

Up til 1975 the IS was not able to recruit Blacks to the organization in numbers that would be more than just the odd one or two in the organization at one time. The Socialist Collective is the exception, and there it was a brief marriage.

As a propaganda group we did not recruit. Even with "the best politics on the left" we did not pick up a core of Black intellectuals during this period. This core of intellectuals or students would have laid the foundation for the coming Black workers and working class youth. Black intellectuals and students went into the petty bourgeois world of the SWP or flocked to the third world existence of the Maoists. The Black worker radical of the late 1960's and early 70's either dropped their militancy or found a nationalist haven with the Maoists.

It is only after the turn to agitation that we can speak of Black recruitment and Black work in terms other than wishful thinking. Our first significant recruitment took place at the 1975 Convention. From the Convention through the Workers Membership Campaign, we experienced our largest wave of black recruitment. Overwhelmingly these Black comrades were working class and were recruited through our industrial and busing work. The next period of significant Black recruitment came through the work of the Red Tide in the Detroit busing crisis, racism in the schools and Gary Tyler. This recruitment also was overwhelmingly working class.

It's important to understand why our Black recruitment did not begin in any serious way until the period of the turn to agitation. Every small wave of recruitment has been the result of agitational - mass work - in industry and in the community. There are exceptions, of course, but this is the rule.

And, how could it be otherwise. We have understood since the late 60's that to be Black and a revolutionary meant literally to put your life on the line. Black people are not willing to join an organization that is not disciplined, serious and willing to lead struggles. This means that the IS must have a focus of actually leading the struggles against the forms and realities of Black oppression, whether in the community or at the work place.

BUSSING WORK

Our first serious attempt at intervening in Community work was our activity in the Louisville busing crisis in the fall of 1975. Our approach broadly was to build a political pole in the community and in our industrial work that was pro busing and anti Klan.

Our success was mixed. In truth, the enormity of the crisis and the anti-busing response in a situation with a small, weak Black community meant that we were overwhelmed when busing actually began. In attempting to actually play a leadership role, however, we learned several valuable lessons and we did recruit out of our intervention.

Firstly, we learned that we could no longer take an abstract view of whether busing in and of itself was progressive. The issue was really 'were you for black equality or not.' If we were going to attempt to actually lead in the struggle, then we had to take a clear stand: for busing, against racist organizing.

Secondly, we learned that we must focus our activity clearly in the face of such an enormous crisis, especially since there were no other real forces to actually work with in building this political pole. In the beginning we spent too much time dissipating the energy of our meager resources ~~through~~ through broad community leafleting instead of focusing on one or two areas.

Thirdly, in our work in CWA we deepened our understanding of the necessity of politically preparing the people we work with on the issues. In this respect the work of our comrades in United Action was a model. By the time the crisis hit full force in September we had won the majority of the caucus to oppose the anti-busing forces. The caucus of black and white workers not only remained, but actually grew for a brief period. No easy task, when one remembers that the entire city and every plant was racially polarized around the issue of busing. None of this would have been possible had we not politically prepared. Our leading comrade in CWA became known for his stand on this question.

We also gained valuable experience in our intervention in the United Black Workers of Jefferson County in answering the Nationalists although over time the inconsistency of our work in this area meant that we did not make the gains that were potential.

We recruited approximately 15 comrades out of the busing/CWA work-- 2/3 of which were black. We were not able to hold any of these comrades-- primarily due to questions and problems not in the purview of this perspective. It's clear that we recruited blacks because we actually took a lead in the crisis.

Our next intervention around the issue of busing took place in Detroit in the fall of 75/ winter of 76. Here the situation was quite different. The busing plan was minimal and the black community was strong. We applied the lessons we's learned in Louisville. We decided to concentrate our efforts in 2 areas where the crisis was likely to be the greatest. We built a group Women Against Racism which became generally known throughout the city as the group that was prepared to counter the racist organization of the anti-busing group MAD.

In the racism that developed in the newly integrated schools W.A.R. became known in the areas we'd chosen of the black community as the group to turn to for help in dealing with these problems. While the IS did not recruit directly out of our busing work in Detroit, we did begin to develop our first links in the black community which aided our work in the Gary Tyler and South Africa campaign in Detroit. (See also section on Red Tide)

The Red Tide and Gary Tyler

The development of the Red Tide from a few cadre recently transported ~~to~~ to the midwest in January 1976 to an organization of 60 members 90% working class and 75% Black in 3 midwest cities is by now well known. In many ways the RT has pioneered the IS in the area of Black and anti-

racist work.

