

# Forward to the Party! Struggle for the Party!

No. 3

*This is the third of several issues of the special journal on the programme of the party. The purpose of this journal is to provide an important form for discussion and struggle around the programme, among members of the RU and all potential party members.*

*None of these articles represents the line of the RU; none has been approved (or disapproved) by leadership bodies of the RU on any levels. Instead, these articles represent the summations of particular comrades based on their study of these specific points of the draft programme and their own summation around them.*

*Because in this issue there are a very large number of articles, we have divided them into eight sections (indicated by headlines), and have numbered the articles within each section. For example, there is a section "On the IWOs," with five articles in it; a section "On Other Aspects of Building the Workers Movement," with 12 articles in it; a section "On the Role of the Workers Papers," with three articles in it, etc. There is also a "Other Articles" section at the end, for those that didn't fit very well into any of the other sections.*

## On the IWOs

### One

The draft programme calls for building "various forms of workers organizations, in the plants and unions and among the class as a whole. Some of these organizations, such as rank and file caucuses, are created by the workers 'spontaneously' (without communists initiating them) to defend their immediate interests on the shop floor, to carry on struggles in the unions, and often to give leadership in strikes.

"In these organizations, as well as caucuses and other forms they do initiate, members of the Revolutionary Communist Party put forward the policy of relying on the rank and file, and mobilizing it to fight around its own grievances in the plant and union and to link up with struggles outside the plant." (p. 30)

The draft also calls for intermediate workers organizations. They are described as "built on a more permanent basis and on a higher political level than caucuses—directing its spearhead squarely at the ruling class." (p. 31)

In the first place, we would like to know where these caucuses are that are growing up spontaneously. We don't think this has been the case for several years—most of the caucuses that have grown up in the last few years were initiated by communists.

Secondly, the draft, although vague about the relationship between caucuses and IWOs, does tend toward seeing these organizations as separate. Our view is quite different.

Let's look at these IWOs practically. Who is going to carry out the tasks of taking the major campaigns to the working class? We hope it is the advanced workers and the organizations (caucuses) that are also leading the day to day struggle in the shops. This is perfectly consistent with our understanding that political lessons are learned in the course of the day to day struggle.

So, what we are saying is yes, we need larger organizations to "apply the single spark method to take up every major struggle, of all sections of the people against the ruling class, mobilize masses of workers in these struggles and develop them into campaigns of the working class..." (p. 31) But, these organizations will be made up of the advanced workers and organizations that are leading the struggles in the shop. This is the way to most closely link up the day to day struggle with the broader campaigns.

#### Right Errors and Isolation

In fact, if this is not the case we feel it will lead to right errors in the day to day struggle and isolation from the masses of workers in building the broader, class-wide campaigns and struggles.

But, this is the direction that the draft programme

is leading, and the direction that has led to the problems that are described in the May 1st Workers Movement (M1WM) article in the second issue of this journal. About the Rucker, Lee Mah, and Jung Sai strikes, the journal article says, "The M1WM did not consistently find the ways to take the main issue and the key lessons of these struggles out to the many thousands of workers in the shops and hiring halls who did not yet actively support these strikes."

Later, in the same article, they describe how they began to correct this problem. In building for the "Defend the Right to Strike—Smash the ENA" picket line, they "united with a number of caucuses and other organizations to build it. A general leaflet was widely distributed...In addition, some of the caucuses put out their own leaflets or newspaper articles..."

But they still noted that "there had been a lot of confusion about the relationship between the M1WM and these organizations. Even for workers and cadres who had been relating actively to both this had been a problem." They go on to say that although politically they might be the same as these other organizations, the M1WM should not be seen as a "left wing labor council." Well, in fact we feel this would be a fairly accurate description of what the M1WM should be. Of course, not on a trade union level, but a central workers organization with many sections (caucuses) in the shops.

After all, isn't this the exact relationship that in practice the M1WM was forced to adopt? As the journal article said, "only...by helping develop intermediate forms [here we assume they mean caucuses] in key industries where they don't yet exist will the M1WM be able to develop deep ties with the working class." And the article also says, "If postal workers at this point are more familiar with Uprising (a rank and file postal workers organization and newsletter) than with the M1WM, and if auto workers are more familiar with On the Line, this is no problem as long as these organizations work closely with the M1WM to strengthen their ties through common work around key campaigns and to take a unified political line to the masses of workers."

But, if we carry out "common work around key campaigns," and have a "unified political line" and hopefully are made up of the advanced and active workers from the shops, then what are we talking about but basically the same organization with the same political level, and carrying out the same tasks?

#### Level of Unity

We feel that the confusion in the draft programme and in the M1WM article lies in the artificial distinction of IWOs as "political workers organizations" and the caucuses as something different. Although we are still not 100% clear about the question of political level of unity, we are sure that the caucuses should be sections of the larger IWOs. But, we feel that the level of unity should be something like Workers Unite to Lead the Fight Against All Oppression, with the struggle directed right at the imperialist ruling class.

The point here is not to get hung up in writing a per-

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### Two

In the last issue of the journal an article appeared discussing the nature of student work in the new period. Essentially it proposed the replacement of the RSB with a youth organization of the Party, a Young Communist League. Important political weaknesses of the line of building an "independent anti-imperialist student movement" were brought out. This proposal has been brought out for discussion in the Brigade and has been received with tremendous enthusiasm.

One of the tremendous weaknesses brought out in the discussion of work within "anti-imperialist" student groups has been the failure to bring forward to the masses of students the political and ideological line of the proletariat. Instead, we wound up substituting for it a watered down version of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, known popularly as anti-imperialist leadership. Communists within the student movement were hampered in their efforts to bring communist ideas to students because the Brigade, with its "incomplete" line, was built to lead the struggles on campus.

As was pointed out in the student work journal article, the student movement is prone to all sorts of opportunism and reformism. It pointed out correctly the key importance of bringing out clearly on the campuses the leading role of the proletariat and the *leading role of the proletariat's line*. The proposal to form broad-based Marxist-Leninist youth organizations was put forward as a first step towards accomplishing this task.

What does this have to do with the workers movement? I believe that similar problems exist in that work as exist in student work. Many different lines exist within the workers movement and many more (ranging all the way from the Trotskyites to social democrats) are out there vying to take over the workers movement and deliver it into the hands of the bourgeoisie.

Our line on the workers movement has been to build political workers organizations, both to take up the struggles in the shops and the broader political questions. These intermediate workers organizations are seen as vehicles through which communists can work to build mass struggle amongst the working class and as "conveyor belts" which bring workers closer to and into the party.

While to a certain degree these IWOs have been successful in building mass struggle, they have faced similar problems as the RSB as far as bringing out the leading role of communists and the question of *proletarian* revolution to the masses of workers. Once again, as in the student movement, the leading role of com-

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fect paragraph that describes to a tee what you stand for (although we're not against defining it), but, what in practice does an organization do.

We work in a rank and file organization in a medium-sized plant. Our main activities have been building struggle against the company. We led the fight to strike for a good contract in 1974. We've built a number of smaller struggles and currently are leading the battle against layoffs. According to the draft programme, this makes us a caucus. But, let's look at the other activities of our caucus.

In putting out the caucus newsletter, as well as having articles exposing the attacks by the company (lay-offs, unjust firings, seniority violations) and exposing the sellout union officials, we also united the active workers around having articles about the energy freeze, the UWOC Jobs or Income campaign, International Women's Day, and May Day. The article building for May Day said, "...we'll be saying that, we, the working class of people, will never stop our struggle until we've wiped out every form of oppression that comes from the bosses' whole damn rip-off capitalist system."

And we united the caucus around taking up May Day. Some members joined the May Day Planning Committee. We distributed the May Day leaflet at the shop and built a contingent to the march. One of our members spoke at the march and told of some of the struggles we were engaged in against the company and concluded that the reason we (the caucus) were out there was because we have to build a working class movement that can stand up and say no to all forms of oppression that come from the system.

So, even though in our first newsletter we defined our caucus as fighting the company and the union sellouts (which we summed up as being too narrow), in practice the caucus has also taken up the broader issues—in fact, has taken up the fight against all oppression. Now, who is to say that this is not a "political workers organization" (as the M1WM defined itself), or that it is not "directing its spearhead squarely at the ruling class" (as the draft programme says IWOs should).

The whole point is that we don't see any contradiction between being a "political workers organization" and leading the day to day struggles. In fact we think they go hand in hand.

### Two Other Points

We might add two other things. One, we definitely see our caucus as a "more permanent organization" (a characteristic the draft programme attributes to IWOs). In order for that to have happened, we knew we needed some politically advanced workers to sustain the organization during the ebbs and flows of the struggle. It was not until we led considerable struggle and a core of politically conscious workers stepped forward that we were able to consolidate the caucus.

Secondly, our caucus is definitely open at both ends. It includes many more people than are united fully around everything we do. One worker is still in favor of the Vietnam war and is quite anti-communist, but he has united very closely with us around many issues in the shop and some outside like the UWOC Jobs or Income campaign. But this would not have been possible if these issues had been brought in by an outside force that the workers did not see as leading the day to day struggle.

Other workers who are active in the caucus have advanced from fighters in the shop to developing Marxist-Leninists who are contributing to building the Party.

The RU and the draft programme have summed up that the way to teach broader political lessons, raise class consciousness, and involve workers in class-wide campaigns is to link up with the workers' day to day struggles and bring out as broad lessons and as many links with other struggles as we can. Building IWOs on one hand and caucuses in the shops that aren't closely affiliated with them is a method that will get in the way of linking up struggles, drawing political lessons, and building the revolutionary workers movement.

We feel that this is the tendency of the draft programme and that this should be changed to explicitly link the plant and industry-wide caucuses with the IWOs. ■

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munists is kept from the workers and instead the "anti-imperialist, revolutionary" workers movement is put forward as the leader of the workers' and the people's struggles.

Propaganda of the IWOs talks about "making revolution" and "smashing imperialism" just as the Brigade's literature does, but never talks about the goal of revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, what that means and how to accomplish that goal. These ideas are brought only to the advanced workers in the shop or in the IWOs through *Revolution* and through discussion with communists.

One of the running jokes in the Brigade now is to describe a conversation with a student which goes something like this: *Brigade member*: "...and so you see, the only way we can end the oppression of the capitalist system is through making revolution." *Student*: "That sounds right to me, but what do you want to replace it with; are you some kind of socialist?" *Brigade member*: "Well, this isn't a position of the Brigade, but I think we need socialism, but that's my own personal position. And you know, there are some communists in the Brigade." How many times has this scene been repeated by cadre speaking "as members of IWO X" or by members of those IWOs who are not in a communist organization?

Recently in building for May Day in this area, work which was tremendously successful, many workers took out the line of May Day as a day when the working class celebrates and sums up its past struggles and plans the struggle for the future. Workers were united around the slogan Workers Unite to Lead the Fight Against All Oppression. What future struggle were they talking about? How were workers going to end all oppression?

The answer was brought out by many (not all) organizing for May Day—our struggle is for a society in which the working class rules, for this is the only kind of society in which the basis for oppression no longer exists. The demonstration had a determined, revolutionary character, hundreds of fists and red flags—and hundreds joined in along the way. People were not excited just because the march was militant, but because it looked and sounded like something that was really going somewhere.

Should the IWOs be independent, anti-imperialist organizations? The draft programme describes the IWO as being built on a "higher political level than caucuses" (the level and role of caucuses is a separate but related question). I believe the IWOs should be united around a program which calls for socialism and clearly points towards a society where the working class rules as the goal of its struggle. The IWOs should recognize the leadership of the Party and should put forward People's China as the type of society we are fighting for.

Does this mean that all the members of the IWO have to be disciplined communists? I think not. Just as in the YCL, the IWOs should be run on a much looser sort of discipline, but should clearly be vehicles for training its members in the use of Marxism-Leninism and in developing them as communists.

Is such an organization a substitute for the Party? I think not. In fact, I think it can only facilitate the Party's ability to bring its line to the working class and lead it in struggle.

As far as mass work is concerned I believe the IWOs should be involved in the struggles in the shops and outside, in the shops forming temporary caucuses or committees around shop grievances and issues.

I realize that there are many differences between the workers movement and that of the students, and that the idea for a YCL among youth cannot be transplanted into the workers movement. But the thrust of that proposal has tremendous merit and the ideas and line it puts forward should be examined closely in relation to many other areas of work we are involved in. ■

# Three

The journal article, "Clarify Role of IWOs," in attempting to criticize the draft programme's formulation, makes some serious errors. The article states that because the fifth spearhead, "unite the proletariat to resist the attack on living standards by the monopoly capitalists," was relegated to a subordinate position and not considered to be revolutionary, the organization made right errors in the shop work, in particular "organizing around grievances in a reformist way, as summed up in many national bulletins and the first NCC report."

The first NCC report does sum up right errors in the work, but says they came from: 1) the struggle against "left" lines like the Franklin group, and 2) the "spontaneous" tendency of the workers' movement to trade union struggle. The report says that the errors consist mainly of restricting work to the trade union struggles, not in underestimating the importance of economic struggle.

The "Clarify" article goes on to say that not seeing that the economic struggle is revolutionary "comes down to not seeing that the fundamental contradiction...in America today is between the working class and the bourgeoisie. It is precisely because of the fundamental contradiction that struggle around shop issues is *potentially* revolutionary struggle." In other words, since the working class is in contradiction with the ruling class, workers can "potentially" learn the need to make revolution in the shop struggle where workers and bosses come up against one another.

The fundamental contradiction is the basis for all forms of oppression in class society, not just the exploitation of workers. A revolutionary struggle is one which raises the question of which class must rule. As the draft programme states, "Only by uniting with all social forces fighting imperialism can the working class develop consciousness of its own historical role as capitalism's gravedigger." (p.33, emphasis added) As Lenin says in *What Is To Be Done?* "Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only from outside of the economic struggle, from outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships between all classes and strata and the government."

Is shop struggle potentially revolutionary? Only in the sense that shop struggle can be the basis for political struggle. But it is not revolutionary as long as it remains solely a shop struggle, a struggle for better terms and conditions of employment. And we will not be developing revolutionary class consciousness if we restrict ourselves to political struggle on an economic basis. Lenin writes, "Working class consciousness cannot be genuinely political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all* cases, *without exception*, of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected. Moreover to respond from a Social-Democratic [communist] and not from any other point of view."

## To Sum Up

To sum up, the task of communists is to develop revolutionary political struggle which may be based on economic struggle in some cases but can never be restricted to that if workers are to develop an understanding of the historic role of the working class.

The "Clarify" article goes wrong in correctly trying to criticize the formulation of the IWO in the draft programme, which organizationally splits the economic and political struggle, as "Clarify" points out. You can't build a revolutionary workers' movement by neglecting the workers' shop struggles and making workers into a group of liberals or social workers who support other people's struggles with a "better" line. As the draft programme states, "The present struggle of the American workers is primarily against individual employers...around wages and benefits..." (p. 29) Communists cannot stand apart from the day to day struggles of the class and expect to lead the class to revolution.

Where there is oppression there is resistance. This has always been true of the U.S. working class. What the class needs is a conscious leadership which can develop and focus its spontaneous struggle into a mighty blow against imperialism. The class doesn't need to be pulled out of that struggle, any more than it needs to be restricted to it.

There was a tendency in one area to build workers organizations on the two level model described in the draft programme. The IWOs were full blown anti-imperialist organizations from the start and caucuses were formed to take up the trade union struggle. The IWOs tended to be small groups with a high level of ideological unity which issued sum-ups, but led no struggle.

The ideology was often "anti-imperialist," a "third ideology" between proletarian and bourgeois. The caucuses were strictly trade union in nature and were set up whenever there was a "mass issue," even if the caucus only included the same people as the IWO. Generally, they were limited to discussing specific tactics for the shop struggle. This set up clear stages for a worker's development—trade union militant, anti-imperialist, communist. Not surprisingly, very few workers made it.

The formulation in the draft programme, which draws clear distinctions between the IWO and the caucus, wouldn't stop anyone from falling into these errors. Not surprisingly, the M1WM which is put forward as an example of what the draft programme means, made the same errors. According to an article in *Revolution*, November 1974, "The first error was the tendency to want to develop anti-imperialist ideas as some kind of third ideology between trade unionism and Marxism-Leninism...It also led in practice to a very static conception of where the advanced workers are—or should be—at."

The draft programme does not make clear the relation between the IWOs and the shop struggle. In fact, caucuses are put forward as the main way to lead the shop struggle. While the draft programme says these caucuses will ebb and flow and come and go, it also says that communists will "work to develop the life of these organizations and to continually recruit new workers to them..." In other words, if you want to lead the shop struggle you better build a caucus.

The "Clarify" article correctly states that to prolong these caucuses is incorrect. After the particular struggle is over these caucuses either die or become an opposition to the union leadership. The task of communists is to build these caucuses when they are helpful in uniting all who can be united around a particular struggle.

If there is no IWO in the industry, we should try to build one with the advanced workers who come forward in the struggle. If there is an IWO it can often directly lead the shop struggle itself. Where building a caucus will help build the struggle, the IWO should still actively build the caucus and lead the struggle.

Our primary task, after building the Party, is once again to build the struggle, class consciousness and revolutionary unity of the working class and to develop its leadership of the united front, as the draft programme states. This means building a revolutionary workers' movement. And the organizational expression of that political line is to build IWOs. This means leading the struggle in the shops in a manner so that "workers begin to see themselves as more than mere individuals, but as members of a class locked in warfare with the opposing class of employers," and consolidating this understanding into an organization which leads the struggle of the *working class* in that industry, which *includes* but is *not restricted* to the struggle against the particular employer.

## IWOs and Caucuses

The "Clarify" article, in applying its right error to the draft programme's separation of the IWO and the caucus, makes some other errors. In describing the IWO in industry X, the article says that the IWO ebbs and flows like the caucus described in the draft programme. The article is trying to say that the differences between the IWO and the caucus aren't so great if the IWO is leading the shop struggle. Well, every organization ebbs and flows with the struggle, even the party. The caucuses' main characteristic is that they ebb and flow because they are totally tied to the economic struggle. The IWOs main character is that they are stable and on-going precisely because they have a broader view of class struggle.

The "Clarify" article says that "Anyone can join who wants to fight the boss but the organization has a fighting program around all the day to day struggles of the class." The IWOs should lead the fight against the boss and some workers will come to meetings just to discuss particular struggles. This is good and we should encourage it. But a worker isn't likely to stick around when the particular struggle is over unless he has developed some understanding of the need for a broader fight. The key is not to have some test workers have to pass. If the IWOs are actively leading *all* the struggles of the class their character will be clear to all and in the course of struggle we will win fighters for one to be fighters for all.

But in order to have a broad circle of supporters and other workers who consider themselves part of the organization but don't regularly come to meetings, the IWO must have a solid core of active members who understand and implement its program. Open ended means ideologically open on the basis of programmatic unity.

The M1WM journal article states that M1WM is an organization of the kind described in the draft programme. The article states "...it is important for communists and active workers to take the main political lessons of key struggles back into the shops and to apply these lessons to the struggles developing there.

On the whole, M1WM has *not* done this consistently."

How could it develop struggles in the shops if it isn't organized to do that? The November 1974 *Revolution* article describes in detail how M1WM helped the Rucker workers develop their strike and sums up, "The M1WM has continued to put forward the significance of the strike and its lessons to other workers, but as an external force it has not been in a position to play a decisive role in determining the strike's course."

The point is not that communists and advanced workers can't provide leadership to a struggle they themselves are not part of, but that there are in fact often limits on the role you can play from the outside. We aren't told if any of the Rucker's strikers joined M1WM or if they formed an IWO or caucus.

In our area, the organization has proposed to the different industry IWOs that they join in building an area-wide IWO. This was proposed now and not before partly because an area-wide IWO would be a paper organization unless it had roots in some of the key industries of the area.

As the proposal states, "This organization must be a fighting organization of the working class, an organization which takes up every struggle against oppression, both on the job and off, takes these struggles and brings them back into the shops, which is where the workers are organized, and takes them back with the view of turning every factory into a fortress. The organization must be deeply rooted in the workers' struggles on the job. It must take up all aspects of the workers' struggle against the bosses no matter how small, and in the course of this struggle develop fighters on one front into fighters for all...To keep our feet firmly rooted in the class struggle, we would be organized as the working class is organized for production, into sections industry-by-industry."

The M1WM article says that organizational relations between an area-wide IWO and industry IWOs isn't that important. What's important is that all the organizations have the same political line.

## Industry IWOs

In our area there are several industry IWOs under the leadership of the RU. They all have basically the same political line. And they all have a tendency to shop narrowness. As the proposal states, "...organization industry by industry through helping to build deep roots has led to some narrowness, to workers developing the idea that the struggle can be waged industry by industry rather than as a class for our interests as a class."

By forming an area-wide IWO organized by industry we will have the basis to overcome this narrowness and to build real political unity. Each section will, through its representatives to the steering committee and in its meetings and meetings of the whole area-wide IWO, discuss the importance of class-wide campaigns and just what campaigns should be taken up and how. When a decision is made it will be clear that the basis is how to build the struggle of the class as a whole. And that decision will be binding on all the sections on that basis.

The area-wide steering committee will also make recommendations on how to build struggle in a particular industry which are not binding. Thus being part of a class-wide organization will help both the shop struggles and the broad campaigns in each section because workers will see the struggle as part of a broader fight. In fact, we see a contradiction between building the IWOs as part of the revolutionary workers' movement and keeping them separate industry organizations.

The M1WM journal article says that there was a tendency to see a contradiction between building M1WM and the industry IWOs. As long as relations between M1WM and industry IWOs are vague, contradictions are bound to arise. A postal worker is interested in joining a campaign that M1WM is taking up. Should he join M1WM or join the postal workers IWO and build the campaign there? Or a worker from an industry where there is no IWO joins M1WM. Should he bring other workers to M1WM or consolidate an industry IWO?

As long as M1WM is a vague group of workers hovering above the class there is no consistent way to answer those questions. The working class doesn't just need a political line. It needs organizational forms which help it carry out the line in a united way. Our proposal makes it clear that a worker who comes forward around a particular campaign will be encouraged to join an industrial section or help build one.

But the M1WM article says M1WM isn't "some kind of left-wing 'central labor council.'" In fact, it has had to fight against the dual unionist tendencies that spontaneously develop... But the way to fight dual unionism is not to refuse to form a political workers organization, either in one organization or city-wide, but to make sure that the organization unites workers in the fight "to make unions militant organizations of the class struggle."

As our proposal for an area-wide IWO states, "The best

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workers organization is not a union and it is not meant to replace the unions. In fact the organization must seriously take up the task of organizing the unorganized into unions. It must also take up the task of building unions into militant organizations of class struggle... We can never succumb to the anti-union sentiment that develops spontaneously, especially among younger workers who have had no experience but bad experience in their unions. Instead we must always come back to the struggle to make the union a fighting organization of the class."

We need organization to fight dual unionism. We can't use dual unionism as a straw man to keep from building that organization.

## Large Service Industry

We work in a large service industry in a major metropolitan city. Soon after we started work, we joined a workers organization, OP, initiated by members of PBO, a small independent collective with a dual unionist and white skin privilege line. OP quickly grew to be a large, solidly multinational organization by putting forward a fighting program. The height of this was an issue of the group's paper which put out demands for the upcoming contract. The demands were widely supported and members of OP were able to take over a local union meeting and several demands were passed overwhelmingly by almost 2000 cheering workers.

Comrades put forward that OP should take up other questions of importance to the class. The members of PBO said that economism meant not fighting white skin privilege on the job, but we did get them to go along with organizing workers to go to a couple of anti-war marches and some demonstrations around the Attica rebellion.

Meanwhile OP began to fall apart, not because it was taking up broader questions, but because it failed to consolidate its leadership of the contract fight. Instead OP fell into a discussion of its program, with one of the PBOers putting out that it should be an organization of revolutionaries.

This left an opening for some BWC cadre to pull almost all the Black and Latin workers into a separate group, XRUM. They "got down" with people so well that soon there was no one left. Since OP wasn't leading any struggle it couldn't hold on to people or draw them back after XRUM fell apart. OP degenerated into meetings solely of comrades and PBOers.

Meanwhile the union went on strike. It was a long strike but OP played no role again until towards the end, when prodded by comrades, two issues of the paper were put out which were important in rebuilding the strike.

OP grew and had a lot of support and respect from the masses because it was seen as a fighting organization. Even now, after almost four years during which OP has done very little and its paper has rarely come out, many workers still call all the different groups in the industry (there are at least four) OP. It was in the course of these struggles and on the basis of this respect that OP was able to involve workers in broad political struggle to the extent that it did.

After the strike a struggle developed over what OP should be. Comrades put forward an essentially correct proposal that OP be a permanent, on-going organization with a conscious left political stand which would base itself in leading the shop struggle and also take up various political questions like the war. OP would help to organize and participate in caucuses around particular issues when appropriate but the main task was to build OP as an organization which linked the struggle in the industry to the struggle of the class.

This struggle led to a split and comrades and some workers left OP and formed WC. At about this time the organization initiated a city-wide coalition of left groups to call an anti-war demo. The coalition became an on-going, anti-imperialist coalition and the various workers organizations, including WC, joined.

We spent most of our time and much of WC's newspaper on activities of the coalition and brought several workers to various demonstrations and May Day. Despite the serious flaws in this multi-class coalition, working in it did help to develop work around the broad political questions, because it wasn't just WC raising the issues but a broad social movement.

But we almost totally neglected the shop struggle during this period and the workers we attracted to WC were generally not those with a solid class consciousness who wanted to fight the boss, but rather those who were looking for ways out of the job.

With the break-up of the coalition and the end of the mass anti-war movement, we summed up that we had been neglecting the shop struggle and began to

prepare for the upcoming contract and for a union organizing drive to get one group of workers out of their company union and into the major industrial union.

During these struggles we dropped all work around political questions and we tended to link these struggles up to the struggle of the working class as a whole in only the most superficial way. This contrasts to our work three years before when in the midst of a long strike we brought workers to a demonstration about the Attica rebellion.

While this error is not inevitable in an industry-based organization, there is a strong tendency in these organizations to only take up the struggle in their own industry, especially when the struggle is at a high point. Being part of an area-wide IWO with sections in different industries would help to correct this error.

We didn't lead any struggle around either the contract or the organizing drive because we both failed to understand the real importance of these struggles for the workers and because we lost sight of how our work around these day to day struggles was connected to making revolution.

For example, we were always very ambivalent about the organizing drive. After all, why bring workers into a union that would sell them out? So we tended to give "critical support" to the union. We talked of the need for a union but emphasized that once we got it we would have to struggle to make it a fighting union.

In practice this line often led to flipping into tailing the hacks and just collecting show-of-interest cards. We should have fought like hell for the union because winning the drive would have been a real victory for the workers. This is not because the union would solve the workers' problems, but because it would help to build the unity of the class to have all the workers in one industry in one industrial union.

In the course of that struggle, we could have used the sparks, workers' real experience in struggle with the company, the NLRB, and the union hacks, to develop an understanding of the nature of unions, the need for broader struggle, and the need for an IWO.

We have gone through periods of both "left" and right errors and have learned the hard way that an IWO must lead the struggles of the working class in an industry. This means both leading the shop struggles and taking the broad campaigns of the class to the workers in the industry. And we have seen that the best way to do this is through an area-wide IWO with industrial sections. We think the draft programme should be rewritten to reflect this.

Struggle for the party! ■

# Four

What is the relationship of building the economic daily battles of our class to the goal of proletarian revolution? Why do we need to build intermediate forms of organization? What are their relationship to the class' economic daily battles and rank and file organization built in the plants, locals and shops, and what is their relationship to the working class taking up the fight against all oppression?

This report doesn't claim to answer all these questions, but in contributing to discussion and struggle around them, we take as our departure point the section from the draft programme on p. 32 and its relationship with the earlier pages on building a revolutionary workers movement. "The fundamental task for the working class is to eliminate the cause—the capitalist system itself. To do this it is necessary to fight the effects to get to the cause—to utilize today's struggle as a means of building for the future showdown with the bourgeoisie." (p. 32)

This means implementing the party's central task by bending "every effort to fulfill three main objectives in these struggles: to win as much as can be won in the immediate battle and weaken the enemy; to raise the general level of consciousness and sense of organization of the struggling masses and instill in them the revolutionary outlook of the proletariat; and to develop the most active and advanced in these struggles into communists..." (pp. 32-33)

We began working at plant x, an assembly plant of about 6000 workers, about five years ago. We could probably best characterize the early period of work in that plant by a fairly high degree of spontaneous mass struggle on the one hand, and on the other hand, pretty thorough-going trade unionism on our part. Our strategic view we called "the red local strategy," but there wasn't anything "red" about it. We saw our main goal, the first "stage" in our work, to build a "progressive," democratically run union local.

We spent a great deal of time just bad-mouthing the International union, but often would hold back criticizing a local official who seemed "progressive"

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or slicker to us. At times we promoted simply relying on the grievance procedures and union maneuverings, hiding the strategic view that our strength lies with the collective struggle of the working class. We made it almost a principle to never seize on sparks outside the walls of our plant (which is particularly funny when other comrades would sell close to 400-600 copies of the local working class paper in this plant's parking lot).

It is not that we did not see the importance of mass struggle, but it was seen important more from the view of a trade union reformer who sees the need for a mass pressure group. Even with this pretty backward approach, our work did contribute to building up a strong spirit of rebellion throughout much of the plant, at times even setting into motion further struggle.

## Orientation Changes

To make a long story short, this orientation began to change through the protracted struggle in the whole organization against rightism. And particularly, some sharp local struggle against some local opportunists in the organization who took advantage of the weaknesses in our work to push a raunchy dogmatist line on the economic struggles of the class. Their line forced us to take a long and heavy look into our past practice, and seriously try to apply the science of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought to the working class movement.

We began to understand that our advances depended on whether or not we had faith in and relied on the masses. We saw that it could only be our own disdain for the masses and fear of their upsurge that could prevent us from going out to the activists, help sum up the experience of the class in fighting the company and the sellout union officials, and help develop the best battle plan to advance the struggle.

And it could only be our own backwardness if we failed to link this struggle to others being waged by the working class, point out the nature of the irreconcilable conflict between the workers and the capitalists, and try to wage every struggle so as to build the strongest revolutionary unity, consciousness and organization as part of building for the decisive showdown with the bourgeoisie.

For example, three years ago a comrade ran for delegate for the International constitutional convention. He ran as an independent, promising that despite the booze and bullshit of the convention, he would raise the issues of speedup, discrimination, etc. More or less a reform platform (although the demands were based mainly on the real issues facing the masses). When the constitutional convention came up again two years later (after much struggle in the organization), we tried to apply Marxism and the line of our organization to the situation in the plant, instead of the earlier approach of focusing on what a good trade union militant should do at such a convention.

Some of the active workers we knew were beginning to talk about running somebody for convention delegate. They had been involved in some struggles on the shop floor against bad conditions and in the struggle to vote down the national and local contracts. They saw the union leaders as sellouts, but many saw the only immediate solution as electing new, more honest officials.

We struggled with these workers around the type of workers movement we needed to build and struggled to find the ways to use the convention delegates election to advance the class struggle at this time.

## Workers Upsurge

This was in the context of an upsurge of struggle by workers in our industry—recent wildcats, plant takeovers and widespread opposition and struggle (especially in our particular local) against the terms of the last contract and the mobilization of thousands of workers, mainly Arabs, against the International's purchase of Israeli bonds. The International leadership had been increasingly exposed as they tried to stamp out the workers' struggle.

We formulated a program that went beyond characterizing the convention as "booze and bullshit," which the majority of the rank and file already knew. We described it as part of the union leadership's ideological offensive to get the small fry hacks within the union solidly on the class collaborationist bandwagon.

The campaign leaflet linked the struggles in our industry with the growing crisis of imperialism and the growing workers movement—the victory of the Farah strikers, fight against the ENA, the West Virginia

miners' no gas-no coal strike, and the movement against police terror as exemplified by the S.F. demo against the Zebra gestapo searches.

Although the focus of the whole leaflet was correctly on the immediate task facing the workers in our industry, we felt this campaign was also a good opportunity to put forward a good class perspective on the U.S. dealings around the Middle East and build on the very visible struggle mainly Arab immigrants had been carrying on in the city, and on the very visible class collaboration of the International leadership in defending Zionist Israel.

The leaflet stated: "As workers organize to fight back, the parasites who live off our sweat and labor fear our growing strength. They need puppets like [head of the International] to sabotage our struggles, like he did all last summer and fall."

We set out not only to put out a lively piece of agitation about what is going on in the world today, especially in our particular industry and union, but to unite with activists to build this campaign as an active "slap in the face" against the company and its men in union clothing.

"The International wants to use this convention as a way to pacify us. [Head of the International] wants us to think that as long as we go through his 'proper procedures' everything will be cool. We really don't care about their convention [that sentence was a little flippant] but we want to use this election campaign to make it clear to [one of the industry's major companies] that we are not going to get driven into the ground for their profits. And to [the company's] best friends, our labor misleaders, we say: We are not going to sit back as you run another con-game on us."

Although we did not win the election we did get a pretty solid vote. This was a shot in the arm for the activists in the plant and was seen as a real advance by many, many workers. This campaign showed that our fellow workers could be mobilized around a program that boldly stated the interests of the working class as opposed to the interests of the capitalists.

## Active Core

The campaign served to consolidate an active core, although primarily in one department, by broadly building the struggle and consciousness of the workers in the local. This became much more apparent as the struggle intensified later in the plant and many new activists coming forward kept referring to the election campaign.

Here we take minor issue with some wording in the draft programme. On p. 29 it says: "...the bourgeoisie was able to solidify the positions of its labor lieutenants at the head of the union 'internationals,' use these top officials as a main arm of its attack on the working class, and even use the union structure at times to quell workers' struggles and enforce labor discipline." This is a severe understatement. The top union leadership constantly tries to use the union structure (and they try to use the contract in the same way) to quell the struggle of the class—that is what their careers are based on—and our task as communists is to recognize that and develop the methods for breaking those chains.

An important thing that we and other activists in the plant had to grasp about the tasks that faced us, was the need "...to break the workers' struggle out of the control of the trade union 'labor lieutenants' both practically, and even more importantly, ideologically and politically. This is not the same thing as the infantile position of attacking or 'leaving' the trade unions—and leaving the workers within them at the mercy of the 'labor lieutenants.'" (quote from an earlier national document of the organization)

We had to understand the fact that we could not limit ourselves to the rules and procedures that the bourgeoisie or its stooges set up, no matter how "democratic" the procedure seems, like the union convention. We had to assess things from the needs of advancing the class struggle, and the needs, aspirations and understanding of the broad masses of workers (who were cynical about the convention, many knowing that no individual, no matter how well-intentioned, could get much done at *this* convention).

## Leading Group Forms

A leading group of workers began to form, mainly in the one department where the one comrade (who had run for delegate both times and was chief steward) worked. Small skirmishes around speedup and harassment began to get organized by members of the group and with each one, lessons were spread throughout the department. At one meeting, composed mainly of workers from that department and a few other workers and comrades from other shifts and departments, it was decided to begin a newsletter to popularize and spread shop floor struggle and make a strong statement.

It was discussed how we were at "war with the capitalist class," and that the capitalist class is always trying to find ways to keep us divided and competing against each other, in order to make more profits and

to maintain their rule.

The company's discrimination against Black and other minority workers was an important topic of discussion. A white worker described how it was easy for him to get a [company] application at the state unemployment office in the white working class suburb he lived in, at the same time hardly any applications were being given out in the inner city.

A Black worker added that the system wants to keep people ignorant of these facts in order to keep us all enslaved. The group summed up that strong multinational unity fighting against discrimination as well as shop conditions, would make our struggle stronger, and it would weaken the enemy every time we workers could overcome some divisions promoted by the capitalist system. We agreed that we would make no progress if we simply relied on the tactic of going through the "proper procedures" of the contract in trying to deal with the conditions we faced.

There was some struggle over the line that the newsletter should be simply an information sheet for the one department that the majority of workers at the meeting were from, but this spontaneous narrowness was soon blown away by the developing struggle. Within a week of this meeting, the comrade who was steward and other active workers led a department-wide struggle against speedup, harassment and shop conditions. The newsletter immediately came out following this and was enthusiastically distributed to workers all over the plant.

When our comrade and three other workers were fired for the earlier action, the whole department walked out, and a four day wildcat strike took place.

## Wildcat A Heavy Blow

The wildcat was a testament to the enthusiasm and energy of the working class for struggle against the slave masters. The workers in the department who walked out set up the first picket lines and hundreds more from all over the plant joined in.

The wildcat was a heavy blow against the company's exploitation, and against the sellout union leaders. At every turn, the local hacks tried to get people to return to work, but even the big guns from the International were sent packing by the rank and file. Eventually, the stooges had to let it all hang out as they joined the police, the judge arresting striking workers from inside the company parking lot, and the company labor relations men, in a combined assault that broke the strike.

The strike was rich in political lessons. Widespread discussion took place about how it was the company that was afraid of the workers and was nothing without their labor, about the role of the police, the stooges and the kind of workers movement we needed to build.

However, our history of rightist tendencies manifested itself again in the form of failing to really have faith in and rely on the broad masses of workers, which helped hasten the defeat of the strike.

Overall we did not develop as well as we could the question of this "war" our class is fighting against the capitalists. The broad masses picked up this idea enthusiastically, but we tended to reduce it to the analogy, "this strike is like a war," instead of as the draft programme pointed out, "Strikes and other similar struggles are very important 'schools of warfare' for the workers. But they are not the war itself." (p. 29) This held us back to a great degree from bringing out the broader significance of this struggle and held us back from laying the firmest basis possible for continuing to build the struggle after the strike was over.

We got bogged down in the mechanics of keeping the picket line going for 24 hours a day—instead of dealing with the tactics of the strike and the tasks that faced us from a solid political perspective. For example, once the wildcat was on, we didn't see the importance of building a strong strike committee that was rooted in and could mobilize the broad masses. We didn't see the importance of struggling to hold on to the union hall when the hacks tried to force the workers out, even though meetings of hundreds of workers had been held there and it was key tactically in mobilizing the broad masses, not just a handful of activists.

We didn't carry on, as well as we should have, the tit for tat ideological struggle the bourgeoisie was waging on several fronts to undercut the struggle. We were afraid of, and didn't really grasp the importance of taking on the red-baiting, the "honky baiting" by the Black union hacks and some social pacifist lines coming up from the ranks of some of the more backward picketers.

After the strike we took too defensive a posture while the company and the union leaders were using every possible tactic to "get things back to normal." For example, the wildcat led to a "legal" strike vote that had been promised for months before the strike. Eighty five percent of the local voted for the strike, *but instead of us struggling to develop the ways to keep the initiative in the hands of the rank and file*, we half-stepped and threw our hands up at the ten-

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dency that developed among some of the workers to say that "now that we showed these stooges through our wildcat, they're bound to follow up on our legal strike vote."

We half-stepped on building a plant-wide and city-wide campaign for the rehiring of the 79 workers fired during the strike. This would have been a strong way to spread the sparks of the struggle among other workers and a key way of keeping the initiative in the hands of the rank and file following the strike.

Even with these weaknesses and mistakes, we did set out much more consciously this time to consolidate active workers and develop an on-going plan for struggle in the plant. The newsletter that came out right before the strike continued throughout the strike and became the organ of the group of workers that pulled together after the strike.

Because of our mistakes, and the objective ebb in the struggle that followed the upsurge of the wildcat, this active core was pretty small, but the base and respect of the newsletter was very broad throughout the plant.

The newsletter dealt mainly with building the struggle at the plant and in the local, as well as taking up other battles and issues important to the working class.

We began some study of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought for the first time with a small group of activists who had come forward during the wildcat. Some activists began to get involved in other struggles of the class (demonstration against Abel and the ENA, some joined VVAW/WSO, and many began taking a much stronger interest in the local working class newspaper).

Many of the activists in the local, while in the main still very concerned about continuing the struggle against shop conditions and the union hacks at the plant, started to see themselves as fighters for the whole working class and took an active interest in the whole class struggle.

## The Question of IWOs

We feel that it is a crucial task of the class to build industry-wide IWOs, and to link workers up as much as possible across industry lines, and nationwide (at least within some industries in the not too distant future).

It is obvious we can't organize the class struggle in our industry from one shop, no matter how broad our base or how "advanced" our workers organization is politically. A city-wide IWO would mainly emerge out of the struggles in individual shops, and from city-wide and nationwide campaigns of the class. At the same time, the creation of such an organization would be a tremendous means for the class to get organized, using the single spark method to go more broadly and deeply among the workers.

For example, as a part of building struggle against layoffs, we spread the lessons of struggles going on around the city in other shops against layoffs, speedup, and forced overtime, as well as those led by UWOC. We promoted struggles around the country, especially the employed/unemployed campaign that was picking up in auto in the Bay Area. Also, we linked up the battles being waged by workers in Europe against the severe unemployment there.

In helping to chart the direction forward, drawing on these sparks was of tremendous importance. But the important fights that are shaping up have to serve as more than inspiration and the source of lessons. We have to move beyond this, to develop the organizational means to weld these fights together—making practical links so as to more fully unleash the potential power of our class and weaken the enemy.

## Criticisms of Two Articles

To better clarify the role and character of the IWOs, we want to make some criticisms of two articles from the second journal. "Lessons of the M1WM" states that there is confusion and struggle over the relation of the IWO to shop struggle. This is passed over, basically saying it doesn't matter as long as the advanced in each shop relate to the M1WM.

This summation tends to portray M1WM as a "detached advancement" of active workers who have come forward through struggles in different industries, but are not using their collective strength to go back and broaden their struggles, and in turn strengthen the overall struggle through the IWO.

"Clarify the Role of IWOs" hits on this when it criticizes the draft programme for making too much of a separation between "caucuses" which struggle around shop conditions, and IWOs which take up other struggles of the class.

Our experience shows that these "caucuses" are

not a widespread spontaneous phenomenon (as the draft tends to portray); and when they are spontaneous, more often than not they are used by hacks as stepping stones to their own careers in union bureaucracies.

"Clarify..." is correct when it says that "the struggles of the working class around shop issues and around the broader campaigns must be linked both politically and organizationally..." and that the IWOs "...must lead the struggle in the plants. If they do not, then they are, or will inevitably become, paper organizations which rip advanced workers out of the daily shop battles of the working class."

## "Big Mistake"

However, it is a big mistake for "Clarify..." to say that "struggle around shop issues is potentially revolutionary struggle." Instead, we agree with a statement in "Learning Through Day to Day Struggle" in the same issue of the journal. This says:

"All of the struggles we engage in, whether economic or political, serve as the basis for strengthening the development of class struggle against the capitalist system. If this is not our view, and each struggle is seen as complete in itself, there will be nothing revolutionary about it."

Our practice shows that when we build off the real links between each and every battle and the overall class struggle, the work advances. As pointed out above, one of the great strengths of the work just preceding the wildcat was trying to shake off the "theory of stages" and putting the immediate plant struggles in the context of the overall fight of our class.

It was precisely this perspective that strengthened the determination and ability of the activists in the convention campaign and the shop floor struggles to push ahead. Losing sight of this perspective to an extent during and following the wildcat hindered the growing workers movement.

In the recent period, we undertook an election campaign for local union office. The burning question throughout the campaign, among the comrades and the group of activists, basically boiled down to, "Do we fight this campaign as part of, and to build, the overall class struggle, or do we subordinate the overall struggle (in practice, essentially drop it) to the interests of getting some 'good' people elected?"

## "A Real Fight"

In the main, the correct line dominated the campaign, and this has laid the basis for further advances. Large numbers of workers came forward to make the election campaign a real fight. Hundreds of workers wore the slate buttons, despite company harassment. Workers painted the name of the slate on many walls in the factory, and on vehicles coming down the line. We held several well-attended rallies in the plant parking lot where activists spoke about the need to get organized to fight, inside and outside the factory. A good number of laid off workers became very active in building the campaign as well.

In the course of the campaign, the Supplementary Unemployment Benefits fund (SUB) for our company ran out. The income of thousands of laid off workers from our plant and around the city was drastically cut. The company also tries to use this to scare employed workers into all kinds of "save your job" schemes like accepting speedup, and wage cuts. But at the same time the class can turn this into its opposite and create

a stronger basis of unity between employed and unemployed workers in the struggles against layoffs and cutbacks.

We picked up on this right away, and united the active workers to agitate around the slogan, "Fight, don't starve!" Along with the city's UWOC chapter and workers from other shops in the same union, we held a modest car caravan to company headquarters. This laid the basis for a stronger campaign against layoffs, and for getting an unofficial employed/unemployed committee started. It also helped inspire the active workers to make the fight against layoffs a cornerstone of the election campaign.

The struggle over taking up May Day in the election campaign organizing committee highlights some weaknesses. The committee was almost inseparable from the on-going rank and file organization we had built, and in the main was composed of the most active and advanced workers. There was no brick wall between the stated aims of the election campaign, and the political message of May Day. And the key link between May Day and the struggle going on in the plant was the election organizing committee itself.

But we failed to take May Day out to the activists strongly, in part tailing behind a few workers who felt building for May Day would be "too heavy" and would hurt our chances of winning the election. These same workers generally had the worst line on the election, confining themselves to bourgeois politicking, even though the slate as a whole was based on a program of building the struggle of the working class.

Tailing behind this led comrades to not take every opportunity to link the election campaign to building the revolutionary workers movement, fighting battles so as to win the war, and aiming toward the final goals of the workers movement—socialism and communism.

## "Lowest Common Denominator"

Not taking up the struggle over May Day boldly enough in the committee itself was symptomatic of an "open at one end" approach—freezing working class organization at the lowest common denominator—which we must continue to struggle to root out. Instead we approached people about May Day as individuals, and because we were missing the "key link," we tended to put out a weak, abstract line.

As a result, our overall May Day work was weakened, and we missed a real opportunity among the active workers to sharpen the two-line struggle so as to better move the election campaign forward in the correct direction. This also weakened our ability to link up the struggle at the plant with the fight other workers are waging against the common enemy.

We have to build each struggle as strongly as possible, uniting all who can be united. At the same time, we have to fan all the sparks of class consciousness and link each struggle to other crucial battles being waged in the class war. By doing this we can see the embryo of an IWO in every plant-based rank and file organizational form we work to build (aside from "single issue" or very short term forms that might be built).

