

## Two-Line Struggle Deepens Understanding Sharpen Weapon Of The Party's Press

As was pointed out in last month's REVOLUTION in the article on "The High Road Vs. The Well-Worn Rut," one of the main characteristics of the Jarvis-Bergman revisionists recently defeated in a major struggle in the RCP was their economism and more general pragmatism. For them it was not only unnecessary but wild "left-idealism" for the Party to carry out broad political work aimed consciously and consistently at the revolutionary goal of proletarian revolution. Instead, all that was necessary was narrowly "promoting the struggle"—seen by them as whatever was going on this morning or could be led by them this afternoon. Such a line would rob a revolutionary Party of its very reason for existence.

Not surprisingly, one important way the revisionist features of this clique became concentrated was in struggle over the role of the Party press. This struggle, and the rupture with their revisionist line generally, has enabled us to get clearer on this role. While the Jarvis-Bergman headquarters never dominated our Party's propaganda work except in a very few local areas in their grip, they interfered with this work and in addition their revisionist, narrow rightist line had a tendency to fuse with spontaneous rightist tendencies in the work of the Party generally. Not only has the defeat of these teachers by negative example removed an obstacle, it has helped the Party begin correcting errors in our own ranks.

This has laid the basis for important advances to be made in our Party's press—in REVOLUTION, in our theoretical journal THE COMMUNIST, and especially in the local editions of the WORKER newspapers (17 of which are now published with plans underway to begin several more soon). Starting with the May 1st issue, several of these latter papers have begun publishing every two weeks instead of monthly, and the majority will be doing so in the months ahead. And in every area the Party is beginning to take important and needed steps to strengthen the WORKERS' role in putting out our Party's line to the broad masses of workers, in more clearly, consistently and forcefully putting forward the Party's revolutionary line, strengthening the various foreign language sections, significantly expanding distribution and making the WORKER, and the Party press generally, a more integral part of our Party's daily work.

### A Revolutionary Weapon

What was the content of the struggle with these revisionists over the Party press? In the broadest sense it came down to the question—was the Party press going to be a revolutionary weapon in the class struggle or was it not? Was it to be seen and used as a crucial weapon, or was it simply a kind of garnish—necessary only for decoration alongside the "real" meaty work of promoting the daily struggle. (According to the Mensheviks, we needed such decorations because, after all, every Communist Party is "supposed" to have a paper—including the old CPUSA after which these top ex-CPers sought to model their thinking and actions.)

If we could get verbal agreement that the press was to be a weapon, there was no agreement as to what kind of a weapon the press, particularly the WORKERS, should be. Was it, as these pragmatists would have it, to be essentially a tool in simply building today's struggles into tougher fights, or a revolutionary weapon which, while promoting and strengthening such struggles, concentrated on exposing every aspect of oppression and exploitation coming down from the imperialist system and thus helping broaden today's movement and pointing to proletarian revolution.

In the Fall of 1977 when the struggle between the revolutionaries within the Party leadership, headed by Comrade Avakian, and the revisionist Jarvis-Bergman headquarters was becoming very sharp on all fronts, an internal bulletin on the WORKER, "The WORKER and Our Party's Tasks," was written under the leadership of the Party's revolutionaries. This bulletin spoke to the Party's line on the WORKER papers and many other questions and summed up erroneous tendencies which—as has now become

clear—were being actively promoted in a factional way by the revisionists.

While these top revisionists hated this bulletin, they did not openly oppose it when it was discussed on central leading bodies; in fact, they even voted to approve it. Especially by this time, their factionalizing was very developed and they were laying low on these bodies on many questions, hiding in wait for a more favorable time, place and subject on which to leap out and try to carry the day in the Party.

The Jarvis-Bergman gang have never yet written down anything of substance in opposition to the Party's line on its press. This is characteristic of their particular form of opportunism and rightism. It makes polemicizing against them more like squeezing a handful of slime than grabbing hold of a consistent—if opportunist—political line. But their line on the press, especially the WORKERS, is clear enough. All one has to do is look through the two issues they have so far published of their paper, which they call "The Worker."

If one manages to stay awake, the general impression that comes through is that the basic purpose of this paper is to combine rah-rah for the spontaneous struggle with writing about particular activities they are involved in and organizing this month. It is in this narrow, reformist way an attempt to "organize the struggle."