The first issue the RT took up together with the IS was the busing fight in Detroit. In the atmosphere of growing racism, the RT--overwhelmingly white at the time--took an aggressive stand. They helped to build anti-racist demonstrations, intervened in several high schools with their newspaper. Through this work RT comrades met and began to recruit black working class young people to the RT.

In April the RT leadership learned of the case of Gary Tyler, scheduled for electrocution on May 6. The Detroit RT, by now 1/2/ black, fought inside the IS for a campaign around Gary Tyler. Following the success of the May 1st demonstration in Detroit, the IS nationally took up the campaign which peaked with the national demonstration and rally in Detroit in June with Mrs. Tyler.

Following the sorting out of the legal situation due to Louisiana's death penalty being declared unconstitutional and the total disarray of the committee in New Orleans, which had been torn by sectarian strife, we co-sponsored with the SWP another tour by Mrs. Tyler in 4 cities in October as well as nationally coordinated demonstrations in 5 cities in early November. This last round of rallies and demonstrations were not as successful as the May 1st and June demonstrations since Gary was no longer on death row. Local committees to Free Gary Tyler in Detroit, Cleveland, Boston and other cities continued to do fund raising and other low key activities.

Gary Tyler work will continue--but we've already gained valuable experience as well as resources through our activity. It was through the Gary Tyler campaign that the RT grew and trained a cadre that enabled it to expand to Cleveland and Chicago in a real way. Black comrades in Louisville and Detroit were also recruited to the IS through the Gary Tyler work. In Cleveland and Pittsburgh we established our first weak links with the black community as well as strengthening them in Detroit through the Gary Tyler campaign.

Both the RT and IS learned the difficulties of ongoing and consistent defense work--it's dependency on the immediacy of the issue as well as the court dates, etc. It is a clear tribute to the IS and RT that Mrs. Tyler now looks to us precisely because we have continued consistent work and newspaper coverage of Gary's case.

Marquette Park

Our intervention in Marquette Park, Illinois in July 1976 was basically a situation of working from the outside. The issue was racist organizing and racist attacks led by the Nazi Party based in Marquette Park on the black community of West Englewood. Out of this intervention we hoped to establish real links in the Chicago black community, build the RT in Chicago and West Englewood, and begin to build with the Martin Luther King Jr. Movement a movement against the racist aggression and violence of the Nazis.

On balance we failed to accomplish most of our objectives. While the RT recruited city wide and in West Englewood, it was not able to hold the people from West Englewood. The weakness of the Martin Luther King Jr. Movement and the strength of the racist forces meant that we were not able to significantly turn back the racist organizing. However, the RT in particular gained valuable experience in having to work with other forces

in the Marquette Park intervention. The Red Tide grew as well and the reality of a Red Tide with a growing cadre in Chicago today is partly due to the training and recruitment through the Marquette Park experience.

BLACK WORK IN INDUSTRY

Black work in industry does not refer to going trade union work among Black workers. It refers to doing anti-racist work among both Black and white workers. In this sense, our Black work has had two aspects. One is taking up the question of racial discrimination on the job or in the union. The other is bringing "community" issues into the work place. Our record on the latter has been good, especially in the last two years. Our efforts on the first have been less successful.

While we have not always planned for or systematically organized bringing anti-racist/Black issues into our industrial work, comrades have generally carried many of these issues into their work. The most obvious example was that of busing in Louisville and our work in United Action (UAW) (See the section on Busing). In Detroit, most of the rank and file caucuses in the UAW where we have people, raised the issue of busing in the city. Several UAW caucuses raised the issue of Gary Tyler, and one comrade held a meeting with co-workers on the issue of Gary Tyler. Comrades in steel in Cleveland also successfully raised Gary Tyler in their work. In Chicago, our comrades at Harvester have done consistent work around local black issues, including Marquette Park. The success of bringing Black workers to showings of the Dimbaza film in well known by

The examples of successful organizing on shop floor issues of racism are much more scarce. One example is the activity of our comrade in UAW Local 869. He took the initiative in a majority white local of forming an official FEPC Committee. This committee uncovered instances of discrimination in hiring and promotions. Our comrade was fired for a time, partly as a result of his leadership on this question. In New York, in the summer of 1975, our comrades became involved in a campaign against NY Telephone for distributing a racist advertising poster. Through United Action we made contact for the IS and the campaign aided in the recruitment of one Black comrade.