The IWOs, under the leadership of the party, are the key mass organizational form in which "...the working class will develop its movement of today into a revolutionary workers' movement that fights exploitation and all oppression in order to end wage-slavery. To do this the working class must take up and infuse its strength, discipline and revolutionary outlook into every major social movement." (draft programme, p. 33) ■

# Five

The two articles on IWOs in the second journal, although not written directly in response to one another, do bring out some contradictions in the work and outlook of communists and the need to clarify some points around IWOs and their relation to the day to day struggle. These articles also point out weaknesses that are dialectically related—weaknesses that are, of course, not restricted to any particular part of the country, but have shown themselves in much of the work of communists generally.

The "Clarify" article essentially narrows the class struggle to the shop struggle, treats it as the revolutionary struggle, and negates any *real need* for area-wide IWOs, while it is attempting to point out the need for IWOs to be based in the shops. The M1WM article makes building the M1WM first an organizational question, presents the Revolutionary Workers Movement (RWM) as a show train for the working class to jump on, and then sloughs off the question of the relationship between the May 1st Workers Movement (M1WM) and caucuses—as long as the political line is uptight everything will work itself out.

In its attempt to show how the draft programme separates the advanced workers from the shop struggles, the "Clarify" article quotes the draft five times and each time leaves out an important sentence or paragraph that tries to link the day to day struggle with the broader struggle.

In the first quote they leave out how the day to day struggles "gives rise to vigorous discussion among the workers not only about every question of the immediate struggle but also about events throughout society and the world," (p. 29) making it seem that the economic struggle is all the workers need to gain class consciousness. The same is done in the quote from Lenin, leaving out "strikes are only one means of struggle, only one aspect of the working class movement." (p. 29) The rest of the quote without that can be misread to mean workers can go directly from economic struggle to the struggle for socialism without the development of revolutionary class consciousness.

When they quote around caucuses they leave out the rest of the paragraph: "They work to develop the life of these organizations and to continually recruit new workers to them, while at the same time raising the consciousness of the workers involved and educating them to the revolutionary interests of their class, through the course of struggle." (p. 30) (By the way, it seems that the "Clarify" authors use the word caucus to refer only to an organization around a single issue. This is not what caucuses are in many parts of the country, from what I know. It seems that in addition to clarity around the line, we also need a common language.)

Then, in between the next two quotes, they leave out, "Through their *experience in struggle* and the leadership of communists, these workers have developed a basic understanding of the nature of the enemy and the class struggle against this enemy.... These organizations act as conveyor belts linking the party with the *class as a whole*. They are *one* important organizational form..." (p. 31)

Then, finally they quote again and leave out "mobilize *masses of workers* in these struggles and develop them into *campaigns of the working class*." (emphasis above, in all quotes, mine) So here they attempt to make it look like the draft is proposing organizations of *just* advanced workers who by themselves take up all these struggles against the ruling class. And, finally, you get the "Clarify" authors' twisted distortion summing up the draft: "caucuses to lead the struggle around the working class' grievances in the plants and unions, and IWOs made up of advanced workers, to lead the broader struggles aimed directly at the ruling class." Comrades can *certainly* get a better idea of what the draft says by reading the draft.

## Two Kinds of "Linking"

The authors of "Clarify" say they like the draft because it "clearly links the struggle around wages and benefits, working conditions, against speedup and lay-offs, against discrimination, to the struggle of the entire working class for the emancipation of labor." But they don't like it where they see it separating the organizational forms to lead the struggle—"Our practice leads to the conclusion that the struggles of the working class around shop issues and around the broader campaigns must be linked both politically and organizationally, not separated as suggested by the draft programme."

All this "linking" sounds good but there's linking dialectically, dividing one into two and seeing the unity of opposites and there's linking two into one which the "Clarify" article does. The draft tries to show the economic struggles as one battlefield in the class struggle where the embryo of class consciousness can develop and the need to develop further broad political struggle to raise class consciousness and the organizational forms to lead this struggle. The "Clarify" folks try to say basically that the shop struggles and the struggle for socialism are one and the same, or that the economic struggle plus socialism tacked on constitute the RWM.

The RU has already summed up that adding propaganda about socialism onto the tail of essentially trade unionist struggle will never develop *revolutionary consciousness* among the workers. At most it will develop social democratic, reformist consciousness—fight for economic gains and eventually, through quantitative changes, economic and political reforms, arrive at socialism. And that is basically the picture we get from the "Clarify" article.

In fact, rightism runs through this article—from the beginning, where it talks about organizing around grievances in a reformist way as the main right error coming out of the period of "left" errors, to talking about the shop struggles as revolutionary struggles, to the fact that *never* is there mentioned taking up the struggles of other sections of the people, only "major struggles of the class."

The shop struggles are one place where workers can begin to develop class consciousness, but it doesn't matter *how* communists organize around grievances if that's *all* they organize around; the workers still won't develop revolutionary class consciousness. That is the main point of the first RU NCC report. "Can Martynov cite an instance in which leading the trade union struggle alone has succeeded in transforming a trade-unionist movement into a revolutionary class movement?" (Lenin, footnote, p. 76, *What is to be Done?*)

This rightism provides the political basis for the organizational views of the "Clarify" authors. Although they talk briefly about building an area-wide IWO they don't say why it is being built, and from their article it is impossible to see why one is necessary except to coordinate the various industrial sections who are leading the day to day struggles.

## M1WM Article

The M1WM article leaves itself open to the criticism of not being based in the shops by making it appear that basically an organizational question of the inability of the Workers Committee Against Wage Controls (WCAWC) to deal with anything other than wage controls was the main basis for the M1WM.

It does say that the work of the WCAWC and other committees helped lay the basis but doesn't say *how*. It doesn't talk about how workers who were involved in shop struggles got involved with these committees, how their political understanding moved forward, how they applied these lessons to the shop struggles, brought more workers forward, began to link up the issues in joint meetings of caucuses and other forms—how all this work, together with the deterioration of the objective conditions of the masses, was *more* important than the organizational question around the WCAWC and even more important in laying the basis for M1WM than the success of May Day, 1974.

The article correctly states the main strength of the M1WM in bringing "together a solid core of advanced workers from a number of different industries. These workers have united with communists to take important issues and struggles to the whole working class."

As workers developed through the shop struggles and various committees they also began to see the need to "take up every major struggle of all sections of the people against the ruling class, mobilize masses of workers in these struggles and develop them into campaigns of the working class." (p.31) This is an important advance.

Uniting the advanced workers as the backbone, as the draft says (and it has been the most advanced workers who have been the backbone of the M1WM), does not mean the advanced workers are the only ones who are active. But it has proven to be one of the main ways to provide the basis for waging the struggle so that broader numbers of workers can take part and learn through their own experience.

This should have been summed up better in the M1WM article. If, for example, this kind of organization had existed and united with the Bay Area carpenters strike in 1973 both the level of that particular struggle and the lessons learned from it could have been greatly sharpened, as well as helping to develop on-going organization there. Instead of maximizing the political gains from that strike much of it was lost.

## "Show Train"

But the M1WM article too much presents the RWM as a show train for workers to jump on. "The work of the M1WM around the Rucker and Chinatown strug-

gles helped to raise the class-consciousness of the strikers by showing them the reality of working class unity and of the growing revolutionary workers movement....

These workers came out not simply on the basis of trade union solidarity (although this was the starting point for some), but because they understood that the fight against the oppression of women, minority peoples, and immigrants was a crucial part of these strikes."

Many workers *did* come to these picket lines based on trade union solidarity and a certain amount of class consciousness. The point is to unite with them in struggle and help bring them forward. The importance of the work around the Chinatown struggles was more the unity that was developed in struggle, helping to break the struggles of the workers in Chinatown out of their isolation and showing the links between the struggles of Chinese and other immigrant workers against class and national oppression and the struggle of all workers against exploitation and oppression. This was more important than the handshakes at the end of a meeting.

There was a tendency to want to have everything looking just right—for the Rucker strikers we have the Lee Mah workers, for the Jung Sai strikers we have the Rucker workers, and so on. One example of this tendency was wanting to have a Rucker speaker at every rally and picket line while they were on strike, running the advanced workers ragged, and not understanding that during the strike the main work of the advanced Rucker workers had to be to develop that strike.

Flowing from these political weaknesses are some incomplete and incorrect organizational ideas. While political line is *key*, it won't do to say "It is not the name of an organization that is crucial. It is its political line and its leadership in struggle. If postal workers at this point are more familiar with Uprising (a rank and file postal workers organization and newsletter) than with the M1WM, and if auto workers are more familiar with On The Line, this is *no problem* as long as these organizations work closely with the M1WM to strengthen their ties through common work around key campaigns and to take a unified political line to the broad masses of workers." (emphasis mine) If there is no difference then *why* have different organizations?

Part of developing the correct approach lies in applying the single spark method: "To enable the masses to use this weapon most effectively and carry forward the struggle of the working class, the Revolutionary Communist Party works to build various forms of workers organizations in the plants and unions and among the class as a whole." (draft, p. 30)

There are now different forms existing, some of which were spontaneous, some were initiated by communists. We should work toward raising the political consciousness of the workers and developing organizations with the same political level as the area-wide IWOs. And these organizations should be affiliated as sections of the area-wide IWO.

## Division of Labor

But even when these organizations are on the same political level there is and will be a division of labor. These organizations or sections still must do the day to day work in their plants and unions, linking it with and building the campaigns of the area-wide IWO. The most advanced workers who come forward will be and are the backbone of the area-wide organization whose "overall role is to apply the 'single spark' method to take up every major struggle of all sections of the people, against the ruling class, mobilize masses of workers in these struggles and develop them into campaigns of the working class." (p. 31)

Whether that means developing the struggle against police terror or building support for a key strike, the area-wide organization is necessary to really develop these campaigns which will help lead to the building of plant and union organizations on a higher level. We have to break through the idea of building self-contained Revolutionary Workers Movements in each plant and industry. The area-wide organization cannot be confined to just being based in the plants and unions and cannot just coordinate different sections of the RWM, but must play its overall role in its responsibility to the working class.

There is only one Revolutionary Workers Movement and applying the single spark in this way, taking account of the uneven development of the struggle but not bowing to it, is the way to build it. And this becomes even more crucial as national campaigns develop.

The draft programme as written around IWOs is basically correct. It should sharpen up the section by stating more clearly the need for organizations to be developed as sections of the IWOs and to lead the struggles in the plants and unions. And, on the other hand, it should point to the role of the area-wide IWOs in developing organizations in plants and unions where they don't yet exist, as well as pointing out the overall role of the IWOs which *is* done (basically correctly) in the draft. ■

# On Other Aspects of Building The Workers Movement

## One

After discussing the journal article "Using the Slogan 'Jobs or Income,'" and reading the section on this in the draft programme on pages 31 and 32, some of us feel that there are important errors here, not only on the point of unemployment, but on all struggles in defense of the workers' standard of living.

We feel that the way the journal article treats the struggle of workers in a shop around layoffs or impending layoffs keeps these struggles separated from the workers who are fighting unemployment at the unemployment centers. When the authors of the article push for workers to "save our jobs" in a struggle against layoffs, they shoot themselves down by not seeing the importance of raising the slogan Jobs or Income not as an action slogan which the article says for all times and places, but as an agitational slogan.

But why do we raise Jobs or Income to the workers in a shop that's shutting down? We raise it because *Jobs or Income is the main demand of the working class around unemployment and impending unemployment*, not just "the main demand of the unemployed" as is stated in the draft programme on page 32. We bring this slogan of the working class to the working class in its battles against layoffs, shutdowns and even speedup because it sums up the situation of the *whole class* and aims an uncompromising demand straight at the bourgeoisie.

The author of the journal article doesn't understand how this struggle for Jobs or Income can develop into a *broad social movement* of the working class (the potential of which we saw April 26 which involved mainly employed workers, as well as the hundreds of thousands who have recently demonstrated in cities around the country for jobs or in defense of jobs). On the other hand, we know rallies aren't everything. The fight for every job, defense of seniority, benefits extended to those already laid off, the fight against discrimination in layoffs, and other demands are the backbone of the campaigns for Jobs or Income and in fact are part of the basis of it becoming a broad social movement. This brings us to the error in the draft programme.

The last three columns of the section, "Trade Unions and Working Class Organizations in the Struggle for Revolution," gives some scanty analysis followed by a set of demands of the working class in the struggle to defend its standard of living. In the next section, "The Working Class Will Lead the Fight Against All Oppression," it says "These demands represent vital questions around which masses of workers are fighting today. But as important as they are, they deal only with the effects of capitalist exploitation and oppression. The fundamental task for the working class is to eliminate the cause—the capitalist system itself. To do this it is necessary to fight the effects to get to the cause—to utilize today's struggle as a means of building for the future showdowns with the bourgeoisie." By saying this it again doesn't understand how, for example, the struggle for Jobs or Income or cutbacks in services (it might be hot times in the cities this summer) can and has become a broad social movement the same way the struggle against police repression can.

In fact, these struggles to defend living standards are one battlefield in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and some can be developed into broad social movements, that get to the cause—capitalism—and challenge its right to exist. If this is not true, why did we take up Farah? The ENA? The miners? April 26th? The draft programme makes a serious error in not summing up these struggles in this way, because if our programme doesn't take a clear line on this there will be a danger to leave the struggle to reformists.

Looking at the cities, especially with all the budget crises, we see the masses in motion every day. Not only does this involve the working class but other strata, too. But look where these struggles are going. At one huge demonstration over the decay in education the main demand has become for a state income tax. Did the masses of people want a state income tax? Of course not! This arose because the working class is not in the forefront of these battles and groups like Congress of Afrikan People are (they've been push-

ing for just that demand). But again, we must see how some of these issues can involve millions in struggle and be led in a revolutionary way.

The political error of not seeing how these struggles can become revolutionary struggles gets made as an organizational error as well, in the section of the draft on caucuses and IWOs on pages 30 and 31. Whereas the caucuses would take up the day to day struggles in the shop, the IWOs on the other hand would take up the political struggles only. We do agree that caucuses "come and go, ebb and flow" like the particular struggle itself. But we also feel that the IWOs, which are permanent and made up of advanced workers, should be open ended, meaning that they take up and lead some of the day to day struggles as well as take up the broad political campaigns. Again we must see how the day to day struggles are related to and in fact build the broader campaigns.

As the draft programme states on p. 33, "Fighting blow for blow on all fronts, and led by its party, the working class will develop its movement of today into a revolutionary workers' movement that fights exploitation and all oppression in order to end wage slavery. To do this the working class must take up and infuse its strength, discipline and revolutionary outlook into every major social movement." We think one of these fronts is in defense of living standards. ■

## Two

The draft programme says, "Unemployment is built into the capitalist system, and is an open sore revealing the fundamental sickness of the system—a sickness that is with it from its birth but becomes all the more malignant as it grows to old age." (p. 31) The fight against unemployment is a crucial question for the working class, and the use of the single spark method is key for building that fight. As communists we must use the fight against unemployment to expose the system and build the revolutionary workers movement.

In using the single spark method, we must link broader issues (such as the Jobs or Income demand) with concrete struggles against particular targets. This way we can more clearly "identify and isolate the bourgeoisie and its agents and unite all struggles against this enemy." (p. 30) And we use these struggles to paint an overall picture of capitalist exploitation and the need for proletarian revolution.

And we have also learned that these demands and targets must be picked scientifically, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought. And that at all times we must keep in mind our objective—building a revolutionary workers movement. Recently we built a campaign for better unemployment benefits, focusing most of our day to day struggle on the bureaucrats who run the unemployment office. We have summed up that this campaign was not formulated and built in a scientific way, and that our UWOC work suffered because of this. We should not have narrowed the struggle for Jobs or Income to fighting for benefits from bureaucrats.

### Fighting Bureaucrats for Benefits

When the big layoffs hit at the end of '74, we developed plans to rebuild the Jobs or Income campaign. In the last year we'd summed up that a big problem people first faced when they were laid off was getting benefits—being delayed, being ineligible, and so on.

So we developed a program that we took to the plants before people got laid off, as well as to the unemployment office. The idea of going to the plants was a good one—something we should have done in the past. It was a way of taking the question of the layoffs and unemployment out to the class as a whole and get to people *before* they were laid off, raising the idea of fighting unemployment.

But rather than concretely raising the question of fighting the layoffs, most of our demands were in essence to make the layoffs more bearable: 1) No delays in benefits; 2) Benefits for all no matter how long they worked; 3) Jobs or Income.

We then proceeded to unfold a program of struggle

at the unemployment office of fighting for better benefits. Fighting for benefits is one part of the struggle for Jobs or Income, and it has some important aspects. It's important to fight for benefits as one of the needs of people when they're laid off. Also through the fight for benefits and the ruling class' denial of them, we can draw valuable lessons about the nature of the system and, in particular, the state.

### Shifting the Heat Off the Imperialists

But in emphasizing the struggle for benefits against bureaucrats we made two errors. First off, we made a lot of right errors in our work.

Though we did point out that the bureaucrats were the servants of the capitalists, we at times tended to put them on the same level as the capitalists—calling them "fat cats" in one leaflet, a term which tends to lump bureaucrats in with the imperialists. And beyond that we put them forward as the main target of our struggle. In a leaflet building for a picket at the unemployment office, we said that one reason for the picket was that "we will be putting the people who run this office on notice that we want our demands met, and we are not about to let some fat-ass bureaucrat steal what we need to live." Even in the fight for benefits, our *main* enemy is the monopoly capitalists.

We built several militant actions at the unemployment office during this time and we involved a number of workers in them. But in making benefits without red tape the main focus of our struggle, we tended to make confrontations with the bureaucrats the main form of struggle. This tended to give the impression both that benefits was the main goal and the bureaucrats the main enemy.

This "benefits" line also pushed us in the direction of narrowing our propaganda. Some of our leaflets did give pretty good raps laying out the cause of unemployment and the working class' fight back. But others didn't really point to capitalism as the cause and made the lack of benefits the main attack we were hit with.

To quote from one leaflet, after a paragraph about being messed out of benefits we said, "what it all adds up to is a systematic effort to deny us the means we need to live." And in another leaflet, "Then we come down to the unemployment office and find long lines, long forms, and short checks. But why should we be paying for this pickle the capitalists have gotten themselves into?" In essence we were saying that the main way the capitalists were attacking us was by not giving us benefits. And we narrowed the demand for Jobs or Income to one for income: "Now benefits run out after 6 months for most people. But WE NEED BENEFITS UNTIL WE GET JOBS—JOBS OR INCOME!" (emphasis in orig.)

### Forgot to Fight for Jobs

But our main error was to make benefits everything, to forget about other aspects of the fight for Jobs or Income. As an article on UWOC work in the second *Forward to the Party* stated, "building struggle around one focus and emphasizing that aspect of the struggle to the exclusion of other aspects—especially demands on the government—led very easily to right errors." This happened to us.

In focusing totally on benefits we missed opportunities to expose the system. In particular, by not fighting the layoffs we missed opportunities to point the struggle directly at the companies. We didn't clearly raise the point that the capitalists have no right to lay us off. We have a right to jobs, there is plenty that needs doing and what we workers want is a job! Not a hand-out. There's something wrong with a system that can't provide jobs.

Secondly, we downplayed the Jobs or Income campaign. For instance, we put off using the national petition. We failed to grasp the importance of linking all our local struggles with the nationwide struggle and to see that this could help build people's understanding and draw them into struggle.

So we were fighting like hell for benefits. But we weren't carrying out our three main objectives in the mass struggle as laid out in the draft programme: "To win as much as can be won in the immediate battle to weaken the enemy; to raise the general level of consciousness and sense of organization of the struggling masses and instill in them the revolutionary outlook of the proletariat; and to develop the most active and advanced in these struggles into communists, recruit them into the party and train them as revolutionary

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## Two...

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leaders." (p. 32)

All this isn't to say we didn't move forward during this period. We had a successful rally for jobs during this time which drew a good number of people and was very spirited and lively. And it was made more successful by our putting forward a better and broader line than just benefits. We were also able to sum up some broader lessons from the struggles with some close contacts.

### Failed To Take Overall View

What was the source of our errors? How did we fall into the benefits trap?

A large part of our errors came from a misapplication of mass line. What we did was build struggle around what people talked about a lot at the unemployment office—benefits. When analyzing what concrete struggles to develop, we have to take into account what's on the people's minds—but we can't just tail after what people say. We must instead come from a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint—do active investigation among the masses, analyze the different needs as well as struggles going on, and then proceed from the viewpoint of what can most move forward the revolutionary workers movement and advance people's consciousness and understanding. We can't lose sight of the basic goal of mass work we do—revolution. We're not just fighting for a better life under capitalism.

Another basis for the "benefits" line was an attitude by some comrades that came down to "we can't fight the layoffs." This line came from seeing the government as an easier target to win against and benefits easier to win than jobs. This line tends to focus on the question of whether we can win or not as the key criterion for whether or not to wage a struggle, rather than the question of will the masses take it up and learn lessons from it.

Basically we were coming from the wrong outlook—we were doing our work on the basis of what seemed to be the most immediate needs of the unemployed we met. Instead our stand should be based on what the working class needs to take up. The question should be: how does the working class build struggle politically in the sharpest way possible against unemployment?

We think this means in general putting emphasis on jobs in the Jobs or Income work because: 1) building struggle around the demand for jobs can more thoroughly expose the ruling class and system. It focuses attention on one of the main sore points of the system—the fact that the working class produces all of society's wealth, yet we're not even assured of a job to support our families, and the fact that millions of us are idle while it's plain to see how much work there is to be done providing a decent life for the people; 2) We must build on the fact that the working class is the productive class—we're proud to be the class that keeps society going, the greatest class in history. Sure workers need income when they're not working, but most would rather work; 3) Struggles for jobs, against layoffs, etc. point more in the direction of employed-unemployed unity. Though we have to win the whole class to support income for the unemployed, going with the line we had to the plants, demanding benefits, was restricting ourselves to asking "them" (the employed) to support "our" (the unemployed) fight.

The struggle for jobs can include many things, can be focused either at the government, at the companies, or both, and must be developed according to concrete conditions. We've just started doing this and we still have a lot to learn.

At the same time we have to play the piano. For example, while focusing on layoffs we must develop struggle around other things too—for public works jobs, benefits, SUB—and link this with the class' fight for Jobs or Income as part of a revolutionary workers movement. Though developing concrete struggles is an important part of using the single spark method, we have to continually link up with other and broader struggles. We must indeed spread the prairie fire and point the way forward in building the revolutionary workers movement and finally overthrowing the capitalist system altogether.

"The Revolutionary Communist Party builds the struggle around unemployment as a major battle of the whole working class, a decisive part of the struggle not only to keep from being crushed under capitalism but to finally overthrow it, and in doing so end the cause of unemployment." (p. 32)

# Three

After discussing the section of the draft programme dealing with the struggle of the working class around unemployment, a number of comrades, including some who have done work among the unemployed, agreed that this section is confusing and could be improved in several ways. In particular, we made the following criticisms and suggestions:

(1) In general the draft programme jumbles together the slogans of the working class around unemployment and the crisis of capitalism with the demands arising out of the unemployed. Of course, employed and unemployed workers are members of a single working class with one class interest, and the conditions they face come from the same source. But employed and unemployed workers do face different conditions, and specific demands arise from these. If this isn't clearly drawn out we will fall into the error pointed out in the journal article "Using the Slogan 'Jobs or Income'": "To shove everything under the Jobs or Income demand is a right error. It is not to educate the masses and show that the class should be united because we face the same imperialist enemy and its economic crisis, and not because we have the same demand."

Around unemployment and the economic crisis the draft programme raises demands and slogans coming from three places: those arising from the concrete conditions of the unemployed—Jobs or Income is an example; those arising from the conditions of employed workers—Fight layoffs, plant shutdowns and runaways; and those which speak to the need of the class to unite and fight back—Employed/Unemployed—Same Crisis, Same Fight! It would be much clearer if the draft programme laid out how these demands and slogans arise from concrete conditions, and how the whole working class must be mobilized to take up the fight around all of them. For instance, Jobs or Income, while arising from the unemployed, must become a campaign of the whole working class, employed and unemployed. In fact, it is in the course of building struggle around the concrete needs of employed and unemployed workers that slogans like Employed/Unemployed—Same Crisis, Same Fight become rallying cries for millions of workers.

(2) In order to show how the demands and slogans of the unemployed arise from concrete conditions, the draft programme should include one or several sentences about the conditions unemployed workers face—how unemployed workers are driven to or beneath the level of bare subsistence, how they lose any benefits they might have had when employed, lose their possessions, how they are forced increasingly onto welfare or into very low paying jobs, or even forced to starvation. It is such conditions which push unemployed workers into becoming scabs.

(3) Specifically around the demand Jobs or Income, we felt that the draft programme must say more about what this demand means. The draft programme is confusing on this demand because, right after it, it lays out how the "Capitalists and not the workers, must pay." What should be an explanation of the slogan Jobs or Income is really an explanation of the slogan "Fight! Don't Starve." (See, for instance, *Revolution*, April '75, p. 4, 1st column: "Fight! Don't Starve. This battle cry is the answer of the working class and masses to the question 'Who shall bear the burden of the crisis?'...We didn't create the crisis and we will put the burden where it belongs, with the only means at our disposal—all out struggle.")

Of course, the demand for Jobs or Income says that the working class isn't about to bear the burden, but it is also more specific. It says that there are lots of jobs to be done, that while masses of people are driven into the dirt, unable to provide themselves with the bare necessities, millions of workers are forced to remain unproductive.

The draft programme should indicate that the demand for jobs is the primary demand. Overwhelmingly our practice with unemployed workers shows that workers want jobs, they want to be productive: this is no surprise, since that's the nature of the working class. In addition, workers want whatever security you can get with a job—weekly paychecks, some benefits, not worrying about unemployment running out. At the same time, it is the tremendous unemployment, and the demands for jobs, which, as the draft programme states, "is an open sore revealing the fundamental sickness of the system..."

To say that the demand for jobs is primary doesn't mean that under all conditions and at all times we must fight for jobs first. It does mean that in our agitation and propaganda the demand of the working class for jobs is primary—that's what we want, need, can do. Without this clarity, we will not mobilize workers around the most advanced understanding, tail behind the spontaneous struggles, raising jobs now, income another time, without educating workers in the course

of struggle around the nature of capitalism and the need for revolution.

That this error is one we not only can fall into, but have already fallen into, can be seen from the journal article "Focusing Struggle in UWOC Work." This article says: "We do feel that it is correct to build the Jobs or Income campaign in the particular, and we also feel that the demand for jobs is the primary aspect of the demand at this point here—the massive layoffs in this area are recent enough, and the extensions on unemployment compensation are adequate enough that income is not yet the overriding concern of the masses. People want work, and that is what we are focusing on."

According to this view, after a longer period of crisis, income will become the overriding concern of the masses and then we will focus on this aspect of the campaign. This analysis is incorrect on two counts: First off, even now, many UWOC chapters focus their day to day struggles around income demands: fight delays, fight for workers who are denied benefits, build the campaign to extend benefits. But in building these struggles we consistently do agitation and propaganda around the need for jobs. As the crisis deepens, as more and more workers and their families are faced with the struggle for bare survival, the agitation and work around jobs doesn't decrease—it must increase if we are to point the way forward for the masses. ■

## Four

The draft programme states that the single spark method is "a key part of building the united front against imperialism under proletarian leadership, and in applying this method the Revolutionary Communist Party not only makes it one of its main weapons but works to arm the entire class with this weapon." (p. 30) After some discussion comrades in our collective feel that the draft programme tends to liquidate the single spark method as a *particular* weapon of the class. We feel that since this is one of the main methods used by the party and the workers organizations we should be more exact on what it means and what it doesn't mean.

(1) The draft programme states that the single spark method means fanning and spreading the *struggle* and through the course of this struggle developing *consciousness*: "To seize on every spark of struggle, fan and spread it as broadly as possible throughout the working class and among its allies. To build every possible struggle and build off of it every spark of consciousness, to identify and isolate the bourgeoisie and its agents, and unite all struggles against this enemy." (p. 30) We think this points out the correct relationship between sparks of struggle and sparks of consciousness: the working class develops consciousness *through the course of struggle* and not divorced from it.

For example, this was something we learned in the Farah strike when we saw that the correct method was to actively build the boycott and strike support through picket lines, plant gate collections, buck-a-month clubs, etc. to make the strike a struggle of the whole class, and through the course of this to unfold the lessons of the strike. The method that didn't take the boycott and strike support seriously and reduced our activity to just leafleting and holding forums tended to isolate us from the masses, held back the development of the Farah strike as a fight of class against class, and developed no one politically.

In fact, we think some comrades are still making the same mistake and downplaying the importance of spreading sparks of struggle and instead see spreading sparks of consciousness as the principal aspect of the single spark method. This comes out in two articles in the second issue of the journal.

In the article entitled "Focusing struggle in UWOC Work," which is about applying the single spark method in UWOC, it says, "We found that limiting our agitational raps to running down this or that bit of dirt on the power company and its hanky-panky with the local politicians and business interests would make the workers angry, but just didn't provide the *spark* [emphasis ours] that would swing them into action. However, when we put the attack forward as a real glaring example of the attacks of the bourgeoisie on the working class in the deepening crisis...workers came forward enthusiastically..."

First, we feel this is wrong because the working class is already involved in spontaneous struggle and the problem is not to figure out how to "swing them into action" but to figure out how the conscious forces can catch up and give leadership to this spontaneous struggle, to point it squarely at the enemy and build on its revolutionary thrust.

Second, in this quote they use "spark" to mean

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spreading the idea of "attacks of the bourgeoisie on the working class in the deepening crisis"—in other words a spark of consciousness.

In the article in the second journal entitled "Lessons of the May 1st Workers Movement" it quotes the single spark method from the draft programme and then says, "In applying the 'single spark method,' it is important for communists and active workers to take the main political lessons of key struggles back into the shops and to apply these lessons to the struggles developing there." We feel this line is also wrong. What would this line mean in building the campaign around police repression, using the struggle for justice for Tyrone Guyton as a single spark? There are a number of political lessons that have been learned in this struggle: the need to rely on the masses and not the courts, the role of the police, the need to make proletarian revolution to wipe out police repression forever, etc. With the above understanding of single spark, communists and active workers would spread these lessons in the shops and use these lessons to build struggles there, like using the lesson of relying on the masses to build a struggle around speedup. Again this reduces the single spark method to mean spreading sparks of consciousness.

We think the way to build this as a single spark among the working class would be to actively involve workers in the shops in the struggle around Tyrone Guyton through participation in demonstrations, plant gate rallies, petitions, etc., and unfold the political lessons *through the course of struggle*. This method allows us to build political campaigns, like the struggle against police repression, throughout the entire working class, while the other method restricts us to applying lessons to the struggles developing spontaneously in the shop.

(2) In terms of what struggles we build as single sparks the draft programme says we "build every possible struggle" (p. 30) and "take up every major struggle, of all sections of the people." (p. 31) This is confusing because it leaves out the role of the party. We don't tail after the spontaneous movement but we use Marxism-Leninism to analyze material reality and choose where there is a dry prairie "littered with dry faggots which will soon be aflame" (Mao), and build struggle there as a campaign of the class. We don't, for instance, use the single spark method around every strike, although we do build it as strong as possible, but we will use a strike in the steel industry as a spark to build a prairie fire against the ENA.

By saying "build every possible struggle" the draft programme also implies that the single spark method would have us running from struggle to struggle. What happens in reality is the party decides on certain campaigns given a Marxist-Leninist analysis of particularly sharp contradictions around which there is a lot of struggle, like police repression, and concentrates and focuses its forces on fanning and spreading a particular spark around this campaign, like Hurricane Carter. There does not even have to be a lot of spontaneous struggle around the *particular* spark, which there wasn't around Carter, but the spark exemplifies the spontaneous struggles that are already going on around the issue. It is exactly by analyzing conditions and scientifically concentrating our forces that the party and the workers organizations are able to build the broadest struggle and extend their political influence the widest.

How, for instance, would we get involved in the struggle against massive cutbacks in a particular city? Spontaneously there are many struggles breaking out, like demonstrations of various city workers against layoffs, struggles in the community against hospital closings, student demonstrations against cuts in open admissions programs, etc. First the party would decide that cutbacks in services was a particularly sharp contradiction, a dry prairie which should be a campaign of the class. Then the party, through an analysis of both objective and subjective conditions, would choose a particular spark, like maybe the struggle among hospital workers, where the cutbacks were particularly sharp and where the party had some strength.

Through concentrating its forces on building and spreading the broadest struggle around this spark, by involving the broadest possible forces, and through the course of this struggle unfolding the revolutionary nature of the struggle, the party would be able to exert the widest influence on the struggle against these cutbacks and to make the fight a campaign of the working class. On the other hand, to build every spontaneous struggle against cutbacks would disperse our forces, take away the focus we could provide, and in a struggle as broad as this, would be like spitting in the wind. ■

# Five

The draft programme states, "The method of the proletariat and its party is to mobilize the masses of workers to take matters into their own hands and wage a blow for blow struggle against the enemy... fan and spread it as broadly as possible throughout the working class and among its allies. To build every possible struggle and build off of it to launch new struggles. And through the course of this to fan every spark of consciousness, to identify and isolate the bourgeoisie and its agents, and unite all struggles against this enemy... To enable the masses to use this weapon most effectively and carry forward the struggle of the working class, the Revolutionary Communist Party works to build various forms of workers' organizations, in the plants and unions and among the class as a whole." (p. 30)

The Farah strike was a spark that, because of its importance to many fronts of struggle, needed to be fanned throughout the whole working class. In many cities the RU helped to do this by setting up Farah Strike Support Committees (FSSCs), because (as is said in *Red Papers 6*, p. 116) "It is our job to broaden and deepen these struggles as much as possible, by involving the largest numbers of workers, making the widest links with all other struggles, of workers and others, and helping the workers to draw political lessons from these struggles."

Committees like the FSSCs are forms through which the single spark method can be applied. These committees, although they may begin with few or even no workers active in them (as was the case in this area), can play a major role in fanning the flames of struggle, uniting the class to fight back, and through this work "active fighters for the class will continually come forward, and unite to lead struggle, the consciousness and sense of organization of the workers as a whole will be developed, and many of the most advanced among them will develop into communists and join the party." (p. 30)

In this area following the Farah strike the FSSC was not disbanded, but continued as a Strike Support Committee building support for the farmworkers' struggle. In the course of our work we have learned many lessons about how to—and how *not* to—apply the single spark method.

## Running Around

We began with an essentially narrow outlook, and an incorrect line on the single spark. Rather than seeing our job as "fanning the flames of struggle," we were "bearers of the single spark." We would run around with the hot cinder in our hands to wherever we could find a strike and dump it on them by laying out the lessons of the farmworkers while getting involved in their strike in a trade unionist way. The idea was that people would learn these lessons if they saw a direct experience on their own strike line that was similar to a farmworker strike. At the same time we gave the impression we were a "rent-a-picket" service with an added attraction—just push a button and you get "lessons from the farmworkers."

We saw ourselves as *teaching* the lessons of the farmworkers, rather than *applying* them. Our slogan, "fight like the farmworkers," was a reflection of that. We were not working to unite the class to support the struggle of the farmworkers *as part of a class-wide fight against a common enemy class of parasites*. What it amounted to was saying that workers would not take up support for the farmworkers unless they could see how it would directly affect their own particular struggle at that particular time.

In contrast to that, the article on the Farah strike in RP6 says "the Bay Area FSSCs mobilized and relied on the strength of the working class and the Chicano people, not by appealing to their narrow interests but by raising the broader political questions involved in the strike and by drawing on the strength and inspiration of the Farah strikers themselves. In fact this was the only way consistent and sustained support could be generated and applied to other struggles as well."

As we began to grasp these mistakes we set out to

develop consistent work around the farmworkers. We set up a weekly picket line at a major chain store in a multinational working class community and concentrated on leafleting and uniting people to support the farmworkers by boycotting grapes and Gallo, donating food, giving leaflets to friends, joining the picket line, etc.

Through this we hoped to develop a base in that community, involve workers in the committee and take the struggle to the many factories in the area. We worked to build support for the farmworkers as leading fighters in our struggles against class and national oppression. We began popularizing some particular farmworker struggles that were going on at that time.

At first we tended to be backward with the people we talked to. We would ask them to boycott Gallo and grapes but wouldn't really try to explain why we thought this was important, or even why we were the SSC and not the union's boycott office. Even with this approach we found tremendous support for the farmworkers, but we didn't *take* that support anywhere.

## Struggle to Root the Work

When we saw that, we struggled to root the work we were doing more deeply in the class struggle. As one leaflet we put out said, "We are fighting because we are tired of living under the thumb of the big corporations and their system that keeps us poor...the gov't and the courts who outlaw our strikes, the cops who attack us on our picket lines, the corporations laying off millions of us across the country and blaming it on workers from Mexico, the traitors like Fitzsimmons and I.W. Abel who conspire with the bosses to take away our right to strike and all the other gains we've made over the years. These are some of the things we are fighting against, and the farmworkers are in the forefront of that fight."

When we build support in that way, people began to see that the farmworkers movement was their fight, too. We began selling the local anti-imperialist newspaper which became more and more relevant to our work as we began to apply the correct line. At first we sold five or six papers, then as we developed more we would sell more and more—recently one day when we didn't have any leaflets people dug right in with the paper and sold over 60 in about two hours. We also put together a huge pictorial display of the farmworkers movement.

Early in our work we held a benefit film showing ("Salt of the Earth"), which brought about 80 people out, including many from the community. After this we summed up more clearly that we had been underestimating the workers' class consciousness and readiness to fight. We were surprised to see such a good turnout—but really what was happening was that the masses were leading us forward. We were learning from the masses that they in fact want to take up the fight to unite our class—and we were learning it through our practice.

We helped build for May Day this year as a day of militant unity with other members of our class—to make future battle plans for building the working class movement and within that to understand more what role the farmworkers struggle plays in that movement. We saw May Day as playing a crucial role in building the farmworkers struggle as part of the whole working class war against the profit system.

Through this work a local high school student and a Chicano worker became members of the SSC. The May Day committee had put together a slide show about May Day, and the worker set up several showings at his night school. After one showing, the vice-principal tried to kick it off. The worker told him, "The people here want to see it, but you can go right ahead and shut it off if you want. By the way, how do you like demonstrations?" The high school student, through his work with us, has begun to see the need to build struggle at his school against conditions in the "English as a Second Language" classes and the school generally. He builds the boycott of Gallo wherever he goes and is particularly enthusiastic about supporting the farmworkers without being under the thumb of the union's line, particularly about deportations.

Since that time the committee has consistently grown almost with each new meeting. We saw more and more that building support of the farmworkers as a struggle in the working class' fight against all oppression meant building the revolutionary workers movement by applying the "single spark" of the farmworker battles and fanning it throughout the class.

## "Incorrect Line"

But again an incorrect line popped up when some comrades put forward the slogan "Kick Gallo out of the community" as a slogan to develop our work around. We had just learned that people came to our committee because they saw the farmworkers as an important fight for the *entire* working class in its battle with the capitalist system, and now some of us were

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# Seven

## Introduction

Struggling around the draft programme and the journal, and summing up our work in the course of this ideological struggle, we began to focus around the demand "No OT during layoffs." Out of this struggle came the article in the second journal, "A Question About Overtime Demand."

When the line of that article first appeared, we were almost unanimously in agreement with its general thrust. But carrying the struggle further and deeper has led us to uncover the real lines in the article, the ideological roots of these lines, and how they have been reflected in our practice over the past few years. We have come to totally reject this position. The article's line is thoroughly rightist, and the ideological roots of that line have seriously held back the development of the revolutionary movement in our area of work.

This rightist line came out in several forms: one was a tailist line toward the masses and their struggles; the second was pure idealism, the line that "the working class learns through its day to day discussions"; and the third was a line which liquidated all but the most spontaneous struggles. The line was based largely on an incorrect class stand, and also to some extent on a weak understanding of political economy, particularly as regards the question of overtime.

## I. Tailism to the Masses in Their Struggles

This boils down to the following question: Will the working class struggle to make revolution?

The journal article states, "Overtime benefits the capitalist class. As the real wages of the working class are driven down, the only alternative to militant struggle to defend the standard of living is for individual workers to work longer hours... This demand (no more overtime during layoffs) tends to pit the unemployed, who need their jobs back against those working, who may need to work overtime to make ends meet."

The article is saying that to work overtime is the only alternative to the working class waging militant struggle. In other words, since the working class won't wage militant struggle, workers have to work overtime. What underlies this is that the working class isn't a fighting class, a revolutionary class. The working class can't "get it together," so as communists we should uphold their only alternative and that is to work overtime rather than fight.

We believe this line really leads to what it says it is fighting against—to dividing the class. The only way to forge conscious links between unemployed and employed is through militant struggle against the capitalist class around demands that represent our class interests.

We, as communists, don't try to drive workers to the poor house, the capitalists are already doing this; but, we certainly *do* put forward that the only alternative *is* militant struggle. Our call is not for workers to sacrifice, give up hard won gains or much needed income. Our call is to unite as a class—to break down the divisions the capitalists have forced on us—to fight as a class. In the course of struggle it will mean temporary material setbacks for some workers involved; this is unavoidable. For it is only through struggle that a revolutionary workers movement will be built that can turn back the capitalists' attempt to drive us down and enable the working class "to wield its mighty power to smash the rule of the capitalists and remake society to serve the interests of the great majority of the people." (draft programme, p. 1)

A. Will workers struggle for their own immediate interests?

The journal article doesn't openly state that workers won't struggle. What it does say is "No Forced Overtime, At Any Time. But it must be coupled with the demand, A Decent Livable Wage Without Overtime." In other words, the line of the article is saying that workers will not refuse overtime if it means sacrificing "extra" pay, or workers will not struggle if it entails sacrifice or risk. We would like to ask, whoever has heard of a struggle without sacrifice?

History shows that workers have always fought back against their oppression. And we had some examples from our practice that showed this was true. One comrade had led a successful fight against forced overtime, organizing his department to quit working after eight hours and march out of the plant. The workers did this knowing that they were putting their jobs on the line. But we didn't learn from this, because time after time we failed to lead the day to day struggles on the shop floor, saying, "This worker won't fight because he has too many kids," "the older workers don't want to make waves, because they don't

want to lose their seniority," etc.

This line has come out in our work at a plant where there were layoffs and a four day work week. An "emergency job" came up, and one welder worked five doubles in a row, all in one week! One of the more advanced workers in his department jammed him pretty hard about it; but the stand of a comrade in the plant was to make excuses for him, saying, "Well, yeah, he shouldn't be working so much OT, but what we should do is fight for a decent wage for 40 hours, then he won't *have* to work so many doubles." In other words, "Sure these layoffs are hurting us, and sure refusing overtime is one way of fighting them, but really, we can't expect workers to struggle unless we can guarantee them they won't have to sacrifice in the course of that struggle." It was true that the welder needed the money he was making, and it is true also that we fight for a decent living wage; but in this case, saying that was a cover for not struggling with him to stand with the class and its needs—No Layoffs, No Short Work Week—and refuse the OT as part of the struggle for those needs.

B. Will the working class fight for demands in their class interest even though it might mean temporary material setbacks for some workers involved?

The journal article makes the statement, "OT benefits the capitalist class." Logically, therefore, it is in the working class' interests to demand its elimination, right? Not according to the article, basically because workers "may need to work OT to make ends meet." In other words, following the article's line, whenever there is a conflict between class interests and immediate material interest, the immediate interest will win out.

An example of this line in our practice, and the effect it had on the struggle of the masses, is at a large plant in our area. Workers there had been on a seven day week for some time, and a lot of anger had built up over this. A comrade began to raise this issue, to try to build a fight around it; but some of the workers said "We can't fight around this OT; most of the guys really need the money." (The plant is notorious for its low wages.) So the comrade dropped it. Even when another worker raised "No Forced OT" as a contract demand in a union meeting, the comrade sat on his hands.

This is an example of how, in carrying out the right line of the journal article, we not only could not lead, but in fact we held back the struggle of the masses that could have been developed!

Of course, a part of the problem was an incomplete understanding of why OT is an attack on the class (we will talk more about the political economy of overtime later). But the main point here is that after the first resistance was encountered, the comrade didn't even consider fighting against forced OT, because he didn't think the workers could be won over to that struggle, because they wouldn't sacrifice the extra money.

Workers *will* unite around demands in their class interests, and take up the struggle, even though it may mean an immediate material setback. At one plant the company was trying to stick the workers with an incentive plan. In the one shop where the plan had been in effect on a trial basis, workers had been making up to \$30 per week extra for a couple of months. The comrade in this plant, together with some advanced workers, saw that any sort of incentive plan is an attack on the class, and they had to fight to keep it out of their plant, while at the same time uniting with the sentiment for more money.

As a result of this fight to defend the class interest, the company's plan was smashed, 82% of the plant voted it down, including a number of the workers in the "trial" department. This even though they may have "needed" incentive to make ends meet, as the journal article states on the question of OT.

C. Will the working class struggle for demands that cannot be immediately won?

The journal article is correct when it says "OT benefits the capitalist class." But that's putting it mildly! Let's take it a step farther—to "benefit the capitalist class" means to attack the working class, since we know nothing can benefit the capitalists and the proletariat at the same time. The proletariat and its party oppose all attacks on themselves, and struggle to unite the class against these attacks. That's why we always oppose overtime as an attack, regardless of how they force us—"by the contract, or by economic necessity"—as it is put in the journal article.

How does the article raise the fight against overtime—as a demand which is in the interest of the whole class? No. It raises it only as a specific "weapon in the hands of the working class in its fight against layoffs." And even more narrowly, "as a tactic to force the company to hire back."

The fight against OT is one front in the fight against layoffs. But that's not all it is. The fight against overtime is, in itself, a fight for the needs of the class. By leaving out this point (after telling us that overtime benefits the capitalists), and by reducing the fight against OT to a tactic, the article is saying that we should fight only against the effects of OT during layoffs, but not against OT itself as an attack on the working class. This

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putting forward that we consolidate our gains by building a massive campaign to kick Gallo out of the immediate community. Where do we kick them to, anyway? Another community? Are we trying to "liberate" our community from Gallo at the expense of building an overall workers movement?

The essence of that line was reflected when a worker who had come to the meeting to talk about building a "farmworkers week" in her shop was virtually ignored because we were too busy talking about that slogan.

The committee later united that what we really needed to kick out was this narrow view of "kicking Gallo out of the community." We saw that what we had to do was take the word of the farmworkers struggle to the whole working class and spread the sparks of struggle. We plan now to regularly take the campaign to different plants in the area as well as maintaining our picket lines, and to make a priority of such things as the "farmworkers week" that worker was talking about.