From all this it is clear that what was involved in the struggle around the Party press was at bottom a question of what kind of Party are we going to have—a reformist or a revolutionary Party. The introduction to the WORKER bulletin made this clear when it said, "Big changes are called for. This means further changes in the content of the papers as well as greatly stepping up their distribution and use. But more fundamentally it means changes in how we view and carry out our role as communists in today's conditions, and how the WORKER fits into that."

Whether all the Party's work should contribute to building a revolutionary struggle or mere reform, narrow and immediate results—this has been a basic dividing line between our Party and these revisionists on all questions, including the Party press. Lenin put it quite clearly, "The movement is everything, the final aim nothing"—this catchphrase of Bernstein's expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long arguments. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chops and changes of petty politics, to forget the basic interests of the proletariat, the main features of the capitalist system as a whole and of capitalist evolution as a whole; to sacrifice these basic interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism." ("Marxism and Revisionism," *Collected Works*, Vol. 15)

### Tribune of the People

Our Party was founded in opposition to such a reformist line. Again at the 1976 Central Committee meeting it was emphasized, "We must conduct all our work, in every struggle, among all social forces and movements, as part of building toward the revolutionary goal." Of course saying this in general is not the same thing as carrying it out. Both the 1976 CC Report and the WORKER bulletin gave direction to implementing this revolutionary principle. As the latter document put it, "This is not just a moral injunction, it expresses a very clear political task—a task most clearly expressed in exerting every effort to be tribunes of the people."

This task, one closely connected with the tasks of the Party press, was spelled out clearly by Lenin when he wrote that a communist's "ideal would not be the trade union secretary but *the tribune of the people*, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat." (*What Is To Be Done?*, Chapter 3, E)

Hitting at the pragmatism and economism promoted by the Mensheviks, as well as at spontaneous rightism, the WORKER bulletin posed the question, "In our daily work among the masses of workers, how do we mainly want to be seen by them—as militant fighters or as 'tribunes of the people'? We clearly must be seen as both, but it is important to understand that the second—tribune of the

people—aspect is overall principle and why this is so."

Of course there was no original stroke of genius in all this. This was a point Lenin had made long ago, and it was a point that the Revolutionary Union (which formed the core of the RCP) had returned to and developed throughout its existence—in struggles against both "left" and right opportunism. But this didn't faze Jarvis and Bergman. They had little use for the theoretical contributions of the Revolutionary Union, or the Party for that matter.

Jarvis had a history of shunning Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* like a plague. Around the time of the Party's formation he had scattered around the notion that this book wasn't really applicable to our conditions because Lenin was writing about a two stage revolution with the first stage being a democratic revolution against Czarism. According to Jarvis, all of Lenin's emphasis on political struggle, as opposed to emphasizing the economic struggle, was determined by these specific conditions. While Lenin was writing under different conditions than ours, these principles which Jarvis was attacking are clearly applicable to our struggle.

In customary form, a hatchet woman closely linked with Jarvis in this revisionist clique openly screeched at a major meeting she had responsibility for, "I wish I could burn *What Is To Be Done?*!" She endorsed the idea of "lending the economic struggle a political character" (explicitly attacked by Lenin) while saying people shouldn't "use those words."

As struggle was developed against economism (which sees the struggle for economic reforms, especially trade union skirmishes, as the most important struggle of the working class) the Jarvis-Bergman bunch abandoned such openly economist positions. But they never made any serious effort to understand and apply the revolutionary principles Lenin was advancing. This is clear both from their downplaying of the importance of the WORKER and their view that its main task should be to promote today's struggles, and in the most narrow way.

The WORKER bulletin put forward a different line, "The WORKER, as a newspaper, is a potentially wide-reaching weapon of the Party in society as a whole. In the day to day work of Party comrades, while the WORKER may assist in organizing a particular struggle, that is not its main role. In such work its primary importance is to assist Party members, advanced workers and other supporters in being 'tribunes of the people,' as they sell the paper broadly to fellow workers." And, "as applied to the papers' content, this means that while they must write about major campaigns and battles we are involved in, we must break with the tendency to write mainly about ourselves. Their prime aim is to create public opinion through exposures of the forces at work behind every feature of political, economic, cultural, scientific life."

Without the aid of such a newspaper, under today's conditions at least, it would be impossible for our Party to carry out revolutionary work. It enables Party members and supporters to "live in controversy" as they should—standing together with fellow workers in their struggles and actively struggling to advance their consciousness of the interests of the working class around all of the key social questions.