It is important to understand why we have been more successful in raising anti-racist, community issues in our industrial work, than we have in raising issues of racism on the shop floor. The reason has not been the lack of racism in our work places or our 'insensitivity' to it. What has existed is an inability to connect our politics to the consciousness of Black workers in this period.

When we first entered industry our approach to the question of racism had been shaped by the recent history of Black struggle in industry during the late 60's. This was a time when the Black liberation movement had come from the community into the factories and when Black workers were organizing themselves independently of whites and around race issues. What we failed to understand was how these same people analyzed the defeat and cooptation of those struggles.

Our experience has been that Black workers saw the defeats of DRUM or other militant Black caucuses as a result of their organizing independently as Blacks. And therefore, they saw the key to victory was unity with white workers even at the expense of dropping special Black demands.

They argued that issues which threatened to pit them against the racism of white workers should be avoided.

This is why it's been relatively easier to, for example, sell Gary Tyler raffle tickets to Black workers in the plants, or to get a good turn out for a film on South Africa. These activities do not necessarily challenge the racism of whites in the shop. But, making a serious campaign to open the skilled trades to Black workers ~~we~~ would do just that. Black workers have emphasized that raising such issues could polarize the plant along racial lines and thus interfere with the ability of Black and white issues to work together on other issues. Many of the Black workers we work with hope to avoid this danger because they do not believe that a significant number of white workers can ever take an anti-racist stand.

We have not had many opportunities to show that it is possible to both fight racism and to build Black and white unity. Nor is this something that we will be able to change very easily. We cannot substitute ourselves for the lack of a Black movement. Nor can we pretend that our industrialized white cadre can be as effective at building Black self confidence as the Black worker cadre we are just beginning to develop. The key to progress lies in our mass work perspective.

We have always understood abstractly, that the united class struggle against racism had to be built in the context of common struggle by Black and white workers around their shared oppression. We have lead and participated in those struggles. What we have not done adequately and what we must learn to do systematically is to make anti-racist propaganda in the context of this agitation. If shop floor unity is essential, we have to make the argument to white workers that unity can only be maintained and strengthened if it is extended to unity on the question of Black liberation. We have to explain to Black workers that they must fight for white support to Black demands because whites are realizing that racial discrimination is management's (or the bureaucrats) way of weakening the fighting unity of the workers. We may not be able to lead many actual struggles against racism today, but this does not mean that we cannot prepare the ground, in an educational way, for future struggle.

On ~~the~~ balance over the past two years the IS has made a real beginning in the development of on-going Black work, Black recruitment, a Black cadre and leadership. In the spring of 1975, we had no serious Black work, and only one Black cadre. Today we have the experience of Louisville and Detroit busing, Marquette Park and Gary Tyler. We have an excellent youth cadre, 75% of which is Black. Several of the leading Black RT comrades are in the process of becoming IS cadre.

During this two year period, we have lost over half of the Blacks we recruited to the IS. Of those we have ~~in~~ successfully integrated, several are developing into leaders not only of our Black/anti-racist work, but also of our industrial work and of the IS. This development is a pre-requisite to building our Black work, and to significant Black recruitment to the IS.

We have been going through the birth pains of building a multi-national organization. Today we have taken the first steps. We must now build on what we have through internalizing the lessons we've learned in the past.

NEXT STEPS

The question of what we do next, or how we build from the gains we have made is always on the agenda. It is not any different in the question of the IS and its relationship to Black liberation. As in our relationship to the working class in general we are still going through the trials of infancy. Our next steps should take into account the state of the organization and the material conditions at hand. There is not a Black movement, nor will a mass movement develop in the next year or so. This is true, despite the fact that Black people are victims of a racist and employers' offensive. The I.S. is small in size with a small Black membership and does not have solid roots inside the communities. What is proposed are things we can do for the coming six to ~~xxx~~ eight months.

1. Reprint the Official Position on Black Liberation

In many ways it is a crime that members of the organization do not have a full understanding of our position and its argumentation. A copy should be given to every member of the organization. The Black Commission will organize a series of classes or cadre schools on the national question, why we see Blacks as part of the national question, and our current Black work in this context. The culmination of these discussions will be a full national discussion of our analysis and perspectives on ~~the~~ Black liberation at a future NC.

