

THE CRISIS IN THE BWC:

LENINISM OR PETTY BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

"Thoroughly imbued with the sectarian intolerance so characteristic of ideologists in the infantile period of social movements, Iskra is ready to brand every disagreement with it, not only as a departure from Social-Democratic principles, but as a desertion to the camp of the enemy... Iskra's excessive predilection for controversy is due primarily to its exaggerating the role of 'ideology' (programmes, theories...) in the movement..." (This is a quote from a group of economists attacking Iskra, taken from Lenin's essay, A TALK WITH DEFENDERS OF ECONOMISM, Lenin, vol. 5, p. 314)

INTRODUCTION

Comrades, even though this is my personal statement, the views presented in this document represent the views and ideas of all the genuine lefts in the BWC, especially those of us in Detroit. However, it is our opinion that these ideas are common to the lefts throughout the BWC, whether they are in L.A., Cincinnati, Nashville, Baltimore, Chicago, Buffalo, or San Francisco; and Birmingham, N.Y., New Orleans and Atlanta, even though none of us have heard the views of the comrades in these four latter cities - except as expressed by the anti-left NCC members assigned to these areas. We sincerely call upon the comrades throughout the BWC to read thoroughly this entire paper in order to know exactly just what line the anti-lefts are attacking and rejecting. We say this because the anti-lefts are already floating up the idea that the time has come to call a halt to "all these papers". And we know that very few comrades have had the benefit of hearing a full presentation of the various views on the questions of "ultra-leftism" and right opportunism in the BWC.

The IC is already entertaining -and have made plans - to move the national center to Chicago; they have already informed comrades in Detroit that a "Congress" will be held in approximately ten weeks; they have already "reinstated" comrade JP as "managing editor" of THE COMMUNIST without the slightest bit of self-criticism on his part for the host of supposedly "left" errors he perpetuated within the paper; they have already brought comrade Danny Brown back onto the IC, formally or informally, without the organization hearing the slightest bit of criticism from this comrade; they have already changed the line of the organization without providing the organization with one sentence of analysis justifying this change; and THE COMMUNIST has been virtually suspended during the last four months.

And finally, within a couple of weeks we will circulate our views on comrade Donald Stone's paper, "On the Question of the Two-Line Struggle in the Black Workers Congress and the Ideological Roots of Right and "Left" Opportunism", because we hold that comrade Stone is the chief person on the IC responsible for the anti-Leninist views coming forth from that body, and that furthermore, this view of comrade Stone's role is substantiated on the positions he puts forward in his paper. We will also make known our views on the NCC's resolutions - whenever they are put in print - concerning "left" opportunism as the main danger in the BWC.

We encourage all comrades to circulate their views on the present crisis in the BWC and to hold fast to Marxism-Leninism in opposition to petty bourgeois Democracy.

Yours for Bolshevik Unity,
Donald Williams

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IN DEFENSE OF MILITANT ORTHODOXY

The original attack on the line of the BWC under the guise of "ultra-leftism is the main danger" was launched by Comrades who today are openly calling 'for retreat! Their battle cry is Dismantle The National Center; Stop Publication of the Communist, and as is well known among members of the NCC, the former Chairman is constantly counseling against "doing too much practical work." (For the clearest formulation of these programmatic demands see Mike Hamlin's latest paper and its 20 program demands.)

But everyone now knows that there is another camp in the BWC which has emerged to join the original anti-lefts in their effort to subordinate the genuine left line, which our organization held until a few months ago, to the right opportunist tendencies of our movement typical of the OL, Guardian, CAP, RU. Though as yet vague in their programmatic demands, and even vaguer in written criticisms of the "ultra-left" line, and with all the >pretensions this camp has in coming forward as the "real proletarian leaders fighting on two fronts," nonetheless, the forces grouped around the I.C. are in fact objectively allied with the original anti-lefts in line and have moved in the same programmatic direction.

A leading comrade of the former NS who once defended the line which says that right opportunism is the main danger in the BWC and in the anti-revisionist communist movement has now come forward to say that he was wrong on both counts. He now thinks 'ultra-leftism' is the main dancer in the BWC and in the anti-revisionist communist movement as a whole! We want to deal with the full 19-page statement of this comrade because it puts down on paper a number of views which have been widely expressed and advocated verbally, and organizationally, by the new camp of leaders committed to uprooting the "ultra-left" line. As Comrade J.P. himself acknowledges:

Many of the things I've said here have already been said by comrades other than myself. I take no credit to having uncovered the root and essence of the present situation. In fact I am indebted to many of my comrades who struggled with me to see the light, especially the comrades .on the I.C.(see p. 18, J.P.'s paper)

In other words, what we want to insist on is that the views we attack in this paper are by no means the isolated views of one cadre, or leader, in the BWC. On the contrary, they represent views and positions commonly and widely held by all our various anti-leftists - even, though the I.C. shows considerable hesitation in putting its views down on paper. (Only Don Stone has presented the organization with anything which could be called responsible criticism, and in his paper there is wide ranging attack on the very foundation of Marxism-Leninism. We will deal with comrade D.S.'s paper at another time in full.)

More though. The views expressed by J.P. represent views necessarily held by our anti-lefts because in their attack on Marxism-Leninism they must inevitably retreat to a certain number of classic positions. Above all we want their full positions, and our refutation of them, to be known and clear to every honest cadre in the organization. Our anti-lefts - whatever the shades of difference in their specific views - are all engaged in an effort to justify our ideological and organizational narrowness, our lack of revolutionary training and experience. They are all engaged in an economist effort to justify our backwardness and amateurishness. What is coming forward under the guise of "ultra-leftism is the main danger" is in fact an attack on the ideological and organizational foundations of a proletarian party as set forth by Lenin in WHAT IS TO BE DONE? (WITBD) and ONE STEP, FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK (OSF,TSB). (Stalin and the heirs of Leninism sum up these fundamental principles of Leninism and the role of WITBD and OSF,TSB in chapter two of the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolshevik).) If comrades will only take a minute to think about it, it is obvious that an attack on these principles - the very foundation of party

building – was more or less to be expected once party building had become our central task. Our anti-lefts, whether of the original right bloc, or the new group around the I.C., are nothing more than the NEW ADVOCATES OF "FREEDOM OF CRITICISM" who cloak their attack on Leninist principles under the banner of "ultra-leftism is the main danger." Listen to this haughty and arrogant statement by Don Stone to be found on page 5 of his paper, ON THE QUESTION OF THE TWO. LINE STRUGGLE IN THE BLACK WORKERS CONGRESS AND THE IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF RIGHT AND "LEFT" OPPORTUNISM:

To think that the communist movement, at this stage, in history, can be consolidated through a newspaper and through forums is to completely misread the objective and the subjective conditions...

Compare this statement to comrade M.H.'s program suggestions, and of course, we are going to fully explore J.P.'s paper in this present document, and you will begin to see the full unity of views of all our anti-lefts.

What must be the answer of Marxist-Leninists to this attack? We stand firmly with Lenin on Militant Orthodoxy. We will resolutely defend WITBD and OSF,TSB against every charge of dogmatism and mechanical use of the fundamental tools of our science, and we will bring forward the ideological and organizational principles established in these two works in order to apply them to the concrete conditions of the U.S. today. This is still the era of Leninism, comrade Don. We reject every effort to appeal – in the manner of Avakian or the "C" PUSA – to changed conditions in order to revise the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism.

To the extent that the motley tendencies among our anti-lefts, including those grouped around the I.C., succeed in establishing differences among themselves to attack the paper of J.P. claiming no, no, that's not what I meant – or the paper of Stone, or the programmatic demands of M.H., comrades we look forward to that. As Lenin said, "when one idealist criticizes the foundations of idealism of another idealist, materialism is always the gainer thereby." (V. 38, p. 283). It is Marxism-Leninism that gains as our anti-lefts fall out among themselves.

We deal with the paper by J.P. in four parts which emphasize themes which unite the various anti-left positions: (1.) the METHOD by which our anti-left's present right and left tendencies in the history and recent practice of the BWC; (2.) the ECONOMISM of the anti-lefts; (3) the IDEALISM of the anti-lefts on the question of the disunity of the Communist Movement; and (4) the PESSIMISM of the anti-lefts towards our struggle and our tasks.

One final point, and we want to really emphasize this point. No one should think that they can dismiss our argument against all the anti-lefts because we were "only" dealing with J.P.'s paper. First, as we have said, the basic themes are common to all the anti-lefts. And second, we have adopted here the method of Lenin: "It is our habit to reply to attacks not by defense, but by counter-attack." (WITBD p. 111) And our counter-attack is against all those who hold that "ultra-leftism" is the main danger in the BWC.

I. THE ANTI-LEFT METHOD OF PRESENTING THE QUESTION OF RIGHT AND "LEFT" IN THE HISTORY AND RECENT PRACTICE OF THE BWC

1. The Anti-Left Method of Isolating The BWC

For the original "revolutionary" bloc of anti-lefts the method of presenting the question of right and left in our organization is to place the BWC in the center of their own "personal" political universe isolated from everything that surrounds it. It is this method which accounts for the totally superficial and confused way in which the question of the main danger in our organization and in the communist movement (to the extent this is taken up at all) is taken up. The analysis which flows from this method is necessarily superficial and confused because the BWC has

been cut off from political trends which historically preceded it, and from the present political trends in today's anti-revisionist communist movement. The former chairman, M.H., carries this method to its most absurd extreme - for him line struggle can be reduced to doing a personal biography of a particular member of the organization.

J.P., our new convert to anti leftism, adopts this method too, though now in J.P.'s hands we get auto-biography rather than biography. J.P. is skilled at giving us the history of the BWC by claiming that he has "insider type of information," J.P. says, "I know because I was there." Lenin writes in the COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL that Marxist dialectics:

excludes any isolated examination of an object, i.e., one that is one-sided and monstrously distorted.(CW, v. 21, p. 235)

But like all our anti-leftists, J.P.'s methods of examining, his object - "ultra-leftism" in the BWC - are exactly that, "one-sided and monstrously distorted." Reading J.P.'s account of the development of the BWC, to be found on page 2 of his latest paper, one would not know whether there was a communist movement in the U.S. in 1970 or not, as well as a general revolutionary movement made up of several trends and organizations. What did the BWC stand in relationship to? J.P. wants to focus the attention of the BWC on itself alone, and on that basis determine its motion and nature. He writes:

The point is, that the present line struggle is connected by a thousand threads to the entire history of the BWC especially the period between 1972 and the present.

We agree. But we also say that the BWC ITSELF is connected by a thousand threads to the historical periods which preceded it as well as the actual political divisions within the present-day communist movement.

Secondly, when our new convert to anti-leftism does take up the relationship of the BWC to other political trends he adopts the genuinely monstrous and one-sided distortion of writing history from the "position I want to justify" point of view. J.P. is seeking to justify that the BWC is "ultra-left." And since J.P. wants to make a case for "ultra-leftism" and since Trotskyism is "ultra-leftism," J.P. is going to make a case for Trotskyism in the BWC, completely ignoring or distorting facts which do not fit the scheme. We will get to this in full in a minute.

Finally J.P. isolates his object by adopting the approach of the most blatant "new leftists" - this is the approach, still much too widespread among us, that the U.S. communist movement began when we hit the scene. Listen to our latest spokesman for the anti-leftists:

Additionally, (in the U.S.) the workers movement developed long before Marxism as a political tendency, and thus was led by reformists and social-democrats. Though the militancy of the U.S. working class was second to none, it lacked the class and political consciousness that only Marxism-Leninism propagated by a revolutionary Communist Party can bring. (See J.P.'s paper, p. 7)

Was 1852 soon enough for you J.P.? Joseph Weydemeyer, a close comrade of Marx and Engels, led the forming of the first communist organization, the Proletarian League, which published Die Revolution, the first communist publication in the U.S. in 1852. And in 1877 the Socialist Labor Party was formed and led by Sorge. A few years later a strike by U.S. workers in Chicago for an eight-hour day was adopted by Marx and the International Workingmen's Association as an international holiday - May Day. International Women's Day also had its origin in our country, comrade J.P. And the International Workingmen's Association itself - the First International - was

headquartered in New York city towards the end of its existence. So as we can see, comrades, in order to make their case for "ultra-leftism" our anti-lefts are led necessarily to deny the revolutionary history of our class!

And this denial leads inevitably to the classic position of history held by all "new leftists," i.e., history and the communist movement begins with our new leftists, especially around the late 1960's:

In summary we can say that the anti-revisionist communist movement emerged on the heels of the spontaneous upsurge of the late sixties.

Of course there is a grain of truth in this formulation, and this grain of truth is very important; but what it helps to obscure is even more important. It obscures the fact that the communist movement in the U.S. is not at all new and that the fight against revisionism has its roots in the "old party" of our class, the "C"PUUSA. The fight against MODERN REVISIONISM in the U.S. began roughly around 1944 and continued until about 1962-63 mainly within the confines of the "old party." But even as early as 1944 the fight against revisionism proceeded from outside the "old party" as well, as large numbers of party members were expelled for "ultra-leftism," because in the late forties the "old party" had declared "ultra-leftism" to be the Main Danger at a time when there was a mass strike wave going on inside the U.S., growing unrest and struggle on the part of the Black masses, and at a time when the U.S. imperialists were intensifying their attack on China and tightening their grip on the whole post-war world, and the "old party" itself was led by "open" right opportunists and revisionists.

So what exactly is "new" in our communist movement today? The new factors in the fight against revisionism is that it is taking place COMPLETELY outside the "old party" and in opposition to the "old party," with the understanding that it is necessary to build a completely new party (among some, we should say) following the Bolshevik Model, and to smash the "old party" which today is a bourgeois party masquerading inside the working class. The other new factor is that we are new to the communist movement, we are new to the fight against revisionism. But comrade J.P., the revisionism of the "C"PUUSA was not, and is not today, an isolated phenomenon. It was and still is, part of an international revisionist trend. But what is even more important for revolutionary communists, is the fact that neither is the struggle against revisionism an isolated phenomenon. Because the international struggle against revisionism joined with the genuine Marxist-Leninists here in the U.S. and opposed the revisionist line of the "C"PUUSA in 1944, just as genuine Marxist-Leninists in the U.S., no matter how small and few in number at various times, have never been alone in opposing the revisionism of the "C"PUUSA – neither then nor today, neither in 194, 1962, 1968 or 1975.

But for J.P. the anti-revisionist communist movement emerged in the late sixties. Consider J.P.'s account of how this movement emerged:

As a result of the anti-war movement, the oppressed minority movements, the student and women's movement, as well as the effects of the great proletarian cultural revolution in China (the little red book, etc.) many people moved genuinely toward the left. (See p. 15 of J.P.'s paper)

Now, what this is, is the history of the new left. Excuse us but we leftists are troubled by your having forgotten the U.S. working class. But listen further:

Marxism-Leninism began to be popular. There was a sincere (sic) though spontaneous (sic) and unsystematic rejection of revisionism and the CPUSA.

Can you really believe it? A sincere and spontaneous rejection of revisionism! If it is that easy, no wonder our anti-lefts don't worry about the fight against opportunism – who needs to fight it at all! But comrades, how can a Marxist talk

about the spontaneous rejection of bourgeois ideology? J.P. continues:

Anarchism, adventurism, passivism, and petty bourgeois nationalism as well accompanied this move towards Marxism due to the overwhelming petty bourgeois and class composition of the movement. As a result simultaneously with the popularization of many terms and concepts found in the classics, there was a definite tendency to smuggle various forms of petty bourgeois theories (Debrayism, Fanonism, Nkrumahism, etc.,) into Marxism-Leninism thereby producing an eclectic hodgepodge of general "revolutionary theory" which various groups (the Black Panthers, the League, YLP, SDS, etc.,) passed off as Marxism-Leninism. (J.P. 's paper, p. 15)

So there you have it. Each and every tendency lumped together without the slightest attempt to examine the role of each tendency, the relationship between them, and how they mutually conditioned each other. Can anyone imagine Lenin analyzing the development of the socialist movement in Russia by saying Narodism, Bernsteinism, Marxism, "legal" Marxism, Bundism, Iskraism, etc., etc., were all in a pot struggling over who would lead without giving us an exact picture of each tendency and the relationship between them, how they mutually conditioned each other and of their relationship to the international revolutionary movement?

This is what happens when you try to examine the history of the BWC as something isolated and divorced from surrounding conditions. But how should we proceed?

2. A Leninist Presentation Of The Question

Comrades, what is a Leninist presentation of the question of political trends in our movement and their effect on our organization? Let's return to basics. The first premise of historical materialism is that we can consider nothing in isolation. This is what it means to apply dialectics to the scientific study of society:

Contrary to metaphysics, dialectics does not regard nature as an accidental agglomeration of things, of phenomenon, unconnected with, isolated from, and independent of each other, but as a connected and integral whole, in which things, phenomenon, are organically connected with, dependent on, and determined by each other.

The dialectical method therefore holds that no phenomenon in nature can be understood if taken by itself, isolated from surrounding phenomena, inasmuch as any phenomenon in any realm of nature may become meaningless to us if it is not considered in connection with surrounding conditions, but divorced from them; and that, vice versa, any phenomenon can be understood and explained if considered in its inseparable connection with surrounding phenomena, as one conditioned by surrounding phenomena. (Stalin, DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM, Int. Pub., p. 7)

But let's spell it out even further. In the COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL Lenin makes it absolutely clear that neither "personal biography or auto-biography," nor connecting simply the BWC by a "thousand threads to itself," can substitute for genuine political analysis:

This question should not, of course, be considered from the standpoint of the biographies of the individual leaders... what interests the socialist movement today is not that, but a study of the historical origins, the conditions, the significance and the strength of the social-chauvinist trend. (1) where did social-chauvinism spring from? (2) what gave it strength? (3) How must It be combatted? Only such an approach to the question can be regarded as serious, the personal approach being in practice an evasion, a piece of sophistry.

To answer the first question we must see, first, whether the ideological and

political content of social-chauvinism is connected with some previous trend in socialism; and second, in what relation – from the standpoint of actual political divisions – the present division of socialists into opponents and defenders of social-chauvinism stands to divisions which historically preceded it. (V. 21, p. 242)

Lenin emphasizes that such an approach is a requirement of the dialectical method:

The first and most fundamental demand of scientific research in general and of Marxist dialectics in particular is that a writer should examine the link between the present struggle of trends in the socialist movement – between the trend that is doing the talking, vociferating, and raising a hullabaloo about treachery, and the trend which sees no treachery – and the struggle that preceded it whole decades. (v. 21, p. 238)

Lenin was raising a hullabaloo about the treachery of Kautsky and the social-chauvinists of the Second International and showed the connection between this trend and the petty bourgeois opportunism of the Economists and ideological and organizational successors, the Mensheviks.

We on the left are left because we are fed up with justifying our backwardness and amateurishness and want to raise a hullabaloo about economism, and Menshevism and revisionism within our movement. We will demand of our anti-lefts then a political analysis of trends: Where does the Main Danger in our organization spring from? What gives it strength? How is it connected to trends that have preceded it for decades? AND HOW MUST IT BE COMBATTED?

Let us continue to see how our anti-left's history of the BWC measures up to Lenin's standard.

On page 7 of J.P.'s paper, our new anti-leftist gives us a definition of right and "left" tendencies, and suggests the class sources from which these tendencies spring. Listen.

In the U.S. – as well as most other advanced capitalist countries – the class basis of the right tendency is the labor aristocracy, the upper sections of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. The material factors which aid the growth and development of this right tendency is imperialism (which splits the working-class movement into a revolutionary and reformist – opportunist in general – wing), long periods of capitalist "stabilization," bourgeois democracy, and a reformist-led trade union movement. The class basis for the "left" is the lower and "ruined" sections of the petty bourgeoisie (both rural and urban), the semi-proletariat (part time workers, etc., etc.,) and the declassed elements of the classes; i.e., the lumpen proletariat, and revolutionary periods give rise to this danger.

Now there are some things we could agree to in this passage, but before we too quickly agree, let's don't forget the case where Lenin thought he had complete agreement with an acquaintance, but in the end could "hardly remember a single question of principle upon which I was in agreement with that Economist." (WITBD, p. 137) What we need to do is to test J.P.'s general statements like the above against the way J.P. applies them to the history of the BWC and our country. In other words, to get specific and concrete, not just universal and general. What is the weight of one or the other tendency historically and presently throughout the U.S.? What is the specific history of either tendency? So let's take a look at the way J.P. "interprets" the first period of the BWC's development: The Forman period.

Now here unfortunately we find that we don't agree with our anti-left or much. To J.P. the history of the BWC is a history of what he calls "semi" Trotskyism – this

is presumably the trend that the BWC is connected to by a thousand threads and that preceded us for decades. Why Trotskyism? Because Forman had a plan for an International BWC. Our latest anti-leftist grandly declares that the BWC by considering itself an international organization held a Trotskyite conception. Comrades let's be serious. This is the trick bag you get yourself into when you violate the teachings of historical materialism which says that in examining questions of social science you cannot consider a thing in a one-sided, isolated and distorted fashion. Is Zionism a Trotskyite conception? Pan Slavism? Pan Arabism? Pan Africanism? Our line that all Pan Africanists fall into Trotskyism was correctly criticized by a comrade on the former NS as incorrect (even though the same comrade was the first to put forward the incorrect line). What all of these trends have in common is the organization along "racial" or "national" lines internationally. While it is true that Trotskyism attempts to organize political parties internationally, it does this without regard for particular national forms in each country. But "national" forms of international organization are by no means Trotskyism – unless we are going to say that any time two things have a single characteristic in common they are identical. For any Marxist-Leninist to forget for one moment the bourgeois nationalist orientation of the BWC which led it to a Pan Africanist deviation is to be blind or to have ulterior motives. In this case the motive is to build a case for "ultra-leftism" at the present moment.

But there is an even more important blindness here. J.P. points out on p. 2 of his paper that "centralized administration and collective authority also fell into the category of semi-Trotskyism," and that the slogan "workers control of reproduction" was "semi" Trotskyism. What is behind all of this? Syndicalists the world over have repeatedly made the error of "workers control of production" rather than the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. And isn't "centralized administration and collective authority" in the context of the BWC nothing more than a petty bourgeois democratic resistance to proletarian forms of organization? We'll tell you what is behind these distortions, as well as J.P.'s later analysis of the communist movement, which only repeats the most general and profound observations: "...overwhelming petty bourgeois character and class composition" of the communist movement. The point is this: While J.P. and our anti-lefts (every one of them) gives lip service to the RIGHT TENDENCIES of the petty bourgeoisie, each and every one of them want to cover this factor up with an argument which boils down to this "we are "ultra-left" because we are petty bourgeois." But the argument stops there. They conveniently forget, all of them, that Lenin labeled Economism and Menshevism petty bourgeois opportunist trends. In WITBD Lenin identified the petty bourgeois "academic stratum" as responsible for the rapid spread of Bernsteinism in Russian Social Democracy (p. 12, WITBD), and in OSF,TSB Lenin identified the democratic intelligentsia as responsible for narrowness and backwardness on matters of organization. But for our anti-lefts – who want to see only "ultra-leftism" – the petty bourgeoisie is capable only of Trotskyism, adventurism and the whole remaining bundle of "left" errors cooked up today. But what are the facts comrades? What are the facts for the BWC?

3. The Opportunism of The Petty Bourgeois Democratic Trend In The BWC

What our anti-lefts want to ignore is the BWC's legacy of Forman's petty bourgeois democratic liberalism which dominated our organization for 2 1/2 years. What our new convert to anti-leftism would like to bring forward in order to justify ultra-leftism today is Forman's anarchism to the exclusion of everything else. But facts will stick in their throats. The facts are that the BWC and Forman were tied by a thousand threads to the liberal bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia and the urban petty bourgeoisie. They want to deny that thousands of dollars came to our organization directly from the purses of the monopoly capitalists.