From the time of the 1976 Central Committee on, when the task of putting out the WORKERS more frequently was set, the Party's line was clear that the main task of the WORKERS (and their main weakness) was in carrying out political exposures. And that this would make these papers *interesting*. As Lenin said,

"Working class consciousness cannot be genuinely political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all cases, without exception*, of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected. Moreover, to respond from a Social-Democratic [communist], and not from any other point of view. The consciousness of the masses of 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 the manifestations of the intellectual, ethical and political life of these classes*; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and materialist estimate of *all aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata and groups of the population*. Those who concentrate the attention, observation and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social-Democrats." (*What Is To Be Done?*, Chapter 3, Section C)

And even this, of course, is not an end in itself. For as the Party also pointed out, this is all part of preparing for the actual overthrow of the capitalist class.

### Mensheviks' View of the Worker

These Jarvis-Bergman revisionists never made any thorough break with their economism, or any attempt to grasp the essence of Lenin's or the Party's line, except to oppose it. As if to confirm this, in the few written pieces they have produced on the Party's line since their split (including an editorial "Introducing the Worker" in Vol. 1, No. 2 of their

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## Revolution

Revolution is the organ of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA (RCP, USA). It is published monthly. All correspondence to the Party should be sent to RCP, USA; PO Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, IL 60654.

# Party Press . . .

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"Worker") they never once mention, either in word or spirit, the need to be tribunes of the people when laying out their tasks. This is no mere omission, since the point was stressed again and again in internal documents and other forms before they departed.

In fact Jarvis' ideas on this point were set for a long time. While the Party's line, as we said earlier, was that political exposure was the main task of the WORKER, Jarvis had a different idea. For some time he spread around through his own informal channels the notion that in order to relate to the present struggle of the workers the heart of the WORKER should be to develop regular columns putting forward a line for the struggle in major industries such as auto and steel.

In the summer of 1977 he even called a meeting at the Party center, when Comrade Avakian was out of town, to attempt to put over this line of his as "guidance" for an upcoming meeting on these papers. Fortunately, his guidance was rejected. While it was unclear at the time (due to Jarvis' customarily jumbled presentation) whether this was to be the central feature of the papers or just the most important addition that had to be made, it didn't matter much. Both are wrong. (Of course by looking at these revisionists' counterfeit "Worker," it is clear that he meant to reduce the whole paper to reformist drivel.)

While the Party press must contain economic exposures and articles on key industrial struggles, such articles by themselves will never produce a revolutionary paper or lead people beyond the bounds of the struggle for economic reforms. Even if to such we were to add propaganda about socialism, the most this would produce is a reformist social-democratic line—trade-unionism plus talk of socialism—a line spouted occasionally even today by various union hacks, including UAW President Doug Fraser.

All this is dead wrong, and was criticized many times by Lenin who blasted those, reminiscent of our revisionists, "who accuse us of departing from the 'class point of view' . . . who seek to persuade us to abandon the many-sided campaign of exposure (i.e. the widest possible political agitation) against the autocracy and to concentrate our efforts mainly upon the struggle for economic reforms (to give something 'positive' to the working class, to put forward in its name 'concrete demands' for legislative and administrative measures 'which promise certain palpable results')." ("Political Agitation and 'The Class Point of View,'" *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 339)

Especially after they split, the Jarvis-Bergman bunch accused the Party of "abandoning the task of fusion of socialism with the working class movement," as Lenin laid it out. While we will have more to say on this question in future articles, suffice it here to say that these revisionists were not upholding Lenin's ideas on fusion, but turning them upside down. Lenin raised the task of fusion precisely in direct opposition to the economists of his time, who were abandoning the task of raising the level of the working class movement to a political struggle.

To cover themselves, the Mensheviks accused the Party of retreating. But the Party was not and is not retreating from the struggle of the working class. What these tail-enders are promoting is not "fusion" at all but *confusion* of socialism with the spontaneous level of the workers' struggle and a retreat from revolutionary struggle and revolutionary work.

## Concentrated Struggles—Broad Exposures

In opposition to tendencies in the Party to see all our work narrowly as "building the struggle" the WORKER bulletin put out that our Party's work in the working class should take place as the dialectical unity of "concentrated struggle and broad exposures." The WORKERS could not be mainly an organizer for building particular struggles, but had to be characterized by their broadness, their all-around political character. As Lenin wrote in *What Is To Be Done?*,

"We must blame ourselves, our lagging behind the mass movement, for being unable as yet to organize sufficiently wide, striking rapid exposures of all these despicable outrages. When we do that (and we must and can do it) the most backward worker will understand, or will feel, that the students and members of the religious sects, the muzhiks and the authors are being abused and outraged by the very same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life, and, feeling that, he himself will be filled with an irresistible desire to respond to this thing, and then he will organize catcalls against the censors one day, another day he will demonstrate outside the house of a governor who has brutally suppressed a peasant uprising, another day he will teach a lesson to the gendarmes in surpluses who are doing the work of the Holy Inquisition, etc." (Chapter 3, Section C)

While this is not the level of things today, the struggle will never advance to this point spontaneously without our work, including the role of our press, conducting agitation and propaganda around all "despicable outrages" and drawing the real connections between them and the criminal rule of the capitalist class.