2. Southern Africa

Southern Africa solidarity will be an important area of work for the organization. A perspective separate from the Black perspective will be presented at the Convention. The importance of this work is the real interest we've found in the questions with Black contacts in the community and in industry. There is also less friction at play in using white comrades in this work.

3. Pamphlet on Black Liberation

The Black Commission will oversee the production of a pamphlet on Black Liberation by June 1 of this year. We do not have any literature on Black liberation. Pamphlets are important tools for revolutionaries.

4. Workers' Power

The coverage in WP over the last two years has been very good in the sense that it has covered well the important issues facing Blacks in America today. What has been lacking is a column that in a more political way can deal with issues in the struggle. In addition, the National Black Caucus together with the Black Commission will encourage Black comrades to write systematically for the paper. Special emphasis will also be placed on writing articles concerning Black struggles and Black oppression directed at white workers.

The IS has a position in support of the right of self determination and the right of Black people to separate organization. Yet in WP "Where we Stand" does not have a formulation that gives our stand, "Where We Stand" is to have such a formulation.

5. Industrial Fractions

The IS has recruited Blacks from every industrial fraction over the last two years. The turnover has been high. We have lost a majority of those recruited. One definitive answer cannot be given. Many factors are part of this problem.

Most were recruited through trade union work or issues brought into our industrial work by our comrades there. The ups and downs of our industrial work was felt by the entire organization. The effect on our Black industrial comrades of downturns in our mass work and local rank and file agitation was heightened by their newness to our politics. Our politics has its core in the concept of the "big picture" and the understanding that there will be momentary ups and downs in the working class movement as well as in the building of the party.

There is also the problem of Black workers joining an organization that is ~~xxxx~~ still largely white and middle class. Nowhere on ~~at~~ the multi-national revolutionary left (including the IS) does an organization come close to the Black composition that is needed for the stamp of "working class party" to mean reality.

We operate at a time when the movement of the Black working class that was a feature of the late 60's and early 70's is not the fact of our recent experience. There are no RUM's in today's picture. There is the steady attack by the ruling class upon the well being of Black people and the Black working class in particular.

The IS role at this juncture should be to develop perspectives for each industrial fraction on the question of Black liberation. Those perspectives drawn up by each fraction steering committee in consultation with the Black Commission should include: The agitational and propagandistic line; Recruitment; Development of Black cadre and leadership. The perspective for each fraction is to be completed by June 1 and published in the IS Bulletin.

6. Black Conference

A Black Conference will be held in June 1977 in Detroit in the name of the National Black Caucus of the International Socialists. The Conference will be two days on a weekend. Topics will be Southern Africa, (Southern Africa speaker), the Carter administration, Black people and the economic crisis, rebuilding the movement. All branches are to build toward the conference with contacts.

7. Gary Tyler

Gary Tyler work will continue. The campaign that the Red Tide mounts will be the major focus of our work. Workers Power will continue to carry updates on the case. Gary Tyler Committees will continue to do fund raising and speaking on the issue. IS forums will go to greater lengths to include the case in speeches.

8. Community Branches and Fractions

In the national reorganization after the convention there will be districts in 4 midwest cities: Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland and Pittsburgh. Each district will consist of two or more industrial priorities and a Community branch or fraction. The role of the community branches/fractions is to establish contact and develop roots in the communities for the organization through involvement in community related issues. These branches/fractions will organize the entire district/branch into the national campaigns such as Southern Africa and Gary Tyler, as well as local anti-racist Black work.

The IS has a history of not being aware of the communities in which we have branches. The new reorganization solves some of the problem, but not all. In those branches outside the ~~minimum~~ four major areas mentioned above, ~~the~~ individuals will be assigned to the tasks of getting to know the communities and developing community work.

This does not mean that Black comrades will automatically become members of community branches/fractions. Black members in priority industries will stay in their industrial fractions. Nor does it mean that Black work is something only for community branches and fractions. The concept of community branches and fractions is only one facet of our work around Black liberation.

CONCLUSION

The growth of the racist right, the ever worsening condition of the masses of Black people have created the need for a new Black liberation movement. But, Black struggle will not revive until Black workers have broken the ideological chains of the Black "political leadership". We cannot predict when this will happen. Our task now is to prepare for the opportunities we know will come. This means building on our past successes: recruitment, cadre development and expanding our tentative links with the Black community. It means a renewal of our theory and a thorough education of all our comrades on this question.