Committees like this play a significant role in building the revolutionary workers movement. Similar to some plant caucuses, they take a particular struggle that has in it many sparks, build struggle around it and in the course of that workers will begin to "see themselves as more than mere individuals, but as members of a class, locked in warfare with the opposing class of employers." (p. 29) ■

# Six

This is being written in relation to the section of the article "Build the Revolutionary Workers Movement" on unemployment work in the first journal and the response on the overtime question in the second journal. Although I agree with the essence of the second journal criticism on the question of overtime during layoffs, it fails to get at the root cause of the error that is made in the first journal article around how to fight layoffs. It seems that in their efforts to overcome what they say was a "left" line during the energy freeze in not having a concrete program to involve workers in around the line of stop the layoffs, they flip and now come up with a concrete program but around what line? LINE IS KEY. In fact the line during the freeze of stop, or better, fight the layoffs is correct; what was missing was developing a program to build struggle around the line.

Because of the incorrect sum up, what was done to correct the first errors was even worse than at first. In the name of "fighting the layoffs" and "developing a fighting program" the question of line got lost or, even better, revised from the "left" "stop the layoffs" to two concrete reformist demands of layoff according to seniority and no more overtime.

These demands don't really fight the layoffs but rather accept them as part of the system. Because what this line would lead to is—let's say workers refuse overtime rather than refuse forced overtime because the latter seems a backwards way to build struggle; but, anyway, the situation is no more overtime.

The layoffs are continuing, less than 50% remain and the company is now forced by the struggle of the workers to give in to the demand around laying off by seniority. What have you got? A plant with a dwindling work force of under 50% and both demands have been won. The program was won, the working class is the loser, because what was being built was not a revolutionary workers movement but a reformist one whose line was to reform the system, not overthrow it. ■

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because it is easy to see how refusing OT during layoffs could win jobs back, but it's not so easy to see the immediate results that would come from fighting OT as an attack on the working class as a whole.

Whether or not fighting for these demands can bring immediate results is not the factor that determines if we take them up. The class fights for what it *needs*, all the way from ending discrimination on the plant floor to ending, once and for all, police terror. In fact, taking up struggles that the class needs is the very thing that allows the class to see its ultimate need—to overthrow the source of all its misery, the capitalist system. The working class needs to stop layoffs, and it needs "a decent livable wage, without OT," and refusing OT is a tactic that the class uses in fighting for this. But it also needs a limit on how long we belong to the capitalists each day, and further, it needs to break all chains of oppression by capital.

"...the party of the proletariat must bring to the workers, through all their struggles, the understanding of the antagonistic contradiction between themselves as a class and the bourgeoisie, and consistently guide the struggle toward its final aim." (draft programme, p. 30)

Here's an example of the journal's line on this question, as we carried it out in practice. At one plant, comrades were building a fight against layoffs. In talking with workers they came up with some demands—but two were contradictory. One was "Stop the Layoffs, Everybody Back to Work." The other was "Lay-off by Seniority." Faced with this contradiction, they dropped the demand that could not be as easily won—the class demand "Stop the Layoffs..." They kept the more "palpable" one. To hell with our jobs, we need *fair* layoffs! (See, we're NOT like OL at GM Fremont; we defend the seniority system!)

Fortunately, another comrade struggled against this error, and it was corrected. We put out a pretty good leaflet which was well received. It spoke to the question of many workers, "How can the company keep us working if there are no orders?" by straight-out saying "We don't care about their profits, we need our jobs!" This brought out enthusiasm we had never seen. Workers were saying, "Yeah, that's right. I've never looked at it that way before." Out of this a small group of workers was brought together to fight.

Even though we corrected the error in this case, we have now summed up that all of our work around layoffs has followed this "palpable results" line—the workers would never fight unless they could see an immediately attainable result.

The same line came out in the work around fighting police terror. When we carried out the correct line, when we "brought forward the ideology of the proletariat and its common interest in fighting exploitation and all oppression," we were able to unite a number of workers to play an active role. But in one plant, a comrade didn't raise it in this way. When a guy asked him what he thought was the solution, he said "community control of the police"! He later summed up that he was afraid of pointing to revolution as the only solution, afraid that the worker wouldn't understand.

Now it is, of course, true that people may not be able to grasp revolution at first. And it is also true that by mobilizing people to fight police attacks we can win some intermediate results (such as making the cops think twice about messing people around). We want to do all these things. But where this comrade was coming from was the "palpable results" line. The worker wants a solution; so we give him a nice, easy one.

We *must* bring out that revolution is the only final solution, but of course that won't be clear in the abstract. So we have to link it to a *fighting program*, which will lead in that direction, and which workers can unite with even if they don't agree immediately with our final aim. Of course we want to control the police; but how will that be done? By uniting all who can be united to fight police terror, and eventually through proletarian revolution.

## II. "The Working Class Learns Through Its Day to Day Discussions"?

Besides everything else, the journal article is thoroughly idealist. It says: "This demand (no overtime during layoffs) implies that the workers cannot be won to *seeing* their interests as a class, and cannot be won over to refusal of overtime as a tactic to force the company to hire back. And if some workers cannot be won over to refuse overtime, then the only thing we can do is force the company from 'giving' it."

This line is totally reactionary! It says we must oppose the class from advancing one step, until every

last backward worker is "won over to voluntarily refuse overtime" or, even more, "won over to seeing their interest as a class." What would this line mean in a strike? Would we have workers patiently trying to "win over" scabs to their "class interest"? The working class would teach us a thing or two about what class struggle really is. And they would deprive workers of the "right" to keep discussing things with us until they reached a high level of consciousness.

Does the working class learn through their day to day discussions? No. "The working class learns through its day to day struggles." This statement means a lot and we are just beginning to grasp it. Class struggle is not just a battle of "ideas," not a campaign to win "hearts and minds." Class oppression is real. When a cop murders a kid, or when someone's laid off—that's real. And the only way to fight it is with real struggle.

It's true that workers have "to be won to seeing their class interests," but that's possible only through struggle. And we fight to build class consciousness for one reason only—to arm the working class for revolutionary struggle. The working class is the most thoroughly revolutionary class not just because it can best see the evils of capitalism, but because "It has no stake in the preservation of the capitalist system and is the only class capable of not only overthrowing the present ruling class but completely remaking society." (draft programme, p. 23)

This struggle has brought out many examples of idealism in our work. At one plant, union hacks got real uptight about the workers' enthusiastic response to our leaflets—May Day, Smash the ENA, and a reprint of the Youngstown article from *Revolution*. So they put out a leaflet of their own entitled "3 Toots for Abel," which praised the no-strike deal because it kept steelworkers on the job while others were being laid off, etc. We responded with a leaflet that showed how things have gotten worse since the ENA was adopted. It exposed the ridiculous lies in the union's leaflet, and said "Instead of 3 toots let's give the boot to the ENA."

All we left out was any reference at all to the struggle in the plant, namely the hacks' attempt to snuff out the sparks of struggle and class consciousness that were beginning to develop. The hacks hadn't put out a leaflet for years, and they thoroughly exposed themselves when they did. Here was an opportunity to give leadership, to build the intensity of the struggle, to help the workers see that it was exactly their struggle that had forced the hacks to come out of hiding. But we didn't. We couldn't grasp it ourselves because we were carrying out the line "the working class learns through its day to day discussions."

At another plant where this line had been carried out for two years, the comrade had "united" with many workers in "discussing" imperialism, but had done little else. When the company tried to put through the incentive plan mentioned earlier, the comrade united with some workers to put out a leaflet and try to give some leadership to the developing struggle.

What was different this time was that he tried to root his work in a program. A number of valuable lessons were learned. For one thing the workers who came forward to lead the fight were, in the main, not the ones who came forward for the "heavy raps" about imperialism. Another lesson was this: Some of the active workers first opposed trying to unite with workers already under the incentive plan, saying "they're just out for themselves." After struggle and actually taking leadership to go out and talk with the workers in favor of the incentive plan, this comrade won the other workers over to the importance of uniting with the righteous anger of people for more money.

People were united around the slogan "More Wages, To Hell With Incentive." This slogan reflected the concrete conditions, and unleashed a lot of enthusiasm. A score of workers actively came forward to leaflet, put up posters around the plant, and even organize a small car caravan through the parking lot on the day of the vote. The incentive plan was smashed. "The working class learns through its day to day STRUGGLES!"

## III. Liquidating All But the Most Spontaneous Struggles

The line in the journal article liquidates all but the most spontaneous struggles. As we have pointed out, it raises OT only in the context of a tactic in the struggle against layoffs and doesn't call for struggle against OT itself. This is certainly incorrect; even if we could mobilize the entire working class to refuse OT in order to win back jobs, that, by itself, would still be bowing to spontaneity.

If we followed the article's statement, "OT benefits the capitalist class," to its logical conclusion, that OT is an attack on the working class, but still limited it to the economic arena, even that would not be breaking out of the bounds of spontaneity.

To really raise the fight against OT as a fight of the whole class means to show how OT is an attack *in all ways*, and bring forward the interests of the class in the course of fighting against it. As the original eight hour day demanded, we need time "for what we will": leisure time to be with our families, to study,

to develop social, cultural and political life. In other words, to begin to break the chains of exploitation that bind us to the grindstone, to raise our heads and begin to develop our strength as a class. We must build the fight against OT as part of the fight for our *class* interests, and against our oppression as a *class*.

We must also clearly point the finger at the ruling class as the source of that oppression, and wage tireless battle to limit the bourgeoisie's ability to oppress us. The article does not do this; in fact its whole purpose is to *oppose* the idea of raising "NO OT" as a demand to the bourgeoisie, let alone the individual company.

This line was strong for a long time in our work around the ENA: "We don't have to fight the ENA itself; workers will strike when they need to. After we have enough strikes, it will be clear that the ENA doesn't work, and we will have defeated it by striking." This was our approach.

It is only recently that we have begun to see that the ENA in itself is an attack. Not just an attack economically, although that is part of it, but it is an attempt by the bourgeoisie to further limit our class' ability to wage any struggle. The working class has historically used the strike as one of our main weapons in fighting back against the attacks of the bourgeoisie, whether the struggle is for higher wages or for broader political demands, such as striking to stop the importation of Rhodesian chrome, part of our struggle against national oppression.

The "right to strike" is not some bourgeois democratic right. The working class fought like hell to force the capitalists to recognize that it is us, the working class, not them, who will decide when we will withhold our labor power. Hence the battle cry is "SMASH THE ENA! DEFEND THE RIGHT TO STRIKE!" and not "FORGET THE ENA, WE'LL STRIKE WHEN WE NEED TO!"

Going even further, we must firmly grasp the understanding that *every* battle we wage is part of the overall class struggle, and that every victory, however small, is a blow at the capitalist class, which is the source of all oppression. Not doing this on the one hand will make it extremely difficult to lead the class to victory in the struggles it is waging. On the other hand, and more importantly, it will make it impossible for us to raise the struggles of the oppressed nationalities and other sections of the people as fights of the working class, and lead the class in taking up these struggles. In other words, by liquidating all but the most spontaneous struggles as the line of the journal article does, we will make it impossible to build the conscious leadership of the working class in the United Front.

We must raise every fight as part of the working class fight against the ruling class, and actually lead the masses of workers in concrete struggle against the bourgeoisie and all its schemes.

"...in building its revolutionary struggle, the proletariat breaks the hold of trade unionist ideology—the bourgeois line that the limit of the workers' movement must be the struggle for better wages and working conditions—better terms of the sale of the workers' labor power, a slight loosening of the slave chain, only to have it tightened again. The struggle of the working class, within and outside the unions, must become the struggle to smash this chain, to abolish wage-slavery and the capitalist class that lives by it." (draft programme, p. 31)

## IV. What Is Proletarian Class Stand?

In the course of the struggle over the journal article, we got a better handle on what is meant by class stand. Basically what the journal article does is to combine two into one. It combines bourgeois individual "right" with the class interest of the proletariat. It implies that the needs of the class equals the sum total of the individual needs of all workers. And, to carry it a step further, the way to unite the class is to unite every section around what *it sees* as its needs, and then put it all together and you get the needs of the class. This reduces class struggle to the arithmetical total of these smaller struggles for individual self-interest, "me first." Not even workers in my plant first ahead of the whole class, but actually ME first, to hell with the other workers.

By failing to take a clear stand with the working class and its needs, it is unable to draw a clear line between bourgeois "right" and the real interests of the workers. This line, in the final analysis, boils down to saying—as the journal article implies—that we cannot fight to win a demand that is in the working class' interest without *first* winning the entire class over to it or we end up violating bourgeois democracy. For example, in the case of overtime, to ever demand no overtime *and win* would take away the right of backward workers to work as much overtime as they want.

While it's true that the needs of the class are therefore the needs of its component parts, to look at it like the journal article does boils down to pragmatism and liquidating the needs of the class as a class. Because the needs of the class are at times in contradiction to the immediate needs of some parts of the class. And the needs of the class are often in contra-

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diction to the subjectively perceived needs of individual workers. (That's why we never uphold the bourgeois "right" of the backward to be backward over the conscious needs of the class as a class.) And to fail, like the article does, to divide one into two around this question amounts to not taking the stand of the proletariat in struggles.

In terms of these struggles against overtime and layoffs, we started from the standpoint of the immediate needs of the particular workers, not the needs of the class struggle. And by using pragmatism instead of science we could not quite figure out a way to satisfy everyone's felt needs (short of revolution, of course). And so we could only half-heartedly give leadership to the struggle against what was coming down, for it was not really that clear even to us how what we were doing fit in with our goal of revolution.

This corresponds exactly to some errors we have made in our view of class stand. For us class stand has meant being militant, enthusiastic, disciplined and prompt, bold among the masses, etc. This is a self-cultivationist view of class stand, one which looks at all the manifestations of class stand except the most important one—standing with workers in day to day struggle, and, by using the science of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, giving leadership to these struggles by fighting for the needs of the working class as a whole.

In this light we have also underestimated the role of theory and science in our work. We would tend to view class stand and science as opposed to one another... "this comrade has a good class stand, but he's not very scientific." The result of this was the enthusiastic, militant, prompt fighters for a narrow, backward line. Of course, there's a lot more to class stand than science, but to pit the two against each other cuts the revolutionary heart out of proletarian class stand.

And here's how. One the one hand, and most importantly, without our science we cannot get involved in struggles and lead them to revolution. And on the other hand, we have found that it is only by grasping proletarian ideology and the science of revolution that we can be consistently militant and provide leadership to struggles. To the degree that we have grasped the interests of the class and the revolutionary nature of the class, to that degree we have been consistently and thoroughly militant. Line is leadership! Proletarian class stand makes us into a *material force* to change the world!

## V. Grasp Political Economy

As the struggle unfolded around the article, we saw that we needed a better grasp of political economy. Two questions had to be answered: one, why is overtime an attack on the working class?; two, is it wrong in principle for communists to raise the demand, "no overtime?"

What did political economy say about the first question? We all knew the theory of surplus value, that for eight hours work the worker is paid much less than the value he has produced. But during overtime the situation seemed different. After all, if the capitalist has to pay time-and-a-half or doubletime, didn't that cut into his profit? Wasn't overtime just an example of anarchy pure and simple, something the capitalists would prefer not to resort to? Political economy said no! As Marx put it in *Capital*: "...the labour expended during the so-called normal day is paid below its value, so that the overtime is simply a capitalist trick in order to extort *more surplus-labour, which it would still be* even if the labour-power expended during the normal working-day were properly paid." (*"The Working Day"* vol. 1, p. 247, emphasis ours)

We know that under capitalism, labor power is a commodity. The value of any commodity is determined by the average socially necessary labor time required for its production; in the case of labor power, this is the cost of maintaining the worker and reproducing future generations of workers. But this value is the same whether the worker works eight or 12 or 16 hours. Since the price of a commodity tends to fluctuate about its value, the real wages (the price of the commodity, labor power) will tend to remain the same. Whereas before the worker worked overtime for "extra" money, he now works 12 hours every day to make ends meet.

But there is a difference between labor power and other commodities. Labor power in motion creates surplus value. The capitalist needs to constantly increase surplus value to try to halt the falling of his rate of profit; he can't be satisfied tomorrow with the same amount of profit he made yesterday. This means he has to constantly try to drive the price of labor power below its value (wages tend to constantly go below what it takes to keep the worker going) since this is one way of

increasing surplus value.

But the lengthening of the working day also increases the amount of surplus value to the capitalist. The more surplus value extracted from a group of workers by the lengthening of the working day, the less the number of workers required to produce the same amount of profit for the capitalist. The greater the number of workers thrown out of work, the greater the competition among workers for the jobs that are left. This competition for jobs (unemployment) drives wages down. The price of a commodity will fluctuate either above or below its value depending on the market. Unemployment creates a buyer's market for the commodity, labor power, and the sellers, the workers, are forced to sell below the value of the commodity (the average socially necessary labor time to maintain the worker and his family).

This, at first, allows the capitalist to hire cheaper labor power (for a greater surplus value) but soon *forces* him to—since the competitors are doing the same thing. It becomes a matter of his survival as a capitalist.

But competition for jobs has another effect. It forces the worker, by the threat of replacement, to work the hours his boss requires. In the same way as before, this first allows, and then forces the capitalist to lengthen the working day.

But even this, which is the heart of why the capitalists make us work overtime, is not the only or even the main reason the working class views overtime as an attack on our class. Throughout the history of capitalist production, the determination of what constitutes a "working day" is the *result of a struggle between the capitalist class and the working class*. This is an eye-opener! The capitalists, if they could, would stretch the "working day" beyond the limits of the 24 hour day. The working class, on the other hand, constantly struggles to shorten it. (An example of how narrowly we viewed the question: early in its history the working class struggled against night work as "unnatural"!)

In *Selected Works of Marx and Engels*, vol. 2, p. 79, Marx says: "A preliminary condition, without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation must prove abortive, is the *limitation of the working day*." (emphasis Marx) "It is needed to restore the health and physical energies of the working class, that is, the great body of every nation, as well as to secure them the *possibility of intellectual development, sociable intercourse, social and political action*." (emphasis ours)

Nowhere in the history of the struggle for the eight hour day were we able to find the demand for shorter hours "coupled with the demand, A Decent, Livable Wage Without Overtime." This demand, as well as others around speedup and job combinations, flow from and are sharpened up by the struggle to limit the working day.

The second question raised in the journal article: is

it correct, in principle to demand of the capitalists, "No Overtime?" From the beginning we had unity that the demand "No Forced Overtime" was a correct demand of the capitalists and that workers should always have the right to refuse overtime. There was also unity (in theory) that the duty of communists was to struggle with other workers to stop working overtime in their class interest. The point of contention was, is it right to force the capitalists from offering overtime? Wouldn't that take away the right of a few workers to make the extra bucks they needed? Isn't this just a fancy form of OL's "share the burden" line? Doesn't this place the burden for layoffs on the backs of those working overtime? Again, Marx says no:

"It must be acknowledged that our labourer comes out of the process of production other than he entered. In the market he stood as owner of the commodity 'labour-power' face to face with other owners of commodities, dealer against dealer. The contract by which he sold to the capitalist his labour-power proved, so to say, in black and white that he disposed of himself freely. The bargain concluded, it is discovered that he was no 'free agent,' that the time for which he is free to sell his labour-power is the time for which he is forced to sell it, that in fact the vampire will not lose its hold on him 'so long as there is a muscle, a nerve, a drop of blood to be exploited.' For 'protection' against 'the serpent of their agonies,' the labourers must put their heads together, and, as a class, *compel the passing of a law, an all-powerful social barrier that shall prevent the very workers from selling, by voluntary contract with capital, themselves and their families into slavery and death*. In place of the pompous catalogue of the 'inalienable rights of man' comes the modest Magna Charta of a legally limited working-day, which shall make clear 'when the time which the worker sells is ended, and when his own begins...' " (*Capital*, vol. 1, p. 302)

One final thing. This struggle over these questions has really deepened our understanding of the correctness of our line on party-building and deepened our grasp of the central task. For it was only by starting to sum up our work in the light of the draft and journal that the original two lines in our group first came out. At this point it took a determined struggle first to even spend the time on the questions raised ("we have all these layoffs to deal with") and secondly to get down into the questions to the point where we were all pretty clear on them and united around what we feel is correct. This was a long and difficult process.

From it we have again learned the absolute correctness of the statements that the correct line develops in opposition to the incorrect line and that it is this struggle between opposites—and nothing else—that moves our understanding and our work forward.

Forward To The Party!

Struggle For The Party! ■

# Eight

Our draft programme states: "The policy of the proletariat and its party is to build its strength in the unions as part of building its revolutionary movement, and not to reduce the class struggle to the struggle for control of the unions." (p. 31) For the past year and more we have been struggling to grasp and apply this perspective in our work among the bus drivers of a large urban transit system. It has been a struggle to overcome trade unionist politics established in our work over a two year period.

We have found that as our practice changed in the direction of building a revolutionary workers movement as opposed to building a strong, militant, democratic trade union movement (and nothing else), workers have come forward to fight under our leadership and some advances in building the "revolutionary struggle, unity, and consciousness" of the class have occurred.

At the same time, we must remain vigilant and continue to struggle, because we are still a ways from completely breaking with our former rightism and firmly grasping the revolutionary line of the draft programme, with the result that right errors have continued to crop up in our work, preventing us from leading the masses in making all the advances possible under the circumstances.

Recently a struggle took place when the local bureaucrats, at the instigation of the International Union, brought charges against and removed from office a brother who was the only officer elected from our caucus' slate in the last union election. A lot of mass struggle took place around his case and it posed in a very clear and sharp way the necessity to break with our past practice around the union. Grasping the advances made in this struggle, and recognizing those which could have been made but weren't (due to our errors) has helped us greatly. We hope it will also be of use to comrades around the country in furthering discussion around the draft programme.

## Running A Slate

"The working class and its party cannot base its strategy on 'taking over' the unions by electing new leadership, and it cannot restrict its struggle to the limits set by the trade unions at any given time." (p. 31) But that, in fact, was our strategy for the first two years of the caucus' existence. Although it was born as an *ad hoc* group in the midst of a big mass struggle over service cutbacks (which we led to "victory" with a *reformist* line), the caucus formalized its existence first around running a slate in the union election and then around putting out a newspaper. The only real unity underlying the electoral slate against the "corrupt, inept" incumbent leadership was a mildly "progressive" line about working conditions that needed changing and union democracy.

It turned out that some of the people on our slate were triple-O's, opportunists out of office. But the *only* lesson summed up from the first election (in which several of our candidates won minor shop steward posts and several others came close to winning seats on the Executive Board) was that people who wanted to run on our ticket had to prove themselves by working in the caucus *between* elections.

After the election, the newspaper was started and it quickly became the main, and often, the sole activity of the caucus. The basis of unity was no more developed than it had been for the election—basically, union democracy, working conditions, and "transit issues." The concept of the paper put forward was a sort of a "Town Hall in print," rather than an instrument of struggle. Whatever anyone wanted to put in the paper was cool. The paper attempted to be all things to all people. It specialized in raking management and union bureaucrats over the coals for their ineptness and inefficiency, but it never dealt in terms of class contradiction.

But this "strategy"—that workers learn, not through their struggle, but through endless "exposures" of their immediate enemies—only created the illusion that workers suffer because management and union hacks are *stupid* (not life-long class enemies!); and, along with this, cynicism that nothing can be done against such powerful, corrupt enemies.

From the start, we had built the caucus among serious activists, workers who were highly respected by the masses. Because of this, leadership in struggle was more or less thrust upon the caucus (*demanding* of us), once on a pay issue, around some cases of management harassment, and around some rotten by-laws changes which the hacks tried to sneak through. But these struggles were generally led in an economist, trade unionist way so that the lesson learned, time and again, was that the masses need new union leader-

ship (us).

Most of the energy of the caucus went to putting out the newspaper. Because our leadership, bad as it was in many ways, was the only rank and file leadership around, and because the paper did speak to a lot of the problems and conditions faced by workers on the job, it became very popular. Everyone read it and discussed it. Most people would contribute financially if asked. We took this popularity as a sign that we were doing good work, and, unfortunately, this became somewhat of a model for work taken up in a number of industries in the local area.

Consistent with our lack of a revolutionary outlook in this period, campaigns our organization took up around class issues such as the Farah strike, Pay Board and May Day were seen as "outside" issues, difficult to raise, we felt (attributing our own backwardness to the workers!), since most people were only at the "level" of being concerned with job issues. We confined our work around them to putting articles in the paper (not very good ones) and talking to a few workers we considered "advanced" enough for political issues, trying, with mixed success, to involve them in a "higher level" of activity. Of course, the question of revolution and communism, and our role as communists in the day to day struggle, were never brought out in caucus meetings, since most people weren't "ready" for that, and not even very much in individual conversations.

This basically characterized our work up till over a year ago, when the struggle against right errors which had been raging in the RU for some time finally came home to us. We realized that we had to transform the caucus into an organization that could lead struggle with a revolutionary working class outlook. At that time, a campaign developed which demanded that instead of talking about transformation, we get on with it. The Mayor and local police announced a campaign of "emergency, systematic, and massive" police terror against the Black community "to combat crime." One of our top (Black) bosses stood at the Mayor's side as the announcement was made, endorsing it. The union hacks, also Black, voiced opposition but did nothing.

But the caucus as a whole took it up. We built for and participated in a major demonstration against the police campaign. We popularized the struggle among the drivers. And workers came forward! While our work on this campaign was still hesitant and far from bold, we had taken a step which began to erase the false division between "inside" and "outside" issues.

## Election Platform

But we still hadn't seen or understood a lot of our mistakes. We were involved in our second union election (the one in which one brother from the caucus was elected to the Executive Board). Our election platform was drawn up as a "Proposed Program for Rank and File Action." In the preamble, we stressed the need for the membership to unite in struggle and not rely on us as saviors. But the platform itself dealt only with immediate working conditions and issues of union democracy, with the slightest bow to the class struggle couched in mild terms and buried down the list of points.

Shortly after this, a major economic and political attack came down on us, in the form of a ballot measure backed by the capitalists and their political hacks in our area. Although our first response was to get out a special issue of the paper detailing "all the facts," we soon moved out in a more positive direction. We called, for the first time, two demonstrations of workers, one directed at the local Chamber of Commerce which was backing the measure, and the other at the bourgeois press.

We built these demos in a class way, pointing out the class nature of the attack and building links between our struggle and that of other sections of workers, particularly other city workers. After this promising start, however, we got bogged down in an inner-caucus struggle with CL, which was trying to drag the struggle off the straight path of fighting back against a capitalist attack to the question of fighting for collective bargaining rights. ("We can't fight *unless* we have a contract"! At a crucial point in the struggle, we fell back into urging the union leadership to call a work stoppage (they didn't) rather than mobilizing the masses independently of them.

CL's ability to derail the struggle at a crucial point (they're no longer in the caucus) was way out of proportion to their strength and numbers. What it really showed was the weight the dead hand of our old economist line had on our work. The *caucus* was still based on the narrow struggle for democratic trade unionism.

Nevertheless, some advances were made. While the hacks based their work on traditional bourgeois electioneering, deception and slick trickery, relying on a high priced Madison Avenue-type firm, we held that that the attack on us was an attack on the whole working class—that we *all* need the right to strike, *none* of us needs wage freezes, we *all* have to fight inflation, speedup, and other attempts to put the burden of the

crisis on our backs—and that the only way to defeat this attack was by relying on the working class.

We joined in building a demonstration of class unity—called by the regional IWO—with local strikers, struggling immigrant workers, and activists in the campaign against police terror. Later, we organized hundreds of drivers to help distribute tens of thousands of leaflets which brought out the class line for defeating this attack. These activities had some impact, but most importantly they helped lay the basis for transformation of the caucus as an instrument of *class*, not trade unionist, struggle.

## Struggle Erupts

Through that struggle and the inability of the caucus in its existing form to provide clear political leadership, we and the advanced workers summed up more thoroughly the need to transform the caucus, or, if necessary, start all over. At that time, we studied the *Outlaw* article in *Red Papers 6* as a guide to the direction we should take. A struggle erupted which gave us a perfect opportunity to put into practice what we had been studying and discussing.

Management came down with a measure designed to speed up and harass the drivers. Before anyone had even heard about it, the union had agreed to it on a "trial basis," saying there was nothing they could do and, anyway, it was a good thing. This showed the drivers very clearly that the bureaucrats weren't just not fighting. They were active collaborators in our exploitation.

We summed up the anger of the drivers and decided to work for a system-wide slowdown. As a first step we made out a union grievance form with the demands on it and took it around, getting several hundred signatures. We put out a leaflet linking this attack with others on us and with the system's crisis, and drawing out the need for a militant struggle by the rank and file, independent of the bureaucrats. As we were gearing up for the slowdown, management backed down. At the same time, the union hacks announced that they would be having further meetings with management where they would make clear their opposition to this measure—after it was already dropped!!

In this struggle we did successfully "mobilize the rank and file around a program representing its interests and in doing so 'jam' the union officials—expose the traitors at the top and roll over them, breaking the union bureaucracies' stranglehold on the workers..." (p. 31) Using the single spark method, we have brought out the lessons of this fight—our strength, management's weakness, the hacks' conscious collaboration—in every struggle we have taken up since, showing that our experience is a living force that advances each struggle further.

In the same period, we also began to raise among the broad masses such major class campaigns as the struggle of immigrant workers and the fight against police repression. We found (to our surprise) that many workers who had not been active previously came forward and showed interest.

## Strike Possibility

Early this year we summed up the recent attacks on us, the intensification of the crisis, and the development of the struggle, and concluded that there was a real possibility of a strike developing this year for the first time in many years. We decided to try and mobilize the workers around a call for rank and file strike preparations. We wrote an open letter to the Executive Board basically outlining the situation facing us, the attacks, the crisis, the need to get prepared and some practical steps we felt should be taken. We sent it over the signature of the brother who was an officer.

We knew they wouldn't like it and that we would have to rely on the masses to carry it through, but we were surprised that the content of the letter was so threatening to them that they used it as an excuse to bring the brother up on charges. They told him that circulating the letter to the drivers would "upset delicate negotiations with management," and if he did, he would be in violation of the International Constitution by going against their "will."

We made our first key error at the outset of the struggle. Finding ourselves attacked, we looked for help first, not to the masses, but to various "left" and petty bourgeois "movement" forces on the job. We initiated a united front defense coalition with CL, PL, various unaffiliated or semi-affiliated "movement" people, as well as ourselves and the active workers who had been relating to us. At the first coalition meeting, we were surprised by the turnout of honest workers who hadn't been involved before. They outnumbered the forces we ran down above.

A two-line struggle developed immediately, with CL putting forward that the key issue was union democracy. We struggled against this, arguing that the hacks were attacking the struggle of the workers and this was more important than union democracy. They put forward the slogan, "Fair Play for X. Submit it to a Membership Vote." We put forward, "Hands Off X. Drop

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## Eight...

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the Charges."

We won the majority over on that point, but we lost on a more crucial one, partly because we ourselves didn't truly understand the importance of it. That was, whether the coalition should include in its demands to be presented at the next union meeting a motion for rank and file strike preparations. We said, "This is what he's being attacked for—if we back off from it, they've won half the battle, even if we save his post." CL said, "Raising that issue will just confuse workers who aren't sure about a strike. This is a united front around one thing only, defense of X." We lost the vote—narrowly—but said our caucus would raise the issue anyway.

### Summing Up the Meeting

In summing up the meeting, several things became clear. First, the honest workers who showed up did so because of the work we had been doing and not because of anything the opportunists had done. Second, they overwhelmingly supported what we were saying about the reason for the attack and not the bogus issue of union democracy *per se*, even though we had not yet sharply focused our position. (The same sentiment was there in a similar struggle, summed up in the *Outlaw* article in May 1975 *Revolution*: "Most workers weren't that concerned with the democracy part. They were concerned about their fight against management and how these changes were an attempt to stop the fight and weaken the contract battle.") Third, we were somewhat handcuffed by the defensive position taken by the coalition, but we thought the caucus would be able to play an independent role to build the struggle in defense of X as part of building our overall struggle.

But we didn't do this—and continuing the struggle for strike preparations went to the back burner. We were not yet ready to shoot down the coalition, because we did not want to appear sectarian, but as it turned out, forming the coalition and then working in it was actually sectarian—thinking in terms of a small group (the "left") rather than mobilizing the masses with a fighting program.

With mass leafleting and rap sessions, we mobilized for the union meeting. We found most people outraged by the Executive Board's action. About 125 workers came, or four times the average attendance. We quickly moved to take control of the meeting, suspending the regular order of business, and passing motions (by nearly unanimous vote) ordering them to drop charges, and also to form the rank and file strike preparations committee.

The hacks offered no debate or resistance to our motions, which we had not expected and were not prepared for. The President gave the game away when he said, "Pass all the motions you want. It won't make any difference."

At that point, when he had stripped away the last illusions concerning parliamentary legalisms, we should have moved to take over the meeting for real, to jam them and prevent them from adjourning or leaving until we got what we wanted. The workers there were ready for that kind of leadership, but we didn't provide it. Not one of us even stood up and sharply exposed the class stand that was being taken by the hacks. Instead, after some sputtering by us and some angry questions fired at the hacks by rank and file workers, the meeting returned to the regular order of business and droned on to adjournment, leaving us and the workers frustrated and angry.

### Didn't "Firmly Grasp"

We summed up that our weakness in this meeting and in the coalition meeting came from not fully believing that the masses would take up the struggle, and particularly, not believing that they were ready to rally behind a revolutionary leadership. We did not firmly grasp that "The working class learns through its day to day struggle," and that the starting point for our work in each struggle is "mobilize the rank and file around a program representing its interests." (p. 31)

We turned this on its head and attempted to lead the masses on the basis of agreement with our analysis rather than around a fighting program. But workers come into each battle with contradictory ideas. Instead of grasping that only through struggle, "the workers... raise their heads (and) are able to see farther and more clearly," we were discouraged that the workers did not unite with our analysis before the struggle unfolded. So we tended to hold back and not be bold in giving leadership. Although workers came forward to defend someone who they saw was fighting in their interests, we failed to lead the struggle forward around a fighting program, and lost the initiative at an early

stage.

By struggling over these lessons ourselves, we were able to put before the masses, at the conclusion of the struggle, a summation which pointed to the real gains which had been made, and pointed the way forward. We showed that the whole reason the bureaucrats attacked in the first place was because by starting to "mobilize the masses of workers to take matters into their own hands and wage a blow for blow struggle against the enemy," by attacking the capitalist class, the hacks were more threatened than they had ever been in all the years we had been raking them over the coals in the pages of our paper. They attacked in order to beat down this movement, not just to remove one man from office.

As the brother brought out in the Executive Board hearing which removed him from office, "The mystery of your conduct is becoming understood. No longer will the workers plead with you to act in their behalf, for they are coming to see that you do not represent their interests. Full of ambition, protective of your puny positions, fearing and imitating management at the same time, having nothing but contempt for the workers who elected you—these are the features you are showing more openly with each passing day. And so the membership is getting rid of some illusions and this is good...When they come to you in the future, they won't be 'asking for help' but they will be demanding action, and they will not be content with promises. If any 'house slaves' refuse to act, the 'field slave' will do what they must anyhow....Now you are saying I am a traitor to my office, to the union. But only the workers can decide if I have betrayed their interests...You act out your charade, I speak my piece, but when it all comes down, the workers have the power to decide the outcome. They will wage struggles for their rights, they will fight tooth-and-nail against all attacks, and they will roll over all obstacles placed in their path. I'm not in trouble—you're in trouble."

### A Victory

So even though they succeeded in removing him, it was a defeat for them and a victory for us because many more workers saw the need to fight and came forward and learned many lessons about the traitorous nature of these scabs. However, due to the weaknesses in our work, some workers drew a defeatist summation out of the struggle and are talking about quitting the union. Others want to fight, but are still seeing the struggle primarily in terms of "cleaning house in the next election."

But our experience points clearly to the fact that while fighting "to replace agents of the bourgeoisie with true representatives of the proletariat in union office," "the working class and its party cannot base its strategy on 'taking over' the unions by electing new leadership...The policy of the proletariat and its party is to build its strength in the unions as part of building its revolutionary movement, and not to reduce the class struggle to the struggle for control of the unions."

Running for union office must be a part of the ongoing struggle of the growing rank and file movement, an outgrowth of that movement, and a bridge to a more powerful movement of the working class, enabling (and not hindering in any way) the masses of workers to "take matters into their own hands and wage a blow for blow struggle against the enemy."

The advanced workers have joined us in saying, "We are going to continue to move, to organize, to take matters into our own hands and do whatever needs doing. As our movement and our struggle grows, the present officers can either come along with it or be swept aside like so much rubbish."

Our task now is to build on the advances that have been made, mobilize around a fighting program for strike preparations and fan the sparks of class consciousness which are flying out of our struggle every day. FORWARD TO THE NEW PERIOD. ■

## Nine

Our experience of trying to provide Marxist-Leninist leadership to the struggle of the workers at Plant Y has borne out clearly the dual nature of the trade unions as described in the draft programme—on the one hand, these unions today are "controlled at the very top by scabs and traitors" who are "labor lieutenants" of the bourgeoisie, often used as a "main arm of its attack on the working class" and who allow the ruling class to "use the union structure at times to quell the workers' struggle and enforce labor discipline."

On the other hand, the unions are the largest mass organizations of the working class, built "by the struggle and sacrifice of millions of workers" which play a crucial role in the workers' struggles. In fact, when in the hands of the working class (even temporarily) they are an important weapon in our arsenal of class struggle.

This dual nature has been borne out by our practice among the steelworkers. The leadership of the USWA is totally in the hands of the monopoly capitalists. The ENA (no-strike deal) is one of the most blatant examples of class collaboration in recent history. Every time the workers wildcat (a couple of departments have been walking out every year) staff reps and high priced lawyers are rushed in to force them back to work. The union for years has upheld the discriminatory unit seniority system and has helped the company crush attempts to fight national oppression on the job.

This has been crowned by the joint company, government, union "consent decree" attacking the workers. The union has joined with the company in job eliminations and speedup through the "productivity committees," and joined with the company in propagating national chauvinism ("Where's Joe?") and "class peace."

On the other hand, a lot of class struggle takes place around the union—the union hall is the first place everyone usually goes when there's a lot of struggle down at the mill. Although most workers know you can't rely on the union bureaucrats, they generally expect them to do something and want to know "what the union is going to do." Unit and zone meetings are attended by a fair percentage of the workers (as opposed to local meetings) and are often the place where real rank and file demands are formulated and sometimes plans for struggle are made. All the workers belong to the union, and feel it should fight in their interests.

### Can't Forget Goal

The dual nature of the unions means that communists must see the struggle in the unions as "a very important part of the working class movement" and work to build them as fighting organizations. "As an important part of its overall struggle the working class will fight to organize unions, to unite the masses of workers in unions in the common battle against the capitalist exploiters, to make unions militant organizations of class struggle, and to replace agents of the bourgeoisie with true representatives of the proletariat in union office" and at the same time must never "base its strategy on taking over the unions" and must fight "both inside and outside the unions" to build the "struggle, class consciousness and revolutionary unity of the working class and develop its leadership of a broad united front" against U.S. imperialism.

In working in the unions, the party must never for a moment forget its goal of socialist revolution and communism, and must constantly bring out the fact that from the struggle for the immediate interests of workers within a given industry, "the workers can and must go over to the struggle of the entire working class for the emancipation of all who labor." In other words, the draft programme sums up that the struggle of the unions against the bourgeoisie and of the proletariat for control of the unions is an important part of the class struggle, but the working class and its Party must never limit itself to the narrow confines of trade unionism, regarding the trade union struggle as only one weapon it uses in the fight to overthrow imperialism and establish itself in power. Some of the campaigns we have been involved in illustrate how these general lessons pan out in practice.

**Atlantic City Demonstration**—The aim in this campaign was to use the national convention of the union as a focus for carrying out mass mobilization amongst the rank and file against the ENA and to raise consciousness around it, showing that the ENA was an attack by the ruling class against the whole working class, and that the struggle of steelworkers was a part of the struggle against the imperialist system. This was correct—it was well known among the workers that the convention was happening, and there was motion in the locals, independent of our work, of both honest and opportunist forces who were trying to use the convention to ad-

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vance the struggle (as they saw it, which in some cases meant holding back the struggle).

We got involved in the struggle around the election of convention delegates, pushed a petition campaign which called for locals to take a stand against the ENA at the convention, exposed the convention for the class collaborationist circus that it was, and called for workers to go to picket and demonstrate the mass opposition to the ENA and all sell-outs. There were overall good results—many people signed the petition enthusiastically, and some advanced workers came forward in getting it out, consciousness was raised and the picket helped bring forward and develop some people who have since been important in forming the core of an IWO at the plant.

The response to the demonstration was tremendous. It helped to overcome cynicism and raised people's consciousness about the union, the struggle and what the rank and file could do. Particularly encouraging to workers was the fact that it was taken up as a struggle of the *class* with workers from many local areas and industries, and other progressive people. We were able to force some concessions in one local for a more democratic election procedure, and a watered down position against the ENA.

But in this work there were also some serious weaknesses and errors. Although it would have been possible, we made no effort to run anyone for delegate, and lagged behind in getting involved in the whole election. As a result, the caucus ticket we ended up with could at best be "very critically" supported. Overall we failed to make the most of the potential in the campaign for mobilizing the rank and file and raising consciousness—which helped build defeatism and cynicism of the workers who saw an all-bureaucrat delegation going with no effective opposition having been built.

This stemmed from a "left" line on union elections, confusing the correct view that we couldn't rely on "progressive delegates" to be the main force carrying out struggle at the convention or in general, with the mistaken idea that we should not dirty our hands in the election.

## The Petition

Another weakness was around the petition—mostly rightist hesitation to take it out broadly and boldly. When we did we got excellent response and made some new contacts, but the overall half-heartedness led to a small number of signatures reflecting a high percentage in a few pockets, but not really revealing the depth of the workers' hatred for the ENA and their desire for change. This error also made it somewhat more difficult to overcome the obstacle of defeatism among the masses.

Both of these errors were linked to weak work in mobilizing for key union meetings. On the one hand not seeing these meetings as that important ("leftism") and on the other hand not boldly arousing the masses around the issues and relying on them to carry out struggle at the meetings, as well as in the plant.

As far as the demonstration itself, we didn't bring it up even at the bigger union meetings ("left" error again) and more importantly, failed to build it widely enough outside. We often got bogged down in the caucus, neglecting the independent role of the more political group that we had been pulling together. The caucus, with its narrow trade union democracy goals, vacillated from originally supporting, to in the end, opposing the Atlantic City action. This kind of caucus is bound to vacillate in this way, and only a group on a higher political level, that goes beyond the level of trade unionism, can consistently move the class struggle forward.

This weakness contributed to a pretty small turnout of workers from the plant—though the impact of the demonstration was widely felt. A campaign around a particularly sharp attack brought out clearly both the use of the international unions against the workers by the bourgeoisie and the importance of struggles within the unions for the workers' interests, and how those interests can be advanced by a correct policy towards the union. It brought out (and still does) even more clearly, the need for organization of the workers not restricted by the narrow confines of trade unionism.

The agreement which sold out the rights of the workers was signed at the district level and the whole thing was placed in the hands of the staff. The company could never have accomplished this initial attack without having the international and its staff securely in its pocket.

On the other hand, this method created divisions even between the local hacks and the higher-ups, forcing some of them to go along in a half-assed way with

the opposition. The original rallying point was an officially called "zone" meeting. Out of that a movement to protect jobs was pulled together which met outside the union hall, but provided open leadership in the zone and local-wide meetings.

Without this independent organization (led by our organization) the whole thing would never have gone anywhere. As it was, pickets of the District Director's office were organized. Local meetings were built for (entirely by the more advanced political group and the movement to protect jobs), which drew over 100 (much bigger than usual) and forced unanimous opposition to the "agreement." On the picket lines workers enthusiastically took up the fight against the ENA as shown by their signs and chants.

At one picket eight departments were represented. This support from other departments would not have been possible if the political group had not stepped beyond the union structure in building it. The particular attack (mentioned before) is a very well known issue throughout the plant due mostly to the work of the political group. Around the whole issue, both the workers directly involved, and those throughout the plant who read the literature and followed the struggle learned a lot about the nature of the capitalist system, the union bureaucracy, and how the class must unite to fight the enemy.

These lessons could only be brought out by a class conscious group (which attracted more workers during this fight) led by communists, and not restricted to dealing within the union. We were able to use the newsletter to deepen people's understanding of how job eliminations stem from the fundamental nature of the capitalist system, and use that as a basis for bringing further revolutionary ideas to the workers.

## Some Mistakes

But at the same time that we were building plant-wide support, we made some mistakes in not fighting for the other local to take a stand. There were overall some real weaknesses in the campaign in that the movement to protect jobs was not won to taking the struggle to even the whole plant and tended to approach it narrowly. The conscious element was inconsistent and liberal in struggling with this backwardness. The thing also tended to become dead-ended (temporarily) because it focused too exclusively on the District Director, without clearly aiming its spearhead at the company, much less the whole ruling class (this was very much a multi-company venture, backed up by the courts, etc.). There were several big pickets, some good union meetings and some concessions were won, with many people developing a better understanding of class struggle. But the basic pellet plan (the worst parts included) rolled on and the campaign has largely died down.

**Miners Strike**—The miners' walkout and their *right to strike* became a hot issue in the course of the campaign. A petition directed at building support for the miners and forcing the locals to support them was overall well received. One local backed the petition unanimously—which gave encouragement to the bulk of the workers who never attend the meetings. While using the union as a *means* of building this campaign, we focused on building it among the rank and file, and linked it with the overall fight for the right to strike and the struggle of the workers against the capitalists, including our current fight against the particular attack and the SUB pay rip-off.

**SUB Pay**—Once again, we see here that the union structure can be used to attack the workers and curb their struggle, and how the working class and its communist leaders can use it to build that struggle. It's pretty well known that the contract gave the company a giant-sized loophole to deny benefits during the coal strike related layoffs. This is an example of how the international hacks can, with the stroke of a pen, wipe out vital gains won by the workers' long, hard, and often bloody struggle.

We immediately mobilized for union meetings to demand action, beginning with a demonstration against the company, and including, if necessary, a walkout (this was pushed by word of mouth and implication in literature). The local meetings were important battlegrounds for struggle. At the same one where the agreement formalizing the particular attack was unanimously opposed, unanimous support was won for a demonstration (although the local officials acted like they didn't know what had happened). At another meeting, many people came and raised hell, and smashed a red-baiting attempt, even though the debate was squashed. However, the local officials effectively curbed the struggle by widely spreading the line that "we won on this same issue through the grievance procedure in 1971. There's no question we'll win, these radicals are just trying to keep people from filing."