The concentrated struggle aspect of this policy refers to the need pointed to in the Party PROGRAMME to apply the "single spark method" to turn important strug-

gles into campaigns of the working class. While this does not negate the need to do agitation around many questions, and to pay attention to and participate in smaller skirmishes, it does correctly point to the need to concentrate. Predictably, the Mensheviks have now jumped on these and similar policies and formulations to charge that we really mean to say that propaganda is our principal task and this is a line of turning our Party into a propaganda sect and for "preaching at the people." This, they say, amounts to taking an idealist view of the relation between struggle and consciousness. Let's examine this more closely.

First off, we should point out that if these revisionists want to criticize the RCP, they should also criticize some other "idealists"—Lenin and Mao, for example. Lenin blasted "the Economist conception of 'close organic connection with the proletarian struggle'"—i.e., tailing behind the spontaneous movement. He answered that "The principal thing, of course, is *propaganda* and *agitation* among all strata of the people." (*What Is To Be Done?*, Chapter 3, Section E, emphasis in original)

He also said, "A newspaper is what we most of all need; without it we cannot conduct that systematic, all-around propaganda and agitation, consistent in principle, which is the chief and permanent task of Social-Democracy in general. . . ." ("Where To Begin," *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 20-21)

Still more, we have the formulation by Mao: "First and foremost create public opinion and seize power." Come on, revisionists, why don't you blast Mao for his "idealism"? (We know that, in essence, this has been the view for some time now of the top leaders of this clique and that they are presently sucking up to those who are "re-evaluating" Mao Tsetung.)

Such quotes can be, of course, misused by dogmatists to justify their contempt for and isolation from the struggles of the masses and to bolster their line of peddling their papers and forgetting all other "diversions." These views have been combatted by the RCP and the RU before it, and we oppose them today. But several things need to be said.

First, we refuse to combat such views with pragmatism and economism. Second, exactly because we had sharply polemicized against such dogmatist deviations and had made important progress in linking up with the struggles of the workers, there were and are strong tendencies in the Party to narrow down our tasks to simply "building the struggle." Such tendencies were greatly encouraged by these revisionists. To point to "overstressing" propaganda and agitation under such circumstances would be, as Lenin put it, "like wishing mourners at a funeral many happy returns of the day."

In the contradiction between struggle and consciousness, struggle is basic and principal. So, too, in the overall and broad sense, between building struggle and carrying out exposures, struggle is decisive in the Party's work.

Our goal is struggle—a proletarian revolution. And more immediately it is through their own experience in struggle that the masses learn (or can potentially learn) far more than through simply "being told." As Lenin said, "The real education of the masses can never be separated from their independent, political, and especially revolutionary, struggle." ("Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 241) As we stated at our First Party Congress and reaffirmed at the Second, "it is through the course of struggle that the masses learn, it is in *changing reality* that the masses are able to learn more about it—and in turn change it further, and more fundamentally."

But all this cannot be taken narrowly, as these revisionists would have it. There are many events we should relate to primarily through agitation and propaganda—exposing the rottenness of capitalism. Last year's New York City blackout is one example. The second point is that the struggle for proletarian revolution is not identical to the immediate struggle. And in waging today's struggle our goal is not some sort of adventurist or economist concept of doing "material damage" to the enemy.

Any particular battle must be built to its fullest potential, must be given tactical guidance, and we must aim to win as much as can be won from the enemy. But our most important objective in any such struggle is to raise the class consciousness of the strug-

gling masses. This is key both in bringing revolutionary understanding to the broad masses and in training the advanced and building the Party so as to prepare for the struggles ahead—especially the struggle for proletarian revolution. In fact it is our task to *divert* the struggle from the spontaneous path it will take, which will be reformist, and *transform* today's struggle into a revolutionary struggle. This is impossible without communist propaganda and agitation.