Our work today will be hard. We will make mistakes because we are still woefully ignorant ~~and~~ and inexperienced. We are just at the beginning of becoming a Black and white workers organization. If we have made enough progress in this direction when the big opportunities open up, our chances of becoming a party will be all the greater.

NOTE: Analysys and perspectives for the National Black Caucus, Black Commission and Black cadre and leadership development will be added to this document before it is presented to the Convention

Response of the Boston Exec to "Statement on the Faction Fight in Boston."

(This is a provisional reply to the preceding statement, a full reply will follow in the next bulletin. We have included our letter to the comrade in question in this bulletin for documentation.)

1-There have been no acts of intimidation, threats of expulsion or harassment. This is an invention. But there have been a series of political discussions in which comrades acting irresponsibly, and, in one case, dangerously, have been called to account for their actions.

2-The "frequent verbal attacks" largely occurred while the 3rd force supporters were still in the majority. These "attacks" consisted of insisting that these comrades defend their politics in what would pass for a political manner, and to desist from taking irresponsible potshots at the local and national leaderships.

3- Vicious slanders. We insisted at a Majority caucus meeting that the local LF supporter was, without regard to her LF positions, acting and had acted in a way inconsistent with and damaging to the norms of a Bolshevik organization. At that meeting the Exec was supported unanimously-with one abstention, this based on a feeling that the comrade in question would be "more dangerous outside the organization than inside." When P and J followed the 3rd force out of the majority, they took their agreement with them, and have blocked with the LF comrade in what we consider a certainly unprincipled alliance.

4-Free Political discussion. The local exec invited Barbara to address the branch at a special branch meeting early in the fight. A second full discussion was also organized. To date, neither the LF nor the 3rd force supporters have made a concrete proposal to this Exec on structuring discussions. It was the Exec that approached a LF MAL (as the local LF supporter is incommunicado) with a suggestion for organized discussion. It is clear that with one, and only one LF supporter in the branch, an inordinately long and prolonged discussion was illadvised. Neither 3rd force supporter prior to this statement has ever criticized our organization of the debate.

5-Had we wished to intimidate and suspend, we could easily have done so. Immediately following the 3rd force move out of the Majority, the local 3rd force supporters (P and J) announced they were severing relations with the Exec, that relations would only be procedural (?) that both comrades would refuse all new assignments which as they proceeded were in fact old assignments, and that in response to questions we were told they weren't going to "argue with us" about it. They refused on a subsequent call to attend an Exec meeting. They were not suspended. Rather, a NYC 3rd force comrade interceded and convinced them to attend a second exec meeting, where they offered no explanation of their behavior, but criticized themselves for a "political error." We have since referred to this as P and J's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) To date, we have received no political explanation of this bizarre behavior.

Despite all of this P and J have been good comrades in the main, and we had no interest in making more of their UDI than they ~~had~~ had already made of it themselves. But it was clear to us that their "error" consisted of embarrassing their bloc, not in their uncomradely behavior.

There is more---much more. In a faction fight, all the crap rises to the top. This Exec has tried to hold this branch and its political integrity intact while too many comrades have jumped in to the factional pool fully dressed. We insisted we would not follow--now we find ourselves dragged along, having to answer what is nothing but a half-assed local variant of "who stole the chairs in 1943."

The next bulletin will contain the inevitable full reply, and for the hagiographers we have included in this bulletin the Exec's letter to the LF comrade in question. If the following is of any use, we ~~int~~ include it in order to stop a lot of self-serving gossip that grows stickier as the fight progresses.

Boston Exec.

Feb 17, 1977

PO Box 8488
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Marianne,

This is an answer to your undated reply to Rob's letter of Feb. 9th. We are sorry that you have chosen to receive our sincere request that you go on leave both for your own good and the good of the branch in a factional and dishonest manner. We are sorry, but not surprised. The personal problems that you face both inside and outside the branch, problems that necessitated us in asking you to take a leave, increasingly assume a factional form, but they are not factional in origin.

You were asked to take a leave for the following reasons:

- 1-a series of personal problems that lead to a high degree of incompetence in your branch work.
- 2-A series of security breaches and a string of gossip whose only purpose was to dangerously undermine the morale of the branch.
- 3-Your absolute refusal to accept work assignments and, after moving, your refusal even to give the branch a phone number where you could be reached.