One leading comrade of the former MS used to be fond of pointing out how CAP and

ALSC got their start with the assistance of large religious denominations out of New York City, but he and the rest of the anti-lefts want us to forget that hundreds of thousands of dollars (literally comrades!) were funneled to the BWC through Forman from the Black Economic Development Conference by the biggest churches in the country. The anti-lefts want us to forget that Forman's buck created the most blatant flabbiness and unwillingness to persevere in the attainment of a goal, an unwillingness to struggle and sacrifice over and over again, even in the face of failure, until a particular objective was achieved. The anti-Lefts want us to forget that Forman's buck was used directly to create districts in the BWC. Certain couples and cadre lived directly off Forman's dole for the first 2 1/2 years of their being in the BWC without ever having to do a day's work. But, oh, how liberals hate unpleasant facts.

Comrades, can anyone forget that when the BWC under Forman's leadership made plans like the Gary Conference, or the Third World Summit Conference and the Black Workers Freedom Convention that it was the liberal bourgeoisie who was relied upon to finance these events? Can anyone who was a member of the BWC at the time forget the airline tickets, the motel rooms, the petty bourgeois liberal decadence, the endless passing of resolutions to merely have them pigeon-holed and forgotten. Can anyone forget that Forman's political activity was in the main a sacrificing of the proletariat's and organization's long range and general interests for the most crass immediate programs? Can anyone forget the ease with which members came and went from the BWC, the precious safeguarding of the rights of the individual? Have comrades forgotten that if you total up the membership of the BWC's leadership who have split the organization or been expelled (and we mean influential members who were on the NCC as well as leading local bodies) that most of these persons have returned to the upper levels of the intelligentsia, the labor aristocracy or petty bourgeoisie? (We want to talk concretely about this; not in generalities and lifeless "formulas" which see only ultra-leftism in the petty bourgeoisie and are blind to liberal petty bourgeois right opportunism!) Just take a glance at what former members of the BWC NCC are doing today. For example, Ken Cockrel is columnist for the Michigan Chronicle and a candidate for Mayor of Detroit. Larry Nevels is a big official in Detroit Mayor Coleman Young's administration. John Watson is an organizer for a big Methadone program. Michelle Russell is a leading figure on the board of a large philanthropic foundation run by the monopoly capitalists. (This same foundation was one of the original benefactors of the BWC.) Helen Jones is an Evangelist for Unity School out of Unity Village, Missouri. Miriam (Atlanta) is an official of Maynard Jackson's administration in Atlanta. Worth Long is employed by the Smithsonian Institute. Michael Wright is close to becoming a psychiatrist in Berkeley. Rick Reed is lodged in the U.E.'s bureaucracy. Herman Holmes is a member of the Chicago Mosque of the Muslims and Warner McCreary is an official of a reformist program run by Fisk University. And comrades, this doesn't even include persons who Forman fought to either bring into the BWC or to put onto its Central Committee, persons like the Rev. Muhammed Kenyatta of Philadelphia, Jessie Grey, the assemblyman out of New York City, etc. And then there are the persons who left the BWC and almost immediately joined the "C" PUSA, like Gwen Patton, Malikha Robinson, and Mickey McGuire who became a close collaborator. And there are facts like the BWC holding one of its most important Central Committee meetings, during Forman's period of leadership, in the home of a member of the liberal bourgeoisie. The affluence and comfort of this setting even had the power to shock even the most consistent petty bourgeois democrat in our midst at the time!

And our anti-lefts want to ignore that the petty bourgeoisie is a source of right opportunism!! And that it is a source of right opportunism in our organization - the BWC!

Comrades, in the face of these facts can there be doubt as to what the source is,

the class basis, for the long-standing resistance in our organization to proletarian forms of centralized and disciplined organization? Our anti-lefts want to mask the fact that for four years anemic petty bourgeois democracy of the Menshevik type has reigned within the BWC. Outright open autonomy has been the main current in the BWC – and these who launched the original attack on the left in this current struggle are openly calling for it again. (See M.H.'s latest paper.) Not a single one of the anti-lefts can deny that for months and months in every district, leadership on the local level have been left to pursue whatever ends it wanted to pursue, and yet they stand things on their heads and scream about how they have been bureaucratically ruled and how centralism has run rampant in the organization. Comrade Danny Brown has even said that we are not a national organization but a loose collection of collectives, but then a style which has become characteristic of our anti-lefts he refuses to stand on the consequences of his own analysis and in the next breath is screaming about bureaucratic centralism. And this comes from a comrade who has never in his entire history (over the last two years) written a single report for any level of the organization on the work in the city of Chicago. There has not been one coordinated even in the last two years. Watch comrades, as ALSC and Women's Day and May Day approach. Watch how the cry will go forward, "we got to do something about these celebrations," and watch how if anything is done, it will be only on the good sense of maybe one or two districts around the country.

Our anti-lefts want us to ignore that the petty bourgeois liberal psychoanalytical approach to ideological struggle and criticism/self-criticism which Forman introduced into the BWC had anything to do with our resistance to democratic centralism – or that the legacy of that petty bourgeois liberalism remains with us today. (Check out the self-criticisms of J.P. and D.S. – I was liberal and will never do it again.) Listen, comrades, to Political Lesson No. One formulated by James Forman and implemented by the BWC, and then try to argue that the petty bourgeois intellectual in our midst has not consistently led us into the Menshevik swamp of right opportunism:

All potential Congress Cadre and existing cadres must engage in Get Acquainted Sessions. These sessions must be thorough and people must be present at all sessions and be willing to meet as long as is necessary to complete them. NO BOOKS ARE TO BE READ – NO THEORY DISCUSSED UNTIL IN-DEPTH PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE IS SHARED WITH ALL MEMBERS OF THE CADRE. (From a Southern Regional Conference Report, May, 1971)

And as long as is necessary meant for some of our petty bourgeois leaders 18 to 24 hours. Now some comrades will say that was a long time ago, and besides, Forman has been out of the BWC for almost two years. Check this conception of proletarian centralism by Don Stone:

"...centralism has more to do with the centralizing of the correct thought scattered and unsystematic ideas of an organization than it does with the centralization of authority though both are aspects of what we mean when we talk of more centralism. (D. Stone's latest paper, p. 13)

You could almost sum this up as Forman's old formula of, "centralized administration and collective authority." This is pure petty bourgeois hatred for centralism, for discipline, for authority. This is also what we mean when we say all the anti-lefts have had to retreat to some classic positions in their attack on Marxism-Leninism. The above passage written by D.S. sounds like it was written word for word from the text of some Menshevik in Russia. Listen, comrades, as Lenin deals with D.S.'s conception of centralism:

The authority of the central institution should rest on moral and intellectual

prestige. There I, of course, agree. Every representative of the organization must be concerned for the moral prestige of its institution. But it does not follow that, while prestige is necessary, authority is not... To counterpose the power of authority to the power of ideas is anarchistic talk, which should have no place here. These propositions are as elementary as can be, they are in fact axioms...(Lenin, OSF,TSB, V. 7, pp. 366-7)

Yes, J.P. and all our anti-lefts, our present struggle is connected by a thousand threads to the history of the BWC; but unless you have lost all sense of shame you will not try to make out a case for "ultra-leftism" on the basis of these facts!

4. The Anti-Lefts Ignore the Opportunism of the Petty Bourgeois Democratic Trend

Comrades, we want to be clear on this. WE CONSIDER THAT THE POLITICAL CONTENT OF THE PRESENT STRUGGLE IS AN ATTACK ON THE IDEOLOGICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS OF A MARXIST LENINIST PARTY BY THE PETTY BOURGEOIS DEMOCRATIC TENDENCY IN OUR MIDST. It is a new form of the right opportunist trend identified by Lenin and connected to the "academic stratum" as the source of revisionism in matters of ideology in WITBD, to "democratic intelligentsia" as the source of opportunism in matters of organization in OSF,TSB. We hold that opportunism of the petty bourgeois democratic type is definitely the main danger which results from the large numbers of students and intellectuals which compose our organization (the highest percentage being on the NCC) and the anti-revisionist movement as a whole. We reject altogether the line originally formulated by OL in its PARTY BUILDING PAMPHLET (Spring, 1973), that "ultra-leftism" – manifesting itself in the "left" diseases of sectarianism, dogmatism and anarchism – is the main danger in the anti-revisionist movement because the social basis of that movement is to a large extent from the ranks of the middle class and intelligentsia.

OL's pamphlet is important here because to the extent that the anti-lefts in our organization rise above personal complaints (what a sense of personal injury our anti-lefts display!) about the way they have been treated by the "two hegemonic forces" they are not above calling fascist (See Stone's paper, p. 11) they all fall back to the arguments in OL's pamphlet. How then does OL make a case for the source of ultra-leftism? They quote Stalin:

I think that the proletariat as a class, can be divided into three strata... One stratum is the main mass of the proletariat, its core, its permanent part, the mass of "pure blooded" proletarians, who have long broken off connection with the capitalist class. This is the stratum of the proletariat which is the most reliable bulwark of Marxism.

The second stratum consist of newcomers from the non-proletarian classes – from the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie or the intelligentsia. These are former members of other classes who have only recently brought with them into the working class their customs, their habits, their waverings and their vacillations. This stratum constitutes the most favorable soil for all sorts of anarchist, semi-anarchist and "ultra-left" groups.

The third stratum, lastly, consists of the labor aristocracy, the upper stratum of the working class, the most well-to-do portion of the proletariat, with its propensity for compromise with the bourgeoisie, its predominant inclination to adapt itself to the powers that be, and its anxiety to "get on in life" (Stalin, v. 9, pp. 10-1)

That was Stalin speaking, but OL continues:

This in general describes the class origins of this "leftism." But let's

examine some of the ways it manifests itself among the groups working for the building of a new party. Certain of the groups who have taken an "ultra-leftist" course have isolated the tasks of party building from work within the mass movement of the people. To them, building a party is the task of a handful of intellectuals, working in isolation from the masses. They argue that "the mass movement is meaningless without the leadership of the party." They have no faith in the people's ability to learn through the struggle and so they participate in mass work for the sole purpose of winning the handful of advanced workers to their organization.(sic!)

Do the arguments sound familiar comrades? These are the arguments D. Stone relies on and we will deal with them in our treatment of his paper. But let's take up for now this question of social origins.

What in fact does Stalin say? He says that the petty bourgeoisie or the intelligentsia is the "most favorable soil" for ultra-leftism. What does this mean? Obviously comrades, it means that neither the labor aristocracy nor the core of the proletariat is a "favorable soil" for ultra-leftism, and that to the extent that it arises, it has its source in these new comers from non-proletarian classes. Does Stalin say that the petty bourgeoisie is NOT a source of right opportunist errors like the OL and our own anti-leftists, including J.P., would like to pretend, or conveniently ignore, or that we can dismiss the intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie and carriers of revisionism and right opportunism? BY NO MEANS! This would be to fly in the face of the whole weight of Lenin's WITBD, OSF,TSB, the struggle with Kautsky, and his whole battle against revisionism. Our anti-lefts are very fond of throwing around the charge that the BWC is afflicted with the disease of "Infantilism." Well, comrades of the anti-left, you have just seen a good example of infantilism demonstrated by your ideological teachers, the OL, for it is childishness to take up Stalin's quote in a one-sided way and then use it as a formula to be slapped down on any and every situation. On that approach one is never required to make a concrete analysis of concrete conditions in order to determine the greatest danger facing the party of the proletariat.

All you have to do is count up the number of petty bourgeois forces at any given time and lo and behold that gives you the main danger of "ultra-leftism."

5. The Petty Bourgeois Democratic Trend and the Fundamental Question of Modern Socialism

The Albanians correctly say that the advanced capitalist countries of Europe and North America are pregnant with revisionism. This is a consequence of the morsels of loot obtained from imperialist "Great Power" privileges falling from the table of the monopoly capitalists to be passed on to corrupt the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia and the working-class aristocracy and bureaucracy.

In IMPERIALISM AND THE SPLIT IN SOCIALISM, Lenin writes:

Is there any connection between imperialism and the monstrous and disgusting victory opportunism (in the form of social chauvinism) has gained over the labor movement in Europe?

This is the FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION OF MODERN SOCIALISM(our caps).

Lenin's answer of course is YES and certain comrades are trying to use Stalin against Lenin and turn a principle of Marxism-Leninism into a lifeless dogma in using Stalin's teaching which says that new comers from the non-proletarian strata are the "most favorable soil for "ultra-leftism" in order to conveniently IGNORE the right opportunist tendencies of the petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia, in advanced capitalist countries, "pregnant with revisionism." Lenin constantly returns to the theme stressing the economist, Menshevik and revisionist tendencies of the

intelligentsia and ties which link the intelligentsia to the labor aristocracy, the government hacks, the universities, newspapers, and other institutions of the bourgeoisie. Where have our expelled and resigned former NCC members gone? In THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL (v. 21, .pp. 258-9) Lenin writes:

In the approximately twenty years '(1894-1914) that Russian Social Democracy has existed as an organization linked with the mass working class movement (and not only as an ideological trend, as in 1883-94), there was a struggle between the proletarian-revolutionary trends and the petty bourgeois, opportunist trends. The Economism of 1899-1902 was undoubtedly a trend of a latter kind. A number of its arguments and ideological features – the "Struivist" distortion of Marxism, references to the "masses" in order to justify opportunism (like OL and our anti-lefts), and the like – bear a striking resemblance to the present vulgarized Marxism of Kautsky... The Menshevism of the next period (1903-B) was the direct successor, both ideologically and organizational, to Economism. During the Russian Revolution it pursued tactics that objectively meant the dependence of the proletariat upon the liberal bourgeoisie, and expressed petty bourgeois, opportunist trends... The "European" type of development, in which certain strata of the petty bourgeoisie, especially the intelligentsia and an insignificant section of the labor aristocracy can share in the "Great Power" privileges of their "own" nation, could not but have its Russian counterpart.

What Lenin is saying here is that the advanced capitalist "European" type of development leads to an alliance ESPECIALLY between the intelligentsia, the labor aristocracy and the liberal bourgeoisie. Comrades! We can never forget that this alliance is ideological – i.e., ideas about democracy, class harmony, individualism, autonomy, ideas about standards of living, etc., – as well as practical and political. Secondly, as Lenin points out more fully in his analysis of Struivism earlier in the text (p. 222) the opportunism that is the political expression of this alliance must mask itself as Marxism, but in a form that purges Marxism of its revolutionary content. The intellectuals and theoreticians feign acceptance of Marxism, they feign acceptance of socialist ideals, of substituting a new order for capitalism, but they take out of Marxism only what is acceptable to their own liberal democratic interests, casting aside the living soul of Marxism, its revolutionary content even under the guise of "references to the masses," etc. (Good lord! OL and our new anti-lefts are really good at this) Or as Lenin goes on to say (p. 244) this trend will prattle and dream about the abatement of antagonisms within the movement (J.P., OL, D.S., Irwin Silber) whose aggravation they argue can only lead to harmful consequences, and in this way they seek to weaken the struggle against bourgeois distortions of Marxism thereby fostering necessarily illusions of class harmony. The ideology of the bourgeoisie – e.g., parson like attitudes which view "theoretical controversies, factional disagreements, broad political questions, schemes for organizing revolutionaries, etc.," (WITBD, p. 22) as unpleasant and unnecessary – smuggled into the proletariat under the guise of an attack on sectarianism and dogmatism, and an attack on those who aggravate antagonisms, thus promoting unprincipled peace with the liberal opportunism of the petty bourgeois democratic trends.

But our anti-lefts like to remind everyone far and near that "left" opportunism – sectarianism and dogmatism – was particularly strong in China and Albania. So let's examine this argument.

It is true that in China and Albania "left" opportunism was for a considerable period the main danger – due above all to the importance of the genuinely revolutionary aims of the peasantry as a main revolutionary force in both these revolutions – that the progressive intelligentsia was in constant danger of confusing the revolutionary interests of the petty bourgeoisie with the more far

preaching and thoroughgoing revolutionary aims of the proletariat – that "petty bourgeois revolutionaries" were inclined to think that the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia should be copied down to the last detail. Remember that Russia borders China and the Bolsheviks had a tremendous influence on the Chinese Revolution. China was an oppressed nation, semi-colonial and semifeudal and the revolution in this type of country would proceed differently than in the western capitalist countries as Mao himself points out in Problems of War and Strategy (Mao, Selected Military Writings, pp. 269-270). In advanced capitalist countries the proletarian parties must go through a long period of legal struggle, and at the right time launch an insurrection and seize the cities, and then advance to the countryside. In countries like China, just the reverse is the case. There is no need to go through long periods of legal struggle before launching an insurrection. Listen at Mao:

The main task of the party of the Chinese proletariat, a task confronting it almost from its Very inception, has been to unite with as many allies as possible and, according to the circumstances, to organize armed struggles for national and social liberation against armed counter-revolution, whether internal or external. Without armed struggle the proletariat and the Communist Party would have no standing at all in China, and it would be impossible to accomplish any revolutionary task. (Mao, War and Strategy, p. 272)

Besides, the party of the proletariat should go to the countryside where its main ally is constituted, the lower and middle peasants, and carry out agrarian revolution, build base areas, encircle the cities and then march on them. It is no accident that many of the "left" lines to surface in China wanted to attack the cities first, wanted to proceed as if they were in Russia, i.e., seize the cities and then march on the countryside. Hence there dogmatism and sectarianism towards the Chinese proletariat's main and most reliable ally, the peasantry. But why do our anti-lefts refuse to bring the lessons of "leftism" in China forward in such a way that we can properly learn from them? To confuse the Chinese and Albanian experience – both waging wars of national liberation AGAINST imperialism – with conditions inside advanced capitalist countries where "certain strata of the petty bourgeoisie and especially the intelligentsia and the labor aristocracy can share in the "Great Power" privileges of their "own" nation, is genuinely to make history with a mechanical and opportunist tongue. It is to abandon every pretense of standing on Lenin's analysis of imperialism and the split in socialism. 1 How can our anti-lefts forget such an ABC of Leninism? In China the working class had not been split into a bribed upper section as is the case in the U.S. Listen to Mao again:

...since there is no economic basis for social-reformism in colonial and semi-colonial China as there is in Europe, the whole proletariat with the exception of a few scabs, is most revolutionary. (Mao SW, p. 324)

But this is by no means the case in one of the world's two SUPERPOWERS! The main danger for our intelligentsia in the U.S. is not to confuse the interests of the proletariat with the "genuinely revolutionary interests" of a vast petty bourgeois peasantry – the weight of the industrial proletariat and other sections of the working class as the main and leading force in the revolution is after all overwhelming – but instead their tendency is to confuse the temporary and immediate interests of the proletariat, immediate interests which principally benefit the small minority of the workers aristocracy, bureaucrats and intelligentsia, anyway, with the proletariat's long term revolutionary interests. This is the significance of the tie of the radical intelligentsia to the labor aristocracy and the liberal bourgeoisie established through the universities, in the classrooms, through the churches, the foundations, the "community programs," the press, etc., as well as the gamut of ideological devices such as consumerism, TV, radio, ads, etc. Traditions of

liberalism and legality, resting on the economic basis of Super Power privileges, penetrate with particular force into the ideology of the intellectual vulnerable as he is through his mode of existence – the fact he typically works in isolation or in very small groups – to bourgeois individualism and bourgeois ideas of freedom and democracy. Just imagine Don Stone is more concerned about "democracy" at this stage of building the party than he is about centralism. Also check out the I.C.'s calling for "Broad Democracy" and J.P. as we will point out further on in this paper is crying because the various groups have democratic centralist structures. Thus in China, where armed struggle was the main form of struggle virtually from day one, adventurism was a major danger throughout the revolution. But for the radical intellectual in our midst, where the struggle is waged at this time principally under conditions of legality, the main danger for these elements is to confuse constantly its own petty bourgeois ideas of individualism and democratic liberalism with proletarian solidarity and democratic centralism, and its own habit of working for reforms "in the interest of the masses" (as they scream it all over the place) and under conditions of legality, with the long term revolutionary interests of the proletariat.

Finally, we will not belittle the fact, as our anti-lefts do, that the split in modern socialism has been nourished and strengthened by the rise to power of Modern Revisionism which is able to use parties like the "C" PUSA to spread its bankrupt ideas of class harmony and peaceful transition. Of course, J.P. like all our anti-lefts do lip service before the line which says that Modern Revisionism is the Main Danger, but their genuflections are mere formality since for them it is only "out there, somewhere in the vicinity of the "C" PUSA" – it is not a danger for us, for our movement, and certainly not for "professional" revolutionaries of the BWC J.P. writes:

But in order to wage this struggle correctly and victoriously, we have to recognize another more immediate danger – petty bourgeois radicalism; i.e., "left" opportunism and sectarianism. Right now "leftism" is the more immediate danger, it is the obstacle which is preventing us from striking a serious blow at revisionism. (J.P.'s paper, p. 16)

J.P. has learned the fashionable catechism. But we will show in the third part of this paper that our anti-lefts are unable to give serious materialist analysis of the source of the sectarianism they find under every bush. What is important now is to recognize how for J.P. and the rest of the anti-leftists that all of a sudden Modern Revisionism is not at all a factor in our midst and certainly not a factor which influences the "petty bourgeois radical." This is strange isn't it for an organization which only a little more than a year and a half ago was applauding that there were two bankrupt lines in the communist movement which had to be defeated: one was that Party Building was the central task, and the other was that Blacks were a nation in the Black Belt South. Do our anti-left liners seriously think that these lines had nothing to do with the pervasiveness of modern revisionism IN OUR MIDST? Our anti-lefts love to complain about how rare books are hoarded in the BWC. Has it ever occurred to them WHY these books are rare? How young Marxist-Leninists have had to cut through Baran and Sweezy, etc., etc., because they did not have Leontiev? The revisionists are spreading their corruption at every turn and until we have grown up enough, become genuinely professional enough to repossess our revolutionary heritage of Marxism-Leninism and stand firmly on that, we will be vulnerable – and especially our students and intellectuals – to their perversions and lies smuggled into our movement in a million ways.

But then we had forgotten – for J.P. a "sincere" and "spontaneous" rejection of revisionism is all it takes! Given such heroic "spontaneous" feats it is normal that our anti-lefts have had to find dogmatism and sectarianism to do battle with.

Comrades, we think differently. We think that the split in socialism caused by imperialism and nourished and strengthened by the rise to power of Modern Revisionism makes right opportunism the main danger in advanced capitalist countries of the "European" type of development, imperialist Great Power nations, and make it the main danger for us. Comrades, THESE CONDITIONS MAKE RIGHT OPPORTUNISM THE MAIN DANGER FOR STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS IN THE ANTI-REVISIONIST COMMUNIST MOVEMENT AS WELL – ESPECIALLY STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS!

6. Lenin on the Influence of the "Academic Stratum"

We have tried to illustrate how in our own organization the extent to which opportunist trends of petty bourgeois democracy – nourished and strengthened by the split in modern socialism – have been able to penetrate into our midst. This is still the main danger for us. As noted earlier, in WITBD, Lenin identifies the "academic stratum" as a basis for the vulnerability of the socialist movement to the revisionism and right opportunism of Bernstein:

Has not B.K. heard of the fact, long ago noted, that it is precisely the extensive participation of an "academic stratum" in the socialist movement in recent years that has secured such a rapid spread of Bernsteinism? (WITBD, p. 12)

Can we say that we are immune from such influence? On the present NCC we have three comrades with Masters degrees, two college teachers, several others recruited directly off the campuses either with an academic degree or not, and our new convert to anti-leftism is himself a student. This is the Central Committee which adopted the Bernstein line of "build the mass movement" and the revisionist line of "Nation of a Mew Type." This is the CC which pleads that it was "stampeded" into revisionism.