Lenin ridiculed the economists of his time who "attached more significance to the 'forward march of the drab everyday struggle'" (as they put it) than to what they termed the "propaganda of brilliant and completed ideas" (See *What Is To Be Done?*, Chapter 3, Section E) In the same section he also said, "Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relationship between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationship of *all* classes and strata to the state and government, the sphere of the interrelations between *all* classes." "Only from without"! Lenin is obviously four times more the "preacher" than the idealist RCP!

Further, raising consciousness can never be reduced down to what the revisionists say and mean—what can be drawn out of one or a few particular struggles. The WORKER bulletin spoke to this question:

"The heart of the matter behind the stress we correctly lay on struggle is stated well in the following quote from [internal document]. 'If we fail to recognize that in the daily struggle of the workers lies the potential for the revolutionary movement of the working class, then we will fail to develop this potential into reality. If we do not actively and militantly lead these battles then there is no way we can lead the class to win the whole war.' This kind of broad and sweeping statement about the fundamental importance of struggle to the work of the Party, about the necessity of carrying out all our work overall in connection with the struggle as opposed to divorced from it and scornful of it, is a basic point which must be grasped. But it cannot be vulgarized to mean that all, or essentially all, of our Party's work, especially agitation and propaganda, must be carried out in direct connection with particular struggles.

"It is certainly true that generally in the midst of struggle people are the most open to learning all sorts of things, but those things cannot be limited simply to how to view and wage the particular battle. Neither can this understanding be taken to mean that basically the only time or the only way to carry out agitation and propaganda is in the course of a particular struggle. While agitation in relation to particular struggles is important, if it becomes essentially all we do, then we lose our revolutionary sweep, and fall into narrow pragmatism where we cannot see beyond the narrow limits of a particular struggle. In this connection it is important to get clear on what agitation actually is. As Lenin pointed out it is *not* a call to action, but essentially using a single event to present a single idea to broad masses, enabling them to see the hand of the oppressor at work, (though this may move the masses to action.)"

The wrong view of agitation criticized above was a widely held tendency in the Party and was practiced and actively promoted everywhere by these revisionists. The effect of this, perfectly consistent with their line, is to reduce the role of communists to that of "organizers" who attempt to turn every outrage into a "Big Battle." Organizing such battles is a crucial part of our work. But with their narrow view of "building struggle" this clique could never grasp the fact that objective conditions, the laws and big forces at work, inevitably will propel far more people into struggle than our hard work ever can (though such hard work on our part is absolutely necessary and does play a role in this). Communist leadership in struggle requires applying the mass line, leading not only in the concrete struggle but also in the struggle over lines and ideas that goes on among the masses.

The crucial importance of the task of raising class consciousness (together with the task of building the Party) is brought out in the following statement by Lenin, which was stressed in the 1976 CC Report, "The task is to keep the revolutionary consciousness of the proletariat tense and train its best elements, not only in a general way, but concretely, so that when popular ferment reaches the highest pitch, they will put themselves at the head of the revolutionary army.

"The day-to-day experience of any capitalist country teaches us the same lesson. Every 'minor' crisis that such a country experiences discloses to us in miniature the elements, the rudiments, of the battles that will inevitably take place on a large scale during a big crisis." ("Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 246)

From this perspective, it is clear why agitation and propaganda is so important—agitation and propaganda that quickly and concretely from a strictly Marxist point of view exposes the forces behind the "minor crisis" of every sort. In this light, the real revolutionary role that must be played by the Party press stands out sharply.

## REVOLUTION Price Increase

With this issue of the paper, REVOLUTION has increased its price from 25¢ to 50¢. This price increase is necessitated by several factors: Besides the general inflation which has affected the costs of all the materials used in putting out the paper; there has recently been an increase in postage costs, and in addition there is our move, with this issue, to typesetting and to publishing the paper in two sections because of added length.

The subscription rate has been increased from \$4.00 to \$5.00 a year. All present subscribers will, of course, receive a full 12 issues.

Even with this increase, the price of REVOLUTION will not cover the costs of producing it. Advertising, which is the main source of revenue for bourgeois newspapers, contributes virtually nothing to the costs of REVOLUTION. Besides sales of the paper itself, we continue to depend upon contributions from members and supporters of the Revolutionary Communist Party.

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With their outlook, it is no surprise that this revisionist clique had great contempt for the struggle in the sphere of ideology. This struggle is an extremely sharp arena of the class struggle under capitalism (and also after capitalism is overthrown). The capitalists have whole industries concerned with it (movies, music, newspapers and book publishing, etc.) and they conduct much of their ideological work on this front relatively independently of any particular battle going on at any time between them and the masses. On the surface of it, it might seem this would be an important battlefield for the Party. Not so, according to these revisionists.