Your reply was unresponsive to any of the specifics of Rob's detailed letter. You state, "I have been attending meetings, paying dues, selling the paper." You add, "I have written up a black perspectives document, prepared a talk for a women's caucus dinner, and a leaflet." You go on to suggest you "contributed to the initiation of new work in the branch" and suggest there is no substance to the charge (your word) that you are incapable of doing branch work at this time. You close in your brief note by saying that "until the faction fight began, I was considered by this Exec a hard worker and a member in good standing who had made some valuable contributions." This whole response is disingenuous, not for the least reasons being that Rob went over in great detail with you what we felt the problems were. Let us repeat them in answering your reply.

Perspectives--Your black perspectives document was incompetent and largely worthless. You were told this, specifically why, and you agreed at that point. You were not asked to rediscover the wheel, but to put forward a limited perspective on your work in this area. It was clear to us that, three months after you had accepted responsibility for overseeing any probes into the black community, you had in fact done nothing at all, that you had no work in this area. In preparing a branch Tasks and Perspectives for the first months of the new year, this was not an unreasonable request, and time was critical as you had left town unannounced for three weeks at Christmas.

What you presented us, a week late and only after two separate phone calls, was a) wrong in its specifics. The most cursory investigation would have revealed that there was no way to intervene in the two groups you suggested; b) a restatement of common practices that any coordinator of any project would do--none of which you had done to date; c) written without any reference to the only specific black work the branch had encountered or could in fact immediately intervene in (Gary Tyler, ELL's ELLION defense work); d) so general as to be useless as a guide, e.g., "forums and speakers as would be fruitful." In all

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a slapdash job, incomplete and hacked out at the last minute. In all the time you have been ostensibly monitoring this work, we do not have one single name of any black contacts supplied by you, either as a branch contact, or even for the branch mailing list.

Selling the paper--Where have you been selling? You were asked specifically to go to a forum, cover it for WP and sell the paper--you refused. You have no regular selling assignments, your schedule being what it is. You had been personally selling WP to one bookstore, trying to establish that contact that is so often valuable--now you claim you mail the paper, instead. So you are not selling the paper.

Preparing talks --You prepared a talk for a women's caucus dinner, no more than any other caucus member had done, but you refused to give an educational at a Teamsters fraction meeting scheduled for the end of March; months ago, you put yourself forward to do a role playing session to complement another comrades talk on the History of the Womens Movement. That talk was given, but without your presentation. You didnt even bother to explain why it wasn't presented.

Preparing a Leaflet--You proposed doing, not a leaflet, but the text of a leaflet, an all purpose propaganda leaflet around womens oppression that could be used in intervening in upcoming demonstrations. You had no idea of which demonstrations, but suggested it would be useful to "keep around in general." You also proposed this, not as one activity, or in addition to other work, but as your only work, in contradistinction to an assignment to monitor and possibly intervene in the local feminist 9-5 group (the latter proposal something the LF supported as good womens work, ironically)

Initiation of New Branch Work--This is a pure invention, you have been the last person in the branch to propose new work or initiate any actions. The only example that comes to mind that could possibly justify such a claim was your suggestion to the organizer that we consider intervening in the Preterm strike--that we do "something around Preterm," this four days after two comrades had met with the Preterm strikers. You had no proposals to put forward, but only wanted the womens caucus to discuss it. At the following branch meeting, when the Exec proposed a specific limited intervention, your initiative, as you call it, was to put yourself forward as a rep to the strike committee in addition to the organizer. After all this initiative, you didn't even bother to attend the Preterm rally, nor did you contact anyone to say you wouldn't come.

A member in good standing previous to the fight--After consistently mishandling tasks you were assigned, you had the gall to insist you were not treated as a leader, and stated to comrades in another branch that you felt "stifled" by the leadership in Boston. You were considered a member in good standing only in the most technical sense, and before we had any reason to believe you had broken security. Also, prior to the fight, you had not yet developed the habit of steadfastly refusing assignments. This past week you refused categorically any assignments to work on the South Africa forum--this ten days before a major event. When you asked for a leave in early December, you were granted one.

On the specific questions of branch security and malicious gossiping, you have chosen not to respond. These criticisms represent as great a problem as any of the above comments. Because you have not commented on the substance of Rob's statements in your reply, we will not repeat them here, except to say that they represent

you as a person who is no longer a comrade, but an individual who is capable of inventing anything for her own purposes. This can not go unchallenged.

As a branch leadership we have put more effort into developing you than any other comrade. At this point, we feel our efforts were futile. It was not from insensitivity or factionalism that necessitated us asking you to take a three month leave of absense, but a realization that you had reached a dead-end in your relations with this branch. Had the faction fight not occurred, you would doubtless have stayed on leave. Had you chosen to return, we would have urged you to stay on leave.

