

PLP

CONVENTION

BULLETIN

12A

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~~The following is a section of a report on trade union work~~ (The following is a section of a report on trade union work given to the March '73 National Committee meeting and was entitled THE GUTS OF WORK IN THE UNIONS. It was proposed to be a pamphlet with additions on our political strategy to avoid a strict "trade unionist" idea.)

In the past year, we have become more involved in the daily life of the unions. Members and our friends have made a beginning at working through the union structure, put forward ~~resolutions~~ resolutions on the union floor, ran for-- and been elected to--union office, joined and lead union committees, begun union newsletters, and, ~~through~~ through many of these avenues, put forward the Party's line and 30/40. Some of this has already been described in discussing WAM and the UAW. But these are only the barest beginnings compared to what really has to be done to consider ourselves taking trade union work ~~seriously~~ seriously with the idea of taking power in the unions.

Getting into the unions is obviously not limited to ~~going~~ going to union meetings and trying to organize a caucus. It means knowing the day-to-day functioning ~~of~~ of the union through and through, inside out. And, in fact, "against the leadership" to organize a caucus/without knowing a lot more than most members do about the union is the wrong way to proceed. Remembering ~~my~~ my own experience, we went through about six years of day-to-day work of making the union's work a vital part of our every-day lives ~~and~~ got elected to various position based on the confidence of the workers won through this ~~activity~~ activity, used the structure of the union and worked with the better local officials, put out a union newsletter, etc. BEFORE we actually formed an official caucus, ~~which~~ which was designed to bring about the culmination of all this work--run for, and take over, the leadership of the local, which happened. That's not to say we should ~~wait~~ wait that long to organize caucuses. But the intent is that we have to plunge a lot more into the inner workings of the union, know what it's all about, before we can organize a caucus that means anything, with workers that would have any kind of confidence in us, that we know what we're doing. Otherwise, we end up getting a group of people together, organizing

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for a union meeting and then getting rebuffed on some simple point of parliamentary procedure, demoralizing the ~~members~~ members of the caucus which proceeds to fall apart.

But there is an even more important reason to do a lot more through the union structure--"seize a hold of the union functions"--than this: if we try to organize without knowing a lot of it, we end up putting forward actions solely beyond the normal union procedure, many times much more militant and advanced than most. *(and may get us fired without the base to back us)* ~~union~~ union members are ready for at the time. And it inevitably pits us more against the union leadership than against the bosses. While our goal is sharper and sharper confrontations with the bosses and their union hirelings, which inevitably must break the normal "ground rules," we can't get to that point in any serious and sustained way without work which is much broader-based and more likely to attract workers. doing the spade work, at least simultaneously if not before-hand. This

spade work could and should involve any and all of the following: (much of this might be considered as "ABC" but it appears most of our members don't do it)

1. Studying, knowing and using the contract. It means figuring out all the possible angles to use to combat the bosses' violations of the contract, useful in winning denied money and bettering working conditions for workers. This means finding out past precedents, creating new ones, etc., many times being able to put lower level bosses in such an embarrassing position that they're unlikely to allow it to go higher up and are forced to give in. This goes along with:

2. Fighting grievances. It seems many times we approach a violation of the contract with every kind of mass, militant, confrontation idea and forget about ~~also~~ also fighting it as a grievance at the same time. This is not merely "filing" a grievance but really fighting it--in addition to looking for all the angles to make it as iron-clad as possible, it means to get several people to file it or sign it: have more than one steward or committeeman go

to a foreman or boss with it; publicize it among all the workers through a leaflet or the union newsletter; plan out a way of working on the job which would make it less profitable for the boss to continue the violation (slow-down, "going by the book," ~~refuse~~ refuse overtime, etc.); have many workers leave their work position to confront the foreman about it; make it a point-- and, at the proper time, a resolution--to change the next contract to make it harder for the boss to do what he's doing; get a shop meeting called about the grievance, etc. If any or all of these things that fit the situation are done, ~~which~~ which are more likely to get rank and filers to participate than if a strike were called for immediately, then, if it doesn't move the boss from his position, at least ~~some~~ workers become more convinced, and ready, to proceed to more militant ~~the~~ levels, including strikes, work stoppages, etc.

3. Hearings. From what I've heard, most members appear to take a very cavalier attitude towards hearings out of which workers are often suspended or even fired. They either go into, or allow other workers to go into, hearings without any kind of battle plan, witnesses, prior discussion, knowledge of the rules, of the procedure of the hearing itself, etc. Even with a bad committeeman representing you, and certainly if one of us is the representative, these hearings can be turned around much of the time and workers' jobs saved or money recouped. Again, it means studying how to proceed in a hearing, whether the company has to put up a separate person other than the boss conducting the hearing to prefer the charge; whether that person can be cross-examined before the defendant-worker testifies; priming witnesses; proving company violations out of the foremens' own mouths that could have led to whatever the worker is charged with; bringing in several committeemen and rank-and-file "watchdogs" to review the hearing; finding violations ~~of~~ of

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the provisions for serving notice of charges itself, and so on