In opposition to the line of the Party, put forward in the WORKER bulletin (as quoted earlier) that the main role of these papers in the overall struggle is "in the realm of consciousness and politics," this clique says, "The task of the WORKER is to stand with the people and build the battles that they are in." (emphasis added) This is immediately contrasted to "preaching." (from their "Introducing the Worker," Vol. 1, No. 2) They also say in that article that the RCP "has given up on figuring out how to fight the capitalists, the class enemy, by uniting people behind a political line. Now they take the struggle for granted and devote their main efforts to criticizing people, in and out of the RCP, for their 'non-RCP' ideas."

Besides the obvious lies about the RCP retreating from the struggle and the distortion of ideological struggle waged by and within the Party, the main thing that stands out in all this is its incredible narrowness, its reducing political line down to a question of tactics and wiping out the role of ideological line entirely. Unfortunately, "leading the struggle"—let alone making revolution—is not so simple as this. As anyone who has been involved in a sharp struggle can tell you—the miners' strike isn't a bad example—the struggle over how to sum up the struggle, what context to put it in, and which way to go is itself a class struggle—and a sharp one at that.

As the article "Mass Line Is Key to Lead Masses in Making Revolution" (REVOLUTION, Dec. 15, 1975) put it: "At each point in the development of the struggle the bourgeoisie and the proletariat must and will contend not only in the practical battlefield, but also in the sphere of ideology."

"There is, and will be so long as classes remain, a continual struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat over how to sum up the struggle, what lessons to draw from each battle and what road to take in order to change with the situation. To the degree that the proletariat, through its Party, does not correctly sum up this experience, does not correctly concentrate the ideas of the masses, the bourgeoisie will, through its political leaders and representatives, put over its summation."

The article goes on to point out how this requires repeated experience and constant summation, and that this struggle will grow even sharper as a revolutionary situation emerges. Spontaneity pulls in the direction of the bourgeoisie. As the article says, "revolution will not occur 'automatically.'"

It is impossible to carry out really revolutionary political work without carrying out struggle in the sphere of ideology. Capitalist propaganda such as "Buy America," "Deport the illegals," or "foreign competition is taking our jobs" must be exposed and combatted in many forms—even when there is no immediate plan for a demonstration or other mass action around these questions.

With a line like these revisionists', not only will newspapers be reduced down to dull and flavorless pabulum and rah-rah, but the need for them, especially to comment on anything controversial or outside the immediate struggle, will be completely negated.

For all this clique's posturing about being the "leaders of big battles" and the "organizers," they were pitiful petty reformers in this task too. While they opposed developing the full role of the Party press with arguments about how the WORKERS' task was to "build the battles that they [the people] are in," they negated this task as well. If you wanted to use the WORKER, or any of the Party's propaganda, to help organize or build a particular struggle—these revisionists were regularly found opposing and sabotaging such work. According to them, for the "organizers" of a struggle to openly propagate the Party's line, to distribute its literature broadly, to get that "burdensome" label of "communists" attached to them was automatically "too left."

During the campaign against the 1976 USA Bicentennial, this clique constantly undermined or liquidated the distribution of the Party's literature—the WORKER, REVOLUTION, and the Party's pamphlet on the subject—in areas under their influence. That hatchet-woman who styled herself the queen of UWOC (Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee) told people to stop selling the WORKER at unemployment offices because this would supposedly interfere with the work of UWOC and "raise its level of unity" too high. No Party literature around unemployment was developed under her leadership. Previous to her ascendancy to the throne, Party comrades and advanced workers in UWOC had found the ways to distribute such literature broadly and generally make efforts to develop the Party's independent role while at the same time developing UWOC as a fighting

mass organization of unemployed workers. (When it came to summing up the lessons of this work, this "UWOC leader" produced several draft revisionist theses for publication in REVOLUTION. But this whole effort ended in fiasco, with her grabbing some drafts back and scurrying off with them [while she was still in the Party], saying she was worried that, if published, they would only stand as "teaching material by negative example.")

After the Humboldt Park rebellion in Chicago in 1977, a lesser light revisionist who had responsibility for the Party's work around this question effectively stopped distribution of the WORKER and a special WORKER leaflet in that neighborhood. In the typical opportunist method of these Mensheviks, this was accomplished by sabotage—never openly stating any case against it to others outside their circle. But later, in an appeal to the Party leadership against having the word "communist" in the name of the Party's youth organization, they made clear that they opposed it because they felt being widely known as communists would only isolate them.