Even worse, when the grievance road came up with a lousy four week sellout, we didn't pick up on this chance to really mobilize the rank and file anger and draw some important (and more obvious than ever) lessons. So, while we got a generally good line out to a lot of people, and held a widely publicized but small

picket line linking the SUB pay fights with the particular attack and support for the miners, and the right to strike, establishing the political group as a leading force among many more workers, we weren't able to defeat the hacks' maneuvering and really consolidate the gains.

**D.C. Coke Conference**—Originally suggested by the movement to protect jobs as part of the struggle around the particular attack and the coke ovens struggle, this demonstration taught us some more lessons about the union. In building for it we found broad support (many tickets sold, contributions, etc.) indicating that the workers see the class collaboration in the union, and want to fight against it, especially when it is linked up clearly to the broader class struggle. On the other hand, the small turnout at the actual picket as compared with the mobilization around particular issues showed that the struggle against sellouts and lack of democracy within the union must be linked with taking up the day to day struggles of the workers against the company and with the overall struggle of the working class against the capitalists.

In order to "...expose the traitors at the top and roll over them..." it is necessary to "Mobilize the rank and file around a program representing its interests and in doing so 'jam' the union officials..." Preaching to the workers about the evils of class collaboration does not build a movement that can smash class collaborators.

Although the USWA is probably one of the easiest places to get support for attacks on the union leadership since the international is generally exposed and isolated (even the local bureaucrats think nothing of bad-mouthing the international to cover their own ass), our experience has shown that the workers really move into action when they are clear that their own interests are being attacked or can be advanced through struggle. The general campaign against the no-strike has always received good response, agreement, etc. But the real development in the struggle, where the rank and file really took the field and advanced fighters came forward to grasp the need to take up all the struggles of the class, was primarily around the specific struggles like the coke ovens walkout, the fight against the particular attack, the SUB pay fight, some of the work around the consent decree, etc.

At these times, the leadership of the revolutionaries stands in sharp contrast to the "class peace" policies of the union hacks and it was possible to make much clearer to the workers the antagonistic nature of the class struggle, and which side the bureaucrats stand (sit?) on. And, *in the course* of these struggles, the workers saw the need to raise demands directed not only at the immediate concern, but also against the ENA and at times against the very nature of capitalist wage slavery.

## Combat Illusions

One line that crops up a lot spontaneously among the workers who begin to overcome defeatism and get involved in the struggle in the union is that "If we get Abel out (or the district director, or the local president), then things will be ok." We have to consistently combat this illusion, both in order to bring out the need to overthrow imperialism, and even to lead the day to day struggle effectively.

For this idea leads on the one hand to linking up with and relying on opportunists who are "out" but who attack the "ins" so they can be the sellouts instead, and neglecting the need to organize the masses. And on the other hand, when faith is put in one of these less exposed representatives of the bourgeoisie, and the struggle leads to defeat, this idea encourages defeatism.

Overall, this idea, along with defeatism, "they're so strong and we're too weak to win"—seem to be the main obstacles in getting the workers to take up the struggle. We must overcome this on two fronts: pushing a positive view of the possibilities of victories in the fight for the union, and at the same time pointing out that we don't have to wait to kick Abel out or get the ENA officially repealed before we can take on the company and the whole ruling class, that we the masses of workers have the real strength, we are part of a whole fighting class that can stand together, with or without the hacks.

"The answer lies in pitting the workers' strength against the enemy's weakness. The bourgeoisie and its agents are a handful who now control the high offices of the unions, but the working class is made up of the rank and file of the unions and the millions of workers not in unions..." ■

# Ten

The sum up of Plant X in the first journal (p. 12) correctly describes the error that was made in the struggle around union democracy, but when it discusses why, how and which were the most important errors, it falls down. In doing so the authors fail to do a correct sum up and because of this fail to make any contribution to the struggle over the programme.

Throughout the article runs an obvious contradiction: while pointing out "an incorrect line led to confusion among the workers," or "we led hundreds of workers in a wildcat against the union," it at the very same time turns the criticism around and blames the workers for the defeated wildcat. Examples: "There is a spontaneous tendency among workers to confuse the fight against the main enemy, the company, with the fight against the union hacks," and "we led hundreds of workers in a wildcat against the union with communists and some of the advanced workers calling it a strike against the company and with many others seeing it as a protest of union policy."

In summing up, we have to be thorough-going materialists. We can't sum up what we wanted to do, or our best intentions—but must sum up what actually happened in the real world. This is not for the sake of making ourselves better communists, but to correct errors so we can help make revolution. Looking over the facts of the Plant X struggle, it's clear that we, the communists, made line errors around the question of trade union strategy and, fundamentally, around the question of mass line.

## Errors of Trade Union Strategy

Here are several examples which show the line of the communists: 1) A month before the wildcat an article was written by the communists for the local workers' paper which clearly made the union the main enemy; 2) In the negotiating committee, where we had several close ties but a small minority of the committee, we abstained when the contract proposal was put up for vote. Doing this indicates that we made winning over the committee primary and lost complete sight of the needs and wishes of the masses of workers. (It is important to know that for several months, quite a few workers were attending the rank and file meetings and were united around some key contract demands which were not met in the proposal.) 3) In a leaflet, put out the second day of the wildcat by us and a few advanced workers, was the following: "We demand an honest vote and we're staying out till we get it. The No's had it hands down and we're not gonna let [the union president] sell us like pigs. We're talking about years of our lives. And this time we'll elect our own vote-counters."

It's clear that we, the communists, did indeed have the "strike the union" line, and in fact, led with that line. We did not tail the "backward workers" but in fact consistently failed to rely on the workers. We made the union the main enemy and directed our main blow there, letting the company off scot free and in a good position to utilize the contradictions and attack the workers.

We think there is an important lesson for the programme in this struggle. It says on p. 31, "Mobilize the rank and file around a program representing its interests and in doing so 'jam' the union officials—expose the traitors at the top and roll over them, break the union bureaucracies' stranglehold on the workers, and unite with those in the lower levels of union leadership who can be won to stand with the working class—this is the policy of the proletariat and its party in the unions."

While we generally agree, we think it should state clearly that our GOAL is not to "jam" the union officials as such, and that if we aim our main blow at them we will be defeated as in Plant X. Our goal is to wage struggle around the workers' needs and make revolution, not to place ourselves in top union posts, which is the obvious result we would get in making the "leaders" the problem. Union leaders will be jammed (and the draft programme is correct that we must not make dual unionist errors) in the course of mobilizing the workers around their needs.

## Errors of Mass Line

The original sum up refers again and again to "we tailed the workers." We have already seen that we had the wrong line. The error at the root cause of our work was the error of the "mirror image" line as described in "Class Stand Is Shown in Practice" in the second journal (p. 12) We never fought for the line of preparing for a strike. We always flipped back and forth in our line, according to what someone or other said. So we came up with the line the workers wouldn't

strike and gave up relying on them, and led directly to relying on the union hacks to build the class struggle.

This amounts to not applying Marxism-Leninism. Our job as communists is to be an advanced conscious detachment of the working class. Mass line is not the taking of popularity polls but to systematize the ideas of the masses, determining what ideas advance the struggle and correspond to reality, and then returning them back in the concentrated form of program—and then persevering in carrying it out and win the masses to take it up as their own (which it is)! This is the way we arm the workers to struggle (make them conscious) and release their initiative.

Without grasping that communists have the responsibility to give leadership, we wind up thinking the masses are backwards and that we are the real heroes. The reason we can systematize the ideas is that we have a science to apply to those ideas, Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, which workers or anybody else cannot arrive at spontaneously. Our responsibility is to put the science in the use of the working class both by summing up practicing mass line and by training workers in that science. And this is what we failed to grasp.

To relate this back to the draft programme, we think pages 16 and 17 on practicing mass line and self-criticism is absolutely correct. The proposal we make is to include the fleshing out of mass line which is done excellently in the second journal. Our party programme should have every possible lesson on mass line we can get, since this is one of the most important things that must be grasped.

Before ending, we would like to say a few more things about the original sum up. Already we can see that the line of "we were correct, the masses were wrong" obscured the real errors that were made. But we don't sum up errors just to sum up errors—we do it to move forward the struggle. The ending, talking about how the work has moved forward, is untrue, according to the very authors who have since done self-criticism on this point. The work hasn't moved forward, precisely because the real errors were never summed up. We must learn from this the real necessity to be thorough-going materialists because without this we will never be able to fulfill our responsibility as the advanced, conscious detachment of the working class.

Grasp the Mass Line! Forward to the Party! Struggle for the Party! ■

# Eleven

I would like to offer some suggestions for consideration on the class analysis part of the UNITED FRONT section of the draft programme. Specifically, I wish to present a rewrite of the paragraphs on skilled workers. I do not disagree with the line of the RU on skilled workers, but I do think that the way it is presented in the draft does not clearly express the line as I understand it. Certainly it is not the purpose of the programme to explain in minute detail every aspect of the party's line; it is important, however, for the programme to stand on its own and to clearly put forward its message to the working class.

My criticisms are, the draft does not clearly explain what distinguishes the skilled workers from other strata of the working class. And that the last sentence of this section, "But with this foundation, the working class and its party can and will unite around its revolutionary banner the great majority of skilled workers and others oppressed and exploited by the ruling class," seems to put the skilled workers outside the working class.

On page 63 of RP4 there is a paragraph that does state clearly what distinguishes skilled workers from other strata of the working class:

"By the way, the reason the labor aristocrats do not have a proletarian world outlook is not only because of high pay. Many of them make high hourly wages, but do not work all year round, so their yearly earnings may not be that much higher than production workers (this is especially true of some skilled workers in the construction trades). In contrast to production workers, many tradesmen work in much more individualized situations, which narrows their outlook. And, unlike production workers, many tradesmen are not completely separated from ownership of the means of production; a good number of them own hundreds, even thousands of dollars worth of their own tools. Because of this, their labor is not as thoroughly alienated as production workers, even though they may be bossed around by foremen to some extent."

While high incomes are a main factor, two other traits are of major importance: more individualized work situations and an incomplete separation from all ownership of the means of production. These three things should be clearly expressed in the programme.

As to my second point of criticism, it comes down to a matter of slightly changing the last sentence of this section so that the intent of the sentence is clearly expressed.

I offer the following paragraphs as a possible way to correct this section of the draft:

"Finally, within the U.S. working class there are several million skilled tradesmen—in the construction trades and throughout industry. Some of these workers earn high incomes; however, this is not the only thing that distinguishes them within the working class. These workers work in highly individualized situations and are not completely separated from all ownership of the means of production. Many of them own hundreds of dollars worth of their own tools, and as a consequence are not thoroughly alienated from the fruits of their labor. Nevertheless, especially with the development of the crisis, the capitalists have launched very sharp attacks on the skilled tradesmen, and their struggles against capital have often been very sharp battles in the overall class struggle.

"These workers as a whole must be distinguished from the highly paid union officials, who act as 'labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.' The workers movement, in order to realize the revolutionary interests of the class, must be solidly based in the heart of the proletariat, among the workers on the assembly lines and in basic production—especially the large-scale plants. With this foundation and uniting the majority of all its sectors the working class and its party can and will unite around its revolutionary banner the great majority of people oppressed and exploited by the ruling class." ■

# Twelve

We feel, after some thorough and on-going struggle, that some sections of the draft programme in the Revolutionary Workers Movement section need to be rewritten and, if not done so, can lead to rightism in summing up our work and can lead to a reformist and not a revolutionary party.

The first part of the section, "The working class learns through its day to day struggle," brings forth a lot of what the working class learns, and we do agree that these lessons begin to come clearer, but what is missing in this part is key. Lenin says, "From individual strikes the workers can and must go over... to a struggle of the entire working class for the emancipation of all who labor."

How does the working class go over? Is it enough for us, the communists, to help them reach the point where they "begin to see themselves as more than mere individuals, but as members of a class, locked in warfare with the opposing class of employers"? Can we assume that when "there is a temporary setback it spurs discussion among the workers as to the cause of the defeat," that what the workers sum up will be right? Or can we assume that there is no bourgeoisie out there constantly summing up struggle for the workers? We think not.

By leaving this part of the section the way it is, we leave the door open to rightism. To "go over" is a qualitative leap. We have to raise what the workers understand to a level of solid rational knowledge of who they're fighting and why. In the draft programme, the part on the day to day struggle is separated off from the part on the ideological struggle and this is wrong. The two have to be meshed and used together.

On the one hand we have the class struggle, which is real and is based on the real world, teaching the working class a lot about the system and the forces of oppression. But what they learn is not enough to take them to the point to where they "go over" to fighting for the emancipation of the entire working class.

As communists, being involved in battles in the real world, we must take what the workers already know, struggle against the incorrect, and raise the correct ideas to a higher level, taking them back to the workers till they grasp them as their own.

If we don't do both these things (being part of the day to day struggle and raising the understanding of the masses to a higher level through the course of the day to day), we'll end up making "left" or right errors that hold back revolution.

Such is the case with the comrades who wrote the two articles on the Boston bus plan in the first and second journals. The first article said "our tendency has been to think that if only the working class and oppressed nationalities understand that the ruling class is the real enemy, then we could unite and fight. Before we could unite with workers to fight, they had to agree with our slogan, 'Fight the Ruling Class' Divide and Rule Attacks.' This reflected a subjective idealistic approach to how the working class moves and learns in struggle." The mistake the comrades had been making was trying to build struggle in the minds of the workers and not in the real world. The key is not to negate our subjective desires but to make them conform to objective reality and use them to help make revolution.

On the other hand, the comrades who wrote the second article made the opposite error. They saw the importance of putting out a fighting program but left the importance of bringing any Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought to it. To them the mass line was "summing up the scattered and unsystematic ideas, putting them back out in a systematized way (a program)..." They failed to see how dropping the slogan pointing to the real enemy was a right error leading to reformism.

We feel that both these errors could be a result in the way the draft programme is written. The part on the day to day struggle and the part on the ideological struggle need to be more closely related, showing how one isn't enough without the other. The working class learns a hell of a lot every day just living in the real world because the bourgeoisie is always exposing itself for the bloodsucker that it is. But without communists constantly out in the every day battles bringing consciousness and raising the perceptual to the rational, the working class can never make revolution, not even in a thousand years. ■

## On the Role of the Workers Papers

### One

Our work on the *Worker* has shown us the need to advance fighting programs, in the course of the struggle, to go to the masses to develop them as the concentrated and aimed expression of their needs, position, and demands, and to rely on the masses to wage the struggle.

It has also developed our understanding of the importance and methods of strengthening proletarian ideology in the working class, and among the masses.

In this process we've had to root out old period baggage which failed to see that the working class could and must grasp and make revolution. This baggage expressed itself in the right errors of economism and feeding watered down analysis to the workers, "left" errors of rhetorical speeches to ourselves, and failure to link the day to day struggles to the overthrow of monopoly capitalism and replacement of it with working class rule.

While our experience has been limited, and our successes undramatic, I feel that what we have learned is of relevance to all of our work in propaganda and agitation, in particular in the form of the working class newspaper, and to questions of how do we develop the revolutionary unity, struggle and consciousness of the working class.

#### Workers Demand Answers

The struggle of the working class is on the rise. With the development of the crisis, many strata of the people, and most dramatically the working class, have gone into motion.

More and more workers are asking questions about what kind of system this is that has to throw people

out of work while the warehouses are full of products we can't buy. They want to know why this system is attacking us ever more increasingly, and how to fight it, and are looking for answers. As the draft programme says, "Each worker perceives a part of the reality of capitalism, but none by himself can grasp the overall picture, fully discover the source of his oppression or grasp the laws of nature and society that determine the development of the class struggle." (p. 15)

Bombarded by bourgeois lies in many forms, in the ruling class media, and also by so-called "communists," the workers are tired of the double-talk and increasingly want to know what communists have to say about the burning questions in our lives, and are looking for the leadership that can take us out of this mess.

We've seen this in the impact of our area's new UWOC chapters and in the increased response to the *Worker*, when it is effectively used. Amid this smoke-screen communists have to bring out, in the course of struggle, the truth, and help the masses use this knowledge in their fight. The draft programme clearly states that "The party can only carry out its tasks by conducting the most determined fight against the ideology and propaganda of the bourgeoisie, exposing its efforts to direct the anger and militancy of the masses against each other and away from the real enemy—the ruling class itself." (p. 33)

The organization is involved in many newspapers throughout the country, in what is possibly our most widespread activity. Yet there has never been a systematic line on what these papers should be like, or a summation of our different experiences. The papers are built in many different ways—some are put out as the voice of the organization (like ours), some come out of an anti-imperialist organization in which we play a leading role, etc. I feel that our experience with the *Worker* points to the direction all the papers should take, once the party is formed.

In the past, the effectiveness of our area's papers was held back by incorrect lines on them that held sway. These lines basically saw the working class papers as anti-imperialist organs of the revolutionary workers movement.

In our area there were newspapers in two nearby

cities. One city's paper was under the strong leadership of the RU, with, also on the staff, advanced workers and petty bourgeois forces who looked to the working class and to the organization for leadership.

The other city's paper was put out by a collective staff which consisted of RU comrades and friends, and ex-"movement" forces who were working in different plants around town, with no real organizational connections or strategy, and were looking for a vehicle to do work in. These people often took Kautskyite and OL-ish lines. All things had to be struggled out democratically on the staff, and sometimes the paper would take lines opposed to the RU's.

As time went on it became impossible to unite the staff on almost any issue, as it became a forum for struggling out political line, and it was paralyzed from regularly coming out.

In order to make the paper a real tool in building the mass struggles, it had to have a clear and unified line, put it into practice, and sum up the advances and identify the incorrect lines and root them out. We had to be clear and decisive in what we said to the class, and not put out muddled ideas and conflicting lines. That's the role of the *Call* and the *Guardian*. So with the breakdown of the second city's paper, we decided to merge the two papers under the RU's leadership, into an area-wide paper that would also cover additional cities in the area besides the original two.

In this process we deepened our understanding of the *Worker's* tasks and the relationship of the party and of its press to the revolutionary workers movement.

#### "Anti-Imperialist" Analysis

A line that was early defeated was that the *Worker* should bring an "anti-imperialist analysis" to the working class, of the issues and struggles of the day. We saw that being anti-imperialist was a fluid thing in motion, and that we couldn't draw a sharp line between calling the enemy imperialism, or calling for its overthrow, or calling for socialism.

There is no third ideology of anti-imperialism; only

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# One...

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bourgeois ideology and proletarian ideology, and anything which doesn't build proletarian ideology builds the influence of bourgeois ideology among the working class, which can develop spontaneously and needs to be fought every inch of the way.

This does not mean that there should be no anti-imperialist organizations. In fact the establishment of revolutionary workers organizations city-wide, or in industries or shops, should not be on a communist level. This would be sectarian to the masses who want to fight but do not yet completely unite ideologically and programmatically with Marxism-Leninism, but who are beginning to see the enemy as the system.

These organizations can be based on a very simple statement, which say something about fighting for anything in the interests of the working class and against anything that stands in our way. Articles in the journal's first two issues have stressed the open door nature these IWOs should have.

But the *Worker* must have a fully developed political line and program. At the same time many people can unite with this line and work on and distribute the paper. This high level of unity does not deprive us of the opportunity of bringing workers onto the staff, who are not yet at this understanding. To think that it does negates several factors: first, that the working class learns primarily through waging struggles, and not by editing articles; second, that it is still important, good, and necessary to involve workers (and others) in all aspects of the paper, but not to bring its level down to the lowest possible unity; and third, that we don't want to yank workers out of the battles that they are waging, into activities like the *Worker*, but want to use the *Worker* to build those fights.

The *Worker* should not be the organ of an anti-imperialist group now, or in the future, of an area-wide or city-wide IWO. It must play an important role in building the various forms of organization that are engaged in struggle, and help to initiate new ones, by bringing their program and spreading the sparks of their struggles broadly among the masses. At the same time, it should be directly led by the party and not by a form at a lower level, and should lead an independent existence from the IWOs.

## The *Worker* as a Party Paper

The *Worker* is now an organ of the organization (and will be of the party). It seeks to be the voice of the working class in struggle, and as of the organization and of the party, as the voice of the vanguard detachment of that class.

The *Worker* is a party paper, a communist paper. In one of our early issues, and in many other papers throughout the country, the "Who We Are" emphatically said the opposite. The question "Is this a communist paper?" was answered "No." While it is mentioned that members of the RU work on the staff (usually), their leading role (where this is true), and the influence of the RU line is not really explained. We are rewriting our "What is the *Worker*" to say that the paper is put out by the RU, and was started by the RU, and that others have united with us and work on the staff.

In line with this, we have also dropped the practice of having separate RU-signed articles, because the whole issue puts forth our line, and so we don't have to say, "Look, this one gets special attention."

In one situation an RU comrade was asked by a construction worker if the *Worker* was a communist paper, to which he said "No, but communists work on it." The worker asked what did the newspaper stand for, and the comrade became tongue tied because he thought all he could lay out was the minimum program for the different struggles of the people, and couldn't say the paper was fighting for proletarian revolution, for the creation of a new vanguard party, etc. The worker kept asking, "Yeah—sure—but what do you want in the end?" and the comrade couldn't answer him.

In another case a comrade was asked the same question and answered yes. The worker said "Good!" (not to generalize on this and say most workers are enthusiastic about communism at this time). In general, saying that the *Worker* stands for proletarian revolution and communism has often led to lively struggle with many workers.

The point is not saying we're "communist" just to show how revolutionary we are, or to encourage verbal struggle, because generally we are not looking to make the question of communism, in the abstract, as the immediate issue. So while we don't emphasize that it is put out by communists, we don't deny it either.

The *Worker* is aimed at the broad masses of the working class, not just the advanced workers. It can

do this because it seeks to work off of the masses' needs and demands from their real level, not what we subjectively wish it to be. At the same time it is the advanced workers who really take up the paper the most, and see it as their own. It is used by cadres and advanced workers as an organizing tool.

The *Worker* is not the same as *Revolution*, even though they are both party papers. It popularizes the line of the organization on *local* situations and struggles—not to do polemics on them (not that *Revolution* just polemicalizes), but to enter into them, advance them and sum them up.

*Revolution* is directed primarily towards people in struggle—to advanced workers and communists and other revolutionary-minded people, and towards other strata that are in motion. The *Worker* is directed to the whole working class. Both of them must be keyed into their audiences and take up the questions on their minds, and this makes them different. While *Revolution* (or the national organ of the new party) should also be sold to workers broadly, it does not have the same agitational nature as the *Worker*.

The main purposes of *Revolution* are to popularize the organization's line on important questions while struggling against incorrect lines, and summing up and popularizing important areas of work and struggles.

The *Worker* should be seen as having one main purpose—to directly enter into and advance the struggles of the masses (more on this later). As such I think that, in the future, local *Workers* should become the party's main written voice to the masses, in the tradition of the old "Daily Worker." They should come out much more often (as conditions permit) and a national news service could be established to eliminate duplication of work, and unify the different papers.

## Fighting Programs

How does the *Worker* advance the working class' struggles? It does this by putting forth the *program of the proletariat*, which has very *real* short and long range needs and demands, and by using the "single spark method." It builds proletarian ideology in the working class (which does not mean "left" formalism, or talk always of the dictatorship of the proletariat, tacking on a call for socialism as the solution at the end of articles, or polemical pieces, as the dogmatists and the "advanced worker finders" would have it).

It does this by putting out that program, helping to implement it in the struggle, and summing up the lessons of struggle. It does not try to win people to Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought by laying out "what is correct." Its function is to advance the struggles of the masses *by using* Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, and along the way raise their perceptual knowledge (class feelings) to the level of rational knowledge (class consciousness). In this sense it brings Marxism-Leninism to the working class and to the broad masses.

We use the single spark method of building support for and popularizing the important struggles of the working class, as the draft programme says, "To seize on every spark of struggle, fan and spread it as broadly as possible throughout the working class and among its allies. To build every possible struggle and build off of it to launch new struggles. And through the course of this to fan every spark of consciousness, to identify and isolate the bourgeoisie and its agents, and to unite all struggles against this enemy." (p. 30)

Our working class papers played a major role in bringing the Farah struggle to broad sections of the class, and of popularizing many important battles, such as those of the farmworkers, the Attica Brothers, the truckers, etc.

Locally we've brought the struggles in certain shops to workers throughout the area, initiated and led a strike support committee in a local strike, and popularized struggles against public school cutbacks, rate hikes, etc.

At the same time we do this on an international level also, in the same method as the draft programme does, by showing how the working class' interests are on the side of the international proletariat, and the oppressed peoples, and what we can learn from their victories and determination in struggle.

We put forth the view of the proletariat in struggles of *all* the different forces that are fighting the monopolists, because, as the Draft Programme says, "The proletariat is the main and leading force in the revolution. It is the largest class in the U.S. and makes up the majority of U.S. society. It has no stake in the preservation of the capitalist system and is the only class capable of not only overthrowing the present ruling class but completely remaking society to abolish classes..." (p. 23)... "the working class must take up and infuse its strength, discipline and revolutionary outlook into every major social movement." (p. 33)

We look at every struggle through the proletariat's eyes, laying out its answers, not the class stand of whatever strata are fighting.

Often our articles lacked a clear focus or thrust. In an article about an important local strike in which the

workers put up a strong fight but got sold out by the hacks, we dished up a good trade unionist strategy and analysis and criticism of the bureaucrats. But in no way was the spark of the strikers used to point the main blow at the system, or tie it into a larger context, except in a superficial and mechanical way. (Not that we have to do this in every article; some could be just news of the people in struggle, but major articles about key struggles or questions should point the way forward and identify our friends and enemies.) All we did was to tell the workers what they already knew.

There were two main lessons. One was that in our propaganda and agitation we should direct the main blow at the imperialist enemy. As the draft programme says, we had to "aim every struggle at the monopoly capitalists themselves, to consistently expose the fact that they are responsible for the suffering of the people..." (p. 42)

We can't spend all our time criticizing sellout union hacks, but should show struggles as class against class and expose the hacks and the opportunists as *their programs* for struggle fail to serve the people, rather than using the attack on them as the main method of exposure of the ruling class. We aim the arrow right at the heart of the system, and if we can't jam those who are holding up the struggle into fighting, we expose them by pinning them up against that target.

The other lesson was that we had to do more than sum up struggles, and expose the capitalist class as the root of the problems; we had to advance a fighting program in that struggle whenever possible.

In an article about a strike, for instance, it meant calling for mass pickets and closing down production tightly, and in an article about cutbacks in the public schools, it meant calling for city-wide organization to deal with it. If we just tell the workers what is wrong, and don't get into how to fight, we haven't taken the class forward—we've just made them cynical about how rotten the system is.

## Learn from the Masses

But where does such a program for struggle come from? The draft says: "...the party of the working class, in leading the class, applies the *mass line*. It takes these scattered and partial experiences and ideas, and by applying the science of revolution, sums them up, concentrates what is correct, what corresponds to the development of society and will move the class struggle ahead. The party returns these concentrated ideas to the masses and they become a tremendous material force as the masses take them up as their own and use them to transform the world through class struggle." (p. 17)

To develop correct lines and programs we had to enter into the struggles of the class. "Observing" struggle could only lead to mechanical articles which didn't reflect the real situation and to idealistic programs. Failure to do this has sometimes led to answering the questions on the minds of communists, or even worse, on the minds of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie.

The *Worker* must also get involved in or kick-off struggles, hold forums, rallies, pickets, etc., and be an active *organizer*, not an observer. The view of a paper with a "pure" line (where would it come from?) led to unsystematic distribution and petty bourgeois anarchistic styles of work. It leads to "left" errors of putting out abstract analysis, rather than concrete analysis of concrete conditions, leading to a program for struggle. Practice is the key to developing line and to changing reality.

This "petty bourgeois critique-ism" led to some articles which attacked every opportunist engaged in a certain struggle, calling out their ragged lines, but without considering whether or not the masses had ever even heard of the groups. This error came out of a "left" interpretation of the communist paper line, which held that we could say anything we wanted, because the working class could relate to revolutionary ideas, but instead we isolated ourselves from the masses.

This subjective idealist approach comes out of not grasping that we have to work from the real experiences and position of the proletariat, and not substitute half-baked illusions for a materialist analysis.

Petty bourgeois critique-ism manifested itself in fine tooth combing of articles for line, without any consideration of what would the effects be on struggle, and in failing to differentiate between the bourgeois ideology and reformism among the masses as opposed to the organized opportunists.

We constantly have to seek out workers' criticisms and response to the paper. Distribution is an important political task that requires efficient organization, because if the masses don't get the paper, we might as well do crossword puzzles with our time.

An error which creeps in the back door, while we grasp that we must actively engage in struggle to use the paper correctly, is the practice of reporting only on the struggles we are directly involved in. This leads to blowing up a strike of five or six workers, of not

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# One...

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too much importance, but in which we played a role, on the front page with banner headlines, while ignoring major struggles of the class just because we didn't have contacts in the plant, or weren't doing work around it, especially in our area, where the organization is young, and is first beginning to develop deep ties among the working class. Once again it was a question of answering the real questions and addressing the real things on the masses' minds.

Failure to do this leads to ignoring elections, bills before city councils and Congress, etc., questions like crime, sports, and developments in the news around political scandals, etc. In all of these situations we had to take on the bourgeois lies and uncover the truth, taking a decisive stand, the proletariat's stand.

The point is to take our heads out of the sand and not criticize the workers for taking up the "wrong questions." We can't substitute our subjective idealist conception for the real state of things.

Also important is the spreading of proletarian culture, and the exposure of the decadence of bourgeois culture. The draft programme correctly states: "As a key part of the struggle against the bourgeoisie, the working class and its party must give full flower to proletarian propaganda and culture, while exposing and ripping out the poisonous weeds of the bourgeoisie. This is an immediate task and cannot be put off until socialism...In their daily struggles the masses of people create the embryonic forms of this culture, and it is the task of the party and its cultural workers to encourage and guide their growth and multiply them among the masses." (p. 33)

We've done this by popularizing Prairie Fire's tour, and printing workers' songs, etc. Some other papers have used fiction, poetry, and proletarian art. We need to take this up more seriously.

At the same time we do reviews of bourgeois movies, TV shows, etc. The task is twofold—to expose the deception and class nature of them and sum them up from the proletarian standpoint; and to explain what it is that workers like about these things and unite with what is progressive. If we fail to do this last part, workers see us as cynics who trash everything, as separate from them. Workers pay a lot of attention to these reviews, because the subject matter is familiar to them, often more so than struggles and questions that we take up, and they gauge the paper on them. In one plant there was a lot of difficulty in calling together a caucus meeting, because the workers wanted to stay home to watch a certain TV show. When the *Worker* reviewed the show, there was a lot of struggle about it. While eventually it took changing the night for the meetings to get the caucus going, the importance of taking on these kinds of questions was driven home to us.

## Response is Better

We've been coming out for several months since we merged the papers and unified on their use and line. With the clearer revolutionary thrust that it now contains as compared to the muddled perspective of the past response to the paper among the class in some cities has really taken off. They are selling really well, and advanced workers have said that it really relates to them. We have been able to use the *Worker* in cities where there was no paper before, and we are trying to unite the working classes of the different cities and popularize the battles that are going on.

The *Worker* is utilized by various workers groups that we work with, like UWOC. It popularizes their programs to the working class and the use of the *Worker* is an integral part of their work. At UWOC meetings it has been explained what the *Worker* is, and how it wanted to build UWOC's fight, and many people in UWOC see the *Worker* as their paper.

People besides cadres work on the paper, both in production and distribution, but it is clear that while there is room for struggle, the RU makes the final decisions, and people who want to work with us should understand that they are doing it from the perspective of uniting with our line and summing it up together with us.

Unemployment centers and key plants are sold at. Papers are also sold at shopping centers and communities. We've begun to sell them door to door in working class communities, and the results have been very good, and we intend to expand this practice.

All cadre sell them in the shops (unless it is politically wrong to do so, like for a newly hired person) and so do other people we are working with. We want to struggle to have more advanced workers doing this. In the shops they can be a powerful and lively tool for struggle, and while practice in our own area has been weak

on this, *Revolution* and *Red Papers* contain numerous examples of successful utilization of the papers.

We are beginning to break through the piles of garbage that various opportunist groups have shoved at the workers, but it has been difficult at certain key plants that attract the leeches. But we are making slow progress with this.

Generally we do not give the *Worker* away—we sell it. We want the working class to support us financially as well as politically, even in these hard times. People read what they invest in. For the same reason, we have lowered the subscription price so it doesn't include a hidden contribution to the paper.

Right now we are using the *Worker* to bring the draft programme and the struggle for the party to the working class, printing sections of it, and explaining them, and of the need for the party.

The proletariat, and its soon to be formed vanguard, need a voice. The *Worker* seeks to be that voice.

Forward to the Party! ■

# Two

In summing up over two years of experience working on a local revolutionary workers paper, we can point to its strengths and weaknesses, particularly around the task of building a class conscious revolutionary workers movement. The paper's main strength has been its usefulness as a tool for communists and revolutionaries to join with and help build the working class struggle, unfolding political lessons in close connection with building the practical struggles.

Not only has this work helped develop a more class-conscious workers movement, giving communists a base in the class, but also it has contributed to the collective experience of the new communist movement, increasing our ability to sum up and concentrate our knowledge in a party programme. The paper's main weakness has been its inconsistency at providing a correct, leading line to unite, mobilize, and politically advance the class as a whole.

The formation of a revolutionary communist party with a battle plan for building the struggle, consciousness and unity of the working class will mark a new period in which it will be both necessary and possible to put out a mass nationwide paper, the voice of the party to the class, replacing the local revolutionary workers papers as the main form of propaganda aimed at building a revolutionary workers movement.

In the old period in which our ties and experience in the working class struggle were new, the paper was an excellent tool for a militant style of outreach work. Tens of thousands of copies were sold to workers at the large factories and shopping centers in the city, bringing class analysis of strikes and the strike wave, the wage freeze, the development of caucuses and rank and file militancy, and of the campaigns against police repression, imperialist war, deportations, etc.

In several situations the paper actively plunged into strike support, fights against police repression, and other struggles like a wildcat against discrimination, sometimes playing a leading role. Through analyzing, publicizing, popularizing, and concretely building these struggles, we were able to help develop a broad class consciousness, helping fighters for one spearhead to develop into fighters against all oppression. As larger numbers of people began to take part in key local battles of the class and the paper worked to politically advance and popularize these struggles, more people began to see the paper as their own. (When the paper fell into right and "left" errors, its base did not grow.)

## "Unable To Reflect Leading Line"

However, as the conscious forces have come together to develop a more advanced strategic road for the class, the local revolutionary workers paper has been unable to reflect this leading line in all its many aspects. The staff of a local paper cannot bring to bear the concentrated knowledge and resources of a nationwide party, particularly when the staff is made up of people on different political levels and the paper is not the organ of a party. The party can concentrate all the experience of the masses, analyze it with the science of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought and best popularize it.

Through its mass nationwide organ, applying the "single spark method" of popularizing and building the key struggles of the class, the party can hammer home the ideas that we are one working class, with one strategy, led by one party, up against a nationwide ruling class, and that our struggle must be on a broad scale. Through its press, the party can frequently, consistently, and popularly put forward the pressing tasks for the mass movement, unfolding them, adjusting them, and changing them as the struggle ad-

vances.

In "A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the Shansi-Suiyuan Daily," Mao explains the importance of the party press towards the mass movement: "A basic principle of Marxism-Leninism is to enable the masses to know their own interests and to unite to fight for their own interests. The role and power of the newspapers consists in their ability to bring the Party programme, the Party line, the Party's general and specific policies, its tasks and methods of work before the masses in the quickest and most extensive way." In the words of Stalin, the Party must be "bold enough to lead the proletarians in the struggle for power, sufficiently experienced to find its bearings amidst the complex conditions of a revolutionary situation, and sufficiently flexible to steer clear of all submerged rocks in the path of its goal." (*Foundations of Leninism*) How can the party give this leadership without a mass paper that can be a vehicle for the party's line to the masses and a tool to consolidate the leadership of the party in the growing revolutionary workers movement?

As the revolutionary workers movement takes its rightful place in the front ranks of the revolutionary struggle and as a genuine vanguard party is formed, the role of an organizational and political unity like the staff of the revolutionary workers paper becomes less clear. In its early stages, the paper and its staff combined two tasks into one organization. It was a programmatic level of unity "open at both ends," an intermediate workers organization. Yet, on the other hand, in practice it was the main propaganda vehicle for giving political leadership to the workers movement. The key importance of a correct line for the mass movement required a high level of discussion and struggle over line, something the whole staff, especially new members, could not fully participate in.

This two into one contradiction sharpened as the struggle advanced—with the growing ability by communists to put forward a leading political line and the growing demands of the masses for sharper political leadership. In the course of this, staff members developed ideologically and politically and in practice were united around the need to implement the task, "build the revolutionary struggle, consciousness and unity of the working class and its leadership of the united front."

## Advance and A Contradiction

This level of unity was more advanced than the initial unity of the paper, "a paper written to the working class and united around the five spearpoints of struggle." This development from a primitive, although basically correct, formulation to a more advanced application of a communist strategy was an advance. However, there was still a contradiction between the political level needed to lead a revolutionary movement and the political level of the majority of the staff members. Comrades often did extensive re-writing and it was difficult to bring new people onto the staff. This contradiction was aggravated by an incorrect handling which too often failed to unite with workers who could have contributed to the revolutionary line of the paper by writing or drawing from their experience in struggle. Comrades at times also failed to guide the work of other staff members.

Not only has this two into one contradiction held back the work of the paper, but it has also held back the development of the staff members, who could develop their political lines and abilities in closer connection with building and leading day to day struggles, in organizations which, in practice, are more "open." Replacing the local workers papers with bureaus of a central party press would eliminate a lot of duplication of effort and expenses, freeing up several people to more actively build the revolutionary workers movement.

We must ask the same question Lenin asked in *What is to Be Done?* Is the predominance of local papers over a central party press a sign of poverty or luxury? "Of poverty when the movement has not yet developed the forces for large scale production, continues to flounder in amateurism, and is all but swamped with 'the petty details of factory life.' Of luxury when the movement has fully mastered the task of comprehensive agitation, and it becomes necessary to publish numerous local papers in addition to the central organ." (p. 221, *Selected Works*, vol. 1)

The predominance of local papers which Lenin describes is today in our movement also a sign of "poverty." They are an expression of the primitiveness of the period in which communists fought to rebuild ties in the working class struggle, learning the difficult lessons which make it possible to now form a genuine vanguard party. Particularly as the RU developed from a federation of local collectives into a functioning communist organization, the papers have not been able to reflect the "comprehensive agitation" which is now becoming possible and necessary.

Conducting political propaganda on a broad scale is the essence of the single spark method as it is defined in the draft programme: "To seize on every spark of

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struggle, fan and spread it as broadly as possible throughout the working class and among its allies. To build every possible struggle and build off it to launch new struggles. And through the course of this to fan every spark of consciousness, to identify and isolate the bourgeoisie and its agents, and unite all struggles against this enemy." (p. 30)

The weakness in our application of the "single spark method" was that in this period of working class upsurge, growing by leaps and bounds, our ability to "seize on every spark of struggle" and "fan every spark of consciousness" was limited. Our political weaknesses were aggravated by the local nature of the paper and the limited resources that go with it. Lenin in his argument for a nationwide party paper stressed the need to deal with "the major typical evils of factory life, exposures based on especially striking facts and capable therefore of arousing the interest of all workers and all leaders of the movement, of really enriching their knowledge, broadening their outlook, and serving as a starting point for awakening new districts and workers from ever newer trade areas." (p. 219, *Selected Works*, vol. 1)

Because of the uneven development of the workers movement, the most significant developments and breakthroughs are scattered all over. In the primitiveness of the old period the paper's facts and analysis of key struggles were often confused and sometimes dead wrong. Other times lack of adequate information caused us to ignore key struggles.

Examples of mistakes due to political weaknesses and limited resources include: failing to give good play to the coal miners' energy protests, tending to glorify bourgeois democracy in the Throw the Bum Out campaign, not bringing forward a good understanding of the consent decree, failing to popularize breakthroughs made by rank and file organizations around the country, and underplaying the nationwide character of UWOC and the fight against police repression. This was a serious problem—when the working class is moving ahead in a period of intense struggle, it is the job of communists to bring them the most advanced lessons, so that maximum gains can be made and minimum losses suffered.

### International Situation

A similar weakness has been uneven and superficial treatment of the international situation. Our analysis often didn't get to the main point of key international questions, developing the ideas with lively examples and telling facts. We tended to assign the less experienced staff members to these articles and concentrate the more experienced on relating to local mass struggles. It was a weakness at arming the working class with proletarian internationalism and mobilizing them against the possibility of world war. We were concentrating on leading and developing ties with the workers movement (and didn't firmly grasp the importance of internationalism). We lacked the experience and resources to do our internationalist duty well.

It is important to stress the role a national party paper can play in building and advancing the basic struggles of the working class which the draft programme correctly characterizes as "primarily against individual employers...around wages and benefits, working conditions, against speedup and layoffs, against discrimination." In our experience there has been both right and "left" errors on these articles—on the one hand in early stages of the paper we tended to trail trade unionism, then rotating full circle to a "left" tendency of de-emphasizing analysis and popularization of struggles in the shops.

In the later phase, there was a line that statically characterized these basic struggles of the class as "economic" as opposed to the "political" struggles like the fight against police repression. In this period, some important breakthroughs were made in those broader struggles generally focused against the state, but while the "left" line held sway the broader political struggles could not be correctly unfolded. For example, campaigns against police repression were sometimes seen as issues to be built among Black people rather than unfolding police repression and national oppression as a part of a broader class question.

Another similar failure to develop a struggle with a working class line was our article on the advances of the liberation struggle in Vietnam, showing pictures of Vietnamese with guns held high on the front page and writing as if all the readers' starting point was that it was a tremendous advance. A working class line would have put forward more strongly the common struggle of U.S. workers and Vietnamese workers and peasants against a common enemy.

We think that a national party paper can best pop-

ularize and analyze the most basic struggles of the class, highlighting the most significant advances, particularly in key nationwide industries, helping to transform these basic fights into class-wide political struggles and developing them in close relation to the other key battlefronts of the class.

### Some Drawbacks

Shifting emphasis from local workers papers to a nationwide party press will inevitably be accompanied by some drawbacks—the local shop articles and local campaigns as well as local examples will not be as consistently dealt with. When these local articles were developed with a correct revolutionary line they held great interest for the workers who bought and read the paper.

But the strength of the nationwide paper will be its firm base in the local areas, with articles submitted by local bureaus. The nationwide paper will be able to expand on the groundwork already done by the local papers, popularizing those most significant struggles in the shops and in the broader political arena. The intermediate workers were most interested in local shop articles because they explained the struggle with examples in their experience, often knowing people in these shops, having worked in them, etc. But the correct line was primary. Workers want to know, "How can we fight back and win?" This ability to put forward a correct fighting programme will be enhanced in the new period.

The nationwide paper will not exclude the development of many other forms of propaganda and agitation directed to the workers movement—newsletters, shop leaflets, and papers of intermediate workers organizations. In fact, the nationwide party paper will greatly aid local propaganda efforts. As our struggle develops, a more and more extensive network of nationwide and local propaganda will be needed to serve that struggle.

In many ways *Revolution* has played the role of a nationwide party paper. Especially in the most recent period, it has popularized the most important struggles of the class and the masses—providing local papers with important information and analysis. But it is not truly a mass paper.

Because of the primitiveness of the old period, it, too, was saddled with a two into one set of tasks. Because of the central task of party building, *Revolution's* primary task was to play a key role in forcibly putting an end to the old period, conducting polemical exposures of opportunist lines and tendencies in the new "communist" movement. Secondly, it had to popularize aspects of a communist programme and breakthroughs in mass work.

A mass party paper in the new period, when the central task becomes once again to build the revolutionary workers movement, will take on the task of giving class conscious political leadership to the working class movement. It should be written to the advanced and intermediate workers. When the party is formed *Revolution's* theoretical tasks of ideologically developing communists and advanced workers should be taken on by a party theoretical journal.

With the advances of the revolutionary struggle, contradictions arise. With the new party on the agenda and the revolutionary workers movement becoming stronger every day, the ability of the local revolutionary workers papers to play a leading role is being outstripped by the growing needs of the masses for consistent and authoritative political leadership—a form of propaganda that can tie together, popularize, and advance the nationwide struggles of the U.S. working class and consolidate respect for the line of the party among the broad masses. That is why we must establish a mass nationwide party paper directed primarily to the working class.

Forward to the Revolutionary Communist Party and its central task of building the revolutionary struggle, consciousness, and unity of the working class and its leadership of the united front! ■

## Three

Page 17 of the draft programme states: "The party of the working class is the party of revolution. It is the instrument through which the working class wields its weapons of class struggle. It forges and leads a powerful united front of all oppressed classes and people, defeating all attempts at compromise with the enemy, and constantly directing the struggle forward to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. One important way the party does this is through its press—regular newspapers and theoretical journals—as well as non-party publications in which its members work."

Throughout the country, the single largest area of work of our organization—in terms of cadre time and expense—is putting out the workers papers. There are now at least 15 of them, together reaching tens of thousands of workers every month. They have been a real tool of our organization in building the workers movement, and often, a powerful weapon in the hands of the working class in its fight against capitalism.

The papers, like our organization, were born in the old period—and they still bear the birthmarks. They still reflect old period weaknesses—and in many cases have not reflected the advances made by our organization and by the working class generally.

This is the time to pull the papers into the new period. It won't happen by itself—nobody just drifts into proletarian revolution. The struggle must be a conscious, and sharp, one. If it is not carried out—if we don't get rid of the old baggage—the papers will not be a tool, but turn into their opposites, and be a brake on the struggles of the working class. To get rid of the baggage means transforming the present workers papers into mass papers of the Revolutionary Communist Party.

The purpose of this article is to clarify the relationship of the workers papers to the Revolutionary Communist Party. It came out of discussions and struggles on the staff of one of the local workers papers.

**The Old Period**—The '50s and '60s were a time of growing struggle and growing consciousness that imperialism was the enemy. Out of these struggles, particularly the Black liberation and anti-war struggles, many people began to see that as long as there is imperialism, the masses of people here and around the world will be suffering. To end the suffering meant somehow ending imperialism—it meant revolution.