But direct personal leadership of the "academic stratum" is only one way the "academic stratum" can penetrate into our midst. We are weak theoretically and our resources for independent theoretical work are weak. We have to rely on bourgeois sources to a greater or lesser degree at every turn. Take the example of the INFLATION article in issue No. 4 of THE COMMUNIST which our anti-lefts call too theoretical. Can you imagine, our hot and heavy anti-lefts never bother their infantile heads with whether the article is incorrect or not, but only the absurd question of it being TOO theoretical! The difficulty with this article is not that it is too theoretical but that it is wrong.* It puts forward a bourgeois academic and not a Marxist understanding of money and directly contradicts Marx's explanation at several points. This error is the result of our failure to overcome the influence of the bourgeois academic stratum on us and of our relying on bourgeois scholarship rather than the classics of Marxism-Leninism. (Mote the ease with which M.H., C.G., and L.M. have relied on books such as "Mao's Papers" by a bourgeois scholar, Boyd Compton, Jerome Chen and Han Su Yen.) It represents a failure to take the consciousness of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism to our theoretical work, a tailing in that regard too, just as we lag in our ability to take revolutionary consciousness to

*The view of paper money put forward illustrates the errors in the article: (1) the article says that paper money is fiduciary money accepted on faith – this is a bourgeois view; what Marx says is that paper money is forced currency guaranteed by State power. (2) The article says that the value of paper money is determined by quantity printed in relation to its gold backing; this is incorrect: Marx says the value of paper money is determined by its quantity in relation to the amount of gold required for the circulation of commodities. There are other fundamental errors which illustrate that Marxist monetary theory has not been grasped, leading inevitably to bourgeois views on the problem.

our political and organizational work. To turn away from socialist ideology to the slightest degree is to strengthen bourgeois ideology. Of course this error itself can be readily overcome provided that we recognize it, identify its source, and take up the struggle against it resolutely, guiding our efforts by Marxism-Leninism. What is really serious is that we should ignore the problem under the silly, childish guise the article is too theoretical (and therefore "left") or refuse to identify its source under the guise that we must attack ultra-leftism as the main danger.

So too, comrades, if we identify an "academic stratum" and state that it is especially vulnerable to petty bourgeois democratic tendencies – that these are the main danger – it is obviously not for the purpose of attacking revolutionary intellectuals whether they have some kind of academic degree or not. We need all the revolutionary intellectuals and red experts we can get. But we will examine carefully and constantly adopt the stand, viewpoint and method of the proletariat. And we will not be fooled by an attack cooked up against the left into thinking that the proletariat does not have to worry about the liberal opportunist and petty bourgeois democratic tendencies of the students and intellectuals in our midst.

Isn't that really the purpose of OL's line on the question: to cover their own liberalism by pointing to sectarianism and dogmatism as the main danger? (Who on earth, pray tell, takes OL's fight against their own and others "Leftism" seriously? Everyone can see what OL really is (and it certainly isn't Left, without or with quotation marks). Are we really going to dig the same hole for ourselves in the BWC?!

7. The Petty Bourgeois Democratic Trend In Alliance With Marxist-Leninists

Comrades, how is the influence of the petty bourgeois democratic trend reflected in the development of political trends in the anti-revisionist movement?

There were at least four distinct political trends that came forward to lead the spontaneous upsurge of the late 1960's: (1) a generally reformist petty bourgeois democratic trend closely allied with the liberal bourgeoisie, the labor aristocracy and the reformist Black bourgeoisie; (2) a radical "revolutionary" wing which went more and more over to calls for excitative terror (also often allied to the liberal bourgeoisie); (3) there was the revisionist trend of the "C"CPUSA who heavily influenced petty bourgeois democrats and the "radicals" even though the "radicals" were vocally anti-CPUSA often to the point of anti-communism, and (4) there was a genuine Marxist-Leninist and genuinely developing Marxist-Leninist trend, though it was weak and scattered.

Now Comrades what is absolutely crucial to grasp is that in the struggle against the "ultra" left adventurist and terrorist tendencies which came forward during those years there developed objectively an alliance between forces expressing petty bourgeois democratic tendencies and genuine Marxist Leninists. Groups like the League/BWC, RU, CCL (California Communist League), the OL, took a stand against terrorism. The strategy of the Weathermen, the BPP, Franklin, Cleaver, etc., was rejected and Marxist-Leninists attempted to base themselves on the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

But the point is this: in the struggle against "ultra-left" adventurism and terrorism, petty bourgeois democratic trends in our movement joined with Marxism-Leninism. However they did not do this openly but covered themselves with the cloak of Marxism-Leninism. Everyone called himself a Marxist-Leninist and as a result the actual objective character of the alliance was masked and hidden from view. The struggle against the genuine "ultra-left" adventurism of the BPP, the Weathermen, the Franklins, etc., allowed for a penetration of petty bourgeois democratic trends into the midst of Marxism-Leninism and the struggle against the "ultra-lefts" covered this penetration.

Comrades, this is the profound meaning for our own recent history of the principle brought forward by the Chinese comrades that the struggle against one error

covers another. For us the struggle against "ultra-leftism" obscured an objective alliance between Marxist-Leninist and a genuine Marxist-Leninist trend. This alliance could continue throughout the period where so much of our movement was involved in "building the mass movement", since the petty bourgeois opportunist trend could continue to cover itself with "references to the masses", etc., and threats to local and individual autonomy called for by proletarian centralization were, particularly in our organization, minimal. In fact, to call things by their proper name, this alliance could continue throughout the period where we were "chasing the bum" because that period represented the OVERPOWERING OF THE YOUNG AND WEAK MARXIST-LENINIST TREND BY THE OLDER AND STRONGER PETTY BOURGEOIS DEMOCRATIC TREND IN OUR MOVEMENT. We did not grasp the science of Marxism-Leninism, we did not grasp the need to study Marxism-Leninism like a science, we did not understand the need for a vanguard party to lead the class - in short we did not understand what it meant to put proletarian ideology and organization in command of all our work. We adopted the right opportunist method of following the line of least resistance.

But as the Marxist-Leninist line on the necessity of building a proletarian party of a new type began to be understood by genuine Marxist-Leninists and as we grasped the significance of this line - that it meant changing the character of all our work, that it meant strenuous struggle to overcome our amateurishness and backwardness and to become professional revolutionaries - as we realized the extent of our backwardness in the face of the magnitude of our tasks in all areas - theoretical, organizational and practical - as all this burst upon us, the alliance of the petty bourgeois democratic trend and the genuine Marxist-Leninist trend of necessity began to rupture. Obviously it is no accident that the rupture has taken place above all around the issues of the relationship of consciousness to spontaneity (hence the overwhelming importance of WITBD to our dispute) and of the relationship of centralism and organization to democracy and local work (hence the importance of OSF,TSB as well as WITBD). On the Black national question the rupture came down around whether we would hold to a "creative" idealist and reformist revision of communist principles on the question - a "creative" revision so typical of the democratic intelligentsia - or whether we would adopt an orthodox materialist and revolutionary stand based on the best experience of our class.

In fact the reason our anti-lefts can so easily ignore the economist errors of the RU period stems precisely from the fact that they intend to obscure the underlying character of these errors. 'While we attempted to base ourselves on the revolutionary proletariat in our struggle with the "ultra-left" adventurism of-"the BPP, the Weathermen, etc., we capitulated to spontaneity in our mass work. This meant without a doubt that the genuine Marxist-Leninist line on taking socialism to the workers' movement was overwhelmed by a petty bourgeois radical line which glorified the path of least resistance - thus we undertook the task of building anti-imperialist coalitions rather than the far more difficult task of doing communist work in the trade unions, starting factory nuclei, etc.; we sought to build the mass movement instead of win the advanced. Our anti-lefts are aware, whether they want to admit it or not, that a serious all-sided examination of this period from a Marxist-Leninist perspective would uncover the liberal opportunist trend which dominated our work - but they will not do this because it is this trend whose banner they have taken up.

Take JP for example who can no longer find economism and amateurishness except in quotation marks. He cannot bring himself to say that the RU period was characterized by "ultra-leftism", but he certainly does do everything he can to ignore the significance and extent of the right opportunist errors we made. It is not really much of an exaggeration to say that he would now evaluate this period as marked largely by unprincipled squabbles over D.H. Wright (and therefore "left"!). Like all our anti-lefts JP has adopted the habit of labelling any error he can find "left"

without explaining why it is "left" and not right. Take his "armchair" example. JP and every anti-left have consistently ignored, in their typical superficial application of Marxist-Leninist theory, that there are right opportunist armchairs as well as "left" opportunist armchairs - in fact armchairs are principally right. Stalin insists particularly on the right armchairs of the Second International who divorced theory from practice and used Marxism to interpret the world and not to change it. (We will have much more to say on this at another time.) And it is curious isn't it that JP can leave the impression that as a result of the split with the RU we emerged weak in our grasp of the BNQ but with a relatively strong grasp of party building and the error of economism (in the next section we will test JP's grasp of these questions). JP may want to quibble over details of chronology, etc. but that is clearly the impression left by the sentence: "But the ideological struggle around the question of Party Building and economism was much more in depth and therefore much more fruitful."(pg. 3)

But the struggle around party building and economism was never fought through to the end and our ideological consolidation around these issues was very weak indeed. The present struggle is proof enough of that. What is JP's point then if not to belittle economism generally and our economist errors in particular? But to belittle the significance of these errors is precisely to belittle the fact that Marxist-Leninists were overpowered during this period by the opportunist petty bourgeois democratic trends in our movement.

The real content of the slogan "ultra-leftism is the main danger" is therefore clear. It is an effort to perpetuate the domination of opportunist petty bourgeois democratic trend in our organization even though we have taken party building as our central task. Not daring to challenge party building itself, our anti-lefts nonetheless retreat practically and theoretically from the task of party building by changing our line on the main danger - economism is forgotten, amateurishness is forgotten, revisionism is forgotten. Instead we find theoretical justifications for our backwardness and resort to slippery manipulation of elements of Marxist-Leninist analysis (like "skipping stages") in order to raise sufficient confusion to justify what is. Under the guise of an attack on "ultra-leftism" as the main danger our petty bourgeois democrats have attacked first of all the practical , revolutionary task of winning the advanced - JP is able to take up the question of party building without discussing this task (and, as we shall see in another paper, so is DS) - so much for our "in depth" and "fruitful" struggle on party building! Since the meaning of ideological struggle to win over the advanced as the chief form of class struggle at this time is completely bastardized, the practical consequences are an attack on the principle of an ISKRA-type newspaper - conditions have changed and it is "dogmatism" to apply these principles to our own concrete conditions, say our anti-lefts. Secondly, the petty bourgeois democratic trend attacks our organizational tasks, repudiating the necessity for organizational consolidation to deepen and expand the scope of the propaganda activity necessary to win the advanced, and repudiating the necessity to give it a single unified and national character - this comes down practically as a denial of the need for a national center and a bundle of slick attacks on democratic centralism.

This then is what we mean comrades when we say that under the guise of an attack on "left" as the main danger a right opportunist petty bourgeois democratic trend wants to attack the ideological and organizational foundations of a Marxist-Leninist party. Where have our anti-lefts drawn upon WITBD and OSF,TSB in this struggle? The reason they do not pick up these fundamental weapons of party building in a struggle over the issue of party building is that they are engaged in a petty bourgeois democratic attack on the very foundations of a proletarian party. We challenge our anti-lefts to battle on the terrain of WITBD and OSF,TSB. We are fed up with lectures on changed conditions - what we want to discuss are the ideological and

organizational foundations of our party. Let them come out openly and say that these foundations no longer apply. Then comrades can decide how far they want to follow our "creative" Marxists!

8. Stalin on the Difference between Left and Right Opportunism

In order to explain to us the meaning of right and "left" errors JP gives us three pages of Stalin. He does not comment on this text, does not explain what it means to him; he just reprints it. Now comrades a two-line struggle within a communist organization involves differences in interpreting the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. To reprint a three-page passage from Stalin as if no one had ever seen it and without explaining what you mean by it is just silly. That is genuine quote mongering. We too rely on Stalin; we rely on this passage from Stalin. The whole question is how the principles Stalin establishes here must be applied to our situation.

To begin with we'll state straight up what we think the difference is that Stalin draws between right and "left" here. We think that genuine lefts are left because they stand for revolution - for a real and thoroughgoing change of the world. We think Stalin considers "left" and right opportunists in essence the same because ultimately neither stands for revolutionary change. But these two deviations from Marxism-Leninism differ in very important ways: they differ, Stalin says in their platforms, demands, approaches, and methods. We think that when Stalin says that the "lefts" want to be more "left" than Leninism, he means that the "lefts" want more revolutionary change than Leninism. But this is absurd since Leninism is the most revolutionary tendency in the world working class movement. What the "lefts" ignore is a materialist analysis on a scientific basis of the preconditions for revolutionary change. The "lefts" may want revolutionary change but in the end their bluster is pretense because their goal cannot be realized in the real world. Rights on the other hand may very well make a pretense to a materialist analysis of the objective world. But rights capitulate to what is and do not seek to transform the world in the interests of the proletariat: as Stalin says of the armchairs of the Second International they only wanted to interpret the world, not change it; the rights do not want revolutionary change.

The HCPSU(B) summarizes these differences between the right and "left" deviations from a Marxist-Leninist line:

The fall of the Utopians, including the Narodniks, Anarchists and Socialist-Revolutionaries was due, among other things, to the fact that they did not recognize the primary role which the conditions of the material life of society play in the development - of society, and, sinking to idealism, did not base their practical activities on the needs of the development of the material life of society, but independently of and in spite of these needs, on "ideal plans" and "all-embracing projects" divorced from the real life, of society. (pg. 116)

That is "lefts" have plans to change the world but they ignore that socialism is a science and that materialism is the basis for every science -they do not base their will for "revolutionary" change on a materialist analysis of the real needs of society, do not rest their aims firmly on the only class capable of revolutionary change, the working class, and therefore change nothing. Typically they bow to the "revolutionary" voluntarism of new comers to the proletariat from the non-proletarian strata, who are the most favorable soil for "ultra-leftism",

On the other hand the rights fail to grasp that Marxism-Leninism is a science for transforming the world:

The fall of the "Economists" and Mensheviks is due among other things to the fact that they did not recognize the mobilizing, organizing and transforming role

of advanced theory, of advanced ideas and, sinking to vulgar materialism, reduced the role of these factors to nothing, thus condemning the Party to passivity and inaction. (ibid pg. 117)

Thus the rights want to passively sit on the science of Marxism, not fight with it, and the right doctrinaires as Lenin and Stalin call the theoreticians of the Second International are not "ultra-left" because they separate theory from practice. The key thing is that they are passive and content with social relations as they exist. Thus they bow to the spontaneity of the pure working-class movement; they are content with the struggle for reforms and avoid those tasks which are necessary to divert the spontaneous movement onto a revolutionary path.

As against both these deviations the HCPSU(B) specifies why Leninism is the most left tendency in the world working-class movement: first as against the "ultra-lefts" it correctly reflects the objective needs of society; second as against the rights it takes as its duty to use every ounce of the transforming power of Marxism to change the world:

The strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism are derived from the fact that it relies upon an advanced theory which correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society, that it elevates theory to a proper level, and that it deems it its duty to utilize every ounce of the mobilizing, organizing, and transforming power of this theory, (ibid pg. 117)

We think these are the essential differences between the platforms and approaches of the rights and "lefts" as they are illustrated by Stalin in the following example quoted at page 5 of JP's paper:

The difference consists in the fact that their platforms are different, their demands are different and their approach and methods are different. If for instance, the Rights say: "It is a mistake to build Dnieprostroy", while the "Lefts" on the contrary say: "what is the good of one Dnieprostroy? Give us a Dnieprostroy every year", (laughter) it must be admitted that there is some difference between them. If the Rights say "do not interfere with the kulak, give him freedom to develop," while the "Lefts," on the contrary, say, "Strike not only at the kulak, but also at the middle peasant, since he is just as much a private property owner as the kulak," it must be admitted that there is some difference between them. if the Rights say "difficulties have set in, is it not time to quit?" while the "Lefts" on the contrary, say, "what are difficulties to us: a fig for difficulties, let us dash ahead",(laughter) it must be admitted there is some difference between them.

The rights want to do everything to hold back the development of socialism and the strengthening of the dictatorship of the proletariat; they want to preserve what exists and do not grasp the duty of Marxist-Leninists to utilize every ounce of the mobilizing, organizing and transforming power of the science of Marxism-Leninism. The "lefts" on the other hand are full of ideal plans and all-embracing .projects for transforming things, but these do not correspond to the real needs of the development of the material life of society.

Comrades we also need to consider a minute the context of this quote. The speech was made in 1928 at a time when the right danger was the main deviation against which the Bolshevik party fought. But there was nonetheless an important "left" danger as well and the Bolshevik party called for a fight on two fronts against both deviations. The Soviet Government was almost 11 years old and the Party, the working class and the poor and middle peasants were carrying out the incredibly difficult tasks of socialist construction under conditions of capitalist encirclement, resistance from rich peasants and bourgeois elements and Trotskyite wrecking and

sabotage. The key to socialist construction lay in mobilizing the workers and peasants to transform the predominantly small peasant economy, still only beginning to recover from the ruin and devastation of the years of war and imperialist intervention, into an industrial economy based on rapid industrialization and the development of heavy industry. In such conditions the building of a huge power plant like Dnieprostroy was a huge but crucial undertaking. The Political Bureau and the Council of People's Commissars had received more than one complaint for going too fast and for not working at a slower rate, and in a calmer atmosphere. But Stalin constantly insisted that the country had to hurry to overcome its backwardness:

... our economic plans, both budgetary and non-budgetary, are so intense and strained, providing as they do for vast investments of capital and construction work, for the purpose of guaranteeing a rapid rate of industrial development, (Industrialization and the Right Deviation, from LENINISM Vol. 2, pg. 78)

It is on this basis that both the "lefts" and rights deserve the ridiculing laughter printed in Stalin's speech. If the power plant is not built the USSR could not industrialize and socialist construction and the dictatorship of the proletariat would be compromised. On the other hand building such a power plant in those conditions was not like building a small house. More than one such power plant could not be undertaken, no matter what the effort and sacrifice. Any "lefts" who would attempt to implement their plans for a power plant every year would sabotage socialist construction and the dictatorship of the proletariat every bit as much as the rights - though by being "ultra-revolutionary", without regard to real needs, rather than by passiveness and inaction.

8.1 "It Is A Mistake To Build Dnieprostroy"

Our anti-lefts have come forward and, basing themselves on Stalin, complain that we should learn from Stalin's example not outstrip the objective capabilities of the BWC!

Comrades we should have enough revolutionary humility not to belittle the Bolshevik party with anemic comparisons. If the Bolsheviks could not produce a power station of the magnitude of Dnieprostroy every year, it is because superhuman efforts and unlimited sacrifice would not have done it! Now comrades just what tasks did we set for ourselves that were objectively impossible? Our anti-lefts want to claim that "Build the National Center", "Build THE COMMUNIST", "Consolidate the organization" (organization is key), "Prepare a Trade Union Conference" ignored the objective capabilities of the BWC and was equivalent to wanting to build a Dnieprostroy every year.

Now this is curious comrades. Stalin tells us that the ideal plans and "all-embracing" projects of the "ultra-lefts" fail to correspond to the material needs of society. Was that the character of our plans?! In fact comrades were these not the very tasks called for by a Marxist-Leninist line on party building - are they not precisely the tasks we MUST undertake? How can we say that these plans are DIVORCED FROM THE OBJECTIVE NEEDS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MATERIAL LIFE OF SOCIETY? Where should we print the ridicule of laughter in our script!

Furthermore comrades other major communist organizations - RU, OL and CLP - have long since accomplished these tasks. So it is obvious that these tasks are not objectively impossible for us. It is not conditions in the world that hold us back. The best we can do is claim that the BWC is not up to these tasks.

But if this is the case isn't it correct to say that the BWC is lagging behind not only objective conditions but other communist organizations as well? Can we consider ourselves outstripping when we are tailing RU and CL?

And anyway which of these tasks was in fact impossible for us? Is it true that we could not develop a national center? No, in fact the national center had begun to

function and in fact was taking steps toward improving its work. Is it true that we could not develop a central organ? In fact isn't the truth that we had four issues of THE COMMUNIST? Obviously these tasks were not impossible— they were achieved.

The complaint then on this score turns out to be something we don't find in Stalin at all – our comrades complain not that we couldn't do these things but that the sacrifice was too great. Now it is true that cadres were inconvenienced by this effort and given the backward state of our organizational apparatus these tasks were not easy for us. But comrades Stalin would have replied that for the proletariat the bourgeoisie is the biggest inconvenience of all! As communists we may as well get used to hardship because there has never been a convenient revolution.

So comrades what is left of our comparison with the Bolsheviks – since our anti-lefts can't justify their positions on the basis of what was objectively impossible and since Stalin will have nothing to do with their inconveniences, where do they stand? Don't we find our anti-lefts in fact standing squarely on the platform, advocating the demands and adopting the approach and methods of the rights: "It is a mistake to build Dnieprostroy," It is a mistake to build a National Center, a Central Organ to consolidate the organization and prepare a Trade Union Conference. Comrades isn't this exactly the program of the "revolutionary" bloc, put down in writing by the former chairman of the organization? And in passing let us add that the IC has adopted practically the approach and platform of the rights. How many letters have been answered by the IC and how many have been put in a pile for "discussion"? The national center barely functions at all, in four months we have had one issue of THE COMMUNIST, and the political work of the organization is stagnating. The approach and method of the IC apparently viewed unit meetings in Detroit as something of a mistake since neither the national center nor the Detroit District began formal meetings until over 6 weeks after the CC meeting in December!

Of course the anti-lefts will argue that we refuse to see things in relation to the objective situation in the BWC, that their hands have been tied by a "left" line, etc. Comrades we are tired of hearing the backwardness of the BWC justified by appeals to objective situation. That is the whole point! You are justifying the situation rather than straining every nerve to overcome it. And as for the left line, let's look at the facts – the left line produced a functioning national center and a central organ and was on the way to developing a cadres training school and holding a trade union conference. We say to our anti-lefts: DON'T SAY YOU CANNOT; SAY YOU WILL NOT. That is a Leninist answer to the right opportunist tendency which seeks to justify inertia with theoretical arguments cooked up about "ideal plans" and "all-embracing projects". Are we really lost in the maze of fantastic plans and projects? Isn't the truth that we have no plan or project at all for unemployment and a host of other objective needs?

9. "Difficulties Have Set In, Is It Not Time to Quit?"

The second use our anti-lefts love to make of the Stalin quote is to argue that the anti-lefts have adopted the stance: "a fig for difficulties, let's dash ahead." The best place to begin here is again to underline that the tasks we posed for ourselves not only correspond to the objective needs of the working-class movement – and thus cannot possibly be called "left" on that score – but were even more-than that: they were our imperative duty in taking up party building as our central task. We have to turn our back on the Leninist principles of party building, turn our back on the treasure of experience scientifically summarized in those principles, if we are to assert that we do not need a national center, do not need a central organ, and do not need a disciplined and centralized organization consolidated nationally. We cannot carry out propaganda as the chief form of activity without a central organ and we cannot develop a central organ without a national center and organizational consolidation. So comrades we begin with the statement – though we know the anti-

lefts hate to hear it - that we will run as FAST as we can to accomplish these tasks. And if comrades are out of breath our hope is that they will learn to build up their wind!