The result of this was that nothing was consolidated by them in this struggle, the Party literature did not get out, and opportunists like the CP(ML), which sold its paper and held a forum but in fact did nothing to build the struggle, were allowed to parade around as "the communists" while they peddled their opportunist line.

In other situations, such as last summer's Pullman strike in Chicago, comrades were criticized as "ultra-leftists" for raising that even one person working actively with the strikers should be selling the WORKER to them. The argument was that in the early stages of a strike comrades should not be known as communists, but only after the strikers began to trust them as leading fighters. How any worker could "trust" someone who corresponded so perfectly to the bourgeoisie's image of "sneaky, hidden" communists is beyond us.

The WORKER bulletin spoke to this point when it said:

"While tactics (including keeping jobs) must be considered, it is generally a good thing, not a bad thing, to be known as a communist by people, even before much struggle goes on. There is no 'holy principle' mandating this in every case, but as opposed to a mechanical narrow and rightist 'theory of stages' or making an absolute out of 'unfolding' understanding simply out of particular struggle (first bring people into struggle, then bring out politics) it is generally helpful to carrying out all three objectives. Often it gets harder, rather than easier, to bring out openly where we stand in the course of a battle or after a relatively long period of time of not doing so. Patterns of our work and relations to people that get set on one basis are often not so easy to change. The more freedom we take on this, the more we have."

"If we are known from the beginning as communists, then when struggle does break out, people are obviously more able to see for themselves what the role of communist actually is. This is clearly preferable to having this explained to them after the fact. ('Oh, by the way...') it is also true that if we are honest and bold with where we're coming from people, though not all will agree, will tend to respect that and check it out more seriously if we act like we really think we've got something important to say."

"Finally, if we're known as communists it becomes easier to explain the relation between a particular struggle we're in and the overall struggle because the question poses itself directly—'Why are you involved?'"

In sum, for these revisionists using the Party press to build the struggle was not only unimportant, sideline activity—it was a potential and often immediate

liability. Organizing a particular struggle certainly requires more than using the Party press. In most situations it is not even the main form of giving leadership to the struggle. But it cannot be negated. "Building the struggle" is not an abstract question, or separate from the question of line. Struggle will always be built according to one line or another—whether this is conscious or unconscious. Negating the role of the Party press in organizing struggle was part and parcel of these revisionists' attempt to negate revolutionary work and the decisive role of line and replace it with their concept of "great organizers make history."

There is another way in which the Party press functions as an organizer of the struggle and that is as an organizer of the Party's work. Lenin spoke of this role of a newspaper and described it as a "collective organizer." Under our current conditions, this role is played mainly by REVOLUTION, the organ of our Party's Central Committee, which is intended mainly for advanced workers and other Party supporters as well as Party members.

Under the direction of the Central Committee and its standing bodies, REVOLUTION has a crucial role to play in directing the advanced forces, who are a key lever to the broad masses. It is a tool of the Party in applying the mass line—concentrating the political experience of the masses and the Party members and taking up the political questions confronting them in waging revolutionary struggle and returning this to them to carry out the struggle in a more conscious and unified way.

## Revolution

REVOLUTION plays its role as collective organizer by giving leadership through line. As such it was increasingly foreign and irrelevant to this pragmatist and factional clique, whose idea of "real leadership" was something very different. REVOLUTION was "just ideas." To them Mao's teaching that "the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything" had no real meaning. Their method of leadership was exactly what the Chinese Communist Party's 10th Congress described as Lin Piao's method—wanting to "have everything under his command and everything at his disposal." They constantly went around central and local Party leadership and relied on private conversations with "key people" or on their own "travelling road shows" of organizers. All this did real damage to the Party's correct methods of leadership.

These revisionists were also disinterested in REVOLUTION because it plays an important part in arming its readers with the science of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought and with an understanding of the basis for the Party's various policies. This task was meaningless for this clique, whose method was to dish out a few increasingly reformist policies and tactics to the masses while theory (such as it was for them) was kept the property of a few "geniuses."

REVOLUTION did not, however, remain simply irrelevant to this clique. Increasingly they came to oppose it. Unable to struggle successfully for their line on the Party's leading bodies, Jarvis-Bergman and Co. increasingly used their own channels to factionalize against the Party's line.