This was a period when the working class was without leadership—without a party. The class could not unite the struggles of the people, putting forward a political line that directed them all squarely at the main enemy—the monopoly capitalists. The working class could not keep all the struggles on the revolutionary path. Declaring war on imperialism was an advance—but it was not enough. Even making this war conscious for thousands was not enough. What was lacking was an understanding of the causes of the war; what are imperialism's laws of development; what are the goals of the war—and what leadership is necessary to win.

Out of the struggles of the masses, many people began to become communists—studying the summed up history of the class struggle to get a handle on how to change the world today. Primarily, these forces arose from among the petty bourgeoisie, and the answers learned pointed to the working class as the force that could transform all of capitalist society. This is how our organization began, and where it went—to the working class.

From the earliest *Red Papers* to today, we have been putting Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought into practice, summing up, making and correcting errors, and advancing to the point where it is now possible to put forward a draft programme.

The various workers papers were started during this time—the early '70s—to build the revolutionary struggle of the working class. They were built as *political working class* papers—not taking up only shop struggles. They were not movement papers or underground papers or people's papers or what have you. They were aimed at the working class—sold in shops and working class communities, not in the petty bourgeois hippie/campus areas. From the beginning, the papers attempted to draw the links between different struggles and point toward the common enemy—monopoly capitalism.

### The Bridge

In the course of years of practice, the organization has summed up and moved forward—deepening our understanding of what was correct in RP 1,2,3, discarding what was incorrect. More and more, the organization has taken the stand, viewpoint and method of the working class. Now, with the publication and struggle

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over the draft programme, the bridge to the new period is out there. But to cross it means putting an end to the old period—and the old period doesn't die easy.

During these years, the errors of a class-less "anti-imperialism," a third ideology, were made, criticized and corrected—but not in the workers papers.

The united front against imperialism is not a coalition of forces, the various struggles don't mean various constituency groups—but that is what comes from the workers papers.

The resolution of the various contradictions of capitalism can only come through resolving the fundamental contradiction of capitalism—but this is not what the workers papers tell the masses.

The struggle of the working class in defense of their living standard is not simply XYZ workers against XYZ boss—but this is what fills the pages of the workers papers.

Revolution is a practical task of the working class, not a "good idea." It comes out of the contradiction between the forces and relations of production, not our good will. But this is not the way it appears in the workers papers.

And communists are part of the working class, not "smart" outsiders. But, again, not in the workers papers.

The purpose of this is not to nitpick—or say "how could we be so stupid." The papers were bound to reflect the weaknesses of the old period. If there is only a time lag before they correct them, let's hurry up. If there is some deeply embedded baggage, let's get rid of it. The examples that follow try to show some of the errors. We realize that the list is longer than this, and also that this article does not deal with the many advances and strengths that the papers have.

## "Where We Came From"

The point is that we must consciously take up the task of transforming the papers. Small errors of the past are serious weaknesses today, and mean defeat for the working class tomorrow. If the papers don't move into the new period, the working class will be robbed of a powerful weapon. Let's look at where we came from.

"Our staff, men and women of all races, live in the Bay Area. We are workers, employed and unemployed, welfare people and students. Some of us belong to the RU, a national communist organization.

"We stand solidly with our class—the working class. We face serious attacks on our livelihoods—and we are fighting back—against the employing class and their politicians.

"The working class is the force that can lead all the people to defeat the monopolists.

"Black, Chicano, Asian, and other people's fight against discrimination is crucial to all working people. The spirit and unity of these struggles is a model for all. We stand with the Vietnamese people and all oppressed nations fighting for independence.

"The *Bay Area Worker* reports the issues and struggles of our class." (*Bay Area Worker*, 1972)

This was the first "Who We Are." It laid out that this was a workers paper, that communists worked on it, that the working class leads and that it is not just interested in shop struggles, but also in broader, social issues. All good so far. The point is not to say that now we know better, that the description of the spearheads is petty bourgeois, since it does not show the working class interests and role in the struggles, or even that it tends towards Bundism. Our organization only learned all of this through practice. By putting a generally correct line, represented by RP2, and in parts by this "Who We Are," into practice, and summing up, we have advanced.

Our purpose is to show how, from this original understanding, certain incorrect tendencies developed and continue to exist today. We have tried to analyze articles from workers papers around the country which were written in the last year since the change in the central task became public. We believe that unless these incorrect tendencies are summed up and criticized, we will drag a good deal of baggage with us when we draw the workers papers around the party.

**Purpose of the papers**—While many of the papers, especially in the *Who We Are's*, do not specifically state their purpose, some clear lines have emerged.

One line says that the papers are put out to rival the bourgeois press: "When these papers (the bourgeois press) report issues affecting workers they present only the side of the bosses because they are part of that class themselves and their interests lie in reporting news favorable to bosses, landlords, and politicians. Government controlled news has kept most of us in the dark in the past about issues abroad. Now with papers like ours everyone knows how the U.S. is using

our taxes to kill and exploit peoples of underdeveloped nations. Imperialism is nothing to be proud of. We want no part of it! It's a system for the rich; not the poor who work. Through the unity of workers here and abroad we can help each other." (*People's Voice, Who We Are*, September 1974)

And: "We are tired of all the lies and distortions that fill up the *regular* [our emphasis] newspapers, radio and TV. We want to tell the truth about what is going on in the world today." (*The Worker for Western-Central NY*, May 1975)

This line is a petty bourgeois carryover. It sets up the paper as an alternate media, like in the '60s. The task is to put out "anti-imperialist analysis" to counteract the bourgeoisie's analysis. It is the line of the petty bourgeoisie bringing the "truth" to the working class.

This line has been struggled against by the line that the workers papers have to build the struggle. The function of a correct analysis is to point the way forward. That is what "correct" means. And to learn it means learning from the masses. The papers were a tool both to learn from the masses and to point the way forward. They were tools of the working class in its struggle with capitalism—not sources of "good" ideas.

"*The Milwaukee Worker*, through its articles, tries to direct this anger into a conscious battle plan for the working class." (*Milwaukee Worker*, May 1975) and—

"The RU is a national communist organization that sees the importance of building a political workers movement, one that actively leads all of the peoples' struggles against our common enemy, U.S. imperialism. The RU thinks *The Worker* can help build that movement, and will work with others in this fight." (*NY-NJ Worker, Who We Are*, December 1973)

The second line, the paper is a tool to build the revolutionary workers movement, points the way ahead.

It is not, however, enough to look at what the papers say they do—we must examine what they do. The *NY-NJ Worker*, for example, functioned to provide "correct" anti-imperialist analysis, "the truth," for one year until sharp struggle was waged on the staff and throughout the organization. And this was with a pretty good "Who We Are"—on paper.

It was by defeating the incorrect, petty bourgeois line, and by beginning to put into practice the correct line that we learned where correct ideas *do* come from, were able to sum up, move forward and reach an understanding of the need for the working class to lead the papers in every aspect. This has led us to see the need for party papers.

**Who Puts Out the Papers**—The first line is reflected in this quote: "Our staff, men and women of all races, live in the Bay Area. We are workers, employed and unemployed, welfare people and students. Some of us belong to the Revolutionary Union, a national communist organization." (*Bay Area Worker, Who We Are*, May 1975)

This, again, is the model for the workers papers. The staff is a coalition, multi-racial, multi-class, even both sexes. Communists are just one part of the coalition that guides the work. This is old period—plain and simple. The question that arises is why mention that there are some communists? Do they have a special role? In some places, the answer put forward is a clear NO.

"Is this a communist paper? No. This paper is for working people and is meant to be used as a tool to inform people and involve them in various struggles going on in this city and across the country. Some members of the Revolutionary Union are on the staff of this paper..." (*Rochester Worker*, September 1974)

Here communists are not just one of the gang, but explicitly outsiders.

Again, the point is not to quibble over *Who We Are's*, but to point out errors that keep cropping up, month after month, and not just in the *Who We Are* box.

**Trade Union Politics vs. Proletarian Politics**—The draft programme states that "the present struggle of the American workers is primarily against individual employers (or employers' associations in different industries) around wages and benefits, working conditions, against speedup and lay-offs, against discrimination." (p. 29) Our workers papers are full of articles about these struggles. The question is what line have our papers been bringing to the workers in relation to these struggles and what incorrect tendencies still exist today?

There has been a tendency, which is very widespread, to narrow our articles about these struggles to workers in one industry fighting their boss and not to see the revolutionary content of these struggles.

Some examples of this...The first example is the way different workers papers covered the wildcat of steelworkers at Campbell Works in Ohio, reported in the April 1975 issue of *Revolution*. This is how different papers wrote about this struggle:

"Although the battle is certainly not over, this wildcat was an important part of the on-going battle steelworkers around the country are waging against killer productivity and Abel's no strike sellout." (*Mass Work-*

*er* reprint from the *Detroit People's Voice*, May 1975)

This article restricts the struggle to steelworkers vs. the productivity of the steel bosses and the no-strike sellout of their union leadership and fails to bring out the significance of this for the whole class.

"Youngstown is a lesson for all of us. We have to cut that shit loose about 'these guys will never stick together' or 'the courts and the international have us licked' and see what we are capable of. Like one Youngstown worker said: 'the company thought we were fools or dogs, but WE REALLY SHOWED THOSE BASTARDS!' " (*Maryland-DC Worker*, May 1975) This narrows the political lessons for the class even further to those guys in that steel plant are really sticking together and showing the company. Showing them what, however, is not indicated.

"This strike is a tremendous victory for these workers and the whole working class. This kind of unity and strength is an inspiration to all workers and is scaring the daylight out of the capitalists. The struggle on the job against layoffs and elimination of jobs is crucial." (*NY-NJ Worker*, April 1975) This article says this strike is a victory for the entire class but doesn't set the article in the context of the struggle of the working class and the capitalist class and bring out why this strike is so full of lessons for the working class in its struggle against layoffs and attacks on the right to strike.

## "Workers Called Narrow"

The papers are full of articles like this, drawing lessons like these. And they all add up to the struggle of the working class—for better unions to get a better deal under capitalism from the bosses, or the rich, (but rarely the capitalists).

Not only are the struggles of workers shown narrowly and summed up narrowly, the workers themselves are called narrow—only interested in the bread and butter issues.

"The economists can meet with President Ford. The Stock Market can go down thru the floor. The trade balance can be the worst in history. And the prime interest rate can remain at 12%...What really counts is how do I feed my family? What can I do to keep fresh fruit on the table and a roast in the oven? All the talk about the build up of inventories has little meaning...But what can I do to keep the home together if I'm laid off my job?...How the hell can I meet the payments on the house on unemployment insurance checks?...These are the questions that are agitating increasing millions of working class families across the nation." (front page article on economy in the *Bay Area Worker*, October 1974) Right on Page 1—workers don't care about the hows and whys of society—don't talk about what causes capitalist crisis, or where unemployment comes from. And don't bring up anything like the international situation, or cuts in services, or things like that. Just keep the workers fed and all is well. So much for largeness of mind.

This is holding up a mirror to the petty bourgeois view of workers that characterized the New Left—and passing it off as a worker talking.

The *Bay Area Worker* article continues:

"What the hell are we going to do...There are no EASY answers, but there *are* answers.

"Answer No. 1—stir up your fellow workers to fight for higher wages...That ain't easy with a bunch of dead-beats running the union...nobody said it was EASY...but it can be done.

"Answer No. 2—Get together with the guys not only in your local, but all the workers to fight for lower prices and to hell with the profits of the giant corporations. It can't be done? We did it in the thirties when we demanded and won unemployment insurance. It wasn't easy. But it CAN be done.

"We did it when we got a bellyful of Vietnam. By the millions we put the screws on the government, convinced LBJ that we'd had enough, and finally, between us and the people of Vietnam, got the U.S. troops out of there.

"It ain't easy but it can be done, and if the big boys don't listen to us—all of us together—we'll just blow them away and put in a system that puts the interests of the workers first! As for profits...forget it!!"

A recipe for revolution. Stage 1, in the shop... Stage 2, workers unite...Stage 3, make some demands...Stage 4, Blow them away.

But this is not the way it really happens. As the draft programme says: "So long as the bourgeoisie has state power it will continue to attack and attempt to corrupt every gain won by the working class—and it will sooner or later succeed in setting back the workers' movement, so long as the fight for concessions is not conducted as a by-product of the fight to overthrow capitalism. This does not mean that the basis of the trade unions and other mass organizations of the working class must be 'fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat.' But it does mean that the party of the proletariat must bring to the workers, through all their struggles, the understanding of the antagonistic con-

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# Three ...

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tradition between themselves as a class and the bourgeoisie, and consistently guide the struggle toward its final aim." (pp. 29-30)

It is not the struggles of the working class in defense of its standard of living that are inherently narrow and reformist—it is the way the workers papers often deal with them that is narrow and reformist.

## Where To Aim Main Blow

This narrowness and reformism is often accompanied by articles directing the main blow against the leaders of the trade unions. They are often written about as the main enemy, if not the only one. In the *NY-NJ Worker*, one article on the miners had a whole page on workers vs. Miller—not a word about bosses, government, capitalist class. This offers the same answer as the previous examples—get a good union and all worries are over. And a good union means one that replaces the bad hacks with good hacks. And who are the good hacks—we are. "Left" trade union politics or right trade union politics, the result is the same, the working class is condemned to an eternity of suffering under the rule of capital.

**Who Will Lead the Fight Against All Oppression—**From the original *Bay Area Worker*, "The working class is the force that can lead all the people against the monopolists," followed by a list of other people's struggles, Black, Chicano, Asian, Vietnamese.

From most of the papers, one or another phrasing of the five spearheads of struggle.

The spearheads formulation was unscientific, and did not proceed fully enough from the fundamental contradiction of capitalism. In the draft programme, it has been replaced by developing the many contradictions within capitalist society.

A serious, incorrect tendency arising from the "spearheads" is to view the UFAI as a coalition of various constituency groups—each with its own spearhead.

Number 1 was for the Third World, Number 2 was for Blacks, Latins, Asians in the U.S., Number 3 was for women, Number 4 for the petty bourgeoisie and students, and Number 5 was for workers.

This is the way many workers papers have viewed the struggles of the masses. Some examples—from International Women's Day this year:

"Women Are Building the Struggle for All of Us" *Bay Area Worker*, March 1975 Centerfold.

"Women Everywhere Unite to Fight All Oppression"

"In order to end their oppression women must fight not just for their own rights, but for the liberation of all people." *Maryland-DC Worker*, May 1975.

"This is what women's liberation is. It means women together with their working class brothers fighting against everything holding women back. It means men supporting women's fight against exploitation so together we can fight the system that causes it." *Milwaukee Worker*, March 1975.

The United Front is portrayed as a deal—we'll help you so you will help us. And women are classless.

## Other Side

This error is the other side of the reformism in the shop articles. Revolution is the answer for women's oppression, or any other social question, but fight-fight-fight is the answer in the shop. And workers fight in the shop, while people—women or Blacks or vets, fight in society as a whole.

This incorrect line comes out again in many articles around police repression. Articles written from the "point of view" of Blacks, or Latins, or Asians—and a call for workers to help them fight. When the question of police repression does not develop from the nature of capitalism, there is no way to build the struggle under working class leadership, or to bring out the concrete tasks of the working class.

This separation of revolution from the working class struggle comes out most clearly on "revolutionary" questions like May Day.

In paper after paper, the significance of May Day was not grasped. For example, from the May issue of the *Bay Area Worker* we find just one short article on page 3 about May Day, mostly describing the march and with nothing within the article connecting the day to day struggles of the working class with the need, determination and ability of the working class to get rid of this rotten system. (The lack of articles may be due to the need to publish the paper before May Day, but that doesn't explain the line of the article that did appear.)

The rest of this issue of the *Bay Area Worker* is full of shop articles like maids vs. hotels, auto workers vs.

bosses, muni drivers vs. muni management, and the Public Utilities Commission, but not one of these 11 shop articles is connected with May Day and none show how it is only by getting rid of capitalism altogether that the working class can win liberation.

On the other hand, the *NY-NJ Worker* devoted eight full pages, including the front page, to May Day and reprinted the major speeches, clearly bringing out the significance of the day.

The weakness of this May issue of the *NY-NJ Worker* is that, like the *Bay Area Worker*, there is a separation of May Day and its revolutionary significance from the narrow content of the shop articles in the rest of the paper.

These, then, are some of the problems and errors of the workers papers as they now exist. In a word, they are still one foot in the wet cement of the old period. We must pull this foot out before the cement hardens.

## Where To From Here

Where do we go from here—how do we pull the papers into the new period?

The key to this is not the struggle to simply try and correct all of our errors and thereby get better at putting out one half old and one half new period papers. The key is answering the question, what kind of papers does the working class need to advance the revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism?

And just as our task is the qualitative leap to the party, not the quantitative improvement of the RU—so our task in regards to papers is the leap to party papers. Our task—build party papers.

**What Should the Papers Do?**—Central to grasping why the papers must be party papers is understanding what purpose the papers have in the working class struggle. As the draft programme states, "The central task of the Revolutionary Communist Party today, as the party of the U.S. working class, is to build the struggle, class consciousness and revolutionary unity of the working class and develop its leadership of a broad united front against the U.S. imperialists, in the context of the worldwide united front against imperialism aimed at the rulers of the two superpowers." (p. 32)

The task of the papers is to serve as a tool in developing this central task. They must play an active role in building the class struggle and summing up to raise the general level of consciousness of the working class.

**What a Mass, Fighting Party Paper is Not**—To save space, read *Palante* or any of the various *The Communists*. The main task of a mass, fighting party paper is NOT to say "here is the 'word,'" and the only way to get it is like we did, with M-L,M."

The correction of right errors is not a list of "left" slogans like the dogmatist papers use—a \$1 an hour raise and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

A party paper does NOT mean an internal, cadre only, newsletter. The working class does not need primarily papers to expose the bourgeoisie's lies, though the papers do that. But to make this their main task is to say that the job of the Revolutionary Communist Party is to expose the bourgeois parties. The class does not need papers to tell workers things they already know—that times are hard in many places.

**What Does the Working Class Need**—The papers' main task is to put forward the political line and program that moves the class struggle forward. And forward means towards proletarian revolution—the only way to resolve the contradictions of capitalism. It is a tool for using the single spark method, taking the sparks of struggle and consciousness that arise from the working class struggle and popularizing and fanning them.

The masses in their millions, through their day to day experience, have amassed great knowledge of the world. The papers must reflect the practice of the mass line, taking the scattered and unsystematic ideas of the masses, systematizing and concentrating them, retaining what is correct and discarding what does not correspond to reality, and returning them to the masses. The papers must persevere in this, until the masses grasp these ideas as their own (which they are) and use them as a tool to smash down the rotten rule of capital.

What kind of paper can do this? To say we don't need party papers is to say the working class does not need a party. How can the papers reflect and practice the mass line? What is the best instrument of the working class for summing up, learning truth from fact? Where does the political line and program to guide the struggle come from? Either from the working class through its party or from the petty bourgeoisie through their innate genius. The answer is the first.

It can't come from "men and women of all races. Workers, employed and unemployed, welfare people, and students." (And sometimes housewives.) (*Bay Area Worker*)

Not from a "political organization of working class people" in New Hampshire. (*On The Line*)

Not from a movement coalition, or alienated petty bourgeois forces who write "workers" papers instead

of the Great American Novel.

The working class needs its line, its outlook, its revolutionary stand in its paper. And this means that they must be papers that the class runs through its party.

**What is a mass, fighting party paper?**—The paper puts forward the stand, viewpoint and method of the working class. It unites widely with the masses around the political line of the class, the line that represents its interests both today and in the long run.

The paper is a tool for building the struggle of the class. It is a fighting paper, not a theoretical journal. It enters the on-going struggles, helps lead them towards proletarian revolution.

The party paper tells the truth. Not a half truth or an anti-imperialist truth. Often in the past, comrades who had articles to write for *The Worker* would say, "What can I say if this is not a communist paper?" Often, this means, "Let me tack on a paragraph or two about revolution."

The heart of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought is concrete analysis of concrete conditions, not to know the world, but to change it. Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought means nothing if it does not lead to political line and program. The paper must be a tool of the working class that lays out how to change this rotten world. Line leads. The line in the paper—on how to fight every battle, how to marshal the forces of the masses to build the struggle to smash the rule of capital—this is what makes it a tool. It is not flowery phrases or good layout. The working class and the broad masses, grasping this line as their own, use it as a tool to fight with.

A mass party paper would put forward the clear political line of the working class. Because this represents the way forward in the real world, great numbers of non-party fighters will see it and unite with it. They will read, sell, and write for the paper—and they will defend it as their own, because it is their own, just as the party is the party of the working class.

Many comrades have raised that if we become party papers, we will cut ourselves off from the masses. In fact, our practice shows that this is not true. The harder the core, the broader the front holds for papers, too.

In every case where the papers were set up "broadly," in the name of not excluding workers, they could not function or unite with the masses. What few workers who were drawn in were sucked into endless petty bourgeois coalition type meetings just to get the damn paper on the streets, and the line was a petty bourgeois compromise line that couldn't win over anyone. The advanced workers were transformed—in the image of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie. A mass party paper would have both feet firmly planted in the working class, and would involve thousands more workers than we do now.

## Question of Anti-Communism

A word or two on anti-communism—ours. In this area, when *The Worker* started, the paper distributors answered the question, "Is this a communist paper?" with a defensive NO. But what was it? "A workers paper," "an anti-imperialist paper." Who puts it out, we were asked. "Just some workers." The result, confusion and suspicion.

Finally, more workers took the paper as their own. Their fellow workers asked them the same two questions. "It sure is a communist paper. The RU puts it out. Isn't it good?" This was their answer. And the other workers replied, "I thought it was a communist paper—why don't they say so." Among other reasons—fear of the masses.

The level of anti-communism is far less deep than it looked like in the '60s. The change is partly from objective conditions, but that is not the main thing. The communists have gone to the working class, taken up the life of the masses, their struggles; we have transformed, and we have learned that communists are part of the working class.

The truth is that the papers were not really communist papers. Their best parts were going in this direction, their bad parts holding back. The task now is to make the leap to what the masses need—a fighting mass communist paper.

This proposal is not a simple organizational change. It is a political and ideological change also. Every idea is stamped with the brand of a particular class.

What class wants an "independent" paper, or an "independent" staff? Independent of what—the working class, its line, its party. The petty bourgeoisie already has its "independent radical newsweekly," the *Guardian*.

For the papers to move forward to the new period means for them to become more and more part of the struggle of the working class, more and more a tool of the working class in their fight for revolution. This can only happen if they become party papers.

Forward to the Party

Build Party Papers/Put an End to the Old Period ■

# On Merging The National Movements And Working Class Struggles

## One

The RSB at Harvard was initiated by an RU comrade and a few others in October 1974. Since the chapter's formation it has been involved in a struggle around the establishment of a W.E.B. DuBois Institute for Afro-American Studies. This Institute was won during the 1969 student strike when Black and white students united and won several demands including the abolition of ROTC and the establishment of the Afro-American Studies Department (AAS). The Institute was to have been an auxiliary feature of the department with a significant degree of student control, ties with the Black community, and strong links to AAS and undergraduates. Winning these demands in 1969 was a great victory for the student movement.

The establishment of AAS did not achieve full cultural equality for Black people at Harvard. This would be impossible under imperialism. But Harvard was forced to recognize that Black people do have a distinct and legitimate national culture that deserved consideration in the university. Because of its progressive content, AAS has been under constant attack since it was established. With the deepening of the economic crisis these attacks intensified.

One of the aspects of the attack was the attempt to restructure the proposed DuBois Institute. The administration announced a plan that would turn the Institute into a post-doctoral research preserve with no input from students or the Black community. An Advisory Board dominated by Black lackeys of the ruling class was set up to implement this concept.

Before the formation of the RSB at Harvard the campus was dominated by several varieties of opportunist political organization. The largest is New American Movement (NAM) which has been around for three years and has built up a significant mass base around its liberal/social democratic line. Several minority nationality organizations also exist. The strongest is the Organization for the Solidarity of Third World Students (OSTWS), a group which calls itself anti-imperialist. The October League and several other "independent communists" work in this organization.

### Several Developments

In the course of building struggle around the DuBois Institute our line went through several developments. We suffered many setbacks. But by learning from our errors we were able to contribute to moving the struggle forward and deepen our understanding of how to build the fight against national oppression and how to view minority nationality organizations. By applying these lessons we will be able to continue to build the struggle, build multinational unity, and win leadership for the proletarian line.

In October we decided that the attack on the DuBois Institute was a key struggle on campus. The RSB approached OSTWS with a proposal to unite around fighting attacks on the Institute and the harassment of AAS on the basis that these were not only attacks on Black students, but also part of an overall attack on all students. This was only one of several cutbacks coming down and we put forward the idea of uniting to fight them all as the correct strategy. We made this proposal because at that time we held the incorrect line that the way to build multinational unity was to seek out minority nationality organizations and try to unite with them in building struggle.

OSTWS did not respond to the proposal so the RSB called an open meeting to discuss the attack on the DuBois Institute and how to fight it. OSTWS sent two representatives to the meeting, both so-called communists, one a member of the OL. Very soon the OSTWS people brought the meeting to a sharp polemic on the national question between themselves and members of the RU. When our comrades did not back off from the attacks, the OSTWS people walked out of the meeting calling us racists. Many new people at the

meeting were confused by what happened.

Because of this we backed off from this struggle for several months. Our involvement for this period consisted of ignoring the masses and struggling with members of minority nationality organizations to allow us to participate in the struggle by joining the DuBois Institute Student Coalition (DISC)—a third world coalition closed to whites. We paid special attention to people who split from OSTWS and formed a chapter of the February First Movement (FFM). Eventually both NAM and the RSB were "allowed" to join DISC, but the RSB was never given a vote in the coalition because it was "a new organization on campus." This bogus argument was just one example of the DISC leadership's sectarianism and distrust of whites who would struggle with them. FFM of course received a vote despite being newer to the campus than the RSB.

During this period of backing off from the struggle we went to great efforts to repair unity with OSTWS and FFM. We even tried to "unite" with NAM because OSTWS and FFM said that this would prove that we were "sincerely" trying to build the struggle and not ourselves.

### Correct Line is Key

In doing these things we failed to grasp that correct line is key. We thought that if OSTWS and FFM were going around calling us racists and NAM was saying we were sectarian there was no way the masses would relate to us. The fact that we succumbed to these fears not only showed our lack of reliance on the masses but also our failure to grasp that most students couldn't care less about the in-fighting among the left. The masses would respond only if a clear fighting program was put forward—something no one had done publicly to this point.

In March a \$580 tuition hike was announced and the RSB called an open meeting to discuss how to fight it. After this meeting the RSB initiated the Committee to Fight for the Right to an Education (CFRE) which was united around a five-point program originally proposed to the RSB by the RU: 1) No tuition hike or cuts in financial aid; 2) Implement the DuBois Institute student proposal; 3) One to one admissions for men and women; 4) Higher proportional admissions for third world and working class students; 5) No layoffs of university workers or cutbacks in services. CFRE clearly identified the university administration as an enemy and put forward the need to unite all students and to throw the burden of the crisis back on to the Harvard Corporation.

The weakness in CFRE's program was that it almost made a principle of *not* specifying which was the principal attack—saying all the five points were of equal importance. This was incorrect. In fact, the principal attack was and continues to be the question of the DuBois Institute. The Bundism of the communists who originally formulated the CFRE program was a key factor in failing to grasp this. We thought, "OK we'll organize everybody around the tuition hike, but we'll have to let DISC organize the struggle around the DuBois Institute because that's a Black question." We were still intimidated by the results of the first open meeting.

Despite this major weakness we found that when we put forward the CFRE program students did come forward (including a small number of minority nationality students) to join CFRE and the RSB and to participate in struggle against the cutbacks, including a demonstration which ended in the burning of an effigy of the university president—the most militant action to occur on the campus in three years. Students came to the demonstration despite the fact that NAM, OSTWS, FFM, and DISC all agitated against it. Even though the demo was small it clearly pointed the way forward.

### Students Become Critical

While CFRE was getting underway, DISC continued to hold effective leadership of the movement on the campus. They called a picket line and held a five hour sit-in at the university president's office. At both these events the main thrust of the action became the demand that the administration talk to DISC about its proposal

for the DuBois Institute. In addition to this blatant reformism, DISC continued to put forward the line that the struggle must be fought as a Black issue primarily, that it take precedence over all other issues, and that it be led by Blacks.

Because of this many students have become critical of the DISC leadership and NAM's tailism. Some are particularly upset at having been used as bodies in support of the sit-in because the action degenerated into sell out reformism. Since the two lines have become clear the RSB has left DISC and will continue to build the struggle based on its five-point program.

Our organization has played a key role in sharpening the two lines on how to conduct the struggle. We distributed a reprint from Oct. '74 *Revolution* on the struggle over the Crim School at Berkeley in which similar lines came out; and we had a representative on CFRE.

An important weakness that still remains in our work is the failure to build multinational unity. Without firm multinational unity based on an understanding of the material unity of interests of all students in the struggle, it could easily degenerate to a point where opportunist Blacks and a few guilt-tripped white allies exhort the masses to support them based on liberal moralism. This is in fact what occurred during the sit-in.

The draft programme states, "...the working class and its party applies the policy of building the fight against national oppression as part of the overall class struggle and of 'working at it from two sides.' This means: mobilize the masses of the oppressed nationalities in the struggle against this oppression, on the one side, and mobilize the working class as a whole to take up this fight on the other..." (p. 34)

Our practice this year showed a failure to grasp this method. At various points we held two different incorrect lines on how to build multinational unity.

- 1) Unite with minority nationality organizations, but let them organize their own nationalities.
- 2) Put out a general call to the masses to get some minority nationality people since they are all in the same place.

### Bundism and White Chauvinism

The first line, which we held most of the time, led us to tailing these organizations and not struggling against narrow nationalism and reformism because we feared that this would lead to splits with these organizations and unity would be shattered. The second line reinforced our fear of struggling with minority nationality students and led us to see them all as narrow nationalists and backwards, adopting an attitude that we'd show them and then they'd come along.

The first line is open Bundism, the second white chauvinist. Both in essence say that only Blacks can organize Blacks and that when multinational unity was not built it was because of the backwardness of the minority students. White comrades and RSB members did not go out actively enough to struggle with minority students to get involved in the fight because they gave too much weight to the idea that Blacks distrust "white revolutionaries."

It is clear that we cannot rely on minority nationality organizations (especially organizations like OSTWS) to organize and mobilize the masses of minority students. We should try to unite with them whenever possible and expose their opportunism when we can't, but communists must take their program directly to the masses of minority students.

Is that what we did with CFRE? No. We put out a general call to the masses of students, but we did not struggle to overcome our spontaneous reluctance to go out directly to the Black students. We should have paid special attention to agitation in the dorms with a high concentration of Blacks, tried to make ties with students taking AAS courses, and found other methods to overcome the objective segregation at the school.

Doing this correctly would also have meant overcoming our reluctance to put forward the DuBois Institute as the focus of struggle—also a Bundist error. We were afraid that whites could not organize Blacks around a "Black issue." Overcoming Bundism is the

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# One...

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key to applying the method of the draft programme of building the struggle from two sides.

On the question of multinational unity in the student movement the draft programme says, "And now more solid unity than ever before is being built between white, Black, Latin and other students, both in organizations made up of students of all nationalities, and through close ties between these organizations and groups based on minority students."

Our experience is that this view is at best one-sidedly positive. During the struggle around the DuBois Institute both OSTWS and FFM have played a principally reactionary role. Their opportunism and sectarianism towards the RSB, CFRE, and the RU have made it very difficult to build unity. Their line has been narrow nationalist, reformist, and reflects contempt for the masses. We do not feel that our experience is broad enough to draw the same conclusion for FFM as a national organization, or for national forms of student organization generally; but it is clear that the line that we originally held—to cooperate with and encourage national forms of organization as a key way to build multinational unity—is an error.

Such forms of organization will persist more strongly among the petty bourgeoisie than among the working class because the material basis for unity is not as great nor the need as clear. At Harvard we faced the additional problem that Blacks are generally from the upper petty bourgeoisie and thus have had a stronger material basis for nationalism and reformism than Blacks from a working class background.

In our experience, without communist leadership, national forms of organization have had a strong spontaneous tendency towards bourgeois nationalism. This is particularly strong when it is an anti-imperialist organization. Sometimes it has been easier to unite with national minority organizations with a less developed basis of unity. What holds back minority students who see the need for revolution and even for multinational unity from joining a multinational organization? In our experience it is principally nationalism.

There is a material basis for such organizations to exist, but they have two sides: the progressive side, which we should unite with whenever possible is that national minorities are coming together to fight the special oppression they face. In taking up that struggle we can unite around a revolutionary program that relies on the masses and points the finger at the real enemy.

But, because of the petty bourgeois class stand of many of these organizations, there will be a strong tendency to reformism and narrow nationalism which must be struggled against and exposed through relying on the masses and taking the struggle out to all students. Working with national forms of organization can never be a substitute for reaching out to the masses of students, boldly putting out a revolutionary perspective, and independently mobilizing the masses of minority students.

The draft programme says that "...the united front is not One Big Organization. It is not a static thing. Forces representing different classes and class viewpoints come together around particular struggles.... Each class brings to this struggle its own ideology, and conflict goes on between opposing class outlooks—over who to identify as the enemy, who to rely on, who to unite with, etc. The proletariat through its party, fights for the leadership of its class in all mass movements, and brings to the fore its revolutionary interests and outlook." (p. 27)

This is the view we must take towards the alliance with the movements of the oppressed nationalities as well. We failed to grasp that intense struggle over political line was an important thing in our relationship with national forms of organization. We were too timid, until the end of the year, in putting forward the program of the proletariat on how to conduct the struggle. Now that we have corrected these errors we will be better prepared to continue to build the struggle. ■

# Two

We have been actively involved in our area in the campaign against police repression for the last year and a half—mainly centered around the police killing of a Black youth. Real breakthroughs have been made by building the campaign that has involved several thousands and reached tens of thousands of people. This campaign has included marches, demonstrations, plant gate rallies, petitions, mass leafleting, hundreds of workers and over a thousand high school students wearing black armbands, etc.

Linking the fight against police repression with the fight against national oppression from two sides has been key to moving our work forward in a revolutionary direction. On the one side, the campaign has been very important in winning workers over *concretely* to take on the fight against national oppression. Comrades doing working class work also learned a great deal through the campaign, overcoming many initial errors in approaching the question from the viewpoint of "isn't this terrible that they did this to this poor Black kid," which got sympathy at best.

Now comrades much more consistently put forward that we need to fight this and other attacks on minorities because it is *in our interests as a class* to do so. Since the youth killed was not a worker, the campaign provided the opportunity to show how as a class we must oppose attacks on Black people as a whole.

In using the campaign to mobilize Black people to fight against their national oppression, real advances have been made in pointing toward the need for mass struggle, and the role of the working class in that struggle. A dialectical relationship exists between the "two sides"—advances from one helping to spark advances in the other. For example, our line on the need for multinational unity, and that the working class must and will take up and eventually lead the fight against police repression, made real headway among the Black people we work with when they saw *concretely*, through the contingents at marches, plant rallies, petitions, etc. that the working class *is* taking up the fight. Both in our work in the working class and among Black people generally, we have also been able to expose the role of the police and the nature of the state in general.

Judging from the many articles in *Revolution*, it appears that building the fight against national oppression has been key to almost all the fights against police repression that we have been involved in around the country.

## Questions Around the Draft

How fully does the draft programme reflect these lessons we have learned in our work around police repression? The general thrust of the section, "Build the fight against repression and bourgeois terror as part of the overall revolutionary movement" (pp. 42-43), correctly sums up our experience that the police repression campaign "must be waged as part of the general revolutionary offensive against the rule of the monopoly capitalists—in any form!" (p. 42) The ultimate aim of our work in fighting police repression is to build the revolutionary movement, not to restore people's democratic rights as part of some United Front Against Fascism now, with revolution on some future agenda.

But the draft programme falls short in stating how these revolutionary advances will be made in the fight against police repression. The draft states correctly that "As the capitalist crisis deepens, as the bourgeoisie is further exposed and the revolutionary struggle of the masses grows, the bourgeoisie in its desperation lashes out with more vicious repression. Alongside of its official state apparatus it organizes vigilante-type groups to carry out its terror." (p. 42) Police attacks have been and will continue to be a major part of this increased repression. Just in the last year and a half, since we became involved in the campaign, there has been a marked increase in people killed by the police

as well as other forms of police attacks.

In response to this increased repression, the draft programme puts forward in the next sentence, "The masses of people must be prepared to defend their struggle, their organizations and their communities *by force of arms.*" (emphasis added) Clearly, armed defense against the police has been correctly used (the housing project in New Orleans a few years ago, and recently in Boston, just to name two). But defense by force of arms at this time is definitely secondary to building mass campaigns in the way we have done in our work in this area as well as across the country.

Our solid advances in the work around police repression were made by mobilizing the masses through petitions, leaflets, demonstrations, marches, etc. and NOT by armed self-defense. The draft programme's error is not that it puts forward armed self-defense, but that it limits the masses' response to that one tactic, rather than showing that *mobilizing the masses in open, political struggle is what is primary.*

## "Link Not Clear"

The draft correctly puts forward as one of the main demands in the fight against national oppression: "End police terror against the oppressed nationalities, stop police murder, brutality and harassment." (p. 34) But in the section on "The Fight Against Repression and Bourgeois Terror," the link between the fight against police repression and national oppression is not made clear.

It is not enough to say, as the section's first paragraph does, that "They [the ruling class] maintain a state of police terror in the ghettos of the oppressed nationalities...." (p. 42) It is true that work in our area, as well as around the country, has shown that almost all cases of police repression we have become involved in fighting, have objectively also been examples of national oppression. And more importantly, it was by building our campaign as part of the fight against national oppression that we were able to make our most important breakthroughs in building the revolutionary movement. This should be reflected more fully in the programme.

When this latter criticism was originally put forward in our work team, it was argued that as the principal contradiction intensifies, police attacks will be more widespread against the working class as a whole, and therefore the fight against national oppression will not be so central to the fight against police repression.

It is true that national oppression will not be so central to our campaign as this situation develops. At the same time, the ruling class will continue to increase police attacks against the oppressed nationalities, and the *fight against national oppression will always be a major focus* of police repression work.

If we continue to link the fight against police repression with the general fight against national oppression, we will be in a *stronger* position to solidly link the fight back of the working class against police repression coming down on the class with the fight of the oppressed nationalities against police repression. This is one of the many concrete ways in which the class and national struggles will merge into a powerful revolutionary alliance, as the draft programme states.

We saw a small example of this in our area when about 150 strikers and supporters from several different strikes went to the city council to protest police attacks on the picket lines. The committee we have been working in which is demanding the prosecution of the cop who killed the Black youth, also went to the same meeting independently. The mother of the slain youth spoke to the rally of the strikers outside the city council building, and when the strikers marched into the meeting they raised the slogan for the prosecution of those cops. Overall, it marked a real advance. The key lesson is that this didn't just "happen," but came about because we had been linking the fight against police attacks on the strikers with the attacks on minorities in our work with both groups.

## Suggested Rewrite

The following (rough) rewrite is suggested for the draft programme in order to incorporate these lessons from our police repression work. The second paragraph, column 1, p. 42, would read:

As the capitalist crisis deepens, as the bourgeoisie is further exposed and the revolutionary struggle of the masses grows, the bourgeoisie in its desperation lashes out with more vicious repression. Alongside of its official state apparatus it organizes vigilante-type groups to carry out its terror. *In recent years masses of people have mobilized to fight these attacks, particularly police repression. The close links in these struggles to the fight against national oppression have resulted in important advances for the revolutionary movement. In addition to building broad, mass campaigns, the masses of people have and must be prepared to continue to defend their struggle, their organizations and their communities by force of arms.* (italicized portion is rewritten part) ■

# Three

This paper will deal with some questions and criticisms of different aspects of the draft programme's treatment of the national question, especially as it relates to Black people. They are not intended to be part of an overall criticism of the draft programme's analysis, which is correct and marks a tremendous advance in our understanding of the relationship between the fight against national oppression to proletarian revolution.

**"Spitting into the wind":** In describing some of the historical development of the Black nation, the draft programme states: "During and after WW 1, when Blacks for the first time came in large numbers to the North as workers, they added a powerful thrust to the workers' movement. The capitalists, of course, practiced and promoted all kinds of discrimination against them and tried to use them as scabs. *But this was spitting into the wind.* Unity was built in the course of mighty struggle, especially as the working class...took up the fight against this discrimination...." (p. 5, emphasis added)

The sentence, "But this was spitting into the wind" overestimates the level of unity that was actually reached between Black and white workers. On the one hand, we have no reason to make a fetish of "racism" or a principle out of divisions along the lines of nationality. On the other hand, we should not portray history as we would have liked it to be rather than as it actually was. This section would be much stronger by omitting that sentence.

**Self-determination of the Black nation:** The draft programme says the dispersal of Black people from the Black Belt "has been the result of economic compulsion; and often the same kind of terror that was used to force Blacks back onto the plantations after the Civil War and Reconstruction was used after WW 2 to force them off, when this became most profitable for the imperialists." (p. 36, emphasis added)

Clearly, economic compulsion—both in the sense of people leaving to get better jobs, and more importantly, people being forced off because of mechanization of agriculture—was the main force behind the dispersal. Was terror used at all to force Blacks off the land? This is the first time I have heard that it was used. It also seems questionable in that illegal terror would seem to have been unnecessary for the landowner, since he could accomplish his end by invoking his bourgeois property rights. On the other hand, terror had to be used to keep Blacks on the land after the Civil War, because "legally" the ex-slaves were free to leave.

In the next paragraph, the draft programme states that the proletariat raises the demand for the right of self-determination "in order to unite workers of all nations in the common struggle against imperialism." This explanation is incomplete in that the proletariat also upholds the right to self-determination in order to unite with the broad masses of people in the oppressed nationalities, not just the oppressed nationality workers.

The draft programme correctly upholds the right of Black people to establish a state in the Black Belt, while at the same time not advocating separation. The draft programme should also allow for the possibility of an autonomous region somewhere in the Black Belt. The right to establish a separate state does not in any way preclude the possibility of an autonomous region instead.

**Housing Demand:** As one of the main demands in the fight against national oppression, the draft programme puts forward on p. 35, "Smash segregation in housing and the extortion of higher rents, taxes, prices and credit and insurance rates in the minority communities." The fight against segregation in housing is important, but it is not at the heart of the oppressed nationalities' struggle around housing. The key demand is for decent (low cost) housing.

This has been the experience in two struggles around housing. One was a rent strike in a small apartment unit of all Black tenants. The strike was over bad conditions (mildew, bad wiring, broken windows, plumbing, etc.) and the fight against segregated housing was not part of the struggle at all. The other is a struggle to keep a building lived in by mainly older Asian people from being torn down. Again, people's right to decent housing is the main issue. This also seems to be the experience in the Newark rent strike and others across the nation.

The proletariat has a definite class interest in smashing segregated housing, and that demand should remain in the programme, but it should be made secondary to the fight for decent, low cost housing. ■

# Four

"As an inseparable part of this, the party wages the most consistent and thorough struggle, among the masses and in its own ranks, against the bourgeoisie's ideological props of *white chauvinism* (in particular the poisonous idea that white Americans are superior to other nationalities who are the 'cause of the problem,' and that white workers should unite with the imperialists to suppress them), and *narrow nationalism* (in particular the line that the oppressed nationalities should be concerned only with the advancement of their own nationality and should fight people of other nationalities, especially white workers, for a bigger 'piece of the pie')." (draft programme, p. 34)

The experiences of this city, especially in police repression work, have shown us just what these "props" mean to the masses of people in struggle. As the draft programme states, these "props" are based on the national oppression of Black people and are used to weaken the working class. "Recognizing this and seeing in it the greatest threat to their rule, the imperialists make use of the social antagonisms their national oppression has created, in a desperate attempt to drive a wedge between the struggles of the oppressed nationalities and the working class struggle. But they are bound to fail because the working class is one working class, with one class interest—to end exploitation and all oppression." (p. 34)

When the ideological props of white chauvinism and narrow nationalism are put into practice, they move from the realm of ideas and in fact become a material force holding back the course of history. Throughout history these props, white chauvinism especially, have been cultivated by the bourgeoisie among all sections of the population. During times of crisis the bourgeoisie gets even more desperate, fearing the spectre of proletarian revolution. During these times these poisonous weeds take on a new significance and provide the ideological justification for fascism.

Just as it is the petty bourgeoisie that grasps for fascism, when strong proletarian leadership is missing, so too, it is the most fertile soil in which these weeds can take root. Their fear of the working class and their bourgeois aspirations make some tremble at the rising working class. The bourgeois props are a means of justifying their class position.

These props are also found in the multinational work force. Many white workers pick up aspects of white chauvinism, and Black workers narrow nationalism. But in terms of the day to day struggle of the working class these props don't provide any answers.

## Struggle Against Narrow Nationalism

In the course of building the struggle against police repression in this city, after summing up the particular and the general aspects thereof, we feel that we can further build the struggle for the party by laying out how the struggle against narrow nationalism falls out, what its historical roots and social base are, and what nationalism as a whole has meant to Black people in the past period. That is not to negate the struggle against white chauvinism, but is rather a summation of our own work where the sharpest struggle has been around narrow nationalism.

In looking at recent history we have seen that the Black petty bourgeoisie has been one of the fastest growing classes ever to appear on the scene. It developed rapidly out of the gains of the Black liberation movement in the '60s. Its members took positions in anti-poverty programs, Black studies and other concessions squeezed out through the revolutionary struggles of the masses of Black people. While the bourgeoisie plans on taking these concessions away, sections of the Black petty bourgeoisie cling on to them with their fingernails. They are hoping against hope that their position will be "stabilized," that they can "help" their people while enjoying the comforts of the petty bourgeois life style. While they are trying to keep their position the masses of Black workers are fighting national oppression and class exploitation. The petty bourgeoisie then becomes a drag on both struggles.

The Black petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie, riding the crest of the Black liberation struggle, entrenched themselves in anti-poverty jobs and electoral politics. They put forward not narrow nationalism but social democracy. At this time of great struggle the bour-

geoisie counted on these characters heading it off, and corraling it into Congress. During the same time the anger of the masses of Black people went far beyond that. Stemming from their national oppression, and lacking proletarian leadership, masses of Black people looked for leadership to what was then referred to as "revolutionary nationalist" groups, such as the Black Panther Party. These groups were progressive because they had roots among the masses, and because they took aim on the imperialists.