The response of our anti-lefts to this, no matter how they cloak it, is that we have encountered difficulties and therefore must move MORE SLOWLY. Now they will no doubt be the first to deny this, but we ask comrades to look at the results of three months' work under the leadership of those who have emerged as the "real leaders" of the struggle against "ultra-leftism". Comrades how much SLOWER could we build THE COMMUNIST? How much SLOWER could we respond to the question of unemployment? How much SLOWER could we take up political exposures on the Middle East?. The polemic on Busing? And for comrades who engage in such bluster about the importance of ideological struggle, how much SLOWER could ideological struggle been systematically undertaken in the national center, the Detroit District, and the organization as a whole? Which districts know the views and positions of other districts? Where is the rest of the bulletin that was promised - the views of other CC members? Indeed, how much SLOWER could our comrades be in providing our organization with a written analysis of their position on "ultra-leftism"? After all, they have apparently done enough analysis to change the line of the organization - but not enough to explain their position in writing!

Obviously comrades if *vie* are not going to make a mockery of Stalin's examples we are going to have to conclude that our anti-lefts have adopted the platform and approach of the rights - "difficulties have set in; is it not time to quit?" On this basis we can understand the argument that has come forward about dashing ahead - that *vie* are skipping stages. In order to cover their tracks our anti-lefts have cast around for some way to call our Marxist-Leninist line "ultraleft" and "outstripping" or "skipping stages looks particularly good because to the rearguard the vanguard is always "outstripping."

But the problem with our anti-lefts analysis about "skipping stages" is that it doesn't correspond to a Marxist-Leninist understanding of this concept at all. What our anti-lefts have argued is that we did not provide thoroughgoing and consistent ideological guidance in developing the national center and in consolidating the organization around our tasks. We did not consolidate cadres ideologically and did not plan thoroughly, in a Marxist-Leninist manner, putting revolutionary proletarian ideology in command - therefore, our anti-lefts say, we "skipped the stage" of ideological struggle.

First off, we definitely agree that there were great weaknesses in our work in developing the national center and in consolidating the organization ideologically around the task of party building. We agree also that leadership failed most of all in giving planned ideological guidance to all our work in a thoroughgoing and consistent way. But comrades will not find anywhere in Lenin or Stalin where this error is labeled "left". On the contrary, what is involved here is the relationship between planned conscious work constantly guided by revolutionary theory, and spontaneous activity which is carried out without a conscious plan based on the science of Marxism-Leninism. This, however, is exactly the right opportunist problem of economism that Lenin attacked in WITBD and virtually all his writings of the ISKRA period, and that Stalin took up in in "Briefly About Disagreements in the Party".

Comrades when is it that we can say we have completed the "stage" where we need to be guided by revolutionary theory?! The leading role of our revolutionary consciousness, the necessity to consolidate around that and use it as the basis to plan everything we do, is an absolute principle of Marxism-Leninism, and we can never turn aside from this principle to the slightest degree without strengthening bourgeois ideology. If at any point, in anything we do, we "skip" the leading role of ideology, we have capitulated to what exists, and that is the essential character of right opportunism.

Furthermore, for a Marxist-Leninist a "stage" is an objective period of historical and social development; skipping stages refers to a relationship between the consciousness and will of revolutionaries and the objective conditions for revolutionary change. It is a relationship between what is determined by our will and what is independent of our will. It is certainly not a question internal to the BWC or of the BWC in relation to itself. "Leftists" the world over, who have been guilty of skipping stages have generally been guilty of skipping the first stage of the revolution, necessary if proletarian revolution is to be accomplished. Trotsky, for example, wanted to skip the bourgeois democratic revolution in Russia, because it wasn't "revolutionary" enough for him. In China, "leftists" refused to see the necessity for the New Democratic revolution, and wanted to pass on immediately to proletarian revolution. These are the types of stages that have been skipped. Yet-comrades with the confusion our anti-lefts have brought to this question, we have cadres attempting to say that we have skipped the "stage" of sum-up, or investigation, and that these errors are just as serious as Trotsky's. Can it be said that our failure to sum-up and properly plan things is the same as denying the need for bourgeois democratic revolution? We don't think so.

Similarly we cannot say that if we fail to carry through ideological struggle and consolidation, and as a result come up with an erroneous line, we have "skipped the stage" of ideological investigation and development. The character of the error we make in that case cannot be determined by making a FORMULA of "skipping stages" but must be evaluated on the basis of its POLITICAL CONTENT. Suppose comrades that an organization in our midst, without Undertaking any investigation or thoroughgoing ideological clarification, merged with the "C" PUSA tomorrow - would we say that its error was "ultra-left" because it had "skipped the stage" of ideological struggle? That is the kind of confusion you get into when you forget politics and begin manipulating Marxist-Leninist principles like formulas. Obviously chronology is no help here and we have to make a political evaluation on the basis of LINE.

But look at the way the anti-lefts of the IC use the principle of "skipping stages":

The study collective, having declared this is a period of study sum up and repudiation has concluded that the nature of the main danger was clarified, the necessary lines of demarcation have been drawn and the ideological essence of the main danger in the BWC has been laid bare. In essence the Study Collective has skipped a stage and thereby slipped into ultra-leftism themselves." (IC statement on "Revolutionary" Bloc, 1/23/75)

Now this statement is downright funny. It reminds one of the incredulity of the Chinese comrades before the arguments of Togliatti and his crowd: "In a word, they indulge in a lot of nonsensical talk, which they themselves must find it hard to understand, or believe. (Whence Our Differences? pg. 117).

The term stages is used so loosely here that one could literally say that if a comrade put on his shoes in the morning without first putting on his socks he would have skipped a stage. But what historical period did the "revolutionary" bloc skip? Quite clearly No stage has been skipped and to fall into such childish use of Marxist terms is inexcusable. If we are going to be Marxist-Leninists we must state straight up that the "revolutionary" bloc manifested a right opportunist hatred for ideological struggle, a petty bourgeois hatred for proletarian organization and repudiated the Marxist-Leninist principle of unity-struggle-unity, sought instead an administrative resolution to the two-line struggle, and therefore confronted the IC with factional demands.

Whether this factional activity represented a right or "left" deviation cannot be determined by asking whether the bloc "skipped a stage." It can only be evaluated on the basis of the political character of the positions for which the bloc stands. But

the IC will not analyze a problem like Marxist-Leninists because they are scrounging around wherever they can to find "leftism", because ¹ "leftism" is tying their hands, etc. etc. And since skipping stages is "left" opportunism, the IC goes out frantically in search of stages that have been skipped. Instead of seeking truth from facts, our anti-lefts make facts fit their prejudice. And "prejudice", the Chinese comrades remind us, "is further from the truth than ignorance."

We suggest that if our anti-lefts want to build a case for skipping stages, then they had better explain which historical stages we have skipped, and show that our errors are comparable to those of "leftists" internationally, who are guilty of skipping stages.

Comrades it is necessary to examine very carefully the confusion that has been created around "skipping stages" or more generally around the proposition that we are "left" because we failed to put proletarian ideology in command, have failed to consolidate the organization ideologically, etc. Lenin gives us a thorough analysis of this problem and it is in WITBD - these problems are the basic characteristics of economism. What our "creative" Marxists of the anti-left are attempting to do with these arguments is to lead us into the quicksand of revisionism. They want to substitute their own formulation of this problem for the formulation of Lenin. They want to revise Lenin. More. The HCPSU(B) teaches us that WITBD is the ideological foundation of a Marxist party. Lenin emphasizes time and again in WITBD precisely the principle that we can undertake no task as revolutionaries unless we are guided by the theory and consciousness of Marxism-Leninism. So what is it our anti-lefts are trying to do: THEY ARE ATTEMPTING TO SUBSTITUTE THEIR OWN FORMULATION FOR A FORMULATION OF LENIN ON A PRINCIPLE WHICH IS THE IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF A MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY.

There is the same problem in the analysis our anti-lefts give to our failure to consolidate cadres on line. Before the present struggle, failure to consolidate on line was considered a right opportunist error, and not a "left" one. But our anti-lefts have a new formulation that says left-liners wanted to "dash ahead". Don't we say that one of the main reasons the "C" PUSA became revisionist was that it failed to train cadres, failed to consolidate on a Marxist-Leninist line? And don't we criticize RU and OL for the same reasons? How is it that we identify those errors as right opportunist, but in our own midst they have suddenly become "dashing ahead" and "skipping stages"? Doesn't it suggest that our anti-lefts are trying to make facts fit their own preconceived views and that they have not based their struggle on line at all?

The point is that they have substituted lifeless formulas for political analysis. The leadership of an organization can never dash ahead by being too advanced theoretically or by being "impetuous" in adopting a correct Marxist-Leninist position. If our anti-lefts want to criticize leadership for adopting certain positions (like the BNQ or party building) they must first and foremost make a political evaluation of the correctness or incorrectness of the line-and not the speed with which it is adopted. Otherwise we will find ourselves justifying the maintenance of a more backward position - like "nation of a new type" - under the guise that we must not "dash ahead".

The fact is comrades that the positions of the anti-lefts are nothing more than confused theoretical justifications for the platform and methods of the right opportunists: "difficulties have set," they say, "is it not time to quit" in order to do so they've gone out in search of arguments to cover their tracks. They want to perpetuate what exists and so scream dashing ahead and "ultra-left-ism" because there is a line in our organization that considers it a duty to utilize every ounce of the mobilizing, organizing and transforming power of Marxist-Leninist theory in order to overcome the present amateurishness and backwardness of our organization. Comrades the fact is that the national center, the central organ and the organization were in

better shape generally - in the face of our very many difficulties - than they are today under the leadership of our anti-lefts. The genuine lefts did not deny the difficulties that existed and were making every effort to meet and deal with those problems. But what the anti-lefts will not forgive the genuine lefts for is our insistence that our backwardness and amateurishness were (and are) our greatest difficulties.

Comrades, the national center - the organization department and the central organ, a cadre training school and organizational consolidation nationally were all concrete measures to meet those difficulties. They were all measures necessary to develop cadres theoretically and Bolshevize our ranks. We did meet difficulties and demonstrated weaknesses in getting those things off the ground - but these problems were necessarily secondary to the greater difficulties we were trying to overcome. For it is only on the basis of accomplishing those tasks that we can develop our organization ideologically in a thoroughgoing, professional, and consistent way.

10. JP and the Anti-Lefts Identify Our "Left" Errors.

We strayed some from JP's discussion in order to take up briefly the concrete analysis of our recent practice based on Stalin's examples that neither JP nor any of the anti-lefts will give us. But what are the "left" errors JP identifies? Essentially they are three: (1) we were impetuous in Party Building, (2) we overestimated the tempo of radicalization of the masses in the U.S., substituting our desires for reality; (3) and underlying both these errors, we failed to investigate, thereby ignoring objective conditions. These points are summarized in a sentence on p. 3:

"This is especially expressed In our impetuosity In Party building, thinking a genuine party can be built quickly and speedily and in our overestimation of the tempo of radicalization of the masses.in the .U.S. The point is WE FAIL TO INVESTIGATE".

Let's examine each of these points.

a. "Left" impetuosity.

The example of "left" impetuosity we are offered is joining the NCC. Comrades we don't think the real question is the speed with which we joined but the fact that we joined it. And on that issue we would like a clear answer from our anti-lefts: do they think it was incorrect for us to join the NCC. it was our revolutionary duty to join the NCC and fight within it for Marxism-Leninism. We think that if the RU called tomorrow-for a committee to organize a Party Congress we would rush to join in order to struggle for Marxism-Leninism. (We are talking about a public call, not drawing room negotiations.) We think that during this period we are under a duty to join in virtually any call under the banner of Marxism-Leninism Mao-Tse-Tung Thought to prepare for a Party Congress. We should join in any such call to struggle for line and to win honest comrades in the movement to genuine Marxism-Leninism. The NCC was one such call that had existed for about a year and had already been joined by workers circles and M-L organization around the country. The rules called for debate, criticism and struggle over various resolutions and for circulating a party program. We think that it was our duty to join that struggle and if anything we should have been in it sooner!

Why is it then our anti-lefts want to deny this obvious duty to fight for Marxism-Leninism? The reason is nothing more than that they have been embarrassed by the stream of filth that has poured forth from the liberal opportunist wing of our movement - the Avakians, the Klonskys, the Guardian & Co. Our anti-lefts cannot rush fast enough to say you were right, you were right, we should have known, we could have known simply by reading their documents (this coming from people who have yet to

read the pamphlets of PRRWO and ATM and provide the organization with a timely summary of their contents).

Comrades who argue that we failed to investigate also forget that the NCC Conference resolutions did point to the difference between two trends in our movement on party building - one trend said that building a proletarian party was the first step towards defeating and overthrowing imperialism and that this task was the most urgent question facing our movement. The resolution spoke to the necessity to take up the struggle against opportunism and revisionism in order to build a party and the key role of propaganda in the form of cadre training and political exposures through an ISKRA type newspaper. The other trend was advanced by RU, OL and the Guardian which saw building the mass movement as the first step toward building the party and the United Front as the most urgent question facing our movement. It saw agitation among intermediate workers to win them over to the leadership of the proletariat in the United Front as the chief form of activity. These were the two lines our movement was and is still debating. And it was correct for us, and still is correct to struggle for party building as a Central Task, for ideological struggle to win the advanced as the chief form of class struggle, and for propaganda as the chief form of activity.

(JP loves to criticize the NCC resolution on the Party in that it put forward that the main task was education. We think this formulation of the NCC is incorrect: the main task is winning the vanguard and the chief form of class struggle to accomplish that task is ideological struggle. In spite of the narrowness of the formulation, the Conference resolutions do speak to the key role of cadre training and of a press in the struggle against opportunism and revisionism.)

Secondly the Conference resolutions also drew a line with the liberal opportunists in our movement on the national question, putting forward that Black people constituted a nation with a specific territory, that their oppression was national, not racial oppression and that the proletariat must recognize the struggle of the oppressed black nation for liberation as an indispensable ally of proletarian revolution in the U.S.A. However CL's formulation was incorrect in that it equated the right to secession automatically with the slogan "Independence for the Negro Nation", in addition to other errors pointed out in our pamphlet, SAR. The other line dominant in the movement was that Black people were a nation of a new type cooked up by Avakian, that their territory was everywhere they were dispersed and that the right to secession was not at the heart of their struggle.

Comrades these facts were investigated though our anti-lefts want to *L* ignore it. Do our anti-lefts want to argue that it was incorrect to take sides in this polemic between two trends in our movement?

It is absolutely crucial to emphasize the opportunism of CL, especially the refusal of CL to stand with the CPC on the analysis of Social Imperialism and the International Situation. But comrades is it not clear that the reason our anti-lefts have such hatred of CL is not for this at all. In fact comrades the new ideological leader of our organization brings forward with "sterling clarity" that he unites with CL and not the CPC on the question of a United Front against Fascism. Listen to Don Stone:

"On the basis of the objective world situation we assert that the world is undergoing the third wave of fascism.... During this period of the Communist movement we assert that building the United Front Against Fascism is the principal task that must be conducted simultaneously with the central task of party building." (D.S. paper on Fascism, p. 17 and 20).

SHADES OF NELSON PERRY! Comrades don't you think that if there were a third wave of fascism that the Communist Party of China would have found out about it?! (We leave the bourgeois nationalist line on the BNQ that is put forward in this paper for

another time - but we do have to point out here that our new dialectical theoretician has very confused notions about the relationship of a "principal" task to a "central" task.)

No comrades the hatred of our anti-lefts for the NCC stems from the fact that the conference - and our participation in it - opened up the difference between two trends in our movement on the question of party building. But our petty bourgeois democrats want to forget that lines were being drawn during this period because they want to obliterate the distinction between a revolutionary proletarian line on our central task and the opportunist trend which sought to "build the mass movement" and belittle the role of winning the vanguard to communism.' Another significant fact that our anti-lefts will no longer acknowledge is that the BWC played an important role in opening up the differences between these two trends to honest Marxist-Leninists in the entire Communist movement, particularly when in breaking with CL we identified the opportunism of that organization but stood firm on the question of Party Building. Clearly the reason our petty bourgeois democrats want to forget this and make all that was accomplished disappear along with CL is for the purpose of taking us back along the liberal opportunist path of "party building" in laps of CAP, OL, and RU.

Now Comrades we by no means pretend that the BWC did not make serious errors on the NCC - but what was the real character of those errors. The essential point was that the BWC SACRIFICED ITS INDEPENDENCE and capitulated to CL without adequate struggle over questions on which our leadership knew there were differences, such as the time for convening a Congress, the BNQ, the international situation, the United Front Against Imperialism and the form of the Congress - a delegate or mass Congress. But comrades the only way we can evaluate the political character of that capitulation is by evaluating the line we capitulated to - not by asking whether we were quick or slow in our capitulation. This is true also of the question of the "Party by September." The question here is not the particular date for which a party congress was called that makes our error "left". We've got to evaluate this question also on the character of the line we capitulated to. September would be too soon for a party congress because we had not overcome CL's opportunism. By sacrificing our independence on the question of the date for a Congress, we capitulated to CL's opportunism and disarmed ourselves from carrying out the struggle on our differences with CL in a Marxist-Leninist manner.

There are two things that are ironical about the anti-left handwringing about CL. The first is that although the BWC, including the circles associated with it joined the NCC only in four cities (this caution itself reflected a concern that we did not have all the facts and only based on this experience and a deeper understanding of the NCC would we consider building CCs in every city where we had cadres. Nonetheless in those places where comrades stood up and resisted the opportunism of CL (with little help from the BWC leadership) there was not the slightest bit of despair about the experience, not all this wailing about how "we should have known, etc." Instead there was only regret that we were unable to have defended a proletarian line in a more thoroughly planned and conscious manner. But most of the comrades felt that the experience was a valuable example of the truth that Marxism grows strong in struggle with opportunism (and we hold to this despite the fact that our anti-left demagogues are pushing many of these comrades off this position today, especially in Son Francisco.)

The second irony, which is more important, is that although our anti-lefts love to scream about our tailing RU and tailing CL what is practically the path they are taking us down today? They want to belittle our fight as an independent communist organization fighting for Marxism-Leninism saying (1) a newspaper isn't necessary (M.H.) or (2) it is dogma to think that the communist movement can be consolidated by a newspaper at this stage in history (D.S.). They throw the principle of an ISKRA

type newspaper out of the window. But comrades how will the communist movement ever be consolidated except through ideological struggle? We are materialists. And how can we engage in ideological struggle if we are unable to express our views? And if we are a communist organization we need to express our views with a unity of will. This means an ISKRA type newspaper that engages in national political exposures and polemics. Why is it that THE COMMUNIST no. 5 didn't have, and no. 6 won't have, any polemics? Because our anti-lefts belittle the role of a newspaper and want to substitute instead "joint work". What this comes down to is that our anti-lefts want to consolidate the communist movement through coalitions and negotiations on the basis of unprincipled peace (see our "coalition" work listed in the GUARDIAN, Mar. 5, 1975). Joint work in coalitions is an important aspect of our work at this time, but it cannot substitute for an ISKRA type newspaper and without such a newspaper laying a guiding line how are we going to combat erroneous views and lines that corrupt people's minds and how are we going to oppose confusion and vacillation in the practical movement exposing every attempt to narrow our tasks as Marxist-Leninists (see WITBD, p. 23). By belittling the role of a newspaper as the I.C. and all our anti-lefts have done they are leading us right back on the path of TAILING other communist organizations and we will inevitably STAY on the path of TAILING until we have grown up enough to use the principles Lenin stood for which have been verified time and again by the international working class, and apply them to our own situation.

One final note on this point. JP says our rupture with CL was not radical enough. But one comrade has compared our relationship to RU and our relationship to CL and asked: "which line did we merely bite into and which line did we swallow whole?" And it's worth asking: is the hardest crying occurring now because, unlike the struggle with RU which occurred primarily in the back closet, our capitulation to CL occurred in broad daylight, before the entire communist movement? But it was this open struggle which moved us all forward ideologically.

b. Substituting Our Desires for Reality.

The second left error which JP identifies is that we took our desires for reality in assessing the objective situation in the workers movement in the U.S., dreaming that there was a rapid growth in revolutionary activity of the masses. Now what is really happening here, comrades, is that we are supposed to take JP's shallow rhetorical sleight of hand for Marxist-Leninist analysis. Listen to this.

"In that same report, we stated our estimation of the objective situation as the following: '...the number of strikes is increasing - developing from purely economic to political demands which the multi-national proletariat is participating on an ever-increasing scale...' Is this statement true? if so then we are very close to a revolutionary situation in the U.S. But I believe this statement is only a reflection of what we would like to be the case and not the actual situation. Besides the isolated, and extremely limited examples we give to support the view (Rhodesian Crome, Hawaiian pineapple struggles, etc.) there is clearly no broad tendency in the struggles of the proletariat which shows a transition from economic to political struggles on a broad scale, and hence no rapid acceleration of the revolutionary consciousness of the U.S. proletariat. We cannot equate a growth of militancy in general (which is what is actually taking place) with the growth of revolutionary militancy. In fact, this is just another example of our "leftist" idealism, substituting a concrete analysis of the objective situation with our own desires."

You really assume too much, JP, to think that this cloak of sober realism will prevent honest Marxist-Leninists from recognizing the narrow pessimism of an economist. Unfortunately our anti-leftists sense of timing was even off - we first

read this brilliant piece of double talk just about the time the UAW was descending on Washington in 50 busloads. Naturally the first question we had to ask was: just who after all is not investigating? But JP's sober and new found blindness to the facts is nothing more than an attempt to justify ultra "leftism". Now watch comrades the path his analysis takes to the conclusion he wants to justify.

First off, since when does a growth in "political demands" mean (1) an acceleration in revolutionary consciousness or (2) a growth of revolutionary militancy, or (3) an imminent revolutionary situation (sic)! Here we have it again - JP thinks that revolutionary consciousness is going to arise spontaneously and independent of the revolutionary work of Marxist-Leninists taking Marxism-Leninism to the spontaneous struggles of the class. The logic here is the twisted logic of economism. The economist thinks that by lending economic struggles a political character he is doing revolutionary work, forgetting that Woodcock and Meany are masters in lending the economic struggles a political character. JP too forgets that the spontaneous political struggles of the working class can never get beyond trade union or bourgeois politics. He thinks that every political demand or political struggle must necessarily be revolutionary in character. He apparently thinks any growth in militancy will spontaneously be a growth in revolutionary militancy.

The report that JP quotes from does not say however that by raising political demands the working class is raising revolutionary demands. What it does mean is that crisis forces the working class to raise political demands thereby forcing it more and more into direct conflict with the political power of the bourgeois state. This is a favorable situation for revolutionaries because it provides a basis for the more and more rapid and widespread introduction of scientific socialism among the most advanced elements of the class.

Finally JP's point about being close to a revolutionary situation is just ridiculous. JP knows - or knew before he started making Marxism-Leninism fit his prejudices - what a revolutionary situation is. Lenin has a good description of it in COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL, v. 21, pp. 213~214:

"To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the "upper classes," a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for "lower classes not to want" to live in the old way; it is also necessary that the "upper classes should be unable" to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplaining allow themselves to be robbed in "peace time", but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the "upper classes" themselves into independent historical action.

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation."

The working class of Australia, through its Communist Party, is putting forth broad political demands, J.P. Would you say they are in a revolutionary situation?

Britain and a whole host of countries are also in a situation where the working class is putting forward political demands; are these all revolutionary situations? To think that an increase in the spontaneous struggles of the working class, or the fact that these struggles are increasingly putting forward political demands means that we are close to a revolutionary situation shows a very shallow understanding of the science of revolution - it shows the mentality of an economist who thinks these things happen spontaneously.

c. We Failed to Investigate.

Comrades, we think that the previous two points demonstrate that our anti-lefts have cooked up this "Fail to Investigate" charge the same way they have cooked up their other arguments against the left. This is not to say that we have not shown definite weaknesses in our investigations of a number of questions including issues around CL. But in addition to what was said above, there are two points that need to be brought forward.