At this point, you are suspended from all branch activities for a period of three months. During this period you are not to represent yourself as an active member of the IS, and are not to attend any branch, regional or national meetings. We are putting this as a motion to the branch. Should you wish to appeal this decision to the branch, you have that right, and the right of defense from any member of the national organization-please put this request in writing to the organizer no later than two days before the next full branch meeting. Should you challenge the branches decision, you have the right of appeal to the National Organization. We recommend, however, that in this period you accept the suspension, take good advantage of this time to unclutter your own life, and think through your own needs and committment to revolutionary politics.

Since considering this serious step, word of your "intimidation" and imminent suspension are rife in the organization-this even before what we considered the last straw, your refusal to work on the SA forum. Even two comrades in Boston, for their own reasons as 3rd force supporters, are defending you against our alleged intimidation. The real intimidation is in using the faction fight to reverse or question responsible decisions that would be seen as reasonable and necessary in normal times. Now, good people will unwittingly come to the defense of what they perceive as an embattled comrade-all because you have been so dishonest in all your dealings with this branch. You are manipulating left faction comrades in a thoroughly unprincipled way, once again spreading fantastic stories that, in a faction fight, gain a credibility they would never have otherwise. It remains to be seen whether the LP will carry you on this one and factionally defend the indefensible. We sincerely hope they do not-certainly there are enough legitimate differences without inventing new ones. Unless you are prepared to acknowledge your own mistakes, faction fight or no, this method left unchecked will destroy the present branch-we are not prepared to allow this to happen.

To reiterate; you are suspended for refusal to accept assignments, for breaks in security, and for malicious gossip that may destroy the morale of the branch and the ability of comrades to work together. Should you refuse this suspension, you must appraise the organizer of this fact in writing by Friday, February 25, 3 PM; include a request for the amount of time necessary for defense, and the comrade, if any, you wish to defend you.

One last word. Despite the sharpness of some of our comments, this Exec is not your enemy, nor do we believe you are hopeless. Pointing these things out to you are only the most recent attempts to get you to do the only thing that will make you a comrade and get your priorities straight. The Left faction, regardless of the merits of any of its arguments, is a smokescreen for you to hide your own disappointments. We sincerely hope you will stop using it.

Mike H., Rob T., Ray W.
The Boston Exec

STATEMENT OF THE ATLANTA LEFT FACTION

Out of a branch of 13 in Atlanta, there are 4 Left Faction members. For the last month, the "Majority" Faction has waged a conscious and systematic harassment campaign against us. In the last two weeks, it has reached ridiculous proportions.

We have weekly branch meetings to debate the faction documents. The only parents in the branch are Carla and Byron, members of the Left Faction. They proposed that for the remaining debates the branch pay approximately \$5.00 an evening for childcare. This would give J.B. (a four year old) adult supervision, get him to bed on time, and allow both parents to attend the meetings. Carla and Byron would continue to work out childcare for any other meetings between themselves. This was defeated by the "Majority".

Jack T., the "professional organizer", opposed this saying he didn't want to do anything about childcare until after the convention, and claiming we don't have the money for it, even though we had been planning to buy a branch coffee-maker until one was donated to us. To Byron, Jack admitted that it would be different if there were other children involved (besides Left Faction members' children). The "Majority" motion that passed calls for putting the four year old upstairs, alone and unsupervised, or, having the meetings at Carla's and Byron's house. The first option is patently unsafe and the second unworkable because their living room could not accommodate more than half a dozen, especially with a still unsupervised child running in and out.

Comrades, what kind of organization do we have when minimal requests for childcare are denied? Could we really hold any working class family members in the IS under such a set-up? None of the people I work with would tolerate such petit-bourgeois prejudices and inconsiderations, not to mention the completely factional and undemocratic way "Majority" comrades have behaved on this issue. The motion means Byron is forced to jeopardize J.B.'s safety or else miss the meetings. Paying for childcare themselves is impossible for Byron and Carla. They are poor. They already pay \$150 monthly for daycare. This motion has more than a factional bias behind it --- it has a class bias.

Another "Majority" motion was passed against the Left Faction at the same branch meeting. The motion reads: "Anyone who is a member of a fraction, including the women's caucus, must attend meetings of the fraction, carry out assignments, and participate in activities unless specifically exempted by the fraction convenor of the organizer."