Today the gains of the '60s are under sharp attack. It is a crisis period for the bourgeoisie, and the workers movement is growing. Under these conditions we see a new trend among the Black petty bourgeoisie. The old social democrats are becoming more and more isolated. For example, at a mass meeting of over 100 community people against police repression, the leading Black social democrat in this city for years kept quiet the whole time. It was the narrow nationalists that led the struggle for the Black petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie. The masses of Black workers at the meeting saw through their tricks. The narrow nationalists at the meeting tried to divide the people and take the aim off the bourgeoisie. The masses beat back the narrow nationalists' attempt to exclude whites, and upheld multinational unity as a principled and powerful force against the bourgeoisie.

## Role of CAP

The revolutionary nationalism of the '60s is all but gone. Replacing it is the narrow nationalism which has taken root among the Black petty bourgeoisie. This was seen clearly in this struggle by the role the Congress of Afrikan People (CAP) played in it. CAP, based largely in anti-poverty programs, came to the city when it was learned that a mass struggle had jumped off. At first they talked about giving all sorts of support, including two busloads of people to come to the mass demonstration that was being planned. In the end they only brought one carload.

To build unity, the repression committee offered to have a dual demo with CAP focusing on a struggle they had raised in the prisons, and one on the police attack on two Black youths that launched the mass struggle in the city. At the time CAP was just saying that it was a way we could help each other. At the CAP prison demo we found that the repression committee had more people than CAP, and it was clear that they had done nothing to build for it. Instead they tried to attack the RU in their city for the lack of people. When we confronted them about this garbage they couldn't come up with anything.

Given the conditions we are facing, the bourgeoisie's crisis and growing workers movement, it is hardly surprising that we hear "Black Capitalist" Baraka become "Marxist-Leninist" Baraka. Alone the petty bourgeoisie is impotent, but in their desperate search for an out they see the working class. Those who once thought they could ride the bourgeoisie now think they can ride the working class.

So the people in this city that CAP hooked up with right away were the ones that were smashed by the masses for their narrow nationalism. These opportunists came from a local anti-poverty center. They considered themselves "intellectuals" and saviours of their people.

These opportunists showed in practice how the petty bourgeoisie is incapable of leading the revolutionary struggle. Before the mass demonstration these people were shaking in their boots about the cops and shaking because they "knew" "nobody would show up." They didn't want "their" people hurt by the cops. Their alternative was for the people to be passive and hope the cops would be nice.

The masses of Black people knew that the cops don't sit still, and they are never nice. So the day of the demo we started with 75 people and ended the march with over 250. The march showed the strength of the people and of the masses of Black people, with all who can be united, against the bourgeoisie.

It also showed how the narrow nationalists fear the people's struggle and try to cover it. During the demonstration these people were unable to deal with the tremendous outpouring of people. They tried to hurry the march and "get it over with" as quickly as they could. Heaven forbid the masses of people should realize their strength. At the end of the march one of these characters even had the nerve to suggest to us that the demonstrators, all 250, were RU cadre!!

The struggle against narrow nationalism must never be a substitute for building *the people's fight against imperialism*. Our failure at the time was that we focused our struggle at the meetings on the narrow nationalists. Meetings became political battlegrounds around issues—multinational unity, the need for mass struggle, etc. The masses had already decided these issues from the start. By getting involved in this without moving to build the committee into a working mass organization that aims at the bourgeoisie, we failed to develop the continuing organizational form through which to build the fight, "End All Police

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# Four...

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Terror Against the Oppressed Nationalities."

The fight against police repression, needed to maintain national oppression, is one that must be taken up by the entire multinational working class. In practice this was shown by the plant work that was done in this city around this campaign. At one plant Black and white workers gave over \$60 to the defense fund. In the course of taking the fight into the plants we learned that there is no love lost between workers and the cops. Young white workers told stories of beatings by the cops, and how repression came down hardest in the Black and Latin communities.

Comrades, what the draft programme lays out provides us with a strong weapon for struggle. "During this period, the ruling class, panicked by the powerful upsurge of the Black people and bringing down more savage repression against them, also rushed to build up bourgeois and petty bourgeois forces among them to put a brake on their struggle, and lead it into a dead-end. But because this could in no way change the basic conditions of the Black masses, it has mainly served to intensify class contradictions among Black people, as it becomes all the more clear that the Black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie cannot lead the Black people to liberation.

"Given this, and given the growing imperialist crisis, the ruling class has pulled the props from under some of the very bourgeois and petty bourgeois Blacks it built up. And it will do so even more as the crisis deepens. At the same time it will always keep some of these forces 'in business' and maintain some time-tested lackeys on its payroll, in order to attack the Black people's struggle and the overall revolutionary movement.

"The working class must win over or neutralize as much of the Black bourgeoisie as possible and bring the Black petty bourgeoisie as far and broadly as possible into the revolutionary camp. But it must consistently combat their tendency to seek accommodation with the ruling class, must thoroughly expose and defeat those who act as agents of the ruling class against the revolutionary struggle, and must carry the struggle through to the end. In this way the proletariat as a whole and the Black people will, at long last, win complete emancipation." (p. 36) ■

# Five

This year's May Day was a success. In the Bay Area over 1500 people attended the march and rally. For the Asian workers who came out it really put forward the strength and unity of the working class united and its leading role in the revolutionary movement. For the petty bourgeois forces who came out from the Asian community, it pointed the way forward—that the working class is on the move and is leading the fight against all oppression.

About 200 Asians participated in the May Day event. And though many marched with the contingents built around the seven areas of struggle; such as "Stop Police Repression," "We Won't Fight Your Imperialist War," "No Cutbacks in Social Services," etc.; the majority (about 150) marched within the Asian Contingent.

Wei Min She, a Bay Area Asian-American anti-imperialist organization, initiated the Asian Contingent (AC) and also built a Chinatown Workers Committee to Celebrate May Day (CTWC). RU members play an important role in Wei Min She and as communists, we were chiefly responsible for the political line that was applied in drawing Asians out to May Day. We soon learned, however, in summing up our work on May Day, that we did not take the stand of communists in merging the national and class struggles.

Concerning the merging of the national and class struggles, the draft programme states:

"The solid core of the united front in the U.S. will be the revolutionary alliance of the working class movement as a whole with the struggles of the oppressed nationalities against the common imperialist enemy. The tens of millions of these nationalities who suffer discrimination and other forms of oppression as peoples are, in their great majority, workers, part of the single U.S. proletariat. Their fight for equality and emancipation is bound by a thousand links with the struggles of the working class for socialism, and lends it great strength.

"But among these oppressed nationalities there are

different class forces. In order to ally the movements of these nationalities most closely with the revolutionary working class struggle, it is crucial to rely on the masses of workers of these nationalities and *build the unity of the workers of all nationalities as the most fundamental unity*. The single working class of the U.S., through its single party, must lead the united front, in order to strengthen the core and build the united front as broadly as possible." (p. 28, our emphasis)

By putting forward the need to build an Asian Contingent for May Day that would unite with people on the lowest common denominator of being oppressed as Asians, we directly contradicted the above quote. Our mistake in building the AC came from the fact that we did not *firmly grasp* that there is only *one* working class—a multinational working class—whose unity must be built as *the most fundamental unity* that will ally the national and class struggles. Instead of merging the national and class struggles and seeing the thousand links, especially in this period of the mass movement where the principal contradiction determining all other struggles is between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, we separated them. We did not firmly grasp that national oppression *stemmed* from class exploitation, and that the fight against national oppression had to be built as *part of the overall* class struggle. In other words, *the working class is the key link in merging the national and class struggles*.

## "Opposite Poles"

In building the AC we did not see this key link. Instead we saw the national and class struggles as two "opposite poles" and that they would merge sometime in the future (like maybe when the revolution comes). We perceived that Asians would only come forward if we united them on the basis of their nationality and fighting national oppression. In particular, we saw that by building the AC, we could reach out to the petty bourgeois forces that would not necessarily come out on the basis of building the unity of the working class.

For Asian workers we tended to see them as Asians first and working class second—they, too, should march in the AC with *their* people. Therefore, the slogan "Asians Unite! Fight the Oppression of Minority People! Build Working Class Unity!" was put forward along with the main May Day slogan, "Workers Unite to Lead the Fight Against All Oppression! Fight, Don't Starve!"

The influence of our Bundist thinking was reflected in the April-May editorial of *Wei Min Bao*, an Asian-American anti-imperialist newspaper. Calling Asian-Americans out to May Day to join the AC, it states: "Asians in America have always struggled against oppression. But what's new and why we say this is the only road forward for us—is that the fight of Asian and other minority nationalities is linking up with that of the working class...All parts of the Asian community—students, professionals, shopkeepers, and workers—see we have a lot in common with the working class. And the working class is every day fulfilling its historical role to eliminate all exploitation and oppression, seeing every fight, particularly the oppression of minority people, as its fight."

In practice this line comes down to objectively relying on the petty bourgeoisie. Seeing the oppressed nationalities as classless and the working class as something different from workers of the oppressed nationalities, spontaneously diverts us away from relying on the proletariat. When we could have united the Asians who came to May Day on the basis of proletarian leadership and built a much higher level of unity, we essentially placed a ceiling on their development by uniting them solely on the basis of nationality.

## Much Different Line

On the other hand, the line on which we built the Chinatown Workers Committee to Celebrate May Day (CTWC) and the Chinatown Workers Forum (which was held to mobilize Chinese immigrant workers to May Day) was much different. Workers who came forward to work on the CTWC came forward not on the basis of the Asian Contingent but on the basis of the main slogan for May Day.

One thing that became clear in building the CTWC was that in no way could we have promoted the AC slogan to the workers. There was no material basis for getting across "Asians Unite!" instead of "Workers Unite." Through every discussion, planning meeting and speech, the question of how to build the unity of the class was always primary.

Difficulty in promoting the AC to the workers led us not to push it at all. The same difficulty cropped up when the *Wei Min Bao* staff interviewed some retired Chinese workers about their views on May Day. The staff continually tried to draw out an Asian perspective, whereas the workers continually put forward a class perspective on May Day. What was happening, which puzzled the communists and

activists involved, was that the workers had a stronger grasp of the material conditions than we ever did.

The leaflet of the CTWC to Chinatown workers best expressed their outlook: "We've had enough of bosses telling us, 'you can't speak English, you've got no skills' or 'you're just old women—so you'd better accept whatever we give you.' It's time for us to unite with other American workers who are fighting against the same things we face. UNITE AND MARCH TOGETHER.....tell the bosses and their government that we are fighting back thousands strong!.....UNITING AND SHOWING THE BOSSES THE MUSCLE OF THE WORKING CLASS!"

Discussion within the CTWC on how to build for May Day was held around all seven areas of struggle which are going on nationwide, not just around the struggles in Chinatown. The workers related their own experiences to how they saw the importance of these struggles. They leafleted the community, and went to English classes to talk to other Chinese immigrant workers about May Day. They went out to the unemployment office and side-by-side with UWOC, talked with workers of all nationalities and publicized May Day for two weeks before the march and rally began.

At the Chinatown Workers Forum where 150 workers from the community came out, one high point was a speech by one of the workers who clearly identified the U.S. capitalists and Soviet revisionists as the enemies of the working class and workers around the world. Another was a skit written and performed by the workers which united the struggles of the class against wage cuts, layoffs, the fight against deportations, and the right to strike under the banner of May Day. These were some of our strengths in getting workers from the community to come out to May Day.

## Some Weaknesses

There were also weaknesses in how we built the Chinatown Workers Committee, such as in the leaflet where we talked about "building a powerful movement against all that keeps Chinese and all people down!" instead of a powerful *workers* movement against all that keeps workers and all people down. We also committed the Bundist error of having the CTWC march at the head of the AC—implying that Asian workers should lead the struggles in the national movement instead of the multinational working class, and that Asian workers have more in common with the petty bourgeois forces in the Asian community than they do with *their* class.

Instead of the class being in the lead in the fight against all oppression, we tended to cater to the petty bourgeoisie with the AC. We held a backward view on how the proletariat wins over the petty bourgeoisie in the revolution.

The draft programme puts forward correctly about "...the need and the ability of the working class to win over as much of the petty bourgeoisie as possible, and neutralize those petty bourgeois forces that cannot be won over, by exposing the bourgeoisie as the source of the suffering of the people, and building the most powerful struggle against it. But in order to do this *the proletariat must bring forward its revolutionary outlook, build its own strength as the main force* in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, and carry this struggle through to make revolution. The more resolutely the proletariat fights for its revolutionary interests as a class, the broader the sections of the petty bourgeoisie it will be able to win over." (p. 24, our emphasis)

This was precisely why the petty bourgeois forces—from the Asian community and outside—came out to May Day. But what did we do? We tried to mirror their class outlook with the AC and drag them away from the leadership of the proletariat. Because our Bundism stood in the way, we did not see that many of the petty bourgeois forces came out because the workers were on the move—that the struggle between the working class and the capitalists is the principal contradiction determining all other struggles in society. Many petty bourgeois Asians—students, social workers, lawyers and other professionals—came because they wanted to check out where the revolutionary workers movement was at and look for direction.

A lot of work was done to get these forces out to May Day, with slide shows and talks at community centers, social service agencies, and campuses. A lot more work with the correct line should have been done to bring forward not just workers from the immigrant population in Chinatown but as many workers as possible from the entire Asian community and the working class in general—building "the unity of the workers of all nationalities as the most fundamental unity." That will merge the national and class struggles.

On merging the national and class struggles, the draft programme talks about using the method of "working at it from two sides." The draft program

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me states:

"End national oppression by ending its source, capitalist rule—this is the stand of the working class, and with this stand the workers' movement will unite with the struggles of the oppressed nationalities to form the solid core of the united front.

"To achieve this the working class and its party applies the policy of building the fight against national oppression as *part of the overall class struggle* and of 'working at it from two sides.' This means: mobilize the masses of the oppressed nationalities in the struggle against this oppression, on the one side, and mobilize the working class as a whole to take up this fight, on the other; bring forward the ideology of the proletariat and its common interest in fighting exploitation and all oppression; and in this way merge the national movements with the workers' movement as a revolutionary alliance." (p. 34, our emphasis)

In practice we have viewed working on two sides as having two class stands—the stand of the petty bourgeoisie for the national struggles and the working class for the workers' struggles (which sometimes included Chinatown workers' struggles and sometimes not). Summing up our work around May Day using the draft programme has also helped bring clarity in summing up other struggles we've been involved in. In these sum ups, we found that we did not really understand the organization's line of "working at it from two sides."

In the Lee Mah and Jung Sai struggles of Chinese immigrant workers, we tended to rely on the petty bourgeoisie in the community for the bulk of the support on the "national oppression" side of the struggle. And we tended to see only workers outside of Chinatown as the working class side of the "two sides." Even though we brought the struggles widely throughout the community, utilizing car caravans, marches, mass leafleting, rallies, and workers festivals; and even though we summed up each time that the section of the community most favorable to supporting the struggles were the workers, we were still only able to involve petty bourgeois forces in the community support work. Surrounding the Lee Mah and Jung Sai workers with petty bourgeois forces did not build the strength nor the leadership of the workers, but bred cynicism as to whether or not it was possible to unite the working class.

Another incorrect aspect of our thinking was that the national aspect of the Lee Mah and Jung Sai struggles was more revolutionary than the class aspect. We thought at that time that unless we brought out the fight against national oppression as being the main importance of the struggles, we would not be able to merge the national and class aspects of the struggles. But the fact was, in these struggles the national and class struggles *were merged*. Lee Mah and Jung Sai was a fight of the whole class against the super-exploitation of another section of the class.

When the struggle was built in such a way, building on the unity of the whole class as the most fundamental unity, mobilizing other workers throughout the area to carry on support work, arranging meetings with other workers (May 1st Workers Movement) to share the lessons they learned in their own struggles with the Jung Sai and Lee Mah workers, cynicism was broken, the struggles spurred ahead and the fight was taken on as it objectively was—class warfare.

## International Hotel Struggle

In our work in the International Hotel struggle—a struggle of retired Chinese and Pilipino workers against rich landlord eviction—the problem of how to merge the national and class struggles still exists. Since our sum up of the AC, Lee Mah and Jung Sai struggles; and work already done in the International Hotel, we've repudiated the line of seeing the fight of the tenants as just a fight of Asians for their democratic right to decent housing—a line that did not bring the tenants forward or other workers forward to take up the fight.

Many errors have been corrected and many of the tenants have come forward to fight for the International Hotel on the basis of seeing their fight as a class fight connected with the rising workers movement in this country which they are a part of. The tenants' participation in the Chinatown Workers Forum and the May Day march and rally helped some of them move forward from seeing themselves as weak old men to strong veteran fighters.

So far, in summing up our work on May Day around the draft programme, we have learned that

the working class is the key link in merging the national and class struggles. We learned that the national and class struggles are connected by a thousand links, that national oppression comes from class exploitation, and that the workers of minority nationalities are not separate from the general working class.

There is ONE working class, there is only ONE class stand and not a different class stand for minority nationalities. Our wrong ideas were left over from the old period when many of us came forward out of the national movements. *They must be tossed out!*

But being old period ideas it's not that easy to toss them out. We have to dig deeper into how the wrong line on the Asian national question come up throughout all our work. We have to insist, as stated in National Bulletin No. 13, "on a class analysis of the national struggles, fighting for the leadership of the multinational working class, and its communist vanguard, for the leading role of proletarian ideology and no other—this is not 'negating the national question,' but *strengthening* the struggle against national oppression a thousand times." (RP 6, p. 22, our emphasis)

This means we have a lot of cleaning up and scrubbing to do. For one, we have to wash away the whole concept of *Asian* as a point of unity to organize the masses around. It is a concept that came out of the old period where the national movements led by the petty bourgeoisie were on the rise.

But the concept "Asian" or "my nationality first" is a thing of the past. The multinational working class—the class of the future—is on the rise now. We have to build its strength everywhere possible. We have to build the strength of our class more deeply in the Asian communities and develop stronger roots among workers of all nationalities because it is through this way that we are going to build the unity that is going to change the face of this earth. ■

# Six

*This article was written by a member of Wei Min She, an Asian-American anti-imperialist organization, and a member of the RU. It represents the comrade's opinions on certain questions, but not necessarily Wei Min She's—Ed.*

The draft programme section on "Chinese-Americans" has gotten us into a lot of discussion and struggle, particularly concerning our work in Wei Min She (WMS), an Asian-American anti-imperialist organization in the Bay Area. Originally the struggle started around why the draft programme used "Chinese-American" as opposed to "Asian-American." As this struggle developed, our understanding of the relation of the class and national struggle was sharpened, as well as our understanding of national forms of organization.

A lot of questions were raised as to why the draft programme doesn't deal with "Asian-American" as an oppressed national minority. In trying to understand the correct way to successfully build the struggles of Chinese, Japanese and Pilipino Americans as part of the overall revolutionary movement, we must look at the basis for the unity of what is termed "Asians," as well as the historical development and significance of the "Asian Movement."

Much of the work in the Bay Area has successfully united Chinese, Japanese and Pilipino Americans both around fighting national oppression as well as taking up the struggle against other forms of oppression. And it can be said that many revolutionaries and communists have come forward out of the struggles against the particular national oppression that Asians face in this country.

The question that confronts us at this time, though, as we struggle to bring the new period into being, is how can we scientifically understand how to fight national oppression, basing ourselves on the material conditions that minority groups face, apply the outlook of the proletariat, and in this way grasp the correct way to merge the national and class struggle?

This question is particularly important at this time because we can see that in summing up our work, uncertainty as to the correct way to organize the masses of Chinese, Japanese and Pilipino people, and uncertainty as to the forms for drawing these forces into the revolutionary movement, has led to serious errors.

## Question of Proletarian Line

These errors can be characterized by the failure to see the necessity of bringing forward a proletarian line to the struggles of the "Asians" we were working with. And along with this our errors stemmed from idealism in that we had the tendency to base

our practice more on the petty bourgeois elements and the "Asian Movement" rather than on the material conditions of the masses of Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino working people. We were not taking a firm class stand nor consciously working to root out left over Bundist baggage.

The key to this question, then, lies in firmly applying a materialist outlook that is based on analyzing the material conditions of the masses of "Asian" people who are overwhelmingly a part of the multinational U.S. working class, and in this way merge the national and class struggles.

Our experience with the masses of Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino Americans is limited to the Bay Area. But on the basis of this, we think it is correct not only to *not* use the term "Asian-American," but also to have a section on Chinese-Americans and not on Japanese or Pilipino Americans.

In the Bay Area, only Chinese-Americans have a sharply defined ethnic communities. These are characterized by language and geographical boundaries, and in fact there are many Chinese who rarely, if ever, leave Chinatown. This is especially true for San Francisco Chinatown, while Oakland Chinatown has been hit with redevelopment which has wiped out large sections of housing and has forced people to move into multinational areas. For Japanese and Pilipino Americans, this is not the case. They, by and large, live in multinational areas, work in multinational industry and are more assimilated into the rest of the area.

We still need to understand more about the concrete conditions of both Japanese and Pilipino nationalities in the Bay Area, their class make up and background, numbers, locations, etc. (as well as for Chinese-Americans, too). And as we understand these material conditions better, then we'll be able to figure a correct approach to dealing with them. The fact is, however, that there was a tendency for us not to even get into this, and instead we based ourselves on basically that it was WMS' role to work with all different "Asian" nationalities whatever and wherever they were.

Also, the draft programme points out: "Many Chinese in the U.S. now live and work outside Chinatowns and together with people of other nationalities, take part in the workers' movement and other struggles against the imperialists. *This is another important factor linking the Chinese-American people's struggles with the overall class struggle.*" (p. 40, my emphasis)

This is becoming increasingly true for "Asians" as a whole. For instance, if we look at Japanese and Pilipinos we can see that dispersed communities (due to the experience of concentration camps during WW 2, in the case of Japanese-Americans, as well as systematic destruction of communities due to expansion of financial enterprises, e.g., urban renewal and redevelopment) also largely characterizes their conditions in this country.

## Role of WMS

Obviously this means something for how we see the role of WMS in the future. Any national form of organization has to stem from the material conditions of the masses of that nationality. We feel there is a basis for WMS' existence in Chinatown because although the majority of Chinese in Chinatowns are members of the U.S. working class, they are separated from the rest of the class in particular by language, and geography (many Chinese-American workers work in all Chinese/Chinese speaking shops) as well as other particularities of Chinatown.

In the Bay Area, however, we don't feel this is true for Japanese and Pilipino Americans. *In the main*, Asian-Americans will increasingly be drawn into the revolutionary movement on the basis of uniting with the multinational U.S. proletariat, through multinational forms in fighting national oppression and class exploitation.

This is an irresistible trend because, as the draft programme brings out:

"The struggle of the oppressed nationalities is bound to merge with the working class struggle." (p. 34)

"From the beginning the struggle of the oppressed nationalities has always been closely linked with the overall struggle of the working class in the U.S. But today this link can be forged all the more firmly, because the oppressed nationalities are, in their great majority, members of the single U.S. working class and their struggles are immediately and directly bound up with the struggle of the entire class." (p. 34)

Because we have not fully grasped what this means, many times our work among Asian-Americans has had many weaknesses in terms of consciously making the links between the national and class struggles.

The nature of the "Asian-American Movement" and the consequent use of the term "Asian" is important to understand because it points to the basis upon which unity was built among Chinese, Japanese

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and Pilipinos in this country under the term "Asian-Americans." And more importantly, it points to the fundamental error in basing work on this unity.

Overall, Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino Americans do have similar histories of oppression and super-exploitation in this country. But an important factor is also the fact that historically, due to racism, there is little distinction made by non-Asian people between Japanese and Chinese (and sometimes Pilipino). The common history and racist stereotypes they faced as a group did give a subjective basis for unity among these groups to unite as "Asians."

But more importantly, because of the nature of the "Asian-American Movement" (petty bourgeoisie/student), the term "Asian-American" and the basis of unity that it portrayed was a phenomenon that came mainly out of the "movement" and was not something that came out of the struggles of the masses of Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino people in this country. The term is still not popularly used among the masses of working Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino Americans.

But looking at the so-called Asian Movement today, again we have to have a firm materialist outlook and class analysis in determining the stand of the proletariat towards the correct way to merge the national struggles of "Asians" in this country with the struggles of the multinational U.S. working class as a whole.

### Leading Role of Working Class

To us, basing ourselves on the idealism of building the "Asian Movement" rather than on the masses of Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino Americans, was a reflection of our failure to really see the leading role of the working class. In fact, the masses of what we call "Asians" don't relate to themselves as "Asians" at all but as Chinese-Americans, Japanese-Americans, or Pilipino-Americans, a fact we would've discovered earlier if we were firmly rooted in the struggles of the masses. This came out sharply in our work in Oakland Chinatown.

Here we had a history of doing work in the community and therefore knew a lot about the different forces in the community, its historical development, the working situation, etc. Some of us had come out of the community, but on the whole we were mainly from student backgrounds and had come forward out of the movement.

There has been a fundamental weakness in the work overall that we did here, that again stems from not basing ourselves firmly and foremost on the working class.

Again, basing ourselves on the concept of an "Asian Movement," we saw ourselves aiming the thrust of our work not at the masses of immigrant Chinese workers in Chinatown but more on developing young activists and revolutionaries that came forward out of the student movement and the national movement.

Objectively what this meant in practice was that we did not integrate ourselves among the masses of workers in the community, did not see the importance of us living and working in the community, and were building the struggles in the community by relying on the petty bourgeoisie. As the draft programme states: "...among these oppressed nationalities there are different class forces. In order to ally the movements of these nationalities most closely with the revolutionary working class struggle, it is crucial to rely on the masses of workers of these nationalities and build the unity of the workers of all nationalities as the most fundamental unity." (p. 28)

Now we are just beginning to grasp what this means for our work in Chinatown and are moving towards gearing our work more consciously in the direction of being out among the masses, getting jobs where they work, living in the community, etc. But this came about only by understanding the nature of the work that we were doing in the communi-

ty and how we could only build the work in a revolutionary way if we based ourselves on the masses of working people rather than on the "Asian Movement."

The failure to root ourselves among the working masses of the oppressed nationalities obviously wasn't just a mistake which had no relation to other aspects of our line. In fact there was a lot of Bundist baggage wrapped up in our thinking which came up in a number of ways. There was a tendency to see "Asian" communists' main responsibility to being "Asians" first and secondarily to the whole working class. That "Asians" role in the struggle to fight the oppression "Asians" face and not as representatives of the multinational proletariat first and foremost.

Few of the members of WMS have jobs in the working class (either in or outside Chinatown). Those who do, mainly have not seen their role there as their main area of political work. There was also a tendency to try to pull all "Asians" to the community struggles WMS was involved in, instead of seeing that some "Asians" should organize primarily as members of the class, or as college or high school students, for example.

In the Bay Area, our use of *Wei Min Bao*, a newspaper WMS helps put out, also pointed out the contradictions we were facing. Although it is called "Asian-American News," in fact it is sold mainly in Chinatown, particularly on the basis of the Chinese language sections. And although the paper is sold outside of the Chinatown community, there are no "Asian communities" to which the paper can be directed, and again this reflects WMS' mistake of seeing that their role as a national form is to reach "Asians" wherever they may be, regardless of class and material conditions.

For example, in one particular case we were doing work in a city that has quite a large number of Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipinos, but at the same time are dispersed throughout the city. As a result of the upsurge of national consciousness during the late '60s and early '70s, "Asians" in the city came together and formed groups, particularly around issues of ethnic studies, educational issues, and electoral politics (running Asian candidates). But primarily it was a small percentage of students, parents and professionals of petty bourgeois background who saw themselves as part of this "Asian Movement." It was not indicative of the struggles of working class people.

When we began doing work with many of these people, we ourselves, mainly coming out of the "movement," made the mistake of seeing that this was the main way to organize in the city. We did not make a material analysis of the conditions of Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipinos in this city (the fact that they were dispersed, worked and lived in multinational neighborhoods, and went to multinational schools) and therefore were objectively attempting to organize people around their being "Asian" rather than around concrete struggles that they faced at work, in their neighborhoods, or in their schools.

What happened was that for a long period of time we ended up limiting ourselves to working with petty bourgeois forces, trying to move their organizations "to the left," and at the same time not really engaging in any concrete mass struggles.

### Shifted Focus

When the Lee Mah and Jung Sai struggles broke out in the Bay Area, though, we began to see the importance of taking working class issues out more broadly. We shifted our focus from working within these liberal organizations, but we still mechanically tried to address ourselves more towards what we still conceived of as the "Asian community" in this city (which in reality didn't exist).

We worked with other people around us on a forum in an attempt to bring out the issue of Lee Mah, Jung Sai and the International Hotel. And we were able in particular to work with a number of high school students and new people who either got interested in the struggles through working on the forum or by just coming to the forum.

But although this reflected some advances in our thinking as well as practice in that we began to see taking working class issues out in a mass way, we were still making a fundamental error in our work. In taking issues out to only Asians "wherever they were," we weren't thinking of the leading role of the working class and were not basing ourselves on the concrete conditions of this city (in particular, the conditions of Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino Americans). What we were in fact still trying to do was "pull out" Asians from a multinational setting and deal with them separately.

This was a classless approach and artificially separated "Asians" from the overall struggle. We saw uniting Asians only around issues that particularly affected "Asians" (mainly united around the need to fight national oppression) but isolated from the fact that the material basis was there even more

strongly to build these struggles in a multinational way.

As communists working in a national form of organization, we were forgetting that our role was to "work from two sides"—that we had a particular role to play in mobilizing the masses of Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino Americans around fighting national oppression, but that we had to base ourselves on the working people and bring forward a proletarian line to these struggles. Only by understanding this could we have built the work in a way that would develop the people that we worked with into class conscious fighters against all forms of oppression, build the unity and leadership of the working class, and in this way merge the national struggle with the class struggle.

As brought out in *Red Papers 6*: "The 'common interests' and 'unity of interests' of the proletarians of different nationalities includes and must include, of course, the struggle against all national oppression." (p. 18) The fact that the city that we were working in was multinational made this material basis (class interests) even stronger.

### Idealist Concepts

In summing up our work further, we could see that our mistakes had been made coming out of a "movement" mentality based on idealist concepts of what we could build as the "Asian national movement" rather than seeing that the masses of Asian working people would relate to and in fact were coming forward out of concrete struggles against national oppression and class exploitation.

At this time we are coming to see more that the role of national forms of organization in multinational communities, work places and schools is becoming less and less a crucial factor in building the struggles of oppressed nationalities and building them in a multinational way based on the leadership of the working class.

With the formation of a new communist party that represents the interests of the single multinational U.S. working class, we can see that leadership in the struggles of "Asians" who live outside of defined ethnic communities will more directly and more correctly come from multinational forms of organization. And, furthermore, we can see that this leadership must be fought for by rooting out the baggage of the old period that says that members of national minority groups and national forms of organizations have the role of giving leadership to the struggles of all oppressed nationalities in the U.S. and only against national oppression.

The task ahead of us now is to sum up our work through understanding both the positive and negative aspects that the emergence of the "Asian Movement" has had on building a revolutionary movement in this country. And in this way see clearly how we can best move forward as a national form of organization in the new period ahead of us.

We can see that the "Asian Movement" itself played a tremendous role in fighting against national oppression and raising both the national as well as class consciousness of many Asian-Americans. But at the same time, on the whole, the "Asian Movement" was based in the involvement of petty bourgeois forces and because of this has still not fully taken the leap to becoming first and foremost an integral part of the class struggle of the multinational U.S. proletariat.

As *Red Papers 6* says: "...As the working class struggle develops, as it increasingly takes up the fight against national oppression, and as the unity of the working class grows on this basis, Black people, especially class conscious Black workers, will be less susceptible to bourgeois nationalism, will be less concerned about bourgeois nationalist (or other forms of bourgeois) 'solutions' to their oppression as members of the Black nation, and more concerned about the linking of the struggle against national oppression with the overall class struggle, more concerned about the proletarian struggle for socialism." (p. 41)

### "Possibly Still Significant"

A national ("Asian" or Chinese-American) form of organization may possibly still be significant in organizing the masses of Chinese, Japanese, and Pilipino people who live, go to school and work in multinational settings, due to the fact that there are still subjective ties to the community and to being part of the "Asian Movement" (particularly among students and youth). But with the crucial leadership of the new Revolutionary Communist Party, we must consciously be looking at what trends are arising out of the changing material conditions of "Asians" in this country.

The dispersal of "Asians" into multinational neighborhoods, work places and schools increases the possibility for multinational class unity. And as

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class struggle sharpens, multinational organizations representing the leadership of the proletariat will be crucial in organizing the masses of "Asians" and drawing them into the revolutionary movement.

National forms of organization in the future must be firmly founded and rooted in the material conditions that give rise to the need for members of oppressed nationalities to be organized through national forms of organization, whether this be due to language problems, geographical isolation, or working situation where one nationality is separated from workers of other nationalities (e.g., garment factories in Chinatown). At the same time, these national forms of organization must always rely on the masses of oppressed nationality minorities who are also part of the multinational U.S. working class.

It is only by taking a firm class stand and by applying a materialist outlook that the proletariat and its party will build the revolutionary alliance of the working class movement as a whole with the struggles of the oppressed nationalities against the common imperialist enemy into the solid core of the United Front Against Imperialism. ■

## Seven

In the section of the draft programme called "The Development of the U.S. has been the Development of Class Struggle" (p. 4), there is a section (paragraphs 2-6) that discusses the struggle against slavery and the Civil War. While this section correctly reveals the role of the slaves in the struggle, it does not reveal the material base of the worker/slave alliance and does not fully discuss the reasons that the working class took a leading role in the struggle against slavery.

The points below are put forth with the idea that they would not be included verbatim, but that their essence would be incorporated in the section so that the class forces that were at play in the Civil War and the anti-slavery struggle would be more fully developed.

1) While the draft programme states that the northern capitalists were held back by the Southern slave-

owning class and slavery, it does not clearly state that the working class, both North and South, was also held back by the existence of slavery in their ability to struggle against the capitalists. For example, it was impossible in many industries to build strong unions as long as slaves could be brought in to do the same work. The working class saw slavery as a continuing roadblock to its development and saw the need to smash it.

2) The Dred Scott decision (which effectively legalized slavery in all states) was a victory for the slaveowning class and revealed their expansionist aims. At the time of the Civil War the slave system had begun to be instituted in more and more states and the Southern aristocracy clearly wanted to introduce it to the whole country. The slaveowners were not trying to secede so much as they were trying to expand in the Civil War. The workers saw this as a threat not only to their economic situation, but to their political and social rights and their very existence. There were many of the Southern aristocracy who were popularizing the idea that all workers should "naturally" be slaves.

3) The Civil War showed international working class solidarity and hatred of slavery, as British workers heroically fought the attempts of the British ruling class to enter the war in support of the South. Workers around the world understood the importance of and expressed support for the struggle to defeat slavery and the Southern aristocracy.

The inclusion of the above points would lay a firmer explanation for the next section which discusses the eight hour movement and the surge in the workers' struggles after the defeat of slavery. ■

# On the Youth and Students

## One

role in a mass revolutionary (anti-imperialist) organization, then we won't be able to play this role in intermediate workers organizations in the working class which are mass and revolutionary.

### Question of Mass Line

In addition, idealism excuses our failure to apply the mass line in the RSB and go out deeply to the masses of students and build struggle there, using the RSB as a "conveyor belt." If we can't do this in the RSB because its "form" (e.g., mass anti-imperialism) prevents it, then how can we do it in the class in organizations there? We know that we can.

We have to separate the errors and changes in the subjective element (errors of the RU and the RSB) from changes in the objective conditions (ebb in the mass spontaneous movements, change in the principal contradiction, the formation of a new RCP). It is our view that the RSB was a contribution to the revolutionary struggle, and a generally correct application of Marxism-Leninism to the conditions that existed at that time: the break-up of the mass movements, no communist party, principal contradiction in flux (or at least unknown to communists).

And the RSB had a role in changing the world, helping to lay the basis itself for the formation of a YCL. While the article notes this, the article mainly puts this contribution in the context of a chance by-product of the Brigade and not as something that was in fact central to the purpose of the Brigade to begin with: to help the student movement make the leap from the old period (characterized by the spontaneous mass movements, etc.) to the new—with the direct leadership of the working class through its party in building the student movement.

### Some Understanding

We did make mistakes in the work we did in the Brigade. From the beginning there has been some understanding of these mistakes: "brigadification" and "cadrification" as well as discussion of "two-level work." We do not believe that these errors were built into the Brigade from its formation just because of its level of unity. They flowed from a failure to apply the mass line within this, and the liquidation of the role of communists. If they had been corrected, we believe the work of the Brigade would have advanced beyond what it has in the past period.

The article's analysis suggests that the RSB held students back from advancing on to Marxism-Leninism by its "two-into-one-ism," and that this problem can be solved by the RSB transforming itself into a "mass communist student organization." This seems to back up the view that we really needed a YCL all along to really carry out our tasks among students. But it leaves out the role of the party. The Brigade can't just "become" a YCL or even a communist student organization in the abstract, just be-

cause it's a "better idea," nor can the RU itself just transform the RSB into a YCL. This is a task of the new party—and *only* the RCP can accomplish it because it is precisely the formation of a new RCP that also makes the formation of a YCL possible.

In the past the way the RU saw correcting problems in the RSB was by correcting the ideas of the RSB, and not by going to the masses, through our work in the RSB, linking the RSB with them by developing a *program*. The RSB always advanced in the realm of ideas—higher and higher level of unity, and not in the development of fighting programs—this is idealism.

There seems to be the view in this article that now that in the YCL we can put out the "idea" of socialism, the cadre will be "released" to do the mass work. The point is to come up with a program to unite with the masses of students, and an organizational form to reflect it, while maintaining the ideology of the working class and our own independent role. There is something idealist about *just* raising the organization to *our* ideology as a method for correcting errors in applying the mass line and developing program.

### Fighting Program

When the RSB, led by the RU, did put out a fighting program, did apply the mass line, this was where advances were made, people came forward, and struggle was built (e.g., Throw the Bum Out, cutback struggles). This is *always* how people are won to proletarian ideology—in the realm of struggle (to change the world), *not* because we give them perfect, ready-made *ideas*.

If this idealism isn't rooted out, the YCL will continue to make the same mistakes the RU has made in the RSB. This could take the form of rightism among the masses when struggle is built, and "leftism" in the form of being a propaganda team—espousing "socialism" as an idea.

We think it is correct to move forward and build a YCL with a student section on campuses. The workers movement is on the rise, the RU and others have gone to the working class and sunk some roots there, begun to build and lead struggles, the basis for the formation of a new revolutionary CP is laid, and that party will soon be brought into existence, the principal contradiction has changed and the contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie is the thing most influencing the development of all other contradictions.

All this has changed the real world. And the RSB has helped change the world, too. This is why it is correct to build a YCL now. But this won't correct our past errors, automatically. And even though the article says that it doesn't see the YCL as a "panacea," if this idealist current running under the correct view of the YCL isn't exposed, these same errors will be made in the future. ■

The recent call from our organization to build a Young Communist League is correct and will advance the work of the proletariat in leading youth (and within this, students) in revolutionary struggle, but we feel that the journal article, "Student Organizing in the New Period," makes an idealist error in its analysis of *why* we need a YCL to move this work forward at this time.

This error is rooted in the view that what is wrong with the RSB is that the *organizational* form was incorrect. But organizational form (the RSB) is only a reflection of the political line of the RU on what the needs of the proletariat and masses were in building the revolutionary student movement. The errors of the Brigade, according to the article, seem to be rooted in its "ideas" (level of unity) rather than in the concrete conditions that gave rise to the RSB and that now have laid the basis for a new political line, and therefore, new organizational form.

A materialist analysis needs to ask what are (and were) the concrete conditions and how can (and did) we consciously change them? Idealism says we can perfect ideas (Brigade's transformation is a question of its ideology primarily) out of time, place and condition. Was it merely a question of having had a less correct idea of the kind of student organization to build then than we have now?

It's very important to answer this question correctly. If we answer that it is just a question of "ideas," we'll be falling into idealism, always trying to improve our ideas up in the air, in our heads—getting our heads together first, instead of trying to use our ideas to change reality, then looking at the real world and the changes that have been made, and changing our ideas to bring them into better correspondence with reality. The question is: How do we know things? By changing the world, or by changing our ideas over and over until they are more "correct"?

If we don't do this correctly, we can't understand the mistaken ideas we *did* have in the past—those ideas we had in the period in which we built the RSB that didn't match up to the reality that existed at that time. And it means that we will excuse our errors by saying that our idea (for the whole RSB) was wrong. For example, the journal article more or less writes off the fact that we practically liquidated the role of the RU in the RSB to the fact that the RSB wasn't the right "idea" and so it prevented us from giving proletarian leadership. This is wrong. If we can't play an independent

# Two

There are two main criticisms of the draft programme's section on students. First, the situation on the campuses today is given three aspects: 1) that there is stronger proletarian leadership of student struggles; 2) students are summing up the lessons of the '60s and aiming their blows straight at the ruling class; and 3) that more solid unity than ever before is being built between the different nationalities.

The first part about proletarian leadership we certainly agree with, but the next two parts, when combined with sentences like "and the student movement is on the rise again," paints a one-sided picture of consciousness among students.

Although the RSB has led many struggles involving thousands of students and spread revolutionary literature and ideas on hundreds of campuses, the level of understanding among students about who the enemy is, how to fight, or even whether it can be fought at all is very uneven. Generally students see that the problems they face on campus are part and parcel of the general problems of society. Campuses aren't ivory towers.

They understand that "rich people" or "corporations" play a role in maintaining society as it exists now but an understanding of the real dynamics of the capitalist system, the drive for maximum profit, is lacking.

The lack of understanding about the ability and how to fight the system is shown in the fact that "More than ever before, students feel that they really have to grind down to their books and study hard." (in the second journal)

The same holds true for the building of multinational unity. The Brigade has made headway in that respect, but multinational unity, and revolutionary consciousness among students, is in an embryonic stage. The basis for continued growth is certainly there and grows stronger every day with the deepening imperialist crisis and attacks on students' education, but to say that multinational unity is now forged on a stronger basis than ever before paints a one-sided picture.

The second criticism is that the draft programme doesn't lay out a complete analysis of the function of universities under capitalism. This function includes two main aspects. One is to maintain the division of labor within the society. The universities' main function is to produce the numbers of managers, technicians, social workers, teachers, etc. from the working class and lower petty bourgeoisie, and doctors, lawyers, corporate managers, etc., from the bourgeoisie and upper petty bourgeoisie. The draft programme lays this out somewhat.

The other function which is not talked about at all, is that the universities are used as main propagators of bourgeois ideology. As the journal article says, "Schools provide the means for socializing young people into capitalism, promoting bourgeois ideology."

This function is shown clearly in the ruling class' sharp attacks on Black, Puerto Rican, and Women's Studies and progressive faculty across the country. In times of rising struggle of the working class the bourgeoisie can't afford to have classes and teachers, teaching about the true history of oppression, exploitation, and resistance of the American people.

This error of the draft programme comes out in the way mysticism and pleasure-seeking among students after the '60s is explained. Of course the basis was in the fact that no other way to fight and win was being put forward to students, but it was the ruling class that was right there, opening up classes on astrology, touch therapy, witchcraft or whatever. It was the ruling class which promoted stinking.

Who was it who in the main has summed up the lessons of the student struggles in the '60s for students; *the ruling class*. It is the ruling class which tells students that the only way to avoid the oppression and misery that their parents have to face is through a college or high school diploma. This bourgeois ideology doesn't spring up from within students' minds. It is fed to them every day.

The draft programme should also lay out more clearly that students don't become political just because of attacks coming down on campus. The sentences, "Now students are under heavy attack, with budget cutbacks and tuition hikes making it harder and harder to get and stay in school, and the student movement is on the rise again," and "Student struggles around particular campus related demands are also an important part of the fight against imperialism," lend themselves to an economist view.

Both of the sentences are true but not the whole picture. Students are living just like everybody else during an intensifying crisis of imperialism, with all

its aspects of crime, police repression, unemployment, threats of war, etc. When the draft programme states, "But even more than this, the working class encourages and supports the desire of students to fight every manifestation of imperialist rule, in this country and internationally, and recognizes their great contributions in this struggle," this should be brought out more concretely, the mobilizations against police repression, against war in the Middle East, and strike support.

Yet another shortcoming was the lack of analysis about how and why the student movement should be firmly tied to the Revolutionary Workers Movement. The YCL will not just "encourage students to fight other manifestations of imperialism." It will not be building an "independent" student movement. This reflects something of an old period view—petty bourgeois view because it wants to maintain independence.

One last suggestion is that a demand is added for full employment after graduation.

Also, two criticisms of the draft programme's section on youth arose in discussion. In the article in the second journal, "On Student Organizing," an analysis of where youth are coming from is laid out which should be incorporated in the programme. General characteristics of youth include, vitality, innovativeness, enthusiasm and rebelliousness. This is clearly shown in the many spontaneous rebellions in high schools, colleges, and ghettos in which youth have released their anger about their particular oppression.

The whole "youth culture" which developed in the '60s is a part of this rebelliousness. The working class must tap this energy and move it to enthusiasm for fighting for and building socialism because youth in the future must have the experience and political understanding to continue to fight for and build socialism.

These facts, that workers cherish youth and try to teach their children to fight and work for an end to the oppression and exploitation they face, and a part similar to the section in the second journal on the characteristics of youth, should be laid out.

Also, the fact that millions of youth are part of the working class, and therefore face the exploitation the working class lives with, besides the legal inequality, police harassment, etc., should be mentioned. The main base of the future YCL should be among this section of youth.

Something of the program the YCL will be taking up should be laid out here—unemployment with its particular characteristics for youth, police repression, imperialist war. ■

# Three

In "Student Organizing In the New Period" (second journal) the comrades correctly state that "The Young Communist League (YCL) would unite youth wanting to apply Marxism-Leninism to the struggles of the people and sees the need for the leadership of the working class and its party." This YCL is an important transmission belt for the party. It is our duty to build it wherever possible. In addition to being based on proletarian ideology and guided by our party, the party of the proletariat, it must be composed primarily of working class youth.

In their article the comrades shy away from this point. They give lip service to building the YCL in the working class and then make a leap in logic by saying that at this time, the place to build this working class organization is the campus. By doing this they abandon both the battle for the hearts and minds of working class youth and the struggle to build a mass student movement.