The first is that our ability to investigate any question depends above all on overcoming our amateurishness and backwardness and developing a strongly centralized and consolidated organization. In WITBD Lenin points to lack of specialization as one of Russian Social Democracies most serious defects and how it unnecessarily limits the work of a revolutionary organization. But then he underlines that developing specialization demands greater centralization:

In a word specialization necessarily presupposes centralization and in turn imperatively calls for it. (WITBD, p. 160)

Secondly, comrades, we must avoid all looseness on this question just as with the question of "skipping stages." We have been told that we installed a refrigerator that didn't work and therefore committed the "left" opportunist error of "impetuosity," of taking our desires for reality, of failing to investigate. Comrades, wouldn't it make more sense to the proletariat if we simply confessed our rank amateurishness and organizational backwardness? Why should we strain so to provide phony theoretical justifications for these characteristics of our work?

Isn't really the most immediate thing we have to investigate is just why our anti-lefts have made such efforts to give theoretical justification for our backwardness under the guise of an attack on ultra-leftism? Isn't the important thing to investigate right now the economism of our anti-lefts!

Up to this point we have exposed the anti-Marxist method of the anti-lefts, and their failure to deal with the concrete conditions which give rise to, and nourish powerful trends in the communist movement. In addition they have failed to show the connection between these objective conditions and powerful trends, and the development of the revolutionary movement in general, and the present organizations of the anti-revisionist communist movement in particular. They have presented us a history of the BWC that not only places the BWC at the center of the universe, isolated from various trends, but also fails entirely to bring forward the history of petty bourgeois democracy and liberalism that have been with us since day one. Instead, they are satisfied to raise the phony questions of Forman's Trotskyism, and bring forward Stalin's quote (with absolutely NO analysis of how it applies specifically to our situation) as proof of the dominance of "leftism."

We would now like to take up the theoretical justifications our comrades are giving to encourage and strengthen the development of right opportunism in our ranks - that is, their basically economist outlook.

II. THE ECONOMISM, NARROWNESS AMATEURISHNESS OF ANTI-LEFTISM

Throughout this paper, J.P. attempts to limit the meaning of Economism, and practically deny that this form of right opportunism is wide spread in the anti-

revisionist communist movement. Ultimately, his views on Economism and those of all the anti-lefts, lead to an attack on WITBD and its applicability to our struggle.

First, his definition. J.P. tells us that "The fundamental thesis of the Russian variety of opportunism "Economism" was: The economic struggle for the workers, the political struggle for the bourgeoisie." (J.P., p. 9)

By comparison, how does Lenin define Economism? To answer this we will quote Lenin himself, to assure our anti-lefts that we are not "seeing economism as we would like." First, on the term itself, and the view of the Economists towards political struggle:

...the first number of the Rabochaya Mysl shows that the term "Economism" (which of course we do not propose to abandon because, however it may be, this appellation has already established itself) does not adequately convey the real character of the new trend... the Rabochaya Mysl does not so much deny the political struggle as bow to its spontaneity, to its lack of consciousness... it absolutely refuses independently to work out a specifically Social-Democratic policy corresponding to the general tasks of Socialism and to contemporary conditions in Russia. (WITBD, pp. 51-2)

Secondly, on the relationship between spontaneity and consciousness:

...the fundamental error committed by the "new trend" in Russian Social-Democracy lies in its bowing to spontaneity, and its failure to understand that the spontaneity of the masses demands a mass of consciousness from us Social-Democrats. The greater the spontaneous upsurge of the masses, the more widespread the movement becomes, so much more rapidly, incomparably more rapidly grows the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organizational work of Social-Democracy. (ibid, p. 64)

Thirdly, on the connection between Economism and amateurishness, and the general narrowing of our tasks:

But the term "amateurishness" embraces something else: it denotes a narrow scope of revolutionary work generally, failure to understand that a good organization of revolutionaries cannot be built on the basis of such narrow activity, and lastly – most important – it denotes attempts to justify this narrowness and to elevate it to a special "theory," i.e., bowing in worship to spontaneity on this question too. Once such attempts were observed, it became certain that amateurishness is connected with Economism and that we shall never eliminate this narrowness of our organizational activity until we eliminate Economism generally (i.e., the narrow conception of Marxist theory, of the role of Social Democracy and of its political tasks). (ibid, p. 128)

And finally, on the Economists view towards ideological struggle:

...the majority of the Economists quite sincerely disapprove (and by the very nature of Economism they must disapprove) of all theoretical controversies, factional disagreements, broad political questions, schemes for organizing revolutionaries, etc. (ibid, p. 22)

Thus through these quotes, and the very content of WITBD Lenin exposes the views of Economists towards our theoretical tasks, as well as our political and organizational tasks, and he very clearly lays out the inter-relationship between all these views and the fact that the Economists could not help but bow in worship to spontaneity in all these questions. In this section we will attempt to show how our Economists (i.e., the anti-lefts) also have a narrow view towards our theoretical, political, and organizational tasks; how they do not recognize that the growing spontaneous upsurge of the masses demands from us a far greater degree of

consciousness and demands that we work out independent communist policies; and that our Economists invariably find excuses and defend our backwardness and amateurishness (to the degree that they even mention this as a problem) and see no connection between our organizational tasks and our political and ideological tasks (hence the attack on organization is key, but more on this later).

Let's go back to J.P.'s definition. From WITBD, we can see that fundamental to the attack Lenin raised against the Economists is the relationship between the spontaneity of the masses and the consciousness of communists. Lenin explains that spontaneously, by themselves, the working masses can only develop trade unionist consciousness, which leads to the domination of bourgeois ideology. The task of communists is to divert the working class from this bourgeois path and to bring it onto the path of communism. But this can only be done by bringing socialist consciousness to the class. And communists can carry out this task ONLY if they themselves put revolutionary consciousness in command of ALL their work. And this is why Lenin says that to belittle socialist ideology IN ANY WAY, to turn away from it in the slightest degree, means the degrading of communist politics to the level of trade unionist – bourgeois – politics and therefore means the strengthening of bourgeois ideology and the abandonment of our tasks as communists.

Thus any and all worship of the spontaneity of the mass movement, and a failure to recognize the role of the conscious factor in these struggles, will lead to the domination of bourgeois ideology – and fundamentally to economist errors. Marxist-Leninists cannot take a single step forward without FIRST overcoming this tendency to bow to the spontaneity of the mass movement, and struggling instead to resolutely put revolutionary consciousness in command.

In the context of understanding the relationship between the spontaneity of the masses and the consciousness of communists, one can understand the meaning of "economic struggle for the workers and political struggle for the bourgeoisie." What this means is that if in any task we take up as communists, we fail to put politics in command, that is we fail to bring to the fore the necessity for socialist consciousness to accomplish our task, then we can only strengthen the stranglehold of bourgeois ideology over the proletariat. We will be leaving politics to the bourgeoisie. We will be leaving the working class to continue along its trade unionist path – which can only be a bourgeois path. And again comrades, this will be true for whatever task we are doing – whether it is trade union work, organizational work, theoretical work – WHATEVER task.

If this was the understanding that comrade J.P. – and all the anti-lefts – give to this phrase, if they in fact brought forward that what this slogan reflects is the belittlement of socialist ideology and the strengthening of bourgeois ideology, if they recognized that it applied NOT ONLY to the purely trade union struggle of the workers but to all our work, in sum if they recognized the full scope of economism – as reflected in the entire contents of What Is to be Done? – Then we would have no differences on this point. The very fact that the anti-lefts don't, and can't do this, shows that they have utterly failed to grasp the principles of What Is to be Done. But rather than recognize their own failure, our comrades instead attempt to lead the rest of us down the same path – the path of practically ignoring the struggle against economism, and not only that, the path of finding theoretical justifications for why economism is a very "lesser" trend in our movement. To prove that we are not just "fantasizing," let us look further at what J.P. says about economism.

First he, like all the anti-lefts, tells us that no one today is saying "economic struggle for the workers, political struggle for the bourgeoisie," but as we have just shown, J.P. does not understand what this principle means. He doesn't see that in general it means a failure to divert the workers from the path of trade unionism, and a failure to imbue the proletariat with socialist consciousness – to rest

content with what is. But dear anti-lefts isn't this exactly what the RU does, with its call to build the mass movement, with its position that proletarian ideology will arise spontaneously out of the struggles of the masses – are they not saying openly economic struggle for the workers and political struggle for the bourgeoisie? What fundamentally is there different?

Further, if our comrade were to remain consistent to his position, he would in fact have to say that there is no Economism in the U.S. Why? Because he tells us that the FUNDAMENTAL THESIS OF RUSSIAN ECONOMISM was precisely "economic struggle for the workers and political struggle for the bourgeoisie." Can it be said that the fundamental thesis of Russian economism is going to be different than the fundamental thesis of economism wherever it raises its head? Absolutely not. Just as the fundamental thesis of Soviet – revisionism is not going to be different than that of U.S. revisionism. What can be said is that the particular forms, the particular catchwords of economism will vary from country to country. But the fundamental thesis, that of bowing in worship to the spontaneous struggle of the masses, that of tailism, that of belittling socialist ideology and strengthening bourgeois ideology – that is, the thesis of leaving politics to the bourgeoisie – will be the SAME.

But to continue. J.P. also tells us that no one today is infatuated with the economic struggle, as the economists in Russia were. He then comes forward with his statement "In the U.S. today on the other hand, the economist tendency, to the extent that it can be described as such, takes the form of refusing to take Marxism-Leninism to the mass movement" in general and not simply to the economic struggles of the proletariat." (J.P. p., 12, our emphasis). Here again J.P. reveals that he does not even understand what he writes. While it is true that in Russia the primary form that economism took was an infatuation with the economic struggle of the workers, and a failure to bring socialist consciousness to these struggles, this was not the LIMIT of economism. As we stated above, Lenin says that economism is a general narrowing of the tasks of communists, that it is a trend which consistently strengthens bourgeois ideology in all spheres of the class struggle – political, economic, and theoretical.

What then is J.P. attempting to do here? Basically he is saying that if economism doesn't take the exact forms it took in Russia, if our present-day economists don't have the same catchwords, then we must necessarily limit the degree to which we label these forces what they actually are – economists. He is attempting to limit economism to an infatuation with the economic struggle, that is to limit it to the primary form that it took in Russia, rather than recognizing the general characteristics that economism has – and recognizing that this theory can be found internationally, in every country, among opportunists of the Right brand. He has failed to see that it is not our task to go in search of the exact same particular forms that economism took in Russia, but instead to recognize that ANY time you find opportunists who want to narrow our tasks, and limit them to the practical everyday struggle, any time you find a belittlement of the conscious factor and the preaching of tailism, any time you find a justification for backwardness and amateurishness rather than a hatred for it, any time you have those who love maintaining what exists and who rest content with what is – there you will find some Economists.

The effect of J.P.'s position, and all the anti-lefts who have yet to understand the basic characteristics of economism, is to totally belittle the fight we must wage against economism. To them it is practically non-existent and at most a lesser danger than sectarianism.

A second way that J.P. and the anti-lefts attempt to hide the existence of economism is to appeal to different conditions here in the U.S. Among these differences are the fact that the communist movement did not grow up with the working-class movement, that the U.S. is a bourgeois democratic state and not ruled by an autocracy, and that communists today are not leading the economic struggle of

the proletariat, as they were in Russia. (see J.P., p. 9) We disagree completely that they can serve as a justification for in ANY way denying the degree that economism exists in the ranks of the anti-revisionist communist movement. And it certainly cannot be denied that anyone who feels it necessary to put the term economism in quotation marks, and claim that what exists in the U.S. can barely be described as economism, is in fact trying to lower our guard against this tendency, and trying to convince us that it's not really a dangerous, and widespread form of right opportunism.

Comrades, can there be ANY conditions in the U.S. that would warrant denying ANY of the principles Lenin brings forward in What Is to be Done? Can we say that the conditions which gave rise to narrowness, a justification of amateurishness, a love for a local, practical view towards our tasks, a great dislike and belittlement of theory, a hatred for centralism and authority, a general striving to degrade communism, to follow the line of least resistance, in Russia don't also exist here in the U.S.? And isn't it also a fact, as we pointed out earlier, that the objective conditions for Right opportunism are even stronger in the U.S.?

Any attempt at all to use the existence of new conditions as a justification for turning away from the struggle that Lenin waged against economism, from throwing down WITBD as our MAIN weapon in this period (along with OSF,TSB) – is nothing more than revisionism. After all, are we so quick to forget that under the guise of new conditions the revisionists brought us peaceful transition, the party of the whole people, etc.? Is it so easy to ignore that these same new conditions laid the basis for the revisionists' denial of the revolutionary position of the Communist International on the Black national question? And that in our own midst, the RU has used this SAME line of new conditions to adopt the line of the CPUSA on "nation of a new type?"

Yet, this is exactly the method used by our anti-lefts to attack the fundamental principles of WITBD. "Our situation is different," they claim. "We don't have to fight the tsar," (though we have a bourgeoisie with a far greater degree of organization and a far more powerful military and police force than the tsar ever dreamed of having!). "WITBD does not expound on "Leftism" as thoroughly as other works" – this coming from our new found leaders of the I.C. But comrades, do you think its accidental that in WITBD (which was written in a period similar to ours, where party building was the central task), Lenin waged a fight primarily against Right opportunism? That though there were separate circles and organizations, with their own organs, and with different lines, Lenin barely mentions the problem of sectarianism? This is certainly not because it didn't exist. No, it's because Lenin recognized a far greater and more dangerous trend – the trend of those who would be happy with what is, who would justify the amateurishness that was common to ALL the revolutionary forces at the time. Rather than demand a fight against sectarianism, Lenin demanded instead an intolerance for all those who stood in the path of communists overcoming their amateurishness, their narrowness, their worship of the spontaneity of the masses.

Comrades, Lenin's fight against economism was not something isolated to Russia, it is not a battle that arose because of the peculiarities of conditions .in Russia. It is a very necessary fight for all communists in the forging of a Bolshevik party. Nor is it any accident that Chairman Mao himself tells us to look to the Bolshevik party and Bolshevik revolution as our model, and the model for communists in all developed countries. (See: "War and Strategy," p. 269 Mao's Military Writings)

We repeat, that it is no accident that the anti-lefts so readily avoid WITBD and the struggle against Economism. They, of course, are desperately attempting to hide their own Economism, and they therefore have no great desire to educate us in this question! It is their own failure to even understand what Economism is, and the justification for amateurishness that invariably comes with it, that leads them to

claim that WITBD is no more important than any other work. Some of the anti-lefts even go so far as to say that the Appendix on China's history is more relevant to our struggle (even though the Chinese themselves have withdrawn this document). Of course, the Appendix is more applicable because it deals more directly with "Leftism." This is nonsense, comrades, because in WITBD Lenin lays out the source of ALL opportunism, "Left" and Right. The only reason all the anti-lefts go everywhere but WITBD for a justification for their position, is because they want to deny the absolute necessity to defeat Economism.

We, however, will stand with Stalin. In Foundations of Leninism (pp. 23-6), Stalin explains that the Economists were the adherents of the theory of worshipping the spontaneity of the labor movement, of the theory of tailism. He says that Lenin's fight against the Economists created the theoretical foundations for a truly revolutionary movement of the Russian working class. Finally, he tells us that his theory of tailism is an International phenomenon and that:

IT SCARCELY NEEDS PROOF THAT THE DEMOLITION OF THIS THEORETICAL FALSIFICATION IS A PRELIMINARY CONDITION FOR THE CREATION OF TRULY REVOLUTIONARY PARTIES IN THE WEST. (Foundations of Leninism, Stalin, p. 26)

"Dogmatists!" our anti-lefts cry. "You can't use WITBD as a blueprint!" To these comrades we reply that you had better first try to understand what Economism is, and then USE the same principles as Lenin in drawing up our plan for revolution. You would do well to recognize that WITBD is an exposition of the ideological foundations of ANY Marxist-Leninist party. (see History of the CPSUB, p. 38) Dare we have a "new" foundation?

Of course at this point our anti-lefts, and we are sure at least J.P. will reproach us with particular vigor and claim that we didn't read the paper. He will say that he doesn't deny economism all together. This is true, and here is what he has to say:

In the U.S. today on the other hand, the economist tendency, to the extent that it can be described as such, takes the form of refusing to take Marxism-Leninism to the "mass movement" in general and not simply the economic struggle of the proletariat. This is because in spite of the fact that the economic struggle of the workers (strikes, etc.) has sharply intensified, communists have played little or no role in them and definitely have not been in leadership of any. So the tendency to "bow to spontaneity" has been manifested primarily in the struggles of the non-proletarian strata – the student struggles, anti-war movement, struggles of the oppressed nationalities, of women, veterans, etc. The "new" anti-revisionist communists are not even close enough to the workers movement to lead it in one way or the other. Now if we are talking about the CPUSA or the Trots (like SWP, etc.) then that's another story. They most definitely "lead" the workers movement (to the extent that they do their influence in the unions, etc.) in an open economist direction...(p. 12)

This quote from J.P., like others in his paper reveal two things. One, that as far as he is concerned, economism, and revisionism generally, is a trend somewhere outside our ranks. It is something that can only be found among the CPUSA and the Trots. Of course what flows from this is that we must fight the CPUSA's "open" economism and not worry too much about OUR OWN ECONOMISM. Hence the statement that the CPUSA is openly Economist while Economism in the anti-revisionist movement exists only "to the extent that it can be described as such."

Secondly, J.P. reveals once again his complete failure to understand what Economism is, and coupled with this, his obvious attempt to narrow its meaning. It is certainly true that one of the main ways that Economism has been manifested in the anti-revisionist communist movement is tailing the struggles of students and national

minorities. The tailing of these struggles clearly reflects taking the line of least resistance, taking up struggles that were the easiest to get involved in, and taking them up in a completely spontaneous and economist fashion. But to say that Economism has not been reflected in the anti-revisionist movement's involvement in the economic struggles of the workers is ridiculous.

Why is it comrades, that we find ourselves still basically isolated from the workers movement, we find that communists are not leading the spontaneous struggles of the workers? Is it because the various organizations refuse to base themselves on the proletariat? Is it because we have set ourselves the tasks of robbing banks and kidnapping officials? Is it because we believe that communists should have nothing to do with the economic struggle of the workers? Absolutely not. There is not a single organization that has not sent its cadres into the plants, that has not been involved in economic struggles,' that would say that the spontaneous struggles of the workers are worthless, etc. No comrades, the reason we are not leading the spontaneous struggles of the workers is because we have not set ourselves the task of leading, but instead rest content with TAILING. Because we have refused to give communist leadership, refused to bring socialist consciousness to the workers, refused to place primary attention on winning the vanguard. We have bowed over and over again to the spontaneous struggles of the workers, and worshipped this spontaneity. That is why we are not leading the economic struggle, and that is why one of the forms Economism takes in this country is tailing after the economic struggle of the workers.

J.P., and the anti-lefts, deny this is true because they are constantly striving to LIMIT the character and meaning of Economism and belittle the degree that it exists in OUR concrete conditions. They attempt to close our-eyes to the scope and breadth of this trend, all under the guise of fighting the "far greater danger" of ultra-leftism.

11. Party Building: The Task Of Winning The Advanced To Communism

The danger of the anti-lefts position lies not only in their incorrect view of economism, but more importantly that they themselves have taken up the cause of the Economists, and taken up the battle to lead us away from Marxism-Leninism.

This is probably most clearly seen in the anti-left's presentation of party building itself, and two points that are directly tied to this: 1) their view towards ideological struggle, and 2) their view towards an Iskra-type paper and propaganda in general.

Before we take up these two essential questions, we would like to speak to the method our anti-lefts ask us to use in determining if the main danger is one of "ultra-leftism" or right opportunism. On page 14 J.P. informs us that:

Some say that we can only determine a Right or "Left" deviation only in relation to what is happening in the objective situation... But this is deceiving. It depends on the concrete situation... Thus the main thing which determines a Right and "left" deviation is what are the requirements of the central task, (his emphasis) "

We leftists DO say that you can determine a Right or "Left" deviation only in relation to what is happening in the objective world. Marxism-Leninism teaches us that both "Left" and Right errors result from a breach between the objective and the subjective. How are we to determine whether errors are "Left" or Right if we do not examine the objective, situation? The demand to take up arms for example, by itself, is not incorrect. It becomes incorrect when it does not correspond to objective reality, and the tasks of communists that flow from this reality, from concrete conditions. Let us turn to the quote from Stalin for another example. Did Stalin determine the errors of both the "Lefts" and Rights on the question of industrialization APART from the objective conditions that faced the Russian people?

Could he have spoken to the demand for no power plant and for one every year without knowing what was possible given the objective conditions the Russians faced? No comrades, Stalin did not attempt such folly!

Let us turn to our own situation. Why is it that all of us can say with certainty that our central task is to build the party? Because when we examine concrete conditions we find that the proletariat is without conscious leadership, without its general staff. So our first step must be to weld together the core of advanced, to win the vanguard to the side of communism. The same is true for the "requirements of the central task," as J.P. puts it. Which of these requirements could we determine without examining what exists objectively? How can we say that the tasks we have set for ourselves outstrip objective conditions – i.e., that they are "Left," that they are tasks which are impossible to fulfill at this time – if we do not examine these tasks in relation to the objective world? Clearly comrades the only way we can determine if our views on the central task are correct is in relation to the objective world.

Why then, does J.P. counterpose these two things? First, because he has ceased to be a materialist, and failed to recognize that all our ideas are reflections of the real world. And to determine if our ideas are correct reflection or are off to the left or right, we have to know concrete reality. Secondly, J.P. counterposes objective reality, to the requirements of the central task, because wants to direct us away from what is occurring in the objective world. He would have us forget that workers across the country are moving into action, are taking up battle against their employers, and often the government. He would have us ignore that the spontaneous struggle of the masses is intensifying – and that this struggle demands leadership from communists. Instead we can content ourselves with conditions internal to the BWC, we can spend our time examining ourselves regardless of what is occurring around us.

Now let us turn to the two points we raised on ideological struggle and propaganda. We will see throughout they DO NOT want to examine the BWC in relation to objective conditions, do not set our tasks in relation to these conditions, but want only to view things in relation to ourselves. And this coming from those who scream so to view things in relation to ourselves. And this coming from those who scream so loud about concrete analysis of concrete conditions, and failure to investigate!

First, we will take up the anti-lefts position on party building, which is the task of winning the vanguard to communism. Now J.P. does pay lip service to this task, he does mention it. But he-so completely confuses the question, that the result is the belittlement of our task to win the vanguard.

For example, on p. 9 J.P. says that our task is "firstly winning the vanguard to communism and then, linking socialism with the working-class movement and finally the consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship". And for those who think this is just a slip, J.P. effectively says the same thing on p. 10: "is it (party building) primarily winning over the vanguard to communism or linking socialism with the workers movement?"

What is wrong with both of these formulations, and why would we say J.P. is belittling the role of revolutionary consciousness? Because he has failed to see that linking socialism to the working-class movement does not come after the advanced have been won, because a communist party itself is the very embodiment of the link between socialism and the working class. The task of linking socialism to the working-class movement is our task at all times – whether it be winning the vanguard, winning the masses, or proletarian dictatorship. Why? Because socialist consciousness must always be brought to the working class. It does not arise spontaneously, it does not emerge in the course of struggle – it must be brought from without. The vehicle to bring socialism to the working class is communism as a whole. Communism without the working-class movement is useless, as is a working-class movement without socialism.