This motion came as the result of an argument over scheduling a women's caucus meeting. An assignment to give a talk for an IS forum was taken away from Carla because she had other plans and could not come to a caucus planning meeting when it was re-scheduled at the last minute.

The motion was motivated on the grounds that the Left Faction comrades were entrust and therefore any action against us --- the so-called splitters --- was justified. The sense of the motion was clear in

the discussion. If you can't come to a meeting, your excuse has to be approved by the convenor or organizer. If unacceptable, you will be dropped from the fraction or caucus. At our current level of internal meetings and pre-meetings of three or even four a week, conflicts will be impossible to avoid, and Jack will decide whether Left Faction comrades will be disciplined or not. Given his past record of refusal to accept practically any reason without a fight, the motion is clearly directed against us alone.

Some members of the "Majority" have argued that this motion will be used fairly and impartially, without factional prejudice. But comrades, one Left Faction member (Carla) has already been disciplined over this issue, and Jack's official opinion of her, stated to the Exec, is: "If we have an organization of Carla's, we won't make a revolution." As well, he has stated that we (LF) should have already been kicked out of the IS. Sound impartial? Another "Majority" member here has admitted that the strategy, including this motion, is to drive us out of the branch.

But even if this motion were passed in a non-factionalized, healthier organization, where it wasn't used in a purely factional way, what would it mean, comrades? Most workers take enough orders at work. Once again, the guys I work with would not be in an organization where they had to have permission to miss a meeting. What is this? The army, or high school, or what? Commitment is necessary in a workers' organization, but it is not built through giving orders, issue-ing ultimatums, and re-arranging the personal lives of worker comrades. This motion is appropriate for a militaristic sect, not a workers' organization.

These motions are but two examples of the harassment. There are scores of tohers, such as Left Faction members being held out of South Africa work and away from our contacts there. Such as Jack admitting that Red Tide material for Carla (the only RT member in the branch) had been sent to our box, but that, "...I'm not about to give it to you." Such as Carla and Byron being told that back dues for when Byrom was on leave must be paid immediately or "you will be stripped of your rights.", and that no consideration will be given to their current fianacial situation even though they have bills and receipts to prove that their budget has no more flexibility and even though they have promised future re-payment (This is a violation of common practice in most branches, and there are scores of examples on both sides of this fight to prove it.). Such as, screaming phone calls to Left Faction members late at night. Such as, advice to younger comrades that we are liars, we are slick, we dupe people (like the com-mies do), we recruit to the faction in a prone position, etc., etc.

The handwriting is on the wall. They want us to quit. Barring that, they're looking for ways to get us on technicalities, to suspend or expell one or more of us to prevent us from having a delegat e.

To those in the middle who maintain we have nothing to worry about as long as we're loyal members, we say "Bullshit!" The LF members in Atlanta consider themselves active, disciplined members, carriers of the

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This is addressed to those members of the majority who are concerned that the Faction Fight be resolved in keeping with the traditions of political democracy and without harassment, intimidation, or threats of expulsion of those not in the majority camp. In Boston this has not been the case. There have been frequent verbal attacks against individuals not in the majority that have degenerated into vicious slanders; furthermore, upon two occasions these attacks became physical. More recently the member of the Left Faction has been threatened with suspension. These are but a few of the more obvious signs of the course pursued by the local executive committee.

Until December, we, members of the branch not now in the majority, had been considered hard workers and members in good standing who had made significant contributions to the branch.

Since the faction fight began, we have continued our work in the branch as loyal members of the organization. However, the policy of the exec towards us has meant an atmosphere of intimidation and repression, and the political functioning of the branch has suffered as a consequence.

The national Executive Committee has stated that the factional debates should be carried on without harassment or expulsions. Members of the Third Camp and the Left Faction here in Boston call upon the E.C. to reaffirm this position and to advise the Boston executive committee to cease their tactics of intimidation. In addition, we urge those in the majority to condemn the use of divisive, undemocratic measures, and to work towards an atmosphere of free political discussion.

The three of us want to carry on the faction fight in a political comradely fashion, which is crucial if the organization is to move forward towards resolving the crisis it faces.

Marianne, Left Faction

Joan B., Peter L. - Third Camp ;

We reaffirm the policies of industrialization, mass work, and the priorities. We feel that inasmuch as these policies have been implemented in a triumphalist and rigid way, the leadership must bear responsibility for the consequences of their actions.