The YCL must be a disciplined organization with a mass working class character, but not a party of professional revolutionaries. It must be built in factories, communities, the military, high schools as well as colleges. As Lenin said in "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues" (*Collected Works*, vol. 31, p. 291) "...it should train Communists." The way this is done is by helping the Revolutionary Communist Party bring its programme to the people, and particularly uniting the broad masses of youth around this revolutionary programme.

Lenin further says: "The Young Communist League must be a shock force helping in every job and displaying initiative and enterprise. The League should be an organization enabling any worker to see that it consists of people whose teachings he perhaps does not understand, and whose teachings he may not immediately believe, but from whose practical work and activity he can see that they are really people who are showing him the right road."

The central task of the YCL will be to help imple-

ment the central task of the party; that is, to build the struggle, consciousness and revolutionary unity of the working class.

Why, then, a YCL? Youth are a definable sector of society with their own characteristics, problems and contradictions with imperialism. As Chairman Mao says, "We hope that the local Party organizations in various places will help and work with the Youth League organizations and go into the question of bringing into full play the energy of our youth in particular. The Party organizations should not treat them in the same way as everybody else and ignore their special characteristics."

The special characteristics of youth in our society are rebelliousness, openness to new ideas and willingness to honestly struggle for the truth, total rejection of the hypocrisy and pretense in bourgeois society. Youths are particularly hard hit by chronic unemployment. Many youths out of work and out of school are forced to join the army or fall victim to imperialism's drug plague. Traditionally working class youths have grouped together in "gangs" and "social clubs." In the '30s and '40s the old Party had some isolated successes in working within these structures; we must do better.

The YCL must help the party make UWOC a mass organization of the unemployed, it must help organize working youth in different industries into IWOs and caucuses, help build VVAW and the GI movement, build and win leadership of the mass student movement. The YCL must send youths to work on committees which already exist to fight police repression, defend the foreign born, oppose cutbacks in social services, support struggles for national liberation in different third world countries, etc. It must help build the party press by selling papers in communities, schools, at plant gates and wherever the people gather.

In addition to this, the YCL must do propaganda and agitation to youth around the special oppression they face in our society. According to Chairman Mao, this means "Apart from continuing to act in co-ordination with the Party in its central task, the Youth League should do its own work to suit the characteristics of youth." This means we must win all youth, particularly working class youth, to realize "There is only one path that offers youth a genuine opportunity to put to use its enthusiasm, its innovativeness, its daring and its determination to change the world—proletarian revolution. Here and only here will they genuinely find a life with a purpose." (draft programme, p. 48)

For student work this means the party cadre must win the YCL as a whole to helping it build a permanent campus left. An organization that will unite the active and advanced students on different questions, give leadership to the immediate struggles of students against cutbacks, "university complicity," national and racial discrimination, for financial aid, "progressive" courses and teachers, equality for all women and minority students, "open enrollment," etc., win campus support for the workers movement and the general revolutionary movement.

This organization must be open at both ends; that is, it must include students who just wish to fight for more financial aid or support the just struggle of the Palestinian people for national liberation, as well as those students who want to apply Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung Thought to the overall struggle.

When there is an upsurge, the organization will grow if it gives proper leadership to the struggle. When the struggle is at a low point membership will go into relative decline. But as the organization leads more struggles the "hard core" which has programmatic unity will increase in number and determination. Within this organization the party and the YCL must struggle to win leadership by putting forward programs that meet the needs of the people.

In the 1930s the American Student Union was such an organization, but it was weak and ineffective except on scattered campuses. SDS had the mass character of an organization which took up all the demands of students, but it floundered because it lacked proper communist leadership.

The basis for building this organization already exists in the Revolutionary Student Brigade. It would be opportunist to destroy this existing group by turning it into a College Young Communist League.

The way to build our party's work among students and youth is to build a powerful YCL and a mass Revolutionary Student Brigade. By counterposing one task to the other the comrades prevent us from accomplishing either. The main question is how to build the YCL in the working class and among youth generally, and not what name we give to a student group. ■

# Four

For the past year and a half, our organization has stressed the need for revolutionaries to break sharply with the old period, recognize the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat as principal, and see our practical and theoretical tasks in that new light.

We feel that the Student section of the draft programme (p. 47) doesn't do this. On the one hand, it doesn't give an accurate picture of the student movement of the '60s, and without that, it is unclear how the new period is really different. On the other hand, the draft does not give a guide to action in the new period either, and fails to show students as potential conscious allies of the working class and part of the United Front under proletarian leadership.

To be more specific on these two major points:

The description of the student movement in the old period is compressed into the following few sentences: "...especially since the beginning of the 1960s, struggles of students have had tremendous impact on American society, dealing blows to the ruling class and fueling the revolutionary movement. They took the forefront in the early days of the civil rights movement and the anti-war movement. ...struggles of students and oppressed nationalities forced open admissions and 'third world' or 'ethnic' studies at many schools. ...The upsurge of the student movement ended abruptly in 1970. Students by themselves lacked the consistency and determination to continue the struggle through setbacks and difficulties for a longterm goal."

## "Mechanical Description"

The problem with this history is not just one of "fleshing out." The description is basically mechanical and doesn't show the thrust and significance of the role students played in the '60s. Nor does it explain in clear class terms why the student movement ebbed. Overall, it's an account that bears no real relationship to the key paragraph summarizing the three important contributions which students can make to proletarian revolution.

In these respects (as well as in the right line on future struggles, about which more below), the draft actually takes a step backward from the 1972 "Build the Anti-Imperialist Student Movement" pamphlet, which showed the political deepening and broadening of student struggles during the '60s, as they went from demands for "Ban the Bomb" and peace to militant action against imperialist war and the role of the military in the university, from civil rights protests to active support for Black liberation struggles and the Black Panther Party, from the reformist thrust of early SDS ("speak truth to power") to recognizing the nature of the monopoly capitalist system and the need to overthrow it. This is the dynamic, however unevenly it developed, that explains why the '60s student movement had a "tremendous impact on American society," and it should be summed up accurately in the RCP's programme. That should be followed by a better class analysis of why the student movement came to a temporary halt.

We also want to point out that the second paragraph of this draft section has a veneer of social analysis, referring to "petty bourgeois," "working class," and "oppressed nationality" students, but doesn't make clear what significance the change in the make-up of the student body has. Furthermore, the paragraph as a whole takes a right line on the strength of the bourgeoisie at the time. Although the capitalists' labor needs certainly figured to some degree, the primary aspect is that the bourgeoisie was forced to make concessions in education for political reasons, to convince people that the system could respond to their needs, and to cool out struggle.

The draft section is weak not only in its description of the past but also in its projection of student struggle in the future. Several errors have to be rectified, most important the fact that the future student movement isn't clearly seen as part of the United Front and as an ally of the proletariat. Although there are references to students "aiming their struggle straight at the ruling class," "stronger proletarian leadership," "closer ties with class-conscious workers and working class organizations," and the "participation of communists," the links between the struggles of students and those of the working class are obscure. (The error stems, we think, from an underlying narrow view of student struggles, a view that stands out most sharply in the statement, "Now students are under heavy attack, with budget cutbacks and tuition hikes making it harder to get and stay in school, and the student

movement is on the rise again"—as if to say that only narrow self-interest will tempt students away from their books.)

## Expand the Demands

To correct this serious weakness, the programme should talk about the Marxist-Leninist student-youth organization which has already been proposed (see "Student Organizing" article in the second journal) that will have ties to the party and will take the stand of the class in leading struggles of students and youth on and off the campus. The demands at the end of the section should be expanded to reflect the program proposed for this M-L student-youth organization—i.e., not only cutbacks and war, but also unemployment—with emphasis on the fact that student struggles and "on-campus" demands do not arise in a world apart from the working class but in the same world, as part of the same overall struggle.

Another weakness the final programme should rectify is the depiction of the state of multinational unity in the student movement. While it is true that there has been some positive development and that those ties which exist are stronger because they are based on deeper political unity, as far as we know there haven't been any real breakthroughs in establishing multinational student organizations or multinational alliances among American student organizations. The programme should point to multinational unity among students as an important problem still to be resolved.

One final point. We suggest that the final version of the programme should unify the sections on Students and Youth, using the material in the last three paragraphs of the draft's youth section to help set the context for the discussion of students. This would be more correct, since students are a part of youth; in addition, the point about youth's desire for a life with a purpose will set the stage for a broadened view of student struggles.

In joining the two sections, the youth section's references to "youth culture" should probably be condensed, but in any case placed firmly in the past, for a couple of reasons: first, although the trappings of "youth culture" remain, they are no longer the hallmark only of youth (capitalist marketing has leaped the generation gap); second, and more important, for most young people, "youth culture" is no longer even a fantasy alternative to the capitalist wasteland. ■

# Five

The last issue of the journal saw a proposal for the launching of a student section of a Young Communist League on the campuses to replace the anti-imperialist organization we currently work in. One of the key problems with the Brigade's work was its inability to present students the opportunity to fight for "a life with a purpose." Although primarily composed of youth from the petty bourgeoisie, students, as all youth, are growing up in a society and a system that is tumbling down all around them.

Some students have come to question the existing system through developing an intellectual understanding of the oppressive and exploitative nature of capitalist society, though only feeling a milder dose of this oppression because of their class position. Others have experienced its bestiality directly, especially the large numbers of working class youth who won the right to go to school in the late '60s. Both groups are looking for answers. The Brigade could not provide them. The proposed YCL would be an organization that could.

What is important here to note is the importance of linking very closely the struggle of youth and students—for both groups can be primarily united with, out of their seeing the lack of a future offered most of them in this society. The recognition of the need for a YCL on campuses came out of an examination of the best way to move forward with student organizing in the new period—the period where the principal contradiction is between the bourgeoisie and proletariat—a fact which means that profound change must occur in the nature of the work done in the student movement. This change provides the opportunity to merge many of the struggles of students and youth, such as in the fight against imperialist war or for open admissions.

Therefore, I propose that the sections in the programme on youth and students be combined, recognizing the differences that exist but more importantly recognizing the fundamental similarities between their perspective on capitalist society.

Proposed change: "The Only Future for Youth

Lies in Revolution"

(keep the whole section on youth as it currently exists)

"Students Will Make Many Contributions to the Struggle for Socialism"

"Students are a special section of youth and as such share many of the same contradictions which capitalist society, especially in the lack of opportunity to find a future with a purpose under capitalism. At the same time students possess several unique qualities as a result of their location in the universities.

"Historically students have played an important part in the part against the ruling class in this country. This was especially illustrated in the period 1960-1970, coincidental with the "youth rebellion" when the students of students had a tremendous impact on American society, dealing blows to the ruling class and fueling the revolutionary movement. They took the forefront in the early days of the Civil Rights Movement and the anti-war movement. The student movement of the '60s was marked by the contradictions primary in that period, students involving themselves in supporting a whole number of oppressed groups in society without any but the vaguest of recognitions that oppression was connected in some sort of vague system.

"At the outset of this period the student movement, and students in general were largely drawn from the petty bourgeoisie. Their rebelliousness grew out of the drudgery of a future in 'corporate society.' As a result of the struggle of students and other youth the bourgeoisie was forced by the late '60s to open up higher education more to lower petty bourgeoisie and working class students, open admissions being won in some parts of the country just before the student movement went into a decline in 1970.

"The situation on campus today reflects the situation in society as a whole. Open admissions programs are being attacked, the ruling class dismantling them piece by piece with cutbacks. Petty bourgeois students, as much of the petty bourgeoisie, see how close they are to being pushed down into the working class, have more than ever begun to grind down into their books and study hard. This is because they are still trying to make a future in capitalist society, find a good job, have some security. Many, seeing that there are some fundamental problems with society are looking for answers. Many are cynical and see no future.

"The working class recognizes the importance of the students struggle and in the last few years communists have gone to the campuses to try to rebuild the student movement. Their attempt, however, to rebuild the old student movement 'on a higher level,' an 'anti-imperialist student movement,' has hit many roadblocks.

"What they did not understand was that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was the sharpest struggle in society—affecting and determining all other struggles—including the student movement. The 'anti-imperialist student movement' could not offer to students an alternative, a life with a purpose that all youth are looking for.

"Lenin notes that there are two tasks of communists among students: first to spread communist ideas among them and to combat various opportunist lines, and second to endeavor 'to broaden every democratic student movement, ...and make it more conscious and determined.' The party of the working class must go out among students, lead their struggles and bring to the students the only solution to the dead-end capitalist system—proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

"Students as a group can make important contributions to the struggle for proletarian revolution. First, because they are in an academic atmosphere and have time to study and seek answers to the problems of society, many, especially in the course of struggle, turn to Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, become communist intellectuals, join the party and take this new found weapon to the working class. Second, students as a group can spread struggle and ferment among the people as occurred during the civil rights and anti-war movements. And third their struggles on the campuses in themselves are a vital force in the fight against the monopoly

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# Five...

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capitalists.

"A program of struggle must be built around the attacks on students coming down as a result of the sharpening economic crisis. We must build the fight against tuition hikes, cutbacks, the closing of whole schools, attacks on open admissions, and against the elimination of 'third world' studies programs and other progressive curricula. We must take up the question of unemployment among graduating students as well as dropouts. Also we must build the struggle on campus in opposition to imperialist war. This means education and struggle around the Mideast, Zionism and the superpowers' moves towards war, as well as battles against ROTC, recruiters and war research on campus.

"But even more than this the working class encourages and supports the desire of students to fight every manifestation of imperialist rule and to build a society free of oppression and exploitation." ■

# Six

The Revolutionary Communist Party must have a systematic and scientific understanding of the tasks ahead in student work, and the appropriate forms of organization for that work. That analysis can only be made through a comprehensive and unsparingly critical summing up of the anti-imperialist student movement, and the work of Marxist-Leninists within that movement over the last period.

Unless we correctly understand the strengths and weaknesses of the RSB, the errors that have been made by the Brigade and by communists working within the Brigade and the basis for those errors, we will have a superficial grasp of the problems that exist within our student work and will fall into subjectivism and idealism in our efforts to deal with those problems and to build the student movement under proletarian leadership.

An accurate summation enabling us to see the correct road ahead must be based on broad discussion and struggle among those future party members who have been involved in student work, and within the RSB as a whole.

The article in the last journal "Student Organizing In the New Period," argues for the formation of a Young Communist League (YCL). The article tries to deal with the major problems of student work over the last period, and concludes that those problems are primarily a product of the organizational form of the RSB, which "is neither a scientific Marxist-Leninist organization nor is it a mass organization that involves masses of students in struggle."

Therefore, it is argued, the RSB must be scrapped and a YCL formed. Although "the formation of a YCL will not immediately abolish other problems that exist in student work," it will, the article says, insure that proletarian leadership is provided to the student movement. The RSB is seen as a roadblock to the revolutionary path because it "waters down the ideology of proletarian revolution and blunts the sword of Marxism."

## "Fails To Get Down"

By treating the problems and errors in student work as symptomatic primarily of the RSB as a form of organization, the article fails to get down and deal with the real weaknesses of our work. It opts impatiently and prematurely for a formal and organizational solution, which can be no solution if the "other problems" are not dealt with.

What is called for in the period ahead is a mass national anti-imperialist student organization which can unite broad numbers of students in struggle against the system, and within which RCP cadre must provide proletarian leadership to the struggles of students, and politically develop the most advanced students, winning them over to Marxism-Leninism and the class struggle.

While the RSB has fallen short along these lines in many respects, it can still serve these functions, provided that communists within the Brigade understand their role clearly and correctly apply the mass line, both within the organization and outside of it. To deny that it is possible for communists to provide proletarian leadership within the RSB is to deny that it is possible for them to do so in other mass

organizations which are intermediate between the party and the masses, whether they be IWOs, UWOC, rank and file caucuses, or VVAW/WSO.

The new period is not a magical solution to our problems, and proletarian leadership must not be seen so narrowly as to tie the mass organizations within which the RCP is working so closely to the party that no one will join them, except for party members and their immediate sympathizers. The formation of a YCL at this time would serve to consolidate some of the chief weaknesses of the RSB.

The RSB was initiated as a mass anti-imperialist organization, but there was some confusion in the conception that many people had of the Brigade, some of which is reflected in the journal article. Many people thought of the RSB as an organization of revolutionaries, rather than a revolutionary organization, or did not have a clear grasp of what the difference between the two was.

Naturally mass organizations that communists build should be revolutionary organizations that wage struggles against the system, deepen the consciousness and unity of the masses about the nature of the system and the need for revolution, and bring forward the leadership of the proletariat within the anti-imperialist united front. Nevertheless, mass organizations cannot be confused with the party itself (or pre-party communist organizations in the old period), which is the only organization of professional revolutionaries, guided by Marxism-Leninism, and with a much higher level of political unity, consciousness, discipline and commitment.

The party must provide leadership within the organizations that it works in by voluntarily uniting people around the line it puts forth, and showing the correct way to advance the struggle against the system and to defend the interests of the masses of people.

## Two Types of Errors

The failure to uphold this distinction between mass organizations or communist organizations can lead to two types of errors, which are closely inter-related. Both of these errors apply to the RSB. The first is the error described by the journal article, although it fails to fully grasp it. This is the error of liquidating the independent and leading role of communists within the Brigade. It is the duty of communists to apply Marxism-Leninism to the political struggles and questions that face the mass organizations that they work in, and through the use of the mass line to provide proletarian leadership, and struggle to unite people around the correct line.

Similarly, communists must be able to find their bearings independently to develop politically and ideologically the most advanced non-communists within those organizations, and not to be restricted by formalistic and bureaucratic thinking. The journal article cites the example of Brigade members who were not "allowed" to read Stalin on the national question, because it was not appropriate for Brigade members to study Marxist-Leninist theory. Obviously communists must be able to deal flexibly with situations where it is appropriate for particular members of mass organizations to study more advanced works. They must divide one into two, however, and grasp that mass organizations must not have Marxism-Leninism as a principled level of political unity, so as to exclude less developed people, narrow the base of those organizations, and in fact water down Marxism.

Communists must provide other forms for the most advanced people to develop theoretically and to take up Marxism-Leninism, such as M-L study groups outside of the RSB, which do not alter the mass, or potentially mass, character of the organization.

## Mass Student Movement

The RSB from the beginning has had the potential of becoming an authentically mass organization. As has been periodically summed up by Brigade chapters, there is a widespread mood of cynicism among the masses of students on most campuses. While many students are fed up with the system they feel powerless to fight it, and easily fall prey to various forms of escapism.

The material basis exists for a mass student movement, which is a fighting force against the system in its own right, as well as a source of cadre and support for the revolutionary workers movement, and revolutionary movements around the world. Colleges and universities are no longer the elite institutions that they once were, and there are many students from working class backgrounds on campuses today.

In addition, with greatly increased numbers of college graduates pouring out of schools, the professional, semi-professional, technical and managerial jobs that they had been trained for do not exist. As a result a college diploma these days means very little. It is increasingly apparent to large numbers of

students that the system doesn't work.

It is up to communists to take the scattered and unsystematic ideas of students and concentrate them, showing that it's the system of monopoly capitalism that is the enemy, and the multinational working class that is leading the fight against that system. The RCP needs a national mass organization that can galvanize the students that are just coming into motion against the system into a fighting force. The best way to bring proletarian ideas to students in a real and living way is to involve them in militant struggles against the monopoly capitalists. We need an organization that will directly involve masses of students in struggle. The RSB can still become such an organization.

## "Combat Narrow Outlook"

In order to build the RSB as an organization that will attract masses of students, it will be necessary to combat the narrow outlook that has existed within the Brigade. Many Brigade chapters have fallen into a small group outlook, making it difficult for new and less-developed students to join, and failing to get out and really take our politics to the students.

There has been a real failure to apply the mass line to the struggles that the Brigade has tried to build, in accordance with the concrete conditions on the campuses. The Brigade paper, *Fight Back*, for example, has not been written in the common, popular style of students, but in a condescending, simplistic and stereotyped way. As such it has been virtually useless as an organizing tool or a form of mass propaganda.

There has not been a consistent and concentrated effort to link up with the fragmented ideas of students and to deepen their understanding of the imperialist system. The narrow and bureaucratic outlook of the RSB was apparent in the April 19th demonstrations against imperialist war, and in support of the struggles of the Indochinese and Palestinian peoples, and against the two superpowers. The decisions to build these demonstrations as regional actions which all Brigade chapters were to help build was hastily and bureaucratically made, without much understanding of the concrete conditions in many areas where Brigade chapters were taking up the fight against cutbacks and tuition hikes as their primary area of work.

The propaganda for the demos was long on rhetoric and short on analysis, and couldn't possibly mobilize those students who weren't already convinced that the imperialist system was "disgusting" and that the two superpowers' contention for Europe made the danger of world war imminent. Thus at a time when the victory of the Indochinese and the defeat of the imperialists could have been used to popularize an understanding of the system among large numbers of students and to bring them into motion against the system, the RSB demos were fairly small and inconsequential. There was no thorough-going critical summation of the mistakes made around these actions.

## Organizational Primitiveness

In general the RSB has been marred by a fair degree of organizational primitiveness, which has hindered its work. It should be kept in mind, here in particular, that the RSB is a young organization, and that many of these problems can be rectified if they are recognized. The National Office (NO) has not served to communicate the various struggles that the Brigade chapters have been involved in, and to put forward the lessons of those struggles, strengths, weaknesses, tactics, slogans, etc.

Rather, the NO has tended to offer superficial and simplistic formulas, like "build these struggles in a revolutionary, and not a reformist, way," without pointing out concretely how that could be done, what that meant, and which RSB chapters had been doing it successfully.

In addition, the RSB has fallen into the error of raising its level of political unity beyond what would be consistent with a mass student organization at this point. The organization decided to take a position on the two superpowers, but the national leadership was careful to point out that that position should not be a highly developed one that dealt with the nature of Soviet society, but one that dealt with the role of the USSR in the world.

The position that was decided on, as elaborated by the NO, affirmed that capitalism had been restored in the Soviet Union, and that it was bound by the same laws of development as the U.S. This is a position that few Brigade members really grasped, let alone had the ability to defend, and one that new people coming into the RSB would be unclear on. The NO held that this was not too developed a position for the RSB, and that the Brigade would increasingly take highly developed positions on other questions.

The overall thrust of the RSB throughout the year has been to narrow the organization, tending toward a federation of small nuclei of fairly com-

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# Six...

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mitted students on many campuses, rather than to broaden it and reach out to large numbers of students to make it the spearhead of a mass student movement.

The two-into-one character of the RSB has been manifested in the liquidation of the independent role of communists, and a general narrowing of the potentially mass character of the Brigade, by failing to grasp and utilize the mass line both inside and outside of the organization, thereby making the RSB inaccessible to large numbers of students.

This weakness has indeed been at the root of many of the Brigade's problems. A YCL, however, while it would solve the problem of the independent role of communists, would exaggerate those tendencies toward narrowness and isolation from the masses of students that have existed in the RSB. YCL chapters at this point in time would necessarily be small in membership, limited in the number of students that they could attract, and hard-pressed to really go to the students and build struggles in a broad way.

There is a need for an intermediary organization for students who are first coming into motion against the system, but not yet won over to Marxism-Leninism, or the need for proletarian leadership. The junking of the RSB and the formation of a YCL would cut the party off from those students who would much more readily join an RSB which had rectified its tendency toward narrowness.

The RSB would therefore allow closer on-going ties between communists and the masses of students, and would strengthen, rather than hinder, our ability to provide proletarian leadership to student struggles.

There must be an on-going organizational relationship that communists have to students who get involved in a particular struggle, but are not ready to make the leap to Marxism-Leninism. Ad hoc mass organizations built around specific issues would not serve this function. A YCL at this point would insure proletarian leadership in a formal sense internally, but would by no means guarantee that the masses of students would acknowledge that leadership. A no-holds barred communist analysis could be provided by the independent presence of the RCP on campuses.

## "Get-Rich-Quick Mentality"

The willingness to discard the RSB so prematurely, with no serious effort at the rectification of the weaknesses of the organization and the work of communists within it, represents a "get-rich-quick mentality" which is more characteristic of a petty bourgeois than a proletarian outlook.

We should not assume that things will remain static, that because masses of students have not been attracted to the RSB in its first year the Brigade cannot attract masses of students in the future. The RSB can be a qualitative leap over SDS, but still retain many of the positive aspects of SDS—getting hundreds of thousands of students involved in militant struggle against the system and taking its politics to the students in an imaginative and creative way.

With the formation of the RCP, a mass student organization would have a much better chance of having mature, stable, and correct proletarian leadership. The rise of the spontaneous student movement as seen in struggle over cutbacks, tuition, and ethnic studies at schools like Michigan, CCNY, Brown, Brandeis and Santa Barbara calls for a programmatic approach that can unite the thousands of students already on the move in militant struggle against the system as a whole.

If the YCL is conceived as an organization primarily of working class youth, it would be a mistake to launch it now as a student organization, if there is no basis for it within the working class at this time. To do so would tend to stamp the YCL as a student organization, would determine its orientation, its program, and its main area of work, and would make building an organization of working class youth that much more difficult.

There needs to be more discussion of the reason for a separate youth organization, seeing youth as a distinct social group with special needs and demands. It is clear that many young people have come directly into the communist movement without need for a preparatory stage. Are the problems of working class and student youth more alike because they are all young people, or more different, because of their differing social positions?

Further historical analysis of the YCL in this coun-

try is also called for. Most evidence would indicate that the YCL never really became a mass organization, and that its membership always lagged way behind that of the CPUSA. Whether this was the product of particular errors made in YCL work in the '30s, or the YCL as a form of organization, must be carefully determined.

It is clear that the significance of students as an anti-imperialist force and as a source of cadre for the party of the proletariat has altered considerably since the '30s. The formation of a YCL should await thorough investigation of these questions, the creation of the party itself and a systematic attempt to correct the errors in Brigade work. The RSB is the best vehicle to build the anti-imperialist student movement under proletarian leadership in the immediate period ahead. ■

# Seven

When we started building the Revolutionary Student Brigade it was because our analysis said that's what the proletariat needed of students at that time. So to open the struggle around the "YCL proposal" in the last journal, we've got to ask two questions: 1) Was that analysis correct or incorrect at that time? 2) Have the conditions that led to that position changed enormously in the new period?

That initial analysis was run down in the RU pamphlet *Build the Anti-Imperialist Student Movement*, and in the draft programme we repeated why communists organize students; what we and our class hopes to gain from it. "Students make three important contributions to the struggle for proletarian revolution. First, because they have the opportunity to study and seek answers to the problems of society, many, especially in the course of struggle, turn to Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, become communist intellectuals, join the party of the working class, which, in grasping this science, can change the world. Second, students as a group spread the struggle against imperialism and revolutionary ferment among the masses of people, as was the case with the civil rights and anti-war movements. And third, their struggles in themselves are a vital force in the fight against the monopoly capitalists." (p. 47)

Was this true in '72? Yes: The beginnings of our organization come out of SDS; as the draft programme points out, student anti-war demonstrations spread a hatred of the Vietnam war to most sectors of the population, and student rebellion has inflicted real defeats on U.S. imperialism (cut short the Cambodia invasion, for instance).

Are these formulations still true? Well, we still recruit many of our cadre from the campuses, the Throw the Bum Out struggle contributed to the general consciousness that the system can't work, and student struggle has defeated the educational cuts that the ruling class is trying to push now. So, yeah, the formulation was true, and still is.

## Contributions to the Struggle

Now why is this important? Because it's important to understand that "their struggles in themselves are a vital force in the fight against the monopoly capitalists." (emphasis added) Students, as students, fighting in their own interests make contributions to the struggle for socialism. If students *couldn't* engage in struggles in their own interest that are objectively anti-imperialist, then the main thing that the working class would want from the campuses would be subjective support.

But that's not the situation. And so long as students can and do inflict real blows on the capitalist class by fighting their fights, it'd be a negation of the United Front to say that the only way students can be revolutionaries is to come out in favor of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that the unity of the revolutionary mass student organization that we build should be ideological instead of programmatic. (This is the line of the "left" Trots, and the dogmatists, not of the proletariat.)

But the article in the last journal had other reasons for building a YCL-type organization on campus in place of the Brigade. The article put out that a YCL is the best type of organization to lead student struggle in this period. And it mentioned a number of good reasons, weaknesses of the Brigade, such as Brigade leadership leading to "third ideologyism," negation of communist leadership, and paper "second level organizations." This is all true.

But before we conclude that a YCL-type group would therefore fill these gaps, let's check out what

the old YCL was. We can't just say "the party had a YCL, so the Party needs one." We have to ask a couple of questions: 1) Why did the proletariat need a YCL? 2) Are the conditions that created that need still around today? And as background to the first, we need some history.

## What Was the YCL?

The YCL was the American section of the Young Communist International (YCI). It was organizationally independent of the CPUSA. It was tied by democratic-centralism to the YCI, which was organizationally independent of the Comintern, but followed its political leadership. It was a mass organization of young workers, based on factory nuclei. And according to the *Programme of the YCI*, the YCL is "the leader of the whole toiling youth."

So we can see that the YCL, like the Brigade, was an organization fraught with internal contradictions. (As *Red Papers 6* points out, any revolutionary organization that doesn't put out the line of the proletariat must be said to be putting out bourgeois ideology, if we look at it statically. It's when we view the organizations as things in transition, as conveyor belts toward the party, that they get a revolutionary character.)

Anyway, the YCL wasn't a fully fleshed proletarian organization: It operated under democratic-centralism, but it was a mass organization. It was the "class organization of working youth" (*Programme of the YCI*) but it wasn't the party. As a matter of fact, that contradiction raised a serious problem, serious enough that the *Programme of the YCI* devotes quite a bit of space to it: "The YCL opposes the idea of 'youth syndicalism', which considers that an independent and isolated struggle of the working youth is possible. The YCL is a part of the Communist movement as a whole. The CP is the leader of the Communist movement and the entire working class; there cannot be dual leadership, or the existence of two different Communist Parties."

So when the old YCL was formed, the proletariat knew and understood the contradiction. It was *not* advocating "constituency parties" like the OL seems to.

So why did the proletariat need a YCL? What gave rise to such an odd thing as a "mass democratic-centralist organization"? Well in that period, the majority of young people from the working class were workers, kids of 15 were working in the shops. And the Party knew that these kids were a hotbed of seething class hatred, but at the same time were still kids—lacking in the dedication and self-sacrificingness of communists. So that Party had an age limit of 18, but also needed some form of organization that could unite with toiling youths' desire for life with a purpose and still retain "A definite youthful character (one adapted to and understandable by the youth)." (*Programme of the YCI*) And so the general task of the YCL was education, it was a training ground for communists.

## Conditions Still Exist?

Now we should applaud the Party's ability to come up with such an organization, that while riddled with internal contradiction, answered *exactly* the proletariat's needs at that time. But we also have to ask whether the conditions that gave rise to the YCL still exist. No. Large numbers of the children of the working class are students, the issues of working youth are basically the same as the interests of the whole class and can best be formulated by the RCP, and chances are we won't set an age limit of 18 for Party membership (based on the previous experience of our organization).

And for these very reasons, the YCL proposal doesn't see the new YCL as an organization based on factory nuclei (at least at this time) but a student group instead. The proposal says we need communist leadership on the campuses, which is true. But would a YCL, an organizational form riddled with contradictions that *don't* answer the needs of this period, provide that communist leadership? No. The organizational form that is best equipped to provide communist leadership on the campuses (and in every sector of society) is the RCPUSA, the class organization of the whole U.S. proletariat.

It is only the party that can come up with a fighting program for students, because only the party can correctly apply the science of Marxism-Leninism. (And that's why the old YCL followed the leadership of the Party, even though it was organizationally independent.) What we need to get communist leadership into the struggles of students is a more open role for our party. We have to take up the complicated job of building mass organizations, but bringing out the understanding that only our party can lead.

How do we bring out that understanding—how does the proletariat gain leadership in the student move-

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ment? Do we simply declare proletarian leadership? Comrade Avakian spoke to this question in one of the speeches reprinted in *On Building The Party of the U.S. Working Class and the Struggle Against Dogmatism and Reformism* (on the slogan, "Black workers take the lead" within the Black liberation movement): "And the RU argued no, because in the Black liberation struggle we felt it promoted sectarianism toward non-working class strata who had to be united with. Even though, we stated and we stressed, as all communists recognize, that it is absolutely necessary to fight for proletarian leadership and to develop the working masses of Black people as the main force in the Black liberation struggle, still that is not won by declaring it but by winning it in practice and building it in practice." (pp. 17-18)

Isn't the same thing basically true in the student movement? The proletariat can't gain leadership of the United Front by declaring it. It has to be fought for, *inside* by basic mass organizations of students. And to build an organizational form that doesn't leave room for the struggle for working class leadership within it is to declare proletarian leadership by fiat. Which isn't the method of the proletariat because it's subjective idealism.

The class struggle in society is reflected in the class struggle within revolutionary organizations. Which means that it would be artificial for the basic mass organization of revolutionary students to be united around the dictatorship of the proletariat long before sizable portions of the United Front had achieved that unity. And history teaches us that unity is achieved on the eve of proletarian revolution. Which isn't on the slate right now.

Yeah, it would be very easy to change the Brigade into some kind of YCL. About 95% of the

membership is already united around proletarian leadership. But Marxist-Leninists don't decide what path to take on the basis of what's easy—the capitalist road is always easier. So what is the future of the student movement? What does the proletariat need?

Well, in the old period the student movement built its struggles under the banner of the Black liberation movement. This was because the Black liberation struggle was the driving force to all fights against the U.S. monopoly capitalists at that time, the principal contradiction in the U.S. was between U.S. imperialism and the Black nation. Today the principal contradiction is between U.S. imperialism and the U.S. working class. And we must build struggle on that basis, unfolding all fights against the capitalists under the banner of the working class.

The RSB's weakness as an independent organization comes right out of that. We recognized that we could no longer build student struggles behind the main drive of Black liberation, and so tried to build them independent. And to build them independent of the new main force (the working class) is to build them independent of reality.

We need an organizational form that subjectively recognizes that the struggles of the working class are pushing forward and laying the basis for all other fights at this time. We need that because it enables us to answer the questions that students are asking, and side step the independence that leads to third-ideology. But we don't need an organization that also recognizes that the fight between the working class and the capitalists is the fundamental contradiction, because this would negate the United Front, eliminate the struggle for proletarian leadership within the student movement, and in the long run eliminate real communist leadership on campus.

We have got to recognize that the fact that the principal and fundamental contradictions are now the same means that we are in a better position than ever to move forward toward proletarian revolution, but it doesn't mean we should that we're on the eve of doing them in.

**Forward to the Party!**

**Struggle for Proletarian Leadership in the Student Movement! ■**

# On the Section on Socialism And Communism

## One

"A Rewrite of 'Life Under Socialism,' " in the second journal, is politically and ideologically incorrect. Although the stated intention of the authors is to "sufficiently reflect that it is the efforts of the working class and its allies that actually build socialism" and to keep from portraying socialism "as a static opposite of capitalism," they accomplish neither of their goals. Neither the role of the masses nor the fact that "Although socialism is not yet full communism, it is a tremendous advance over capitalism, and opens the road to communism" (draft programme, p. 9) comes through.

This is owing to two reasons; one, the orientation of the authors is basically petty bourgeois; and two, the fact that socialism is both a tremendous advance over capitalism and opens the road to communism is not grasped.

In the introduction to the rewrite, we are told that socialism has a great deal in common with capitalism, and we are told that Chairman Mao said so. This emphasis is quite a bit different than the original, which says that socialism is a tremendous advance over capitalism, and opens the road to communism. What is the reason for this difference?

For one thing, this is not China, where the working class has power, and the task is to maintain and strengthen its power. This is the United States, where the working class does not have power and its task is to achieve it. Therefore, what should be emphasized, and what is emphasized in the original, is the achieving of that task.

Furthermore, what Chairman Mao did say was this: "China is a socialist country. Before liberation, she was more or less like capitalism. Even now she practices an eight-grade wage system, distribution to each

according to his work and exchange by means of money, which are scarcely different from those in the old society. What is different is that the system of ownership has changed." "Our country at present practices a commodity system, and the wages system is unequal too, there being the eight-grade wage system, etc. These can only be restricted under the dictatorship of the proletariat." (*Peking Review* No. 10, 1975, "On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique")

Socialism is the *system of ownership* of the working class. This is what the authors are criticizing when they criticize "socialism will" in the original. The way this ownership is developed, strengthened and consolidated—towards communism—is through the form of rule of the proletariat—the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the continuation of class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The role of the Communist Party is not that it rules or owns, but that it leads the masses, arms the masses with the correct line for accomplishing the above.

Understanding this profoundly is what enables one to understand that socialism is both a tremendous advance over capitalism and that it opens the road to communism, though it is not full communism. Failing to understand this gets the authors into some hot water.

### Question of Conscious Struggle

For example, the reason why the working class, with the leadership of its party, takes up the struggle to know the whole production process is most definitely not so that their pride in their work will be enhanced. That would be incredible and self-centered and why would they bother!! The reason is so that the working class can in fact rule, can run production in the interests of society and all humanity, can revolutionize all society and liberate the productive forces. This is a *conscious struggle on the part of the working class*, with the leadership of its party, against the bourgeoisie.

This "knowledge" which the authors say "will let" workers feel pride in their work, and which they say is the "summation of the direct experience of the working class in production," (my emphasis), is sup-

posed to enable the workers themselves to organize production rationally and constantly improve it. Look as one may, he will find no element of rule and ownership in this. Why?

What characterizes the struggle of the working class, in every sphere, including production, is the contradiction between itself and the bourgeoisie. The authors emphasize the struggle for production, but they do not understand that the *class struggle* with the bourgeoisie (old exploiting classes, international capital, and newly engendered bourgeois forces) is what determines everything else. They emphasize the struggle with nature in the introduction to the rewrite as well, when they say "Socialism is a *transition period*, characterized not only by class struggle (which is dealt with on the ideological level in the subsection 'The Struggle for Communist Society'), but also by the struggle with nature to constantly transform society and move it to a higher level."

They do not understand why the correct slogan, expressing the relationship between the class struggle and the struggle for production, is "Grasp Revolution, Promote Production." They wind up implicitly taking the same line as Liu Shao-chi in China, who insisted that the principal contradiction in China was "between the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces of society." He did this in order to cover up the contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie, to disarm the working class, so as to affect a restoration and revisionism.

The authors do not understand that the actual rule and ownership of the working class is necessary. This is indicated to us once again in their criticisms of the original when it says: "The pride that workers have in their work will be unhindered by any sense that they are working themselves, or someone else, out of a job, or that they are being driven to produce for the private benefit of some money-bags, under the orders of his foreman and the constant threat of being fired."

Our authors rewrite this to say: "Nor will work be the boring, grinding hell it is under capitalism. Workers need no longer slave endlessly to keep their heads above water—only to wind up enriching capital

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so it can further enslave the working class. Under socialism every drop of sweat will go to make a better life and a better future for the workers, their kids, and all of society. *Knowing* that they cannot work themselves or someone else out of a job, that their work is not filling the pockets of some money-bags, *will let* workers feel pride in their work without hindrance. This will be enhanced because workers will not be performing some isolated task—all workers will understand the whole production process of which they are a part and how the work they are doing fits into society as a whole." (my emphasis)

To the authors of the rewrite, it is evidently impossible for workers to feel pride in their work under capitalism, and according to them, production is not socialized under capitalism, after all, but consists of "isolated tasks." Furthermore, it is "knowledge" that private appropriation and anarchy isn't going on that changes this, according to the rewrite, though this is put very subtly. Still the emphasis is crystal clear.

The original recognizes the contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation in fact, and as perceived by the workers themselves. The original emphasizes, furthermore, that the ownership and rule of the working class changes this, that *it is so* that wealth is not privately appropriated, as opposed to "knowledge" in the abstract.

## Role of the Class

The role of the working class, through its own system of ownership and its own form of rule, in revolutionizing all of society, is cut out of the rewrite in a number of ways. The most glaring is in the 15th paragraph, where the authors say:

"Like all specialists, they [medical workers] will be politically educated and supervised by the working class to keep foremost the principle that the lives of the workers are the most valuable of all of society's resources."

The original says: "They will be politically educated and supervised by the working class and *learn* to value the lives of workers as the most valuable of all society's resources." (my emphasis)

There is a world of difference here. The specialists will be educated and supervised—on this there is agreement. But *will they learn?* In other words, should the working class only use specialists, or should it use and remold them?

The answer of the Chinese proletariat to Liu Shao-chi was the latter, for just this "nuance" of difference turned out to be a difference between two roads in China. Why? Because when you state implicitly or even unconsciously that they will not learn, you are saying that the proletariat cannot revolutionize all of society, that its alliance with other classes is only tactical, and that communism is impossible.

If you wish to say that, no one can stop you. But what you are left with is the idea that the Communist Party rules and owns, and not the working class, and you have restoration and revisionism. You have the petty bourgeoisie riding to power on the back of the working class, since it is impossible to "make it" under imperialism.

Another example of the same thing is the fact that the only time the authors deal with the contradiction between mental and manual labor, which must be done away with in order to achieve communism, is to say: "socialist education will break down the differences between mental and manual labor, training all workers and particularly the youth to combine them."

Again, we have a subtle difference from the original (but that is all that is required). The original says: "Socialist education will *help* develop workers who are capable of combining mental and manual labor." (my emphasis)

Education alone cannot do this, for there is a material, as well as an ideological basis for this contradiction. At the same time, it is crucial, from the beginning, using all the means at hand (and the educational system is only one of them) to begin to break down this contradiction materially and ideologically, in the economic base, as well as the superstructure. The original puts it in its proper perspective.

Another example, which gets us to the question of orientation in a sharp way, is the way the rewrite presents the problem of ending national inequalities. The rewrite says that to do this is a "crucial part of building the new life of socialism." The original introduces the question differently. It says, "With *state power and the ownership of the means of production in its hands*, the working class will take up the ending of all inequalities between nationalities

as a crucial part of building socialism." (my emphasis)

There is no disagreement in this particular section that it is necessary, in regard to all the ulcers left over from capitalism, including national inequalities, to obliterate them materially and ideologically, for the rest of the paragraph is almost verbatim the same as the original.

But once again, and it runs throughout the rewrite, the question of first achieving ownership of the means of production and rule is viewed as unimportant. This is evidently too static for our authors. This relates back to the criticism they make of "socialism will" in the introduction.

I would like to ask the authors of the rewrite a specific question: Does the working class have state power and the ownership of the means of production under socialism—and is the essence of the socialist transition period to *strengthen* working class rule and ownership and advance to communism—or does the working class simply *strive to gain* rule during the socialist transition period! In fact the socialist period *begins* with the rule of the working class and the working class' *first* crucial step upon seizing power is to socialize ownership of the major means of production. Without this state power and ownership there can be no socialism and no advance to communism—this is exactly what the rewrite is wiping out here, despite any other references to this.

## "Reflects Something More"

The effect of the change, in my opinion, reflects something more, however. Throughout the rewrite the way socialism is presented is as a static opposite to capitalism—and on the basis that under capitalism life is terrible, and under socialism life is groovy. It follows that if you want a good life, a new life, you have to fight national inequality.

It was not too many years ago that one could gain a following in the movement by standing up to say about the working class, "Those beer drinking, color tv watching slobs will never make revolution." This rewrite is nothing but a warmed over version, made somewhat more "respectable," of the same thing.

It is true that life will be good and getting better all the time under socialism, and if it were not so, why bother anyway! However, when you give undue emphasis to this, what you are saying is that socialism must be *sold* to the working class on the basis of its immediate needs. You are saying comrades, that only communists have largeness of mind, are capable of dealing with emancipating all of mankind, and are capable of ruling and owning. You are saying that the Communist Party will do that—until the workers catch up!

Just look where this leads you. We have the capitalists, on the one hand, who are cold-hearted, grasping parasites, using the "very organs of dead working people" (good lord!), having a lifeless and sterile culture (selling each other "pictures of soup cans"!), and work is a boring grinding hell. Then we have the working class, creative and co-operative, having dreams and aspirations, imagination and will (and their kids can go to school under socialism). Big deal. Isn't it all an outrage.

And then we have the ultimate! Paragraph two tells us there is a way society "*should be*." As far as I know, the working class with its advanced detachment, is not going in for utopianism? There is a way society could be and will be. But this "should be" stuff is nothing but some petty bourgeois moral outrage and longing for the past when it was possible to "make it" into the bourgeoisie.

Whether we think we have to sell the working class socialism on the basis of immediate needs, on the basis of bread and butter and a groovy life, is not just a question that arises once the working class has achieved state power and ownership of the means of production. Today it is the dividing line between whether we truly represent the proletariat, whether we truly believe that the proletariat is the only thoroughly revolutionary class in this country, and whether we rely on the working class, unite with the masses of workers in struggle and lead them forward toward the goal of *proletarian* revolution.

**Forward to the Party...Struggle for the Party...of the proletariat!!** ■

# Two

We feel it is important to strengthen the section, "The Working Class Will Transform All of Society," by adding after the first sentence, this one: "Making ownership of the means of production public, the working class lays the basis for eliminating any form of exploitation, oppression or class rule. At the same time it begins to create the conditions for production to leap ahead—now unfettered from the capitalist relations that have held it in check. All social relations and ideas flow out of the basic way men are organized to produce their everyday need. Upon the basis of transforming the relations between men and production it is possible for the working class to struggle to transform all of society. Changing the relations of men to production lays the groundwork for socializing all relations between men and men and building a co-operative society in which men work in harmony for the betterment of all."

We added this paragraph because we felt the draft programme didn't stress enough the material, scientific BASIS for the working class being able to transform all of society. These ideas were present in other sections of the draft programme (p. 4, 7, 15) but we felt it was important that they be in the section on Socialism and Communism.

The point isn't to negate the role of revolution in the superstructure, or to make it seem everything flows automatically (even complete transformation of the ownership of the means of production; but it is important to show workers a scientific materialist explanation of how the rotten system we now live under can be completely transformed. Not a utopian plan or vision, not a society that is better because we struggle with people to be better people, or because our party is in power—but an understanding of why socialism is a step toward resolving the material and social contradictions that make capitalism so oppressive.

At the same time we feel the section on "The Struggle for Communist Society" could be improved by adding the fact that the bourgeoisie doesn't reemerge just on the basis of small scale producers (private ownership of some means of production) but also on the basis of bourgeois right in the sphere of distribution. Economically as well as culturally, socialism is a transition between communism and capitalism and is marked with the scars of the society it came from. ■

# Three

Both the draft and the "rewrite" of "Life Under Socialism" miss the point, but the rewrite misses it twice. Socialism is a qualitative change over all previous forms of society. In this, it is *not* wrong to present a vision of socialism. We are not making proletarian revolution so that we can continue THE STRUGGLE, although certainly class struggle continues—even intensifies—under socialism. We are making revolution to *change reality*. It is this change in the real world, in the mode of production, which is left out in both versions.