To forge the party, communists must necessarily bring socialist consciousness to the advanced workers, and win them from under the sway of bourgeois ideology. **THUS WINNING THE VANGUARD TO ^COMMUNISM IS THE FIRST STEP IN LINKING SOCIALISM TO THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT.**

To say otherwise, to say as J.P. does that we have EITHER the choice of winning the advanced or linking socialism to the working-class movement, is in fact to deny our task now of bringing socialism to the most advanced sector of the proletariat. J.P.'s formulation thus incorrectly confuses and equates the task of linking socialism to the working class with the task of winning the masses to the side of the vanguard. He in fact denies that in each stage of the revolution – that of winning the vanguard to communism, that of winning the masses to the side of the vanguard, and that of proletarian dictatorship – it is the task of communism to link socialism to the working-class movement, to bring socialist consciousness to the proletariat.

For those who think perhaps we are just quibbling over J.P.'s formulation, we will carry our point further, to prove that J.P. consistently fails to see the task of winning the advanced as the task of bringing socialism to the working-class movement. Let us look at why J.P. says that ideological struggle is primary in this period.

Why do we say that party building is essentially an ideological question, and what do we mean by this? Because the revolutionary movement in our time has been betrayed by the ideological opponents of Marxism-Leninism, principally the modern revisionists of the Soviet Union and the modern-day Trotskyites and the struggle against these dangers, which has become one of the principal tasks and burning problems of the ideological struggle must be made the foundation of the unity upon which the genuine Marxist-Leninists must unite. (J.P.'s paper, p. 11)

Now who would deny in general our foundation of unity must be the defense of Marxism-Leninism in the face of revisionism and Trotskyism (recall this is exactly what the hated CL put forward)? Again comrades, this statement pretends as if revisionism and Trotskyism are things which exist outside our ranks, and we have only to unite against the CPUSA and the Trots – that we don't also have to defeat these forms of opportunism in our own ranks.

More importantly, the generality of JP's explanation is a far cry from explaining why ideological struggle is the chief form of class struggle in this period. He ignores all together that the reason ideological struggle is primary is because we have a very concrete practical task confronting us – that of winning the advanced to communism. The chief obstacle to this is opportunism, or the Influence of bourgeois ideology, in the working class. The reason that the struggle against the revisionists and Trotskyites is significant is because these forms of opportunism in our midst, and outside them, are preventing us from winning the advanced. We cannot stress too much that the only way the party will be forged is by winning the advanced over to the side of communism, to socialist ideology, and this cannot that be done without a victory over opportunism. This is why Lenin teaches us that:

...the first historic task (that of winning over the class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat to Soviet power and the dictatorship of the working class) could not be accomplished without a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and social chauvinism..." (LEFT WING COMMUNISM, Peking Ed. pg. 98)

Clearly without placing the struggle against opportunism and chauvinism foremost in our view, that is without placing the ideological struggle primary; we cannot accomplish our task of winning the vanguard.

But comrades, is that what JP and the anti-lefts stress? Do they consistently bring forward the struggle against opportunism – both in our ranks and among the

advanced? Do they stress the necessity of ideological struggle as a practical task without which we cannot possibly win the advanced? NO! They stress instead that ideological struggle is necessary so that we can unite the existing communist movement. They caution us that we cannot make a move to consolidate advanced workers without first completely consolidating ourselves. And there are those, especially on the IC, who would have us go to workers not with a definite line, not with the firmness of a communist, but with the shakiness of a petty bourgeois liberal - "Well I think we might have a correct line, but we're not sure, we're still investigating, etc." They tell us that to fight for a correct line, in the communist movement and among the workers is bourgeois hegemony. They cry about the sectarianism and factionalism that exists "among us" and in fact bring this forward as a (if not the) major obstacle. Our task to them is "to continue to wage ideological struggle so that the whole communist movement will unite and the general staff of the proletariat can be forged." (JP, pg. 15) They have forgotten precisely our task of linking socialism to the working-class movement, and would have us instead focus attention on ourselves.

Let us take up a more specific example to show that JP fails to see the building of the party as the first step in linking socialism to the working class.

On page 15 JP poses the question:

Is the objective situation one of revolutionary upsurge where the task of communists is to place themselves at the leadership of it? Or is the objective situation one of preparation and gradual development of the conditions (economic crises, government crises, etc.) necessary for revolutionary battles yet to come, in which case the task of communists is to unite themselves ideologically, politically, and organizationally; i.e. unite on the basis of ideological and political line, engage in persistent protracted work among the key, advanced sector of the masses, train cadres, build the party, etc.?

What is wrong with all this? First, posing these questions in opposition to each other is incorrect. When is it not our task to give leadership to the spontaneous upsurge of the masses? When is it not our task to do persistent and protracted work? to unite on the basis of line? to build the party, train cadres, etc.? These are our tasks at all times, whether there is a revolutionary upsurge and when there is not. And, when this is not our task, we can be as equally gradual in carrying out the task of "uniting ourselves" as the economic and political situation is in developing.

What JP has failed to understand is that when you have a communist movement like ours - which is basically isolated from the workers movement, because of our failure to take up the task of winning the advanced - then you cannot possibly narrow our task to solely "uniting ourselves." Our task is to unite socialism with the workers movement, to bring socialist consciousness to the most advanced, and, by defeating opportunism, win the vanguard to communism. We must have a party that is inseparably connected with the spontaneous working-class movement. Only in the course of winning the advanced, in taking up this practical task, will we in fact be able to both unite the communist movement and unite this movement to the working-class movement. The trend that is successful in accomplishing the task of winning the vanguard, the trend which focuses its attention on bringing socialist consciousness to the proletariat, will be the trend that gains hegemony and successfully unites the various communist forces into one party.

12. Our Task Is Always To Be At The Head Of The Spontaneous Movement

The anti-lefts are not interested in leading the spontaneous struggle, they are not interested in combating our isolation from the workers movement. They have more pious concern for the internal problems first and foremost of the BWC and secondly of the communist movement in general. This can be seen in the view of the anti-lefts

that we are too weak to lead the spontaneous struggle of the masses.

Comrade JP tells us that:

In a pre-party situation when the communist movement is characterized by a number of weak forces and very weak groups with political and ideological differences, the principal task is to unite the movement, build the party on the basis of line, train cadres, etc. This also involves taking part in and trying to give leadership to the key struggles of the masses. But our ability to lead the spontaneous movement is limited by the internal situation of the movement itself... And the central task requires not that each and every weak group try to lead the spontaneous struggle with their own line, and very often little ability to put it into practice, but that we continue to wage the ideological struggle so that the whole communist movement will unite and the general staff of the proletariat can be forged. (pg. 14)

Again comrades, our principal task is linking the communist movement to the working-class movement by winning the vanguard to communism - which is done primarily through ideological struggle. Instead of recognizing that we, the leaders, are disgustingly behind in taking up this task, that we are lagging in our duty to bring socialism to the proletariat, our anti-lefts whine that we are too weak to lead - imagine communists denying the necessity to give leadership to the working class!

In addition to the statement above, the view that we are unable to lead the spontaneous struggle can also be found on page 12, where JP tells us that the anti-revisionist communist movement is not even close enough to the workers movement to lead it in one way or the other. It has also been run by comrade MH, who said (at the last CC meeting) that comrades should not get too involved in practice, but should study, because that's what he was going to do. It can also be seen in the views of the IC, in the statement in THE COMMUNIST no. 5 that "the task of uniting the many forces that comprise the anti-revisionist communist movement into a genuine multi-national communist party is still the key task that face us." (pg. 3)

We are quite sure that by this time our comrades will accuse us of counterposing the task of winning the advanced to the task of uniting the communist movement. Our response is that it is impossible to unite the communist movement and to forge the party, without winning the advanced; that a communist movement that is isolated from the working-class movement is in a sad and undesirable state of affairs. We also say that for comrades to deny in any way our task to stand at the head of the spontaneous movement of the working class is to deny the task of bringing socialist consciousness to these struggles, and deny the necessity of diverting the spontaneous struggle off of the path of trade unionism and onto the path of socialism. How comrades, are we to do this if we do not stand at the HEAD of the spontaneous movement? How are we to do this if we do not put our primary attention on winning the advanced, as the ONLY way to successfully unite the communist movement and link it to the working-class movement?

No comrades, it is not we who are denying our tasks, it is you. Because it is you who want to limit us solely to the task of uniting the communist movement. It is you who say we are too weak to lead the spontaneous working-class struggle. It is you who ignore that our first step, our primary task at this time is winning the vanguard. It is you who do not understand ideological struggle as a concrete, practical, revolutionary struggle; as the chief form of class struggle at this time because it is our means to win the advanced away from opportunism and all forms of bourgeois ideology which spontaneously dominate the working class

What our comrades have utterly forgotten, is our DUTY as communists, NOW and in the future:

Our duty, the duty of Social-Democracy, is to deflect the spontaneous working-

class movement from the path of narrow trade unionism to the Social-Democratic path. Our duty is to introduce socialist consciousness into this movement and unite the advanced forces of the working class in one centralized party. Our task is always to be at the head of the movement and combat tirelessly all those - whether they be foes or "friends" - who hinder the accomplishment of this task. (Stalin, Briefly About the Disagreements in the Party, pg. 107)

13. The Right Passivity Of Our Anti-Lefts

The thrust of the anti-lefts position is to deny first, that in order to take our proper place at the HEAD of the spontaneous movement, communists must take up the task to win the vanguard to communism. Secondly, our comrades are denying that it is ALWAYS our task to stand at the head of the spontaneous movement, to give overall, communist leadership to the struggles of the masses. It is not our task to be mere observers of the spontaneous struggle.

The fact that our anti-lefts ARE nothing more than passive observers can be seen from a few examples. Comrades here in Detroit, at our national headquarters, there are over 300,000 unemployed workers. Yet NOT A WORD has been spoken on this subject. Not a trace of activity has come forward. There has been no participation in a number of demonstrations here in the city. And not a single cadre was on the 50 odd buses that went from Detroit to Washington for the UAW's demonstration. This is, perhaps, the result of our sectarianism? Another example. The struggle in Boston over busing still continues - yet we speak not a word. This same question is coming forward in Detroit - meetings are already being held in the communities - yet there is not the slightest bit of knowledge or investigation of this question. Were we not mere observers - and bad ones at that - of the miner's struggle? of the Menominee Indian's struggle?

Is it not clear that our comrades have no concern for independently working out a communist policy, that establishes our tasks in relation to such struggles? That they continuously deny that we must consciously RESPOND to the spontaneous upsurge of the masses now sweeping the country? And that we must respond not by narrowing our tasks, but by stepping up and broadening our theoretical, political and organizational work? (we refer comrades again to WITBD pg. 64)

Our anti-lefts are not, however, satisfied simply to deny that it is always our task to stand at the head of the spontaneous struggle of the masses. They have gone to great pains to find all kinds of reasons as to why we must drag at the tail of the working-class movement, why we must remain passive observers. We are too weak and ignorant they claim. Our ranks are so dominated by sectarianism and factionalism that no one can possibly think of LEADING the workers movement.

What comrades is this than a narrowing down of our tasks? All these cries of our weakness, our divisions, are nothing more than a JUSTIFICATION FOR OUR OWN BACKWARDNESS!

They are all attempts to blame certain "absent conditions" for the fact that we are not taking up our task to bring socialist consciousness to the working class. Isn't the anti-lefts concern for the "internal conditions" of the BWC, and the communist movement in general, another way to excuse our failure?

Here is what Lenin has to say on such attitudes:

"In adopting a hostile attitude towards the activities of the Social-Democrats of the end of the 'nineties, the ISKRA ignores the fact that at that time the conditions for any other kind of work except the struggle for petty demands were absent," declare the Economists... The facts quoted above show that the assertion about "absent conditions" is the very opposite of the truth. Not only at the end, but even in the middle of the 'nineties, all the conditions existed for other work, besides fighting for petty demands, all the conditions - except sufficient

training of the leaders. Instead of frankly admitting our, the ideologists', the leaders', lack of sufficient training the "Economists" want to shift the blame entirely upon the "absent conditions", upon the influences of material environment that determine the road from which it will be impossible for any ideologist to divert the movement. What is this but slavish cringing before spontaneity, the infatuation of the "ideologists" with their own shortcomings? (WITBD pg. 40)

It need only be asked, who is it that says that we can only unite ourselves, and that at present time "conditions are absent" for building factory nuclei, broadening the communist press, centralizing our organization, etc.? Who is it that is cringing before the shortcomings of the communist movement, and the BWC in particular, and is so infatuated with our sectarianism, our "running ahead", that they ignore the 100,000's of unemployed?

Who denies that it is our task to stand at the head of the spontaneous movement, that we must struggle to link the communist movement to the working-class movement, and do it primarily by winning the advanced? Who denies that if in fact we are not leading the spontaneous struggles of the masses, if we do not consciously attempt to bring the working class under the wing of communism, then we are "leading" (by the very fact that we are tailing) the spontaneous movement in a trade unionist direction? And yet the anti-lefts claim that they are not economists!

14. Theoretical Justification For Taking Path Of Least Resistance

And have no fear comrades. We of course hear your howls that we leftists are fantasizing once again, that we are seeing things as we would like and not as they are. We can say only that yes we do dream of having a communist movement that stands at the HEAD of the spontaneous movement, and not at its tail. And we will strain every muscle to achieve that dream as fast as possible. We will adamantly fight any and all who prefer instead to be content with our amateurishness, with the fact that WE, the LEADERS, are LAGGING BEHIND in our responsibilities and our duties to the proletariat, and especially the advanced workers. When there are communists who are not only satisfied with this state of things, but are finding theoretical justifications for such a situation, we will attack them for what-they are - economists.

We ask comrades to stop and think a moment - what is really the path of least resistance for us? Is it not true that it is far easier to concern ourselves with tea cup discussions with certain other communist "leaders", than it is to place our emphasis on ideological struggle to win the advanced, both within the anti-revisionist movement, and among the workers? Isn't the path of least resistance scrambling to build anti-imperialist coalitions rather than cracking the large factories and mills?

Isn't it time that our anti-lefts recognize that the preoccupation with ourselves, that they are fostering, will in fact only heighten our internal difficulties rather than solve them? Why do we say this? Let us turn to Engels for some help:

Only very exceptionally, and in no case to his and other people's profit, can an individual satisfy his urge towards happiness by preoccupation with himself. Rather it requires preoccupation with the outside world, means to satisfy his needs, that is to say means of subsistence, an individual of the opposite sex, books, conversation, argument, activities, articles for use and working up. (LUDWIG FEUERBACH, from Marxist-Leninist library, Moscow edition, 1934, pg. 48)

The same comrades can be said of an organization. We cannot exist without cadres, without political activity, without ideological struggle, without preoccupation with

the world around us. And if we become too preoccupied with ourselves, we will die as a political organization. Our internal difficulties stem precisely from the fact that we have not grasped and energetically taken up the task of winning the advanced; have not recognized the need to broaden our propaganda in the class and among other communists; have not struggled fiercely to overcome our amateurishness and centralize our organization. Comrades we can show our greatest concern for improving both our internal life and external work, by repudiating the economist trend now in leadership, and implementing a Leninist line on winning the advanced to communism. Only by inseparably connecting our internal life with our external work can we achieve a healthy life as an organization. And only by recognizing that the task of uniting the communist movement must be inseparably bound up with winning the vanguard of the proletariat to communism will we be able to accomplish our task of building a Bolshevik party.

Finally, before passing on to the question of an ISKRA-type newspaper, we would like to note, in passing, that isn't it strange that the very same forces who are screaming about the petty bourgeois character of the communist movement (and some have even come up with the absurd phrase "petty bourgeois communist movement") are the very same ones who are now satisfied to unite the existing communist movement? Isn't it odd that those who rail against our isolation, who say we are divorced from the masses, consistently fail to bring forward our task of uniting socialism with the working-class movement, of winning the advanced through ideological struggle? How we might ask these comrades, do you intend to unite socialism with the working-class movement, when you isolate the task of uniting the communist movement from our practical and revolutionary tasks in the working class?

15. Anti-Lefts See Iskra-Type Newspaper As "Paper Work"

Now let us look to JP's treatment of the role of an ISKRA-type newspaper and the necessity for topical political exposures. And remember that comrade JP was the Secretariat member in charge of the central organ, and development of THE COMMUNIST has been his main political task since August. Yet, in examining his paper we find not ONE WORD or example of the supposed "left" line in THE COMMUNIST (except the point already mentioned). We have no mention of the task of organizing comprehensive political exposures. We find no defense, or opposition to the need for an ISKRA-type organ. We have no idea what JP feels would be the correct relationship between the staff and the NS and the districts. Nothing on the question of phrase-mongering, on the role of intellectuals, on whether the central organ was premature, or too theoretical. Yet all of these questions are burning issues in the present debate. Talk about ignoring the real heart of self-criticism! Our comrade rants and raves about "leftism", but never brings forward the supposed political and organizational "left" errors HE was primarily responsible for. Instead we get ramblings of the character of political lesson no. 1 (And for all who are interested, JP has once again been re-instated as "managing editor" of our central organ. This comrades, after JP went from a position of being surer than ever that right opportunism was the main danger, and has now slipped and slid his way over to being absolutely sure that "leftism" is the main danger in the whole communist movement, and in the interim has done absolutely NO political self-criticism of his work on the newspaper and the numerous supposedly "left" errors he has been responsible for. Fine bit of remolding comrade! Of course it is the IC who is principally responsible for JP re-emerging "remolded" as "managing editor" of THE COMMUNIST - what a term anyway, "managing editor", bourgeois technocratic to the bone. And this kind of political decision comes from an IC which has been screaming throughout the organization that "leftism" has been the result of failure to sum-up and repudiate. We ask comrades to judge for themselves the political honesty or dishonesty of these actions. And also comrades, given the many and obvious differences among our anti-lefts on the meaning of "ultra-

leftism" as the main danger, we're sure the whole organization would welcome an explanation of the political basis for the appointment of this particular anti-leftist. Will the newspaper reflect JP's view that we are too weak to lead the spontaneous movement, or D.S.'s view that the basis of our error is our isolation from the spontaneous movement? Or perhaps, a "managing editor" is someone who does not have political views at all, but only directs typing, lay-out, distribution,.etc.?)

But aside from these "minor" points we would like to bring forward two basic points: 1)the failure of all the anti-lefts to recognize the importance of propoganda, and the role of THE COMMUNIST as a collective propogandist; and 2)their failure to recognize the organizing role of the central organ, and why is it also a collective organizer.

On the first point of propoganda. It is no accident that an economist (better known as an anti-left) would fail to speak to the importance of political exposures and the role of an ISKRA-type newspaper. Lenin makes it perfectly clear that those who have a narrow view towards our tasks, those who are concerned only with local practical work, see no need for an ISKRA-type paper. And Lenin is equally adamant in attacking the economists for failure to see the necessity of organizing political exposures as the ONLY WAY TO TRAIN THE MASSES IN REVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS. So it is little wonder that while JP pretends to speak to the question of propoganda for two pages (12 & 13) he never addresses himself to these questions. And this aversion to these crucial questions is by no means unique to JP. Not a single one of our anti-lefts agrees that we should center our work on the development of a nation-wide ISKRA-type newspaper. All of them belittle the role of propoganda, and particularly a newspaper, in building the party. This can be seen in its extreme by the proposals of comrade Mike that we completely abandon production of THE COMMUNIST. It can be seen in the views of the IC, who, while claiming that we need a central organ, have managed only one issue in four months. Certainly their priorities do not lie with putting out THE COMMUNIST. And it can be seen, by the very fact that the question isn't addressed, in each and every piece of material our economists have written to support their views on "ultra-left ism".

What comrades must be our view towards propoganda in this period? We have said that our task is to win the advanced, and that the primary form of struggle in this period is ideological struggle. We have said that we must bring socialist consciousness to the class, and tear the vanguard away from the stranglehold of bourgeois ideology. Comrades, in turning to WITBD Lenin teaches us that, the only way to accomplish this task is thru the organization of comprehensive political exposures:

The masses cannot be trained in political consciousness and revolutionary activity in any other way except by means of such exposures. Hence activity of this kind is one of the most important functions of international Social-Democracy as a whole, for even the existence of political liberty does not in the least remove the necessity for such exposures... 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, and not from any other point of view. The consciousness of the masses of the workers cannot be genuine class consciousness, unless the workers learn to observe from concrete, and above all from topical (current), political facts and events, every other social class and all manifestations of the intellectual, ethical and political life of these classes; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of all aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata, and groups of the population... in

order to become a Social-Democrat, the worker must have a clear picture in his mind of the economic nature and the social and political features of the landlord and the priest, the high state official and the peasant, the student and the tramp... But this "clear picture" cannot be obtained from books. It can be obtained only from living. examples and from exposures following hot upon the heels of what is going on around us at a given moment... comprehensive political exposures are an essential and fundamental condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity, (pgs. 85-86)

Comrades we would like to emphasize two points here. First it is always our task to be raising our own revolutionary consciousness, and that of the masses – we must constantly remember that unless communists bring socialism to the working class, the working class will follow a trade union path. Without comprehensive political exposures, we cannot possibly accomplish this task. Why? Because without them we cannot train the working class to respond to all forms of oppression and tyranny from a COMMUNIST point of view and no other. Without them we cannot train leaders for our class, we cannot train communist cadres. Comprehensive political exposures are a fundamental requirement if we are to train the masses and ourselves in political consciousness and revolutionary activity.

Secondly, political exposures are necessary if we are to teach the working class (and ourselves) to have a broadness of view, to be consistent fighters for all the oppressed and exploited strata. Is it any wonder comrades, given the limited amount of political exposures in the communist press, that we so easily ignore the farmers of this country? The Eskimos, Asians, and, often Chicanos? That we pay little attention to strikes of teachers? To the struggles of peoples oppressed by the empire of US imperialism – those of Latin America, the South Pacific for example? This happens precisely because without taking up the task of organizing comprehensive political exposures, of appraising what is going on around us and appraising it from a COMMUNIST point of view, we will spontaneously have a very narrow field of vision. And we will fail to teach the working class to apply a materialist estimate of "all aspects of life and activity of all classes." And recall too comrades, that Lenin tells us that "those who concentrate the attention, observation and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social-Democrats; for its self-realization is indissolubly bound up not only with a fully clear theoretical, as with a practical understanding, of the relationships between all the various-classes of modern society, acquired through experience of political life. How comrades, are we to keep from focusing the attention of the working class on itself alone? How, comrades, are we to fulfill our task of imbuing the proletariat with socialist ideology – if we do not take up the task of organizing wide, striking, and rapid exposures of topical events?

Perhaps, dear anti-lefts, you have discovered a new way to train the masses in political consciousness, one that corresponds to our new conditions? Perhaps we are not being creative enough for you when we say that we cannot possibly train the masses, the advanced, or even our own cadres to respond to events from a communist standpoint, without the organization of political exposures? We are of course dogmatists for saying that in a period of party building, where propaganda is the chief form of activity, to ignore THIS KIND OF PROPAGANDA, is to ignore our tasks as communists? And are we "left" when we say that we have not won more advanced, we have not trained more class-conscious workers, that workers generally display little revolutionary activity PRECISELY because we have been unable to organize sufficiently wide, striking and rapid exposures of all the outrages of U.S. imperialism, and LAG BEHIND in this respect?

No Leninist can possibly deny – or forget – the task of organizing comprehensive political exposures. And nor can one accept the need for these

exposures and then deny the need for a nation-wide, regularly published, newspaper. How else, we might ask, are these exposures to be organized? (By word of mouth perhaps?) How else can we win the "foremost representatives of the entire working class of the whole country (to be) conscious of themselves as a single class and launch a struggle that is directed, not against individual employers, but against the entire class of capitalists and the government that supports that class." (OUR IMMEDIATE TASK, Lenin, CW, V. 4, p. 215)

Comrades, again, do you think it is an accident, or peculiar to Russia, that Lenin stresses the absolute necessity for nationwide political exposures, and that he brings forward the practical means by which to carry out this fundamental task? What was good enough for Lenin is more than good enough for us! ISKRA can and must serve as our model!