As time wore on, this clique was unable to simply ignore REVOLUTION or dismiss it as a "safe" realm for "idealists." On the basis of discussion on leading bodies in the Party, REVOLUTION increasingly began to combat reformist errors and tendencies that these opportunists were not only concentrating into their own line but extensively factionalizing around within the Party. Comrades throughout the Party began to take up the task of criticizing and rectifying these errors. This led the Mensheviks to whip up frenzied attacks on key articles in REVOLUTION which hit at rightism, even while the top leaders of this clique mumbled mealy-mouthed agreement with them on top leading bodies. They particularly hated the articles on the Party branches (August, September 1977), which pointed to education in the Party's ideological and political line as the lifeline of the Party's branches, pointed to the importance of ideological work, and generally stressed the revolutionary tasks of the branches in opposition to economism and pragmatism, which this clique was actively promoting. The vast majority of Party members, even including many in Jarvis and Bergman's social base, took up these articles enthusiastically, but these revisionists whipped up sections of their base to wildly oppose them and spout things like—this isn't the line of the Party, it's only in REVOLUTION!

These revisionists were also opposed to any revolutionary approach to the theoretical struggle, which is an important part of the tasks of the Party press. To a large degree this is concentrated in our Party's theoretical journal, THE COMMUNIST, but other Party publications, including REVOLUTION and to a lesser degree the WORKER, play an important role in this. The article, "Theoretical Struggle Crucial Part of Working Class Movement" (REVOLUTION, January 1977), was a major blow at the line this clique was pushing on this question. Taking up an important point in the 1976 Central Committee Report, this article pointed out that there were three—not just two or one—forms of the class struggle, the theoretical as well as the economic and the political. It stated that "within the Party empiricism now represents a greater error than dogmatism."

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# Party Press . . .

Writing a few months later in an internal document in an area under the grip of these revisionists, a glib-tongued, empty-headed hack in their clique wrote the following about the “progress” on their local WORKER, which he headed up: “In the [1976] CC Report, it says we are not good enough at exposure, and that our low theoretical level holds us back. This is true. *But* the gaining of theory can’t be separated from fighting idealism and metaphysics. The paper had to root itself in the real world, the objective contradictions and struggles. Only by doing this could the question of theoretical level be raised in a real and not abstract way.” (emphasis added) That was one big “but.” This hackneyed honcho was openly opposing the line of the Central Committee, and expressing this clique’s characteristic hatred for the theoretical struggle. Any form of rational knowledge is just “abstract” to them, and ideas—at least correct ones—are “idealism.”

For this reason this clique never seriously took up the theoretical struggle in general, nor did they take a revolutionary approach to the theoretical journal—though they would occasionally dabble in it. Their social base was an unholy alliance of pragmatists plus a few dilettante intellectuals who would flit about, gathering a smattering of knowledge and isolated facts to impress others with their “expertise” and produce an incredible mishmash of various schools of bourgeois thought with a “Marxist” coloration. Jarvis and Bergman personally combined and concentrated both pragmatism and dilettantism. As Marx said of Proudhon, “he seeks to be the synthesis, he is a composite error.”

The Party’s press is a potentially powerful weapon

in all arenas of the class struggle. Further developing this role goes hand in hand with further strengthening the Party as the revolutionary vanguard of the working class. Now that our Party has won an important victory in smashing the Jarvis-Bergman clique we can continue to learn from their negative example, root out similar tendencies in our own understanding, and move forward in this important task.

In the book *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Stalin said, “A whole generation of the revolutionary proletariat was reared by *Pravda* [a mass working class paper of their party].” (p. 153) While this does not describe today’s situation in our country, the future holds vast potential. With the victory against this Menshevik clique and its petty reformist and thoroughly revisionist line, through deepening our grasp of the correct line and revolutionary work based on it, and with the further development of the objective situation, we can make big strides. On this question—no doubt earning again the label of “idealists,” a label we proudly wear when pinned on us by revisionists for fulfilling our responsibilities as the proletariat’s revolutionary vanguard—we would like to quote Lenin:

“We should dream . . . ‘There are rifts and rifts . . . My dream may run ahead of the natural march of events or may fly off at a tangent in a direction in which no natural march of events will ever proceed. In the first case my dream will not cause any harm; it may even support and augment the energy of the working men . . . The rift between dreams and reality causes no harm if only the person dreaming believes seriously in his dream, if he attentively observes life, compares his observation with his castles in the air, and if generally speaking, he works conscientiously for the achievement of his fantasies. If there is some connection between dreams and life then all is well.’ Of this kind of dreaming there is unfortunately too little in our movement.” (*What Is To Be Done?*, Chapter 5, Section B) ■