Because both the rewrite and draft do not draw the vision out of its economic base, the whole tone of it comes out as the nice workers vs. the nasty capitalists.

Where the draft talks about anarchy, crises and unemployment, it leans in the direction of planning being the key. This is incorrect. The transition from capitalism to communism (socialism) moves more and more to eliminating commodity production (that is, producing for use value, the needs of humanity, than for exchange value). It is exactly this process which makes planning *possible*. Otherwise, planning would simply be the attempts of the bourgeoisie to maintain its position—like the U.S. or Soviet Union.

The section "Life Under Socialism" should be rewritten or edited to bring out what socialism looks like in daily life based on a Marxist-Leninist understanding—not only to present the vision, but to show the possibility, more, the inevitability of socialism. It is not up to fate or the good will of the working class that we wind up with socialism or social imperialism. The working class wants to know—and it is the duty of its vanguard to lead the way. ■

# Five

We would like to make some criticisms of the way that the section on socialism and communism is dealt with in the draft programme.

The problem as we see it is that the section did not present a thorough-going materialist view in an integrated way (linking theory with practice). It didn't explain the material basis for the proletariat seizing state power and building socialism. The tasks, problems and goals in doing that and in exercising its dictatorship were dealt with separate from what life is like under socialism.

The way it was written mechanically separates the tasks of the working class in building socialism ("The Working Class Will Transform All of Society") and the struggle to build communism ("The Struggle for Communist Society") from what life is like under socialism ("Life Under Socialism"). Are not the tasks of building socialism part of life under socialism? And socialism moving forward IS the struggle for communist society.

We will attempt to go through the section on socialism and communism and try to point out what we think are the errors and how they can be rectified, particularly focusing on the "Life Under Socialism" section.

## Question of Why

First, the draft programme did not lay out *why* capitalism in creating a socialized means of production and a socialized working class lays the *basis for socialism*. On p. 7 the draft programme briefly skims through the history of society up to capitalism and then says, "And now it is the turn of the proletariat to overthrow the capitalist system and build a completely new kind of society." Then it goes on to say that the struggle for production and science and the class struggle is the reason for progress but that the development of the proletariat under capitalism makes it possible for the working class to rule...but it never breaks that down for the masses to understand. What about the development of the proletariat under capitalism makes it possible for the working class to rule?

At the same time it doesn't give a fully scientific presentation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its tasks. "...the dictatorship of the proletariat represents the rule of the majority over the minority. It makes possible for the first time real democracy and political power for the masses of people. And its purpose is not to enforce exploitation, to allow one class to live parasitically off another, but to end all exploitation and create a community of working people, without class distinction." (p. 8)

While this characterization is generally correct, it doesn't hit at the heart of the matter. The dictatorship of the proletariat can eliminate exploitation and provide real democracy not simply because it's the rule of the majority (though that's true in this country). The social ownership by the working class of the socialized means of production is the economic basis for the political rule of the working class and that rule is what is pushing progress forward under socialism. (If it was simply a case of majority rule, then in China you would have the dictatorship of the peasants, not of the proletariat.)

Thus, we must go back and look to see if we are really explaining things to the masses, or are we talking to ourselves, and are we giving to the working class the most clear and scientific understanding of the material basis for revolution and socialism so they will see it as a real thing—not something concocted out of our heads? And so that they can use that understanding to change the world?

## Delete Section

The last section, "The Struggle for Communist Society," talks mainly about some of the ideological baggage that socialism inherits from capitalism and the ideological struggle that needs to go on, the need for the proletariat to take an internationalist stand, particularly regarding former U.S. colonies. It also deals with the struggle against revisionism by dealing with capitalist restoration in the USSR and by talking about the Cultural Revolution in China. This must be gone into (through those examples) more deeply.

But these questions reflect the class struggle which goes on under socialism and should be brought out as such. Therefore this section should be deleted as it presently stands and its contents should be merged with "The Working Class Will Transform All of Society" and "Life Under Socialism."

Socialism is a transition period from capitalism to communism. Classes still exist and this period is marked by fierce class struggle, both in the ideologi-

cal realm and in the struggle for production and scientific development. This class struggle is waged not only against the overthrown bourgeoisie, but against classes (like the petty bourgeoisie) that give rise to the bourgeoisie, and "bourgeois right"—which also give rise to capitalism; and in how the proletariat draws non-proletarian strata into the working class.

The ability of the dictatorship of the proletariat to wipe out class distinctions, inequalities, etc. must be viewed in the context of what is the overall development of production and the consciousness of the masses, for moving into communism is moving from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, and is bound by objective reality.

The "Life Under Socialism" section in the draft programme did not bring out the struggle, but only brought out the improved conditions of the working class (nor did it bring out that the working class can do this because it's a socialized class owning the means of production socially). The working class cannot gain those conditions without a fierce struggle. This is not a separate ideological question as the draft programme makes it, but part of the day to day lives of the masses under socialism. The draft programme talks about the need to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat—bring it out—how does it happen?

It should be brought out around particulars drawing from our understanding of what kinds of struggles have taken place in Russia, China, Albania, etc.

For example, the draft programme states that the nature of work will change; that is true but that is through fierce two-line struggle; i.e., should the manager work, what kind of pay differentials should there be, who makes decisions, how, what about material incentives, what line builds socialism, what line leads to capitalism, how should a thing be produced, etc.

It is through these struggles plus the struggle of the working class to produce, grappling with the obstacles and experimenting to overcome them (which he is able to do because he is no longer an appendage to a machine and a means to make somebody rich). It is through these struggles that the initiative of the workers is released, that the worker finds joy and pride in his work, etc.

## Question of Education

Or take education. Although the draft programme correctly compares bourgeois education to socialist education, it is a rather one-sided, static view of education. The draft programme fails to bring out the motive force behind why education will be different, and also the fact that there is fierce class struggle in fulfilling every goal the draft programme mentions (cooperation, equality, etc.)

The draft programme should say that the role of education changes because the society will be run in the interests of the masses of people. If the means of production are owned collectively by the working class, then advances in science, technology, etc. can benefit society as a whole. Bourgeois education disseminates its ideology and creates different privileged strata necessary for the maintenance of capitalism. So skill and education lays a basis for privilege.

Is education a privilege to advance an individual's position in society or will the education be used to advance the level and lives of the people in society? Who will go to school—the petty bourgeoisie or will it be the people with the broadest view, from the working class more in touch with how their education is needed? Will education be confined to a classroom behind closed doors, or will it be integrated with the daily lives of the people, tackling the real problems in the world and learning from the experience of the masses?

The draft programme must draw these lines out of the particular conditions, link the lines to classes, show how one leads to socialism and communism and the other to revisionism, and bring out how the workers and their party fight day to day to build socialism and prevent restoration.

How about instead of using the title "Life Under Socialism" we use something else like "Socialist Construction" or "The Struggle for Socialism"?

Also, though I didn't think that the rewrite in the journal really got to the problem, it did have a much more lively and down to earth style. ■

# Four

The Programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party (U.S.A.) should contain within the second section (Socialism and Communism) a sub-section on socialism as it has been fought for and won in many parts of the world. The section should primarily be a guide to action for the U.S. working class by putting forth how we use what has been learned from the direct experience of others, both in their successes and failures, and apply this knowledge to our own party (both internally and externally) and to the day to day revolutionary struggles of the working class.

It would concretize much of the programme (by drawing out how what the programme talks about has been used successfully or how the failure to do certain things has set back things) and would especially serve to support the rest of the section on Socialism and Communism. What the programme talks about as reality under socialism (e.g., no unemployment, better social services) will be shown in practice to exist.

Within this section, a few specific points should be addressed which are important to the working class in the U.S., both because it will move forward the work and because it will defend the party against attacks from its enemies. These points are:

1) The role of the party in making revolution in the USSR and China. The relationship of the party to the masses in day to day struggles and in the overall political struggles.

2) The Building of Socialism. I believe attention should be paid to how Russia, under Stalin, defended itself and began building socialism. It is very important to lay out clearly the strong points of the USSR at that time and also the mistakes that eventually led to restoration of capitalism.

3) The Dictatorship of the Proletariat. What this means and how it can work in practice. Once again the question of the relationship of the party to the masses is important, as well as the question of educating the masses to understand and defend socialism against capitalist restoration. This is where it is important to differentiate between "idealism," "Utopianism," "socialism is a bed of roses" vs. the reality of socialism releasing the capabilities of industrial society and how the dictatorship of the proletariat goes about realizing the potentials of industrial society.

As the draft programme stands now, I believe it is a real weakness that it does not relate, much more systematically, the struggle of the U.S. working class for socialism to the struggles for socialism that have taken place in many parts of the world and continue to take place and exist today. It is very important to the working class to learn what history has to teach, not only in the U.S. (which is all the draft gives) but internationally. It is important because we want our own "October" and we must understand the road forward and be able to discard ideas that are proven incorrect in practice. ■

# Six

The draft programme as it now stands, barely mentions the Soviet Union. But in conversations with fellow workers this question of what happened in the Soviet Union always comes up when people think of communism. Clearly the existence of the Soviet Union's revisionism is one of the biggest weapons the bourgeoisie has for confusing the working class.

This is not an attempt at an article. This only lays out the way the problem comes up day after day in conversations. Further, this is an appeal for a section of the programme clearly devoted to the question of social imperialism, and marked so in the table of contents—a separate section or chapter.

The main contention here is that whenever workers think of communism or socialism today, the first thing they equate that with is Russia. This is a big part of the basis of anti-communism. But when Russia comes up in some conversations, with the deepening crisis in U.S. imperialism, some other workers look at Russia positively and say, "Well, communism's not so bad after all—you get medical care, schools, etc." So both dangers must be dealt with.

Here are some of the points to be dealt with:

1) Cynicism: The inevitability of capitalist restora-

tion—i.e., even if we win a revolution, a new class of rulers and a bureaucratic hierarchy is bound to develop. Also, it's human nature to require material incentive to get people to work. "Communism was a good idea, but it just won't work." "Things never change."

We have to show the basis for revisionism to take hold, the basis for capitalist restoration to occur.

2) Cuba: many immigrants from Latin America look at Cuba and wonder if being made a one-crop economy as a sugar colony for Soviet social imperialism is what communism is all about.

3) Questions of freedom: Bureaucrats telling you where you can live, work, travel, etc. "How can you believe in communism when in practice in the Soviet Union, all the liberties are taken away?" Deal with dictatorship of the proletariat, what it really is. Might be good place to deal with question of Stalin more under dictatorship of the proletariat. That section dealing with dictatorship of the proletariat in the draft programme is inadequate in handling this question. Also deal with struggle going on within the Soviet Union today.

4) Emigration laws: "People want to leave, but they can't get out."

On the other hand, those who speak highly of the Soviet Union say, "In Russia, individual advancement is based on ability, anyone can take the tests for promotions, job opportunities, university, etc." Or, "At least in Russia, everyone has a job." Deal with the question of fascism some here—how under Hitler roads were built and inflation halted, etc., but what fascism really means to working people. ■

# On War and the International United Front

## One

The section in the draft programme, "Fight Against Imperialist Wars, Wipe Out War By Wiping Out Imperialism" (p. 43), correctly states: "To eliminate war, once and for all, it is necessary to eliminate its source, imperialism, through revolution and socialism."

The section also correctly states the demands of the working class and its party at this time:

- Withdraw all U.S. forces from foreign soil and territorial waters of other countries.
- Free all colonies in the grip of U.S. imperialism.
- End all U.S. military alliances and military aid to U.S. puppets, oppose all superpower aggression, bullying and interference in the internal affairs of other countries.
- Abolish and destroy all nuclear weapons, oppose the superpowers' arms race and phoney disarmament.
- Support just wars for national liberation and revolutionary wars against imperialism and reaction, oppose all wars of aggression by imperialism and its allies, defend the socialist countries.
- If revolution does not prevent world war, world war will give rise to revolution.

While the section speaks to the long-range objective of wiping out war by wiping out imperialism, and also puts forward the correct immediate demands, the section does not sufficiently explain the relationship between the two. It does not answer the question, "Why fight against imperialist war now?"

In taking up the fight against imperialist war, the working class wants to know why, how to do it, and if it's possible to prevent a war even before revolution. The section does not speak to this second point at all.

The fight against imperialist war is part of the class struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie. It is not a separate or neutral struggle as the revisionists portray it. War is the continuation of politics by other means, and as the Chinese pointed out, "As far as the capitalist-imperialist countries are concerned, whether they launch wars or profess peace their aim is to pursue or maintain their imperialist interests. Imperialist war is the continuation of imperialist peacetime politics, and imperialist peace is the continuation of imperialist wartime politics."

This is why the relationship of the fight against a particular war or imperialist war in general, and to fight against imperialism, the cause of war, has to be made clear. To not clearly show the relationship separates the long-term goal from the immediate demands

and can fall into reformism and revisionism by making the struggle around the immediate demands ends in themselves. A clear example of this was the Puerto Rican Socialist Party's slogan, "Bicentennial without colonies." To separate the long-term goal from the immediate demands would result in giving the working class the impression that imperialism had changed and that these demands could be achieved without revolution, either here or in the country that the demand is applied to.

Imperialist war brings a great amount of suffering to the working class because it is the sons and husbands of the working class that are used as cannon fodder by the monopoly capitalists in their attempt to maintain and advance their own imperialist interests. Although we recognize the inevitability of war, communists take up the fight against it because by doing so, the smokescreen that the bourgeoisie puts up to conceal its nature and its preparations for war (e.g., "détente," Strategic Arms Limitations Talks, etc.) is blown away by the exposure of its real nature, and in the process the revolutionary forces will be strengthened.

In addition, strengthening the revolutionary forces in the fight against imperialist war means the further weakening of the monopoly capitalists and the possibility of the prevention or postponement of a particular war. The fact that the prevention or postponement of a particular war would temporarily limit additional suffering of the working class in itself is a good thing, and would also help to further strengthen the revolutionary forces provided it was taken up as part of the overall revolutionary struggle. The working class will see and understand that the bourgeoisie has to be taken on, on all fronts. Proletarian internationalism will be developed as the working class recognizes the unity of the revolutionary struggles around the world, all focused at the two superpowers which are pushing things toward a new world war.

This paper has attempted to take up some of the weaknesses in the draft programme section, "Fight Against Imperialist Wars, Wipe Out War By Wiping Out Imperialism." As the contention between the two superpowers intensifies, the struggle against war will grow and it is essential for the working class and its party to put out clearly the reasons why we fight against imperialist war and how this brings us closer to proletarian revolution. It is wrong to just state: "To eliminate war, it is necessary to eliminate imperialism," without setting "forth to the working class the goal of its struggle and the means to achieve its high goal."

The article on war in the June issue of *Revolution* points out correctly that it would be wrong to "reduce all the many struggles that are going on to the question of war or revolution," because "revolution is a protracted struggle which demands a long-range strategy involving many battles on many fronts,"

and the fight against war is part of this.

The section in the draft programme should speak, specifically to the issue of imperialist war and the fight against it and what it will accomplish as part of the overall struggle for proletarian revolution. The section should include something like "The Road Ahead" section in the June *Revolution* article on war:

"By developing this struggle against imperialist aggression and war as part of the overall revolutionary struggle, we will accomplish several things. One, we will further hinder and weaken the imperialists, and especially the two superpowers, making it more difficult for them to launch a world war. Two, we will further mobilize and strengthen the revolutionary forces; and especially the revolutionary working class, making the conditions more favorable in this country for revolution, which in the final analysis is the only thing that, along with a socialist revolution in the Soviet Union, can prevent world war.

"Three, by building these specific struggles against aggression and war, and by building the overall revolutionary struggle, if world war does break out before there are revolutions in the U.S. and Soviet Union, then the working class and masses in these two countries will be in the strongest possible position to continue and intensify their revolutionary struggles and overthrow the U.S. imperialists and Soviet social-imperialists, thus bringing much closer the day when all exploitation and oppression will be eliminated from the face of the earth." ■

# Two

Careful study of the section of the draft programme entitled "World-Wide United Front" (pp. 21-22) has convinced me that the draft makes errors in describing the world situation to the U.S. working class. The fundamental error is in failing to state, in a clear and concise way, that the firmest alliance between the workers of the advanced capitalist countries with the struggles of the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America is the basic strategy for the world proletarian socialist revolution during the epoch of imperialism.

This error is manifested in several ways—not pointing out that the national liberation struggles are a component part of the world socialist revolution; an inadequate definition of proletarian internationalism; an incomplete summation given of the present world situation; and failing to raise, anywhere in the draft, the slogan, "Workers and Oppressed Peoples Unite!"

1) Since the victory of the October Revolution, Marxist-Leninists have held the guarantee of victory over imperialism to be the linking of the socialist revolution in the West with the national democratic revolution sweeping first Asia and today throughout the entire "Third World," in essence a worker-peasant alliance on a world scale. Since World War 1 and the October Revolution, the struggle of the oppressed nations has been constantly on the rise and since World War 2 have, in fact, delivered the main blow against the imperialist system.

While the social character of the national democratic revolution remains bourgeois in that it is aimed at foreign domination and feudalism, insofar as the revolution in the oppressed nations is aimed at imperialism it becomes part of the world proletarian socialist revolution. In Mao's words, "No matter what classes, parties or individuals in an oppressed nation join the revolution, and no matter whether they themselves are conscious of the point or understand it, so long as they oppose imperialism, their revolution becomes part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution and they become its allies." ("On New Democracy")

Yet the draft programme limits itself to saying "...the proletariat in the U.S. has as its allies in the international arena today the great struggles of nations throughout the 'underdeveloped world' or 'Third World' for liberation from colonialism and imperialism." By not raising the question of the "component part" and by limiting the discussion of allies to the context of the united front against the two superpowers, the draft leaves itself open to the interpretation that the masses of people in the oppressed nations are simply firmer allies in the struggle against the two superpowers than, say, the reactionary regimes which resist superpower domination, and not the fundamental allies of the proletariat during the whole epoch of imperialism.

2) The draft defines proletarian internationalism as "the unity of the workers of all countries as one mighty force, the alliance with all struggles throughout the world against imperialism and for revolution, and the unwavering support and defense of the genuine socialist countries." There is nothing wrong in this definition, but especially in view of its placement in the draft programme, it fails to adequately orient the party and the workers to what the content of proletarian internationalism is in the United States.

Proletarian internationalism, and the definition of it, follows a paragraph describing how the bourgeoisie tries to divide the workers of this country from the rest of the international working class through slanders of the socialist countries, "Buy America," etc. Yet in the preceding paragraph no mention is made of the attempts by the bourgeoisie to convince the U.S. workers that the working class in this country benefits by imperialist plunder of the oppressed nations, something which the bourgeoisie is using more and more to try to build public opinion for intervention and aggression in other countries (economic strangulation, etc.) now that their guise of "protecting democracy" has worn thin. During the height of the Vietnam war, for example, the dividing line of proletarian internationalism was support for the Vietnamese people; today support for the national liberation struggles aimed at the U.S. bourgeoisie remains a crucial aspect of proletarian internationalism and a way must be found to bring this out more sharply in the programme.

3) On p. 22 of the draft a one paragraph summation is given of the present world situation: "The situation in the world today is very complicated, but through all this complication and disorder two things stand out: the struggle of the working class for revolution and socialism is advancing, and uniting with all possible allies, while the two superpowers are becoming more and more isolated, and the whole imperialist

system is declining." (The draft then goes on to describe the growing danger of world war.)

This summation is incomplete at best. The fact of the matter is that since World War 2, the national liberation struggles have been the main force in opposing imperialism, and while that situation is rapidly changing, and is certainly not true today in the same kind of decisive and clear cut way, nevertheless it is wrong to refer to it simply as the working class "uniting with all possible allies." Perhaps what is meant is that the national liberation struggles themselves are struggles "of the working class for revolution and socialism," which would be a serious error, failing to take into account two distinct stages in the revolution in the oppressed nations, and the bourgeois social character of the national democratic revolution even when led by the proletariat and its party.

4) The draft programme ends with the slogan, "Workers of the World Unite!" Nowhere in the draft is the slogan, "Workers and Oppressed Peoples of the World Unite!" to be found. Comrades, this is wrong. Lenin wrote the following concerning the modification of the slogan, "Workers of the World Unite," to "Workers of All Countries and All Oppressed Peoples Unite!": "Of course, the modification is wrong from the standpoint of the Communist Manifesto, but then the Communist Manifesto was written under entirely different conditions. From the point of view of present day politics, however, the change is correct." (vol. 31, p. 453) Similarly, the Chinese raised on many occasions in their polemics with the revisionists that the slogan, "Workers and Oppressed Peoples of the World Unite!" was correct "for our epoch."

The point is not mainly what slogan the programme should end in (personally, I favor the slogan "Workers of the World And All Oppressed Peoples Unite!") The point is that failing to raise, anywhere in the draft programme the central slogan of Marxist-Leninists throughout the world on the national and colonial question is a serious mistake, especially given that we find it possible to raise many other slogans in the course of the draft programme (for example, "We won't

scab, and we won't starve"). I believe that not using the slogan is a reflection of the general error made in this section of the draft.

The main thrust of this section is correct. It emphasizes the present world situation and not the past and correctly centers in on the growing threat of world war. The main deviation in the U.S. revolutionary movement on the international situation has been to almost totally ignore the contention of the superpowers and the threat of war and to see the contradiction between the oppressed nations and U.S. imperialism as virtually the only contradiction. No doubt these wrong views (actually a rehash of Kautsky's theory of "ultra-imperialism") still exist in varying degrees within the RU and those forces uniting to form the party, and the great strength of this section of the draft programme is that it truly represents a "radical rupture" with this unscientific and moralistic nonsense. Similarly, the draft is correct in not presenting the world as three contending worlds which, in the U.S., would have the effect of telling the working class that they had something in common with the ruling class (membership in the first world).

Nevertheless, in the process of discarding the baggage of the old period the draft makes the error of not providing as clear, complete and correct a view of the international situation as the party and the working class need. We must not forget that the working class in this country has never been affected, to any significant degree, with the moralistic line on the international situation common among the radicalized petty bourgeoisie. On the contrary, the party will have to fight and defeat the influence of the bourgeoisie among the working class and win the workers to the understanding that "The revolutionary movement in the advanced countries would actually be a sheer fraud if, in their struggle against capital, the workers of Europe and America were not closely and completely united with the hundreds upon hundreds of millions of 'colonial' slaves oppressed by capital." (Lenin, Second Congress of Communist International) ■

# Other Articles

## One

"When Marx applied this law [of contradiction in things] to the study of the economic structure of capitalism, he discovered that the basic contradiction of this society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This contradiction manifests itself in the contradiction between the organized character of production in individual enterprises and the anarchic character of production in society as a whole. In terms of class relations, it manifests itself in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat." (Mao, *On Contradiction, Selected Works*, vol. 1, pp. 328-9)

The problem of a concrete analysis of the fundamental and principal contradictions of U.S. imperialism is a crucial one. The line of the draft programme represents an important advance on this front: "Increasingly united and with powerful allies in the movements of oppressed nationalities, the working class is intensifying its mighty historic battle against capital. It is the basic contradiction of capitalism, and the class struggle that arises from it, between the working class and the capitalist class, that stands even more prominently at the center of the stage in the U.S. today." (p. 6)

This formulation ends a period of confusion over what the principal contradiction is by correctly stating that it is now the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This correct line will undoubtedly earn us the "gratitude" of all sorts of cockroaches who are scurrying around in every direction—except one, the direction of the new period—and who want to go back to the time when the struggles of the oppressed peoples, students, youth, women (or anyone else they could think of) seemed to overshadow the struggle of the working class.

However, it seems that while all attention was riveted on correctly resolving the question of principal contradiction, confusion slipped in the back door on another question—the question of what is the *fundamental* contradiction of capitalism.

Look at the quote from the draft programme again: "...the basic contradiction of capitalism, and the class struggle that arises from it..." This is what "stands even more prominently," etc. But what is this referring to? Is it one contradiction (the basic contradiction and the class struggle that arises from it) or two (a. the basic contradiction; b. the class struggle)? And what is the "basic contradiction of capitalism"?

Earlier the draft programme gives this explanation: "...the basic contradiction of capitalism... production itself is highly socialized—it requires large concentrations of workers, each performing part of the total process and all essential to its completion, and is capable of massive output on this basis; but the ownership of the means of production and the appropriation of the wealth produced is 'private'—in the hands of a few, competing owners of capital." (p. 2)

Yet in an internal document accompanying the publication of the draft programme, entitled "Grasp the Key Link, Advance From the Old Period to the New!" we find a different formulation: "the basic contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie." (p. 5)

A few lines down, the paper mentions the "fundamental contradiction of capitalism," referring (it seems) to the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie: "The result of this process, and the interaction of the various contradictions—all stemming from the fundamental contradiction of capitalism—has been that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has once more emerged as the principal contradiction, only now on a higher, more intense level than before. It is this contradiction today that—not only in an underlying (fundamental) sense, but in an immediate sense—is more *influencing* than influenced by every other contradiction in society."

This same formulation of the fundamental contradiction is advanced in *Red Papers 4*: "the fundamental contradiction in the U.S.—between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat." (p. 55)

So we've got two formulations of the fundamental contradiction: a) between socialized production and private appropriation; b) between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Which is right? Maybe they're the same? Let's try and clear up some of this confusion.

First off, what *is* the "fundamental contradiction"

in a process, in general?

"The fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process determined by this fundamental contradiction will not disappear until the process is completed; but in a lengthy process the conditions usually differ at each stage. The reason is that, although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process remain unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified, as it passes from one stage to another in the lengthy process. In addition, among the numerous major and minor contradictions which are determined or influenced by the fundamental contradiction, some become intensified, some are temporarily or partially resolved or mitigated, and some new ones emerge." (Mao, *On Contradiction, Selected Works*, vol. 1, p. 325)

Granted, Mao doesn't give us a precise definition of the "fundamental contradiction." But this seems to me to be the essence of the matter: the fundamental contradiction is what gives a thing or process its essence, unity and general character. It is in the full sense "basic"—it does not flow out of any other contradiction *internal* to the process; the other contradictions internal to the process flow out of it.

Marxism-Leninism is very clear on what the fundamental contradiction in society is:

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material forces of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the social, political and intellectual life processes in general... At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production in society come into conflict with the existing relations of production... From forms of development of the forces of production these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed." (Marx, Preface to the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, quoted in Stalin, *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, p. 130-1) Simply stated: the fundamental contradiction in society is between the forces of production and the relations of production.

Marxism-Leninism is equally clear on the particular form this contradiction takes in capitalist society: "The basic contradiction of this [capitalist] society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership." (Mao, *On Contradiction, Selected Works*, vol. 1, p. 328-9)

This, of course, is the formulation we find (slightly revised in the light of the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union) on p. 2 of the draft programme. We also find it in RU publications as early as *Red Papers 2 (Selections)*, p. 38) and as late as *Red Papers 7* (p. 5) and the June 1975 *Revolution* ("Portuguese Powderkeg," p. 18). (You can find it just about everywhere; for example: Stalin, *HCPSU*, p. 126; Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, p. 295-6; Leontiev, *Political Economy*, p. 178)

### What Flows From What?

But, perhaps the contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation is the same as the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It would be a grave error to suppose this.

In the first place, it doesn't conform to reality. In *Anti-Duhring* (p. 293-9), Engels analyzes the development of simple commodity production into capitalist production. He shows that as the productive forces develop, their conflict with the relations of production sharpens; this conflict is the essence of the development. And he shows how this "contradiction between social production and capitalist appropriation *became manifest* as the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie." (p. 297, my emphasis) Then he goes on to show how this same "contradiction between social production and capitalist appropriation reproduces itself as the *antithesis between the organization of production in the individual factory and the anarchy of production in society as a whole.*" (p. 299, emphasis in original)

Clearly, the contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation is not *simply* the same as the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. (Other examples can be found of contradictions which, although affected by the contradiction between the proletariat and the bour-

geoisie, do not *flow out of* that contradiction. Another example: competition among the capitalists.)

In the second place, it points us in the wrong direction politically and practically. One of the main lessons of the Cultural Revolution was that there is a *material basis* for the development of bourgeois ideas and a new bourgeoisie under socialism—and that basis is precisely the capitalist elements of the relations of production under socialism. This is what the Chinese call "bourgeois right."

That's the point of the quotations from Mao that are being studied in the current campaign to deepen understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"Our country at present practices a commodity system, the wage system is unequal too, as in the eight-grade wage scale, and so forth. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted. Therefore, if people like Lin Piao came to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system." (Quoted in "Marx, Engels and Lenin on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," *Peking Review* No. 9, Feb. 28, 1975, p. 5)

Against the spontaneous emergence of bourgeois ideas, bourgeois ways of doing things and the bourgeoisie itself from such "leftovers" of capitalism, the party mobilizes the masses and develops their political consciousness and scientific understanding by involving them in struggles against "bourgeois right" in all its forms. In this way, the *source* of the class struggle—bourgeois relations in production and distribution—is gradually abolished.

There are "left" and right errors that you could fall into if you ignored the fundamental contradiction between the developing socialized productive forces and the relations which are partially proletarian and partially bourgeois. A "left" error is voluntarism—acting as though all elements of bourgeois right can be immediately abolished. A right error would be determinism—thinking that now that the proletariat holds state power, the relations of production are in total harmony with the productive forces.

### Conclusion

Where does all this leave us? First, the fundamental contradiction in capitalism, including U.S. imperialism, is the contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation.

Second, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is *not* the fundamental contradiction; it flows out of the fundamental contradiction. In capitalist societies, it's usually though not always the principal contradiction.

Perhaps those who call this contradiction the fundamental contradiction want to emphasize that it is the development of the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie that usually and in the long run determines the future of other classes and their struggles, that the proletariat is the only thoroughly revolutionary class and the only class that can lead the revolutionary struggle to a successful conclusion. With this there's no disagreement here. You could even talk about the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie (along with many others) as a contradiction "basic" to capitalism—in the sense that the contradiction can't be resolved without changing the system. But that doesn't make the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie the *fundamental contradiction of capitalism*.

This conclusion will of course raise several questions, such as the so-called "theory" of the fundamental contradiction becoming principal, raised in *Red Papers 4* (p. 55), and the formulation in "Grasp the Key Link" that the contradiction between the Black people and the bourgeoisie "represented a stage in the development of the basic contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie." (p. 5, emphasis in original)

These and other questions will have to be resolved. But they can only be resolved on the basis of a firm understanding of the fundamental contradiction of capitalism: "production itself is highly socialized... but the ownership of the means of production and the appropriation of the wealth produced is 'private.'" (draft, p. 2).

# Two

In the process of reading and studying the draft programme, the question of fascism must appear to most, quite different from the line on the question that the international communist movement held when fascism was in fact the most immediate danger to the proletariat and the masses of people both in this country and throughout the world.

In the section on "Build the Fight Against Repression and Bourgeois Terror as Part of the Overall Revolutionary Movement" (pp. 42-43), the draft programme states:

"The move to fascism by the bourgeoisie is a desperate one, showing their fear of the working class. The battle against such moves must be waged as part of the general revolutionary offensive against the rule of the monopoly capitalists—in any form!

"To struggle only to 'save' bourgeois democracy is to give up revolution and accept the continued rule of the bourgeoisie, which comes down to accepting fascism in the final analysis. While there is conflict within the bourgeoisie over the timing and tactics of moving to fascism, and over who will be on top in the fascist state, there is no section of the bourgeoisie that does not infinitely prefer fascism to proletarian revolution; and none will oppose fascism once they see it is necessary to prevent revolution. The only way to prevent fascism for sure is to make revolution, to establish the rule of the working class over the bourgeoisie." (p. 42)

The line that the draft programme presents makes some rather serious errors, as well as arriving at some correct conclusions. Firstly, it is correct in saying that the move by the ruling class to a fascist state is a desperate one, for it means the sacrifice of the mask of bourgeois democracy and legality and the open rule of the bourgeoisie (OR ITS "MOST REACTIONARY, MOST CHAUVINIST AND MOST IMPERIALISTIC ELEMENTS"), a move that would surely not be made unless the situation was rapidly degenerating for their class rule.

Secondly, the draft programme is correct in seeing that there is not a progressive "liberal" bourgeoisie that hates fascism and would be a force against it (although in some countries the composition of the bourgeoisie may be different). All would in fact prefer it to the rule of the working class. This is inherent by their very nature as a class.

## Basis of Disagreement

It is on the third point that is made that I have a basis of disagreement. When the draft programme states that the only way to prevent fascism is to make proletarian revolution it fails to determine what is the principal contradiction. (Principal if fascism was looming before us, as it could be in the future.) For if fascism was the principal danger and threat, the proletariat would have one of two decisions that would have to be made. One is to launch an armed insurrection and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. Two is to form a united front of the working class to unite with and give leadership to a broad anti-fascist peoples' front, that would have the immediate objective of preventing the establishment of fascism, and from this position, once the menace was defeated, lay the groundwork for the seizure of state power by the proletariat.

The first alternative is one that could only be implemented if the class forces were as such: "There is one essential precondition for victory. Decisive elements of the proletariat must be prepared to wage an implacable armed struggle to overthrow the political power of the ruling classes. A second precondition is the existence of a large communist party, with a large degree of ideological and organic coherence, armed with Leninist theory and capable of leading the struggles of the masses."

This passage makes clear what the conditions for revolution are from a Marxist-Leninist stand. If these conditions are not always there the capabilities of the proletariat are indeed hindered. Stalin gave note to this during the 1930s:

"Some comrades think that, once there is a revolutionary crisis, the bourgeoisie is bound to get into a hopeless position, that its end is therefore a foregone conclusion, that the victory of the revolution is thus assured and that all they have to do is wait for the fall of the bourgeoisie and to draw up victorious resolutions. This is a profound mistake. The victory of the revolution never comes of itself. It must be prepared for and won. And only a strong revolutionary party can prepare for and win victory. Moments occur when the situation is revolutionary, when the rule of the bourgeoisie is shaken to its very foundations, and yet the victory of the revolution does

not come, because there is no revolutionary party of the proletariat with sufficient strength, and prestige to lead the masses and to take power. It would be unwise to believe that such 'cases' cannot occur."

Stalin was absolutely right in pointing to such "cases" at this time because they existed. Fascism had been established in many countries and was a grave threat in many others, and the preconditions for the proletarian revolution were often not there. For a communist party to ignore that situation then, or now, would be a terrible blunder.

## Should A Distinction Be Made?

The question before us in relation to the party programme, which will come into being from the ideological and political struggle that is now being waged, is if there should be a distinction made between the United Front Against Imperialism, and The United Front Against Fascism. The draft programme as it stands now does not make that distinction. However, I think that a distinction does have to be made. For if it is not the party of the proletariat will be strapped into a straightjacket that will prevent it from altering its tactical positions in a flexible way, which is an indispensable tool for Marxist-Leninists.

Georgi Dimitroff summed up the situation aptly: "The whole question boils down to this: Will the proletariat itself be prepared at the decisive moment for the direct overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of its own power, and will it be able in that event to secure the support of its allies? Or will the movement of the united proletarian front and the anti-fascist peoples' front, at the particular stage be in a position only to suppress or overthrow fascism, without directly proceeding to abolish the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie?"

This, then, is the alternative that confronts the emerging Revolutionary Communist Party in determining its political line on the question of fascism. Before closing this article I wish to emphasize that the United Front Against Fascism is only a tactical reorientation for the class and *only* a temporary position that must be taken in the development of the class war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. All true communists look towards the final goal of our struggle—the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism, and finally communism.

I hope that all comrades will give the article that I have submitted to the journal close consideration, and submit articles of both positive and negative criticism, so that we can gain greater clarity on the question of fascism. ■

# Three

In the section of the draft programme entitled "A Genuine Communist Party Fights For Proletarian Revolution," there is a part that says: "The immediate task of the proletariat was in fact to defend the Soviet Union and defeat the fascist Axis. But Browder used this to cover up the nature of imperialism and the fact that U.S. imperialism, while fighting the fascist countries, was also aiming to strengthen its position as an imperialist power."

The last sentence is misleading, in that it seems to say that the imperialists had some motive other than expanding their interests and control. I suggest that it be altered to read: "...and the fact that U.S. imperialism was fighting the fascist countries only to strengthen its position as an imperialist power." ■

# Four

The sections in the draft programme on the question of proletarian culture (pp. 11 and 33), while containing good points, still reflect a hanging on of some petty bourgeois baggage on this question. Mao states that revolutionary proletarian culture must "operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind."

The draft programme touches on this point, but it doesn't explain it very well. On p. 11, the draft states that "Culture...represents the viewpoint of one class or another and is a powerful weapon in the hands of that class for creating 'public opinion.'" This is true, as far as it goes, but to leave things just as a matter of "public opinion" is not a very deep-going explanation of the real effect of culture in society. From there, there's too much of a tendency to wax poetic on the subject, which ends up obscuring things, rather than explaining in a straight-forward manner what the basic political tasks of revolutionary culture are and indicating how they are to be carried out.

Culture as a weapon has to be brought out much more sharply and politically. Culture is not simply a reflection of the real world—which is how the draft programme tends to deal with it—but in the hands of the proletariat must be a sharp and deadly weapon for changing the world and moving history forward.

The question of integrating the role of culture as a part of our struggle is not really dealt with in the draft programme, and is part of a general weakness of the section on the Revolutionary Workers Movement, that the whole question of the ideological struggle against the bourgeoisie is abstracted from and cut off from the practical struggles of the working class that go on in the real world.

Culture and the ideological struggle are put forward as if the ideas and culture of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat were slugging it out somewhere out in the ozone, when much of the real ideological battle goes on every day, as an integral part of the overall class struggle. Without some explanation of *how* "...forms of art that represent the proletariat arise from and in turn serve the struggle of the masses of people" (draft programme, p. 33), we don't really do much to arm the cadres and masses with this weapon.

Culture must play the same role as our other agitation and propaganda in bringing to light and explaining the significance of all instances of exploitation and oppression, inspiring and helping the masses to unite and struggle to rid themselves of their oppressors. It must be criticized—politically—honed and sharpened in the same way as we criticize and sharpen our other agitation. Because a song, or other cultural work, can (because of its form) put forward a political statement sometimes more powerfully than a speech or leaflet, we have to work all the harder to make sure that our cultural work has the correct class stand (in the real world, not in a dogmatic way).

There are many problems in trying to do this. In many places there hasn't been enough attention paid to putting forward the correct political line and class stand in our cultural work—although a lot of good things have been done, a lot hasn't been so good, and could have been a lot better with clearer guidance and more political leadership in the field of culture. The party must overcome primitiveness in the field of cultural work, too.

Without sufficient political guidance, there has been a tendency to fall into seeing revolutionary culture as "political entertainment," rather than as a weapon in the class struggle. Culture with "political content" is seen as something "nice to have around," frosting on the cake—but this stuff isn't much use to the working class in our struggles.

Mysticism on the question of culture, the tendency to think that the form prevents thorough-going criticism of the content, or the tendency to think that form will somehow make up for weaknesses in content, or any of the other ways that form is allowed to become primary over content—are problems not

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only in cultural work, but in our other agitation as well. All are baggage that must be gotten rid of. We have to take up and use this weapon, integrate it with our struggles and hone it to razor sharpness as a weapon for the cadres—all of them, not just party cultural workers—and the masses to use to unite our ranks and defeat the imperialists. To do this effectively, guidance must come from the party and the party programme.

"Proletarian literature and art are part of the whole proletarian revolutionary cause; they are, as Lenin said, cogs and wheels in the whole revolutionary machine. Therefore, Party work in literature and art occupies a definite and assigned position in Party revolutionary tasks set by the Party in a given revolutionary period." (Mao, *Talks at the Yen-an Forum*)

This is the stand that should come across in the party programme—and doesn't yet—with guidance in how to carry this out. ■

## Five

In the draft programme, under the section entitled "Old People—To the Bourgeoisie Useless Waste, To the Proletariat a Precious Resource" (pp. 48-49), the demand for an end to forced retirement should also call for decent pensions with a cost of living. To just call for an end to forced retirement without a pension demand implies either working till you drop or else retiring on whatever the bosses dish out.

The liveable income demand in the draft programme doesn't cover this because it implies that this is a struggle for after you retire only. Many workers now forced to retire at 60 or 65 have to find another job "off the books" because their pensions were peanuts. While it is true that many workers forced to retire at 65 are still able and willing to work no matter at what age they go out their pensions are meager and they're thrown into the "used up bin."

To answer this we don't just call on the bosses to exploit us for ten years or so more, but to wage a battle before retirement in the trade unions around pensions. Otherwise, we are literally asking to be worked to death. This struggle in recent years has been on the incline and has to be waged as one front in the fight to defend our standard of living.

Otherwise the view that older workers should retire so that the "young people can have a chance" because "of course, there's not enough jobs anyway," will not only divide the struggle but lead it in a real reformist direction. ■

## Six

In the section of the draft programme, "Workers Unite To Lead the Fight Against All Oppression," more than half of it deals with bourgeois-instilled ideas in the working class (anti-semitism, decadence, national unity, etc.) Instead of confusingly having it put in this section, it should be more pronounced. Let there be a section "Fight Bourgeois Ideology in the Working Class." ■

## Seven

Comrades should read and compare the sections of the draft programme on the lumpenproletariat (pp. 26 and 27) and crime, prisons, and prisoners (pp. 12 and 49), along with related articles in the December 1973 and March 1974 *Revolution*.

Page 26 of the draft programme makes clear distinctions between the lumpenproletariat and workers who commit crimes, and between the lumpen and the heads of big crime syndicates. This first distinction is blurred on p. 12 and this makes it sound like all crimes are either "loaf of bread" or "Mafia" crimes.

Through our work (building the fight to defend prisoner X who fought against an attack by guards, and to support prison struggles in general) we learned we had been making this error. Prisoner X is from a working class family, he was forced into crime because of the conditions of his existence under capitalism; and he has been in and out of jail since he was a teenager. He hasn't been thoroughly lumpenized but the lumpen outlook has been strong in him for a long time. We originally ignored his internal contradictions and placed all our emphasis on his class background, his nationality, and the conditions of capitalist society.

Our work in prisoner X's hometown, where he's done most of his ripping off. The masses wouldn't buy our line of "so what if he's committed some crimes; he's not bad; the poor guy just never had a chance." Scientific analysis, not this pity and half science, is how to develop a correct line which the class will take up as its own.

We summed up and learned to make the distinction more clearly in our line, which is, "he's committed crimes, which is wrong, and he's got a bad outlook that he has to deal with. But it's not bad outlooks alone that cause crime" (and the line is developed more fully around the nature of crime and that it's caused by the capitalist system, the nature of prisons and that they don't rehabilitate anybody, etc.).

The point is that we should make clear distinctions between the lumpen and its outlook and the proletariat and its outlook, not blur these distinctions.

Another error in the draft programme, which we think can be corrected on p. 12, is that the need for prisons after the proletariat has seized state power isn't mentioned. In the prisoner movement in our area there is a strong "abolish prisons" line which can only be dealt with on the basis that the proletarian state will need to operate prisons. To leave this out of the programme could also lead to, or strengthen, idealist views of life under socialism.

We offer this rewrite of the paragraph on p. 12: "Those who, in capitalist society, are forced into crime because they cannot find work—at least not at a living wage—or for other reasons that capitalism forces people into crime, will no longer have the need to do so. People who no longer want to work, who take up crime as a way of life, will be re-educated and will take their place in the ranks of the revolutionary working class. Those who have made crime their business and have built whole criminal syndicates, like the Mafia, will be ruthlessly punished. Their organizations will be smashed by the armed power of the working class. The proletariat will need to operate prisons (although differently than the capitalists) for those who must be segregated until they are re-educated enough to rejoin society; and for those who are dangerous and refuse re-education."

An error in the closing paragraph of the section beginning on p. 49 is in the last sentence. There's a strong "prisoners take the lead" line in the prisoner movement, reinforced by a strong adventurist tendency. The glamour represented in the proletariat opening the prison doors, guns in hand, and offering the masses of prisoners themselves the chance to join the proletarian army appeals to these sentiments. It can also contribute to the idealist view of abolishing prisons immediately.

The masses of prisoners will join with the proletariat and fully remold themselves into fighters for the working class. But the proletariat shouldn't take a "storm the Bastille" approach to opening the prisons. We're not immediately going to tear down the walls, and besides putting a lot of blood-

suckers into prison, there are some prisoners in there now who will be staying there.

This sentence could be rewritten to read, "In the process of seizing power the proletariat will immediately free those prisoners who are willing to join with the proletariat and fully remold themselves into fighters for the working class. Other prisoners will be released as their re-education progresses."

There are a couple of other errors in the section beginning on p. 49. The fact that over one-third of all prisoners are Black or Latin is important because it is an example of the special oppression different nationalities face in the U.S. This should be said. That sentence could be changed to read, "The overwhelming majority are from working class backgrounds, and because of special oppression of different nationalities, over one-third are Black or Latin."

The paragraph beginning "Prisoners have always conducted" is somewhat contradictory. First it says that there has been, and is now, lots of struggle in the prisons. Then it says "thousands of prisoners have turned their confinement into study time, and..." This gives the impression that those prisoners who study have no relation to the struggle going on. It could easily be corrected by changing it to "thousands of prisoners have begun studying revolutionary theory while confined, and..."

It's really important in building the prisoner movement and uniting it with the struggle for proletarian revolution for the proletariat, through its party, to develop a correct line on crime, prisons, and prisoners. ■

## Eight

In the paragraph on p. 17 that begins "The party of the working class" (left column, middle), the principles of democratic centralism are talked about but are not specifically named. The discussion about how they move the work of the party forward is clear and concise. Stating what the principles are will clarify how the party can build the unity of will and unity of action—that's necessary to defeat capitalism.

"The party of the working class is based on specific principles—the individual is subordinate to the organization, the minority to the majority, the lower level to the higher level, and the entire membership to the central committee. They enable it to most correctly concentrate the experiences and ideas of the masses, to formulate in this way the strategy and tactics to advance the struggle of the working class and its allies, and to carry out these policies with an unbreakable unity. These principles of organization, democratic centralism, combine the greatest degree of discipline with the fullest discussion and struggle over policy within the organization and the selection and supervision of party leaders by the party membership." ■