16. A Leninist Line On Political Exposures

What do we leftists mean when we say we must have an Iskra-type paper? It means first that we have an organ that is addressed to the advanced:

At a time when educated society is losing interest in honest illegal literature, an impassioned desire for knowledge and for socialism is growing among the workers, real heroes are coming to the fore from amongst the workers, who despite their wretched living conditions, despite the stultifying penal servitude of factory labor, possess so much character and will-power that they study, study, study, and turn themselves into conscious Social-Democrats – "the working-class intelligentsia." This "working class intelligentsia" already exists in Russia, and we must make every effort to ensure that its ranks are regularly reinforced, that its lofty mental requirements are met and that leaders of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party come from its ranks. The newspaper that wants to become the organ of all Russian Social – Democrats must therefore, be at the level of the advanced workers; not only must it not lower its level artificially, but, on the contrary, it must raise it constantly, it must follow up all the tactical, political, and theoretical problems of world Social-Democracy. Only then will the demands of the working-class intelligentsia be met, and it itself will take the cause of the Russian workers and, consequently the cause of the Russian revolution, into its own hands... After the numerically small stratum of advanced workers comes the broad stratum of average workers. These workers, too, strive ardently for socialism, participate in workers' study circles, read socialist newspapers and books, participate in agitation, and differ from the proceeding stratum only in that they cannot become fully independent leaders of the Social-Democratic working-class movement. The average worker will not understand some of the articles in a newspaper that aims to be the organ of the Party, he will not be able to get a full grasp of an intricate theoretical or practical problem. This does not at all mean that the newspaper must lower itself to the level of the mass of its readers. The newspaper on the contrary, must raise, their level and help promote advanced workers from the middle stratum of workers. (A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy, CW, V. 4, p. 281)

Comrades we are in a period of deepening economic and political crisis. This objective situation has forced more and more workers to take up not only purely economic demands, but struggle of a more political character. And there are workers everywhere who have expressed their desire for socialist literature, have shown their thirst for knowledge, for a scientific answer to the problems confronting them. Our own heroes are coming forward, and we too have a worker intelligentsia whose demands must be met. It is our task to respond to the advanced workers, to train and develop them as communists. And we can only do this if our propaganda is directed towards the

advanced, and if we consistently strive to raise the level of our work. We cannot bow at all to the difficulties of the more average workers in grasping all that is being said in our propaganda. This is only normal. Our response to the average workers must be to explain, (through study groups for example), the theoretical or practical questions being dealt with, to develop the worker's understanding. We must bring the average workers forward and not take the level of our propaganda backwards.

Yet comrades, what are the cries we hear in regards to THE COMMUNIST? It's too hard to read, it's too theoretical, no one understands it because it's reading level is that of a college student, etc. etc. And the response of the anti-lefts to this problem? Make it easier to read, so everyone can understand it immediately. Use smaller words. No one has advised us to RAISE our standards, to deal more fully with complicated problems. No one has criticized our failure to deal with topical events, with pressing theoretical problems. Our anti-lefts are not concerned with such things. They are concerned with the average, with making things readily understandable for all.

We can't imagine what criticisms these comrades must have of Marx for writing articles that were "too intellectual" (consider the NEUE RHEINISCHE ZEITUNG, published in Germany or CAPITAL, which was serialized in the French press). And if the COMMUNIST is too difficult, what must our comrades say about the difficulties of WITBD and OSF,TSB, not to speak of CAPITAL, ANTI-DUHRING, etc. Perhaps this is the real reason why our anti-lefts do not rely on WITBD or OSF,TSB – because they are too difficult to read, or because they are too lazy to read them a second or third time if they have not understood them the first? Do we want to be led by people who find these things too difficult – including THE COMMUNIST?

Comrades, the point is, if articles are incorrect, they should be criticized and corrected. But don't attempt to drag the level of our propaganda down to the understanding of the average and backward. Demand instead that we raise the theoretical and political level of our propaganda, that we more thoroughly deal with complicated questions, that we broaden our view to the tasks before us and take on questions that up to now have been left untouched, such as the Chicano national question, the agrarian question, the question of parliament as a platform, etc., etc.

Secondly, in order that we meet the demands of the worker intelligentsia, we must, as we said, take up the task of political exposures. We must train the workers to apply a materialist analysis to events occurring around them. And to do this we must also take up the task of developing a core of leaders that can provide these political exposures, a core that is trained to watch and observe all that is going on around us every day. And how do we train such leaders?

Lenin tells us that:

...the masses will never learn to conduct political struggle until we help to train leaders for this struggle, both from among the enlightened workers and from among the intellectuals; and such leaders can acquire training solely by systematically appraising all the everyday aspects of our political life, of all attempts at protest and struggle on the part of the various classes and on various grounds. Therefore to talk about "training political organizations" and at the same time to contrast the "paper work" of a political newspaper to "live political work in the localities" is simply ridiculous! (WITBD, p. 199, Lenin's emphasis)

There are two points we should draw from this. One, that in order to train leaders we must have people who take up the task of systematically appraising what is going on around us. That this is a constant task, and a necessary one to train communist leaders. Second, these appraisals are not made for the sake of making them. They are in turn used as political exposures that appear in the press, and that help train the masses and cadres in revolutionary consciousness. Thus Lenin is quite clear

that to train leaders, and to train the masses to put Marxism-Leninism in command of all we do, we must take up the task of systematic political exposures and the production of a nation-wide newspaper.

What in comparison do our anti-lefts tell us? First they tell us that the newspaper should be written by "all cadres"; that we should develop a plan for the paper 5 months in advance so that all cadres can criticize this plan; that the staff should be a committee that has no more nor less political responsibility than any other cadre for the newspaper. They rail against the idea of red experts and revolutionary intellectuals. Comrades this whole position is absurd.

Now is precisely the time that we must concentrate our efforts to bring forward the best leaders we have to take up the task of organizing political exposures. We must concentrate on developing specialists in propaganda and newspaper work. To belittle in any way the centralization, and development of a solid core of propagandists who can produce a newspaper consistent in principle who can provide wide and striking exposures of topical events, is to belittle our DUTY to train our cadres and the working class in political consciousness and revolutionary activity.

"You are belittling the role of cadres. You think you are Lenin," the anti-lefts will cry. Not true comrades. We leftists recognize well the need to develop the initiative and energy of the cadres around the task of building THE COMMUNIST. We know well that without a strong network, without regular reporting, without written contributions and full participation of cadres our central organ could not exist. And proof that steps were being made to link the districts to the center, and particularly the central' organ can be seen in articles like National Lead (no. 4), the Postal Workers (no. 3) and the article on using the COMMUNIST from Nashville (no. 2), the letter to districts that someone be specifically in charge of newspaper work, etc.

Our point comrades is that we must have the energy and initiative both of the cadres AND a staff of propagandists. And while both must develop simultaneously, and in connection with each other, our primary emphasis must be on developing revolutionary leaders capable of providing comprehensive political exposures. And comrades, we have no illusions to being Lenin, but we are certainly going to take him as our model!

Comrades why is it that our "new Leaders" have no concern for the fact we have not even attempted to appraise the question of unemployment, war in the Middle East, the struggles in Africa, the PLO - and on and on in an endless stream? Because to them political exposures have nothing to do with training ourselves, or advanced workers, as leaders. Evidently propaganda is nothing but 'paper work'. Far more important is a coalition like AARC (Atlanta Anti-Repression Coalition), or maybe some discussions with OL, or perhaps participation in International Women's Day. Make no mistake here, all these things are tasks we must take up. But our point is that our anti-lefts are only too eager to build coalitions, but don't have the slightest concern or shame with the fact that in four months the only piece of propaganda we have had is THE COMMUNIST no. 5. Isn't it odd comrades that what should be the MOST important work - that of developing a central organ and our propaganda in general - has been the work MOST ignored, and was the FIRST thing our comrades sacrificed??

17. THE COMMUNIST Is A Necessary Evil For The IC And The Anti-Lefts

For those who tell us that the IC and those around them have no intentions of stopping production of the newspaper, we have this to say: Obviously, with the line that these comrades have, there might be a newspaper, but not of the character and quality of the first four issues of THE COMMUNIST. And not one that will attempt the task of organizing political exposures and directing itself towards the advanced, not an ISKRA type newspaper. We have already, comrades, issue No. 5. And we are quite certain that no. 6 will not be qualitatively better. We can well expect more articles

like the one on the Black Liberation movement, like the one on Parkchester. More editorials with the most basic of generalities. This is because our comrades have no desire to follow Lenin's model, because they have great disdain for an ISKRA type newspaper!

Comrades, we will say that we believe that issue no. 1 of THE COMMUNIST did lay out the basic principles for the type of newspaper we need, and that the first four issues were definitely positive steps towards building the type of organ we need. We will also say that while our central organ should be the primary weapon we use, there are many other forms that should be utilized for the spread of communist propaganda - mass meetings, pamphlets; leaflets, forums, study circles, revolutionary art - are only some of the possibilities.

We also will say that we find it shameful that for all the screaming of the anti-lefts that THE COMMUNIST is dominated by a "left" line they have yet to come forward with a thoroughgoing criticism of the newspaper. We can think of only two reasons why the anti-lefts have not even attempted this task: 1) they are incapable of doing it (and who would be more capable than JP, whose so-called "super-human efforts" built the newspaper?); and 2) they so belittle the role of an ISKRA type newspaper, and the task of political exposures, that it's obviously a waste of their time to even bother with the question.

18. Our Collective Organizer And On How Line Should Be Consolidated

On the question of a newspaper serving as a collective organizer we will speak briefly here of two aspects. First on the ability of a newspaper to help centralize and unify the BWC. And note that this point should be placed in the context of the BWC's history, which has always been one of loose, autonomous groups, rather than an organization that operates with one common line and a singleness of purpose.

A newspaper necessarily helps to unify an organization because it creates common activity for every district in the organization. That activity is obviously distributing the newspaper, developing correspondents, having study circles that discuss the newspaper, submitting reports and articles, organizing national campaigns, etc. It immediately broadens our organizational work as comrades across the country take up our central organ and use it as a powerful weapon. It necessitates regular communications between the districts and the center. It allows for a broad exchange of experience, as it can serve to popularize model examples, and methods that have been successful in achieving particular tasks (like building factory nuclei). An organ can take up a particular struggle and generalize and broaden its scope as it takes it out of the confines of its particular local character. By taking up the task of political exposures it will broaden the vision of comrades and workers as it will address itself to questions that wouldn't necessarily arise in the course of narrow local work. If used as an organizer, a newspaper can aid in the task of gathering forces together, as it gathers cadres and workers around the tasks necessary for its existence and development. We simply ask our anti-lefts, how do YOU intend to accomplish these tasks, to create unified activity, regular communication, to gather forces together without the aid of an ISKRA-type newspaper? What is Stalin's attitude toward the press as a collective organizer, even after the achievement of state power?:

"The point is not only that a newspaper must agitate and expose, but primarily that it must have a wide network of collaborators, agents and correspondents all over the country, in all industrial and agricultural it centers, in all uyezds and volosts, so that threads should run from the Party through the newspaper to all the working-class and peasant districts without exception, so that the interaction between the Party and the state on the one hand, and the industrial and peasant districts on the other, should be complete...

Stalin then quotes from Lenin's article WHERE TO BEGIN and Stalin continues:

At the time Comrade Lenin spoke of a newspaper as an instrument for building the Party. BUT THERE ARE NO GROUNDS FOR DOUBTING THAT WHAT COMRADE LENIN SAID IS WHOLLY APPLICABLE TO THE PRESENT CONDITIONS OF OUR PARTY AND STATE AFFAIRS." (Our emphasis) (Stalin, "The Press as a Collective Organizer, CW, v. 5, p. 287).

Perhaps our anti-lefts think Stalin was dogmatic and ignoring "new" conditions!

The second aspect of the role of a newspaper as an organizer, is in the question of training cadres, and particularly in aiding in consolidation around line. As we have already said, in order to train revolutionary leaders, we must have leaders who are taking up the task of systematically appraising the objective situation. And to train the masses in general we must take up the task of organizing wide and striking political exposures. Clearly, these political exposures also help to train our cadres, and gives them a UNIFIED line around which to deal with various questions. How can we help develop comrades' understanding of political economy, if we don't attempt to provide a Marxist analysis of inflation, unemployment, crises like Watergate, etc.? How do we help deepen comrades' understanding of the national question without dealing with questions like busing, with the agrarian crisis, with the struggle of the Third World? And what better means is there for taking up this task of political exposure than a regularly published, nationwide newspaper? If our leadership LEADS comrades in taking up the newspaper, studying it, using it, cadres cannot help but develop their understanding of our line on particular questions. And with a single position presented, cadres all across the country will bring forward our line with a single view, they will struggle in a unified manner with workers and other revolutionaries. How else comrades, can we have one unified position on burning questions that face our class? And again a newspaper is not the ONLY means, but it is and must be our central means. Our anti-lefts' failure to recognize a newspaper as a central means to help consolidate cadres on line to help train cadres to apply a materialist estimate of events, makes all their cries around line consolidation meaningless. Again comrades we ask, what methods do you propose for achieving the tasks set out here? How do you plan to carry forth communist propaganda without a central organ of the ISKRA type?

Before passing on to the section on amateurishness, we would like to say that the refusal of the anti-lefts to recognize the role of a central organ as an organizer directly corresponds to their failure to recognize the need for a strong centralized organization. As far as they are concerned we lefts are striving too high when we strive to Bolshevize the BWC in this period. JP is a good example of this dislike of proletarian organization. Throughout his paper JP shows his hatred for a disciplined, powerful organization. Instead of seeing that it is a good thing that there are organizations trying to implement fully developed party structures, he sees this as a bad thing. The only time he speaks of democratic centralism (pp. 10 and 15) it is in a negative sense. And he clearly belittles certain important organizational questions. For example he attacks the 'lefts' for "skipping stages and thinking that the lines of demarcation have already been drawn and the task is now to prepare the party program, merge where possible, and strengthen themselves organizationally." (p. 11) Our first question here would be which lefts is JP talking about - who exactly holds this line? The second question, and more importantly is that the task of developing a party program, of merging where possible, of strengthening ourselves organizationally are all correct tasks that we SHOULD take up, and that it would be incorrect not to take up. The only reason JP criticizes the lefts for taking up these tasks is because he himself sees no relation between organization and the ideological and political task of party building. In classic economist style he refuses to recognize that centralization, stronger discipline, and strengthening and attempting to Bolshevize our ranks CAN ONLY aid in the struggle to win the advanced. Every step

we take now towards developing an organization that can act as one, that can actually embody a unity of will and action, can only help in the foundation of a Party with the same characteristics - "Organization is Key"! And the fact that JP - and all those who agree with him - has already gone over to a Menshevik position on the question of organization can be seen in the statement "open up the ideological struggle to every member of every single organization, individual or group so that each can formulate his or her own independent position." (p. 17). Said in other words JP does not want anyone to be chained to the line of their particular organization. This is to say effectively that democratic centralism HURTS rather than HELPS the ideological struggle, that we would all be better off if we could each do our own thing. This is nothing more than a petty bourgeois aversion to discipline, and a desire to be free of the need to unite around line. One might ask our anti-lefts, if you held your own views, and were not united on line with a particular organization, then how or why is it correct to unite at all ORGANIZATIONALLY? Wouldn't this be in fact the liberal opportunism of putting organization before line? On what basis would anyone unite with a given organization? Perhaps our comrades would be bold enough to openly state to the communist movement that we would be better off if we didn't have any communist organizations!

19. Summary of Our Anti-Lefts Economism

In summary comrades we have shown that our anti-lefts are fundamentally economist. We brought forward the examples of their view towards the character of economism; their failure to see the task of leading the spontaneous struggle of the working class and most importantly their failure to understand party building as the task of winning the vanguard to communism, and they therefore do not see the practical necessity for having the ideological struggle primary, and find it very easy to totally ignore the question of an ISKRA type newspaper.

In contrast to our case against this right opportunism, we find that JP has brought forward the most general views of the "lefts" in the communist movement, but he does not speak specifically of the line of the "lefts" in the BWC and where this line is reflected. Who in the BWC has seen party building as a narrow organizational question and where is this reflected? Who at this time claims that the lines of demarcation have been drawn? Where is our dogmatism? Our desire to abstain from the struggles of the proletariat? Who among the lefts disdain from day-to-day work - and anyone who knows the lefts knows that this is turning things completely on their head.

To conclude this section, we will say that it is not so difficult to bring forward general views on the errors of Rights and "Lefts" - all that is necessary is copying a quote or two as JP did with Stalin's piece. But comrades it is another thing entirely to prove that "Left" opportunism has become the main danger - either in the BWC or the communist movement - without at the same time adopting the platform, methods, approach and demands of ECONOMISM.

III. THE IDEALISM OF THE ANTI-LEFT: SECTARIANISM OR AMATEURISHNESS?

At page 14 JP says that the lefts say "if the spontaneous movement is proceeding at such a pace that it is far outstripping the ability of Communists to give it leadership, then you have the problem of Right opportunism."

Comrades this is wrong and not what we are saying. It is not the fact that revolutionaries lag in their ability to give leadership to the spontaneous movement of the masses that is a right error; you have the problem of rightism when people come forward who try to give a theoretical justification for our lagging. Lenin says:

lack of training of the majority of revolutionaries being a natural phenomenon, could not have aroused any particular fears. Since the tasks were

correctly defined, since the energy existed for repeated attempts to fulfill these tasks, temporary failures were not such a great misfortune. Revolutionary experience and organizational skill are things that can be acquired provided the desire is there to acquire them... But what was not a great misfortune became a real misfortune when this consciousness began to grow dim... when people... appeared who were prepared to regard shortcomings as virtues, who even tried to invent a theoretical basis for slavish cringing before spontaneity. (WITBD, p. 40) (Our emphasis)

It is not the fact that we lag that defines the economist error of tailing; it is justifying that lag theoretically, making excuses for it, making excuses for our lack of energy, refusing to correctly define our tasks, using temporary failures as an excuse to call off our efforts to meet the demands of the masses - all these things are what Lenin means by the right opportunist error of economism.

But comrades all the "theoretical" arguments of our anti-lefts - JP now included - come down to nothing but elaborate theoretical justifications for our inability to meet the needs of the class, theoretical justifications for our lack of energy, initiative and revolutionary training. The slogan "left is the main danger" is nothing but an effort to establish theoretical basis for slavishly cringing before the immaturity of the communist movement and the spontaneity of the pure working-class movement.

JP's inability to find any economism in our movement is his own way of laying a theoretical basis for slavishly cringing before our narrowness and amateurishness. But since he can find no economism in our movement - under his own narrow definition - how does he explain the obstacles to overcoming its obvious disunity? Here JP, aligning himself with the anti-lefts, slides inevitably into the methods and approach of idealism. But his platform is not the idealism of the "revolutionary" voluntarist who pretends to change the world; the platform of our anti-lefts is the idealism of slavishly bowing before what exists.

The method and approach of the anti-lefts, JP included, is idealist because there is no objective or materialist explanation of the source of our disunity. What is the source of our inability to give leadership to the spontaneous movement: "Leftist", close doorism, and sectarianism" (JP, p. 14)? Here the analysis stops. JP's "materialism" justifies the sarcasm with which Lenin attacked the analysis of the Rabocheye Dyelo: "The French quarrel among themselves because they are intolerant; the Germans are united because they are good boys." (WITBD, p. 13).

To the extent that an answer to this question can be squeezed out of JP's rambling piece it reduces itself to two things: (1) the small group structure of the communist movement (2) the petty bourgeois makeup of the communist movement.

First, JP says that ideological and political differences are exacerbated by the structure of the movement (p. 10). Comrades this is the flabbiness of classroom liberalism - and it runs constantly through JP's piece. Wouldn't it be nice if we could get together and forget all these "petty" ideological and political differences? How are differences exacerbated by the structure of the movement for JP (we're comparing Russian Social Democracy with our movement)? Because we are trying to implement fully developed party structures - i.e. democratic centralism, factory nuclei, an ISKRA type newspaper, etc. etc. These things, instead of being an advantage for our movement, instead of being an advantage that these forms have been proven in the practice of the international communist movement, these things further exacerbated our differences. Here JP has stood Marxism-Leninism on its head. What would JP prefer? That we give up democratic centralism, an ISKRA type newspaper, etc.? That we turn backwards to the narrowest forms of proletarian organization rather than strive constantly to achieve and implement the highest forms of proletarian organization? No, JP considers the highest forms - fully developed party

structures, implement the highest forms of proletarian organization? No, JP considers the highest forms - fully developed party structures - an "exacerbation". So does the petty bourgeois liberal. JP's error here is the idealism of Deborin that Mao criticizes in ON CONTRADICTION:

the Deborin school maintains that contradiction appears not at the inception of a process but only when it has developed to a certain stage. (Selected Readings, p. 93)

JP and the anti-lefts do not believe that democratic centralism is the form of political organization which corresponds to the class interests of the proletariat at every stage of its independent political life, that it should be implemented in every form of proletarian organization - no, JP and the petty bourgeois democratic anti-lefts think that democratic centralism should start only when the process has developed to a certain stage, i.e. when we have a party. Listen to Stalin:

...it is necessary, as far as possible, to introduce the principle of centralism in the proletarian organizations as against the looseness of federation - irrespective of whether these organizations are party, trade union or co-operative. It is also clear that all these organizations must be built on a democratic basis, in so far as this is not hindered by political or other conditions, of course. (Stalin, Anarchism or Socialism? Selected Works, Cardinal Publishers, p. 31)

Instead of seeing the immense advantage to every single step of our movement in being able to draw upon proven proletarian forms such as democratic centralism, an ISKRA type paper, factory nuclei, etc. JP sees them as an exacerbation. And finally, isn't the most important aspect in considering whether the organizations in the Communist movement are parties or even "mini-parties" as JP puts it, not the organizational aspects, though these are extremely important, but the adequacy and correctness or the incorrectness of their ideological and political line?

But what of our question - the movement's 'mini-party' structure does not give us an objective materialist explanation of our sectarianism and disunity because the source of the small group structure itself has to be explained. JP says, "In this situation left sectarianism and small "groupism" have and seem to be developing even more deep roots." (p. 10). But why? What is a materialist explanation of that? He goes on: "the growth of small groupism can be traced directly to the lack of a unified understanding in the movement of the party building process..." The explanation then is that small groupism and 'left' sectarianism seem to be developing first because we are acting like Marxist-Leninists - i.e. implementing democratic centralism, factory nuclei, an ISKRA type paper., etc. - and secondly because we lack unified understanding. But what is the explanation for our lack of unified understanding? The method and approach of idealism is as shallow as its platform. The method of materialism is relentless.

Turn to another explanation then. JP and the anti-lefts say we are sectarian because we are petty bourgeois. No doubt there is a truth here - the petty bourgeois tail that many of us drag into the communist movement in spite of our best efforts can lead to sectarianism. But the question is not whether, in the abstract, that can happen. The question is whether the anti-lefts have been able to show that this is the explanation for the small group structure of our movement, for our disunity and for our sectarianism. There are several reasons why none of the anti-lefts - including JP - can come up with any such explanation.

First of all the social origins of members of the anti-revisionist movement can never be an adequate explanation of what the movement stands for nor what the main obstacles it must overcome are. Political organizations represent historical trends and class interests, not persons. We have seen that the question of deviations from

Marxism-Leninism cannot be reduced to a question of personal biography. Lenin says there must be a study of the historical origins, conditions, the significance and strengths of trends. We have to ask what is the objective source of a particular error and what has given it strength.

We cannot reduce the problem to saying that the reason that some are intolerant is because they are petty bourgeois. Yet an objective explanation of what the source of a trend is and what feeds it or gives it strength is, as we have seen, what our anti-lefts refuse to do.

Secondly as has also been shown the anti-lefts are badly confused when they think that the influence of the petty bourgeoisie in our midst is mainly in the direction of "ultra-left" errors. We demonstrated in the first section of this paper that the main danger our students and intellectuals face is not the "left" diseases of dogmatism and sectarianism but the liberal opportunism of the petty bourgeois democratic trend. But comrades we will never get anything but a grossly distorted argument on this question from our petty bourgeois democrats and liberals - after all, being exposed as petty bourgeois democrats is the last thing people like Klonsky, Silber and our own anti-lefts want to admit to. So comrades since we can't get an explanation from our anti-lefts or JP, let's turn to Lenin. Let's look at the way Lenin addressed the problem of disunity in the ISKRA period.

20. Material Source of Disunity in Our Movement

In Lenin's ISKRA writings he constantly talked about the problem of the disunity of the movement. But he did not talk about sectarianism - in fact he scorned those who accused him of dogmatism and intolerance. The authors of Rabocheye Dyelo, he said,

declaim against the intolerance that is characteristic of the infancy of the movement. To this we reply: yes, our movement is indeed in its infancy, and in order that it may grow up the more quickly, it must become infected with intolerance against those who retard its growth by their subservience to spontaneity. (WITBD, p. 51).

What Lenin did do was to go to the real source of disunity and to the main obstacles to overcoming it. Thus he showed that the source of the disunity of the Social Democratic movement was its fragmented, locally limited and narrowly practical character and showed that in those characteristics it reflected the inevitably fragmented, isolated and practical character of the spontaneous struggles of the working class. The conclusion he drew from this was that it would take the conscious efforts of revolutionary social democracy to overcome this, fusing thereby a unified communist movement with the "elemental destructive force" of the masses and thereby overcoming the limitations of both. But instead of dogmatism and sectarianism he identified the chief obstacle to overcoming the condition of disunity as the amateurishness, the lack of revolutionary training and initiative of revolutionary social democrats. Thus he says in both the DRAFT DECLARATION OF ISKRA AND ZARYA (v. 4, p. 321) and in the DECLARATION OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF ISKRA (v. 4, p. 352):

The principal feature of our movement, which has become particularly marked in recent times, is its state of disunity and its amateur character.

He identifies the chief obstacle to overcoming this situation in OUR IMMEDIATE TASK (v. 4, p. 216):

All that is now lacking is the unification of all this local work into the work of a single party. Our chief drawback, to the overcoming of which we must devote all our energy, is the narrow amateurish character of our local work.

Comrades, what has happened to the amateurish character of our own movement, and

of the BWC? J.P. gives it only passing reference and at that needs to put his reference to it in quotation marks – like economism, I guess it does not really exist among us. But what has happened in the past few short months to make all of us polished revolutionaries? Have we all overcome our lack of revolutionary training? Have we become professional revolutionaries in the Bolshevik sense merely by talking now about sectarianism when we talk about disunity, rather than talking about amateurishness in connection with disunity? Amateurishness is not a right error if the problem is recognized and the desire to overcome it is there. It is giving a theoretical justification for amateurishness, making excuses for our failure to overcome it, putting obstacles in the way of overcoming it that is the narrow and right opportunist error of economism. Comrades, all this talk about sectarianism is nothing but theoretical poison to turn our attention from our lack of revolutionary training and the real character of the tasks we need to undertake to overcome our immaturity. To each of you – what would you say is the chief drawback to your own personal activity as a professional revolutionary – sectarianism or amateurishness? to your unity? to your district? to the BWC? And incidentally, since J.P. brings up the question (p. 16) what is really the kind of atmosphere police agents dream of working in – an atmosphere of sectarianism or an atmosphere of rank amateurishness? Can there be any doubt as to an honest Bolshevik answer to these questions?

The point is this: the objective source of the disunity and fragmentation of our movement, as for early Russian Social Democracy, can be found in the character of the spontaneous movement and the inability of revolutionaries to overcome it due to their immaturity and lack of revolutionary experience, initiative and training. The working class is divided along 100 lines – sex, age, nationality, region, skill, trade, industrial sector, etc., etc. These conditions are not new – they were true in Russia in 1900 and are true in the U.S. today; they are a result of the fundamental character of the relationship between wage labor and capital. The Albanian comrades warn us against falling into the trap of over-evaluating special features and ignoring what is a basic characteristic of capitalism:

Thus the revisionists absolutize the changeability of the world and have no regard for its stability and basic law, they over-evaluate new conditions and phenomena, the special features according to time and place and negate the general principles and laws of the revolution and socialist construction which are indispensable at any time and for any country. (Some Questions of Socialist Construction in Albania and of the Struggle Against Revisionism, p. 149)

Thus in the Russia of Lenin's ISKRA period and in the U.S. today, the struggle of a group of employees against an employer or a group of employers (e.g., Farah or the Farmworkers) is necessarily a limited and fragmentary portion of the entire struggle of the class (and if we "link up" these struggles we still have only linked up the trade union struggles of the working class).

Cut the task of Communists is to struggle against the entire class of capitalists and the government that supports it. Lenin writes:

The struggle of the workers becomes a class struggle only when all the foremost representatives of the entire working class of the whole country are conscious of themselves as a single working class and launch a struggle that is directed not against individual employers, but against the entire class of capitalists and against the government that supports that class. (OUR IMMEDIATE TASKS, Lenin, v. 4, p. 215)

In order to overcome the fragmentation and disunity which characterize the spontaneous struggles of the working class and which is inevitably reflected in the infancy of our own movement, we must win all the foremost representatives of the entire working class of the whole country to a consciousness of themselves as

representatives of a single working class fighting in one unified struggle against the entire capitalist class and against the government which supports it – not just against individual employers or groups of employers.

That is what is meant by taking socialism to the working class and that is what it means to win the vanguard to communism – neither of which J.P. clearly understands and the last of which all the anti-lefts ignore in their narrow focus on summing up the BWC. It is in overcoming our own narrowness and amateurishness that we can overcome the influence of the fragmented and disunited character of the spontaneous struggles of the class on us and all the politics which bow to the spontaneous struggle. We cannot accomplish this task by decree or by becoming tolerant good boys and girls.

21. Organization is Key

The pivot for our efforts in overcoming the narrow and amateur character of our work is a strongly centralized and disciplined national organization based firmly on democratic centralism and a newspaper of the Iskra-type that we can use as a weapon to conduct the ideological struggle – the chief form of class struggle at this time – necessary to win both advanced workers and representatives of the working class within the communist movement. Instead of scattering our bricks around here and there against individual employers, the newspaper is one means to ensure that we lay a line and build with a singleness of purpose the struggle against the entire capitalist class and the government that supports it. Lenin writes:

the publication of an all-Russian political newspaper must, be the main line by adhering to which we could unswervingly develop deeper, and expand this organization... Pray tell me: when bricklayers lay bricks in various parts of an enormous structure the like of which has never been seen before, is it "paper" work to use a line to help them find the correct place in which to put each brick, to indicate to them the ultimate purpose of the work as a whole, enable them to use not only every brick but every piece of brick which, joining with the bricks placed before and after it, forms a complete and all-embracing line? And are we not now passing through just such a period in our Party life when we have bricks and bricklayers, but lack the guiding line which all could see and follow? (WITBD, p. 200)

We need this line not in the abstract, but to win the foremost representatives of the entire working class – and yes, we will struggle for the hegemony of that line! Lenin's line! Not pious, parson-like statements about struggling for the "purity" of Marxism-Leninism in general.

But we can only put forward such a line in actual revolutionary practice if we strengthen and stiffen our organization:

only by better organization and the establishment of a common Party organ will it be possible to extend and deepen the very content of Social Democratic propaganda and agitation. We stand in great need of this. Local work must almost inevitably lead to the exaggeration of local particularities... (AN URGENT QUESTION, Lenin, v. 4, p. 225)

In the same article Lenin writes:

Here we come to the most urgent question of our movement, to its sore point – organization. The improvement of revolutionary organization and discipline, the perfection of our underground technique are an absolute necessity. We must openly admit that in this respect we are lagging behind the old Russian revolutionary parties and must bend all our efforts to overtake and surpass them. Without improved organization there can be no progress of our working-class movement in

general and no establishment of an active party with a properly functioning organ in particular. (ibid, p. 221-222)

A failure to recognize the practical importance of improved organization to our ability to carry out ideological struggle as the chief form of class struggle has led some comrades to attack the slogan "Organization is Key." They do not see that this slogan is an attempt to summarize this lesson of Lenin – that without improved organization we can make no progress. The attack on the slogan counterposes organizational work to ideological work in an anti-Leninist way. Generally this stems from an economist failure to see that ideological work is a practical task carried on in the working class to defeat the forms of bourgeois ideology which keep the foremost representatives of the working class from communism. Failing to see that ideological struggle is a practical form of revolutionary work, our chief form of practice at this time, these comrades fail to see that like any revolutionary task it requires utmost organizational unity and discipline. The slogan certainly does not mean that ideological struggle should no longer be the chief form of class struggle, nor does it mean that we are trying to consolidate the communist movement without first drawing lines of demarcation ideologically. It does mean that we cannot carry out our ideological work as professional revolutionaries unless we are part of a disciplined and centralized proletarian organization. And it certainly means that we cannot overcome our backwardness and amateurishness without the utmost attention to questions of organization in all our work.

22. National Forms Of Communist Organization: Sectarianism And Amateurishness

Comrades, an example will demonstrate the idealism of all this talk about sectarianism in contrast to the patient, disciplined ideological and organizational work called for by Lenin to overcome our disunity. One of the most burning questions of our movement over recent years has been that of national forms of communist organizations. We still bear the scars of national forms of organization and into the last year the BWC was still justifying theoretically national forms of communist organization – it was not until the first issue of THE COMMUNIST that we did repudiate that line in print. Were national forms of communist organization the result of sectarianism, or did they have their source and were they given strength by the division of the class along national lines? Was our inability to overcome these forms due to our sectarianism or was it due to our lack of revolutionary experience, to our backwardness in grasping the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat and above all to our bowing to the spontaneous struggles of a class divided along national lines? We must be realistic we said. It is not we who cause disunity. The class is already disunited and we only reflect that disunity.

Listen to this statement by John Watson of the old League, and member of the BWC NCC:

Basically, we have organized an all-Black revolutionary union movement, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, because of the fact of racism existing in American Society, because of the fact that the working class is already divided between the races, and because it is necessary for Black workers to be able to act independently of white workers. We have learned historically that in too many instances white workers have been willing to sell us out because of their own racist misunderstandings of the dynamics of struggle. (From the pamphlet: TO THE POINT OF PRODUCTION by John Watson. This pamphlet was used extensively by the League and the BWC)

And that was the justification widely given throughout the anti-revisionist communist movement! Now we are certain that our anti-lefts will be able to find some "ultra-leftism" in this narrow nationalist syndicalist view, and there is. But what

our anti-lefts never want to speak to is what is primary. Comrades, , could there be a clearer example of bowing to the existing divisions of the class and justifying them theoretically, of our failure to raise the consciousness of the foremost representatives of the class to the necessity for unified struggle of the entire working class? Not even a good trade unionist would subscribe to such a narrow view of the trade union movement. But the BWC bowed to this type of spontaneity not only with organizations of workers but on the plane of communist organizations as well, and to this day it is reflected within our organization. Comrades, what is the name we project to the foremost representatives of the entire working class? And as recently as January in Detroit at the Black Women's United Front Conference when OL proposed and the BWUF adopted a nationally exclusive membership clause – membership in the organization is limited to Black women – we capitulated and did not take up the struggle against this position. (It is one thing to have an organization that concerns itself with the special problems of a particular group; it is another thing for communists to initiate organizations that are exclusive in their membership. (The Vietnamese Women's Association, for example, has men among its members and its leadership.

Now one member of the I.C. has run that it was because the old N.S. left them this mess of the BWUF that they didn't struggle against OL's line, nor CAP's and that this also justified the fact that in our speech to the conference we put forward a "race theory" and spoke of racial oppression rather than national oppression. How convenient. The old N.S. forced the I.C. to tail OL and CAP, forced them into forgetting the ABC's of Marxism, and forced them to put forward a bourgeois liberal line, the "race theory." This type of argument will not get over for very long.

Comrades, national forms of organization are one of the most important aspects of disunity in the recent history of our movement. Does our position historically on this question reflect sectarianism or bowing spontaneously to the existing divisions of the class? Does our position on a nationally exclusive membership clause reflect a principled Marxist-Leninist achievement in overcoming our "left" tendency to sectarianism – or does it reflect the right opportunist tendency towards unprincipled peace which thinks that principled struggle as communists would create "harmful antagonisms?"

Comrades lack of revolutionary training and amateurishness can be overcome; but we can neither build a party nor make revolution without defeating, without becoming infected with intolerance against every theoretical justification for the narrow and backwards character of our theoretical, political and organizational activity.

IV. JP'S AND OUR ANTI-LEFTS "REVOLUTIONARY" PESSIMISM

On p. 17, J.P. treats us to a remarkable analysis of the present situation and our tasks – remarkable for its narrowness and pessimism. As such it is a summary of the positions our anti-lefts have retreated to. For J.P. the present situation has two aspects – one dangerous, the other hopeful:

If most of the groups (in the anti-revisionist movement) continue on their present course of mutual antagonism and sectarianism... if they continue mechanically to copy the experience of other countries and treat Marxism-Leninism as something they... treat as dogma... if they don't repudiate all these things then the formation of a genuine Communist party is indeed a long way off, or worst yet, completely out of the realm of possibility for this generation of revolutionaries, who will inevitably degenerate into so many different sects, or worst, into counter revolutionaries.

Comrades, this is the essence of their anti-leftism: how passive this ail is. We are dealing with a mere observer – if Muhammad Ali doesn't block that (ultra) left hook he's going to be out of the fight. And notice how narrowly their observation is

focused: "most of these groups... if they... if they... if they... if they don't..." – as if the fate of the U.S. working class, millions strong, depended on the personal fate of the Avakians, the Klonskys, and the anti-lefts among us. No, Comrades, we cannot evade the struggle by standing by and wringing our rhetorical hands about intolerance and antagonisms and dogmatism. That is no way to overcome our backwardness and lack of revolutionary experience.

And where in all this is the chief practical task to which we should be devoting all our energy – winning the advanced?! For the anti-lefts this has disappeared along with amateurishness and economism – at best they put it in quotation marks and tack it at the end of a phrase. But here, in summing up the prospects of the anti-revisionist movement, it has no place. For the petty bourgeois democrat the practical revolutionary activity we must undertake is forgotten and instead we have rhetorical and utopian dreams of unity isolated from the concrete tasks upon which that unity must be built. So for J.P., if we ("most of these groups"):

wage a principled ideological struggle starting from a desire for unity, struggle and reaching unity on a higher level, engage in joint practical work whenever possible, open up the ideological struggle to every single organization, individual or group so that each can formulate his or her own independent position... we can fulfill our historic tasks.

Where again in all this is the task of winning the advanced? Ideological struggle is a matter for communists only, a question of abstractly taking up key questions, and not the chief form of class struggle by which we will overcome the influence of bourgeois ideology, opportunism, revisionism and national chauvinism in the working class and win its foremost representatives to communism. Nor do we need democratic centralism for this task – instead every individual is going to formulate his or her own independent position. Comrades, the anti-lefts have retreated to "Freedom of Criticism." It is the task of an Iskra-type newspaper to open up ideological struggle to "every member of every single organization" – and what our anti-lefts forget, to every class-conscious worker as well. But since the anti-lefts ignore the systematic development of propaganda that an Iskra-type paper can accomplish, the systematic laying of a line, everyone must formulate his or her own independent position. Here is ideological struggle for the bourgeois intelligentsia – not a struggle which depends upon developing and expanding a proletarian organization, but a struggle which depends upon every member of every organization ("most of these groups") formulating his or her own independent position. Recall Lenin's quote from Kautsky in ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK:

As an isolated individual the proletarian is nothing. His whole strength (in every form of class struggle, including ideological struggle), his whole progress, all his hopes and expectations are derived from organization, from systematic action in conjunction with his fellows...

Quite different is the case of the intellectual. He does not fight by means of power, but by argument. His weapons are his personal knowledge, his personal ability, his personal convictions. He can attain to any position at all only through his personal qualities. Hence the freest play for his individuality seems to him the prime condition for successful activity. It is only with difficulty that he submits to being a part subordinate to a whole and then only from necessity, not from inclination. (OSF, TSB, Moscow Ed., p. 122)

Principled ideological struggle for the proletarian depends on organization, from which he derives all his strength; for the petty bourgeois intellectual it is a matter of formulating his or her own independent position.

Our anti-lefts have become pessimists because they have reduced the struggle of

the U.S. proletariat to the BWC, and, ultimately, to bitter personal squabbles of a few leaders. They reveal in this their methods and approach: personal biography, not a political analysis of trends. J.P.'s self-criticism does not rise above this narrow view. He criticizes himself for back-scratching without explaining why backscratching, if that were the essence of the thing, is a "left" rather than a right error, or why elitism is a "left" rather than a right error, etc.

In fact what one single example of the line which JP says is "left" does he identify in his whole piece?! And curious isn't it, as we have said, that the Secretariat member responsible for the central organ nowhere discusses THE COMMUNIST and what he thinks a newspaper should be in this period. No, JP, this self-criticism smacks of political lesson no. 1. JP was a bad guy, intolerant, and being a bad guy is "ultra-left" these days.

Comrades, as we have said throughout it is not our backwardness and our lack of revolutionary experience which is our danger – that is our starting point. The danger is the "revolutionary" pessimism of our anti-lefts who want to justify our backwardness, who refuse to summon the energy, initiative and discipline to overcome that situation and who make excuses for that. That is why we say that the essence of this struggle is an attack on WITBD – because in the last analysis it is an effort to narrow the scope of communist theoretical, organizational and political work and to give a theoretical justification for this. Positions put forward confuse at best, and more commonly ignore the relationship of consciousness to spontaneity as it is put forward in WITBD. Our anti-lefts have not understood that there is no task we can do without putting the revolutionary consciousness of Marxism-Leninism in command, nor have they understood that to belittle economism is to attack the ideological foundations of a Marxist-Leninist party.

This is what JP does with his narrow understanding of economism. And the result is a tendency to revisionism: appealing to changed conditions to repudiate an established and proven principle of Marxism-Leninism. The anti-lefts are forced, even against their will, to the methods and approaches of revisionism.

This is also the source of their pessimism. The anti-lefts have lost their grasp on our central task – winning the advanced – and call on sectarianism to justify our amateurishness and to belittle in a genuinely idealist fashion the difficult tasks that confront us.

We have leveled our fire at JP in particular because his paper is an attempt at a systematic expression of the anti-left position. But more, importantly, though it is obvious that individual positions coming from various quarters tend to be different, there is a basic identity in the underlying content of the different anti-left positions and in the methods they are arrived at.

23. Launch A Counter-Attack Against The Anti-Lefts!

Comrades, our anti-lefts have done a great deal of shouting about "anti-democratic" methods, about "bureaucratic centralism", about "failing to investigate" about "developing the line over the heads of the NCC and cadres", about suppressing the ideological struggle", etc. etc. The meaning of all these catchwords is now crystal clear as we have pointed out throughout this paper. And now the other side of the faces of our anti-lefts are being revealed, with, as comrade Don Stone is fond of saying, "sterling clarity". For example, the entire line of the BWC on what constitutes the main danger, both internally and externally, has been changed, and there are not even two scraps of analysis justifying the basis upon which this has been done. This is just one example – the most important – but there are plenty of others, and we will list several in order that comrades may heighten their vigilance in the fight against the economist trend which is sweeping the BWC. For example, one of the former "hegemonic forces" has been re-installed as "managing editor" of THE COMMUNIST even though, as we pointed out this comrade to this day has not offered a

single criticism of his "ultra-left" errors as editor of the paper. The IC explains this appointment by saying that JP can make his self-criticism in the course of his "practical work". They do this at the same time that they remove comrades who are defending the left line of the BWC (that is those of us who are attacking the anti-lefts) with explanations that don't even come close to a Marxist-Leninist analysis. "Lack of confidence" they cry. Based on what? How has the leadership of these comrades hurt the organization? the class struggle? To this there is no reply.

Right now the IC is proceeding in the dark, behind the backs of cadres, to move the national center out of Detroit to the city of Chicago. To Chicago, mind you, where in almost every meeting of the NCC, comrade DC has always reported that Chicago was virtually too weak to even do study groups if he wasn't there. Isn't this the reason comrade Danny always offers for no one having an understanding of what is going on in Chicago? And comrades let it be known that DB's suspension has been revoked and he is now a member of the IC. Where comrades are the "sum-up" and "repudiation" of this comrade's so-called "ultra-leftism", a self-criticism of his particular errors as a Secretariat member? Why has the IC, or the CC given us no political explanation for this decision? Or perhaps their decisions aren't based on politics!

Also consider comrades, that we have heard nothing from various members of our national leadership on the question of "ultra-leftism" or rightism. Not even from the chairman of the IC - not a word. Yet in the dark these comrades can vilify the lefts all day long. Consider the fact that the IC is planning to hold a Congress within approximately ten weeks, and yet, as of this date, they have no idea as to the procedure around questions like the choosing of delegates, the discussion of documents, the actual running of the Congress itself. Within this ten-week interim we are supposed to believe that at least two organizational bulletins will be put out, regional meetings will be held to discuss the line struggle, and an NCC meeting will be held. There will supposedly be the preparation of positions on many of the burning questions facing our movement, a plan developed for "focusing our political work" as they put it, and a complete summing up of the "left" opportunist line on party building. All this from "leaders" who in three months have given us 1/2 a bulletin and a few short statements. And of course all of these "new" positions are to be consolidated around at a Congress - everything in ten weeks!

Comrades, we call upon all cadres to stand up and actively defend the line of WITBD and OSF,TSB against these blatant attacks by the petty bourgeois democratic trend in our midst. And in closing we would like to quote Lenin in order to ask the question just who is really resorting to blatant bureaucratic methods and "mechanical methods" of achieving unity:

They talk of bureaucracy. The word bureaucracy might be translated into Russian as concentration on place and position. Bureaucracy means subordinating the interests of the work to the interests of one's career; it means focusing attention on places and ignoring the work itself; it means wrangling over co-optation instead of fighting for ideas. That bureaucracy of this kind is undesirable and detrimental to the Party is unquestionably true, and I safely leave it to the reader to judge which of the two sides now contending in our Party is guilty of such bureaucracy... They talk about grossly mechanical methods of achieving unity. Unquestionably, grossly mechanical methods are detrimental; but I again leave it to the reader to judge whether a grosser and more mechanical method of struggle of a new trend against in old one can be imagined than installing people in Party institutions before the Party has been convinced of the correctness of their new views, and before these views have been set forth to the Party. (our emphasis, OSF,TSB, Vol. 7, pg. 364)

Comrades, we know that many cadres have been confused in the course of this

struggle and tended to give support to the ideas of our anti-lefts, but we also know that many comrades have been able to see the huge contradictions in their arguments all along. We have all had our doubts, our hesitations and confusion, but now is the time to defend Leninism against petty bourgeois democratic opportunism! Now is the time for each and every cadre to overcome any passivity and pessimism, any thoughts of being a "defensive" minority. Instead we must militantly counter-attack the line of the anti-lefts, and stand up for orthodox Marxism-Leninism.

DOWN WITH ECONOMISM AND RIGHT OPPORTUNISM!

DOWN WITH MODERN REVISIONISM!

LONG LIVE GLORIOUS MARXISM-LENINISM!

BUILD A NEW PARTY, A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY, A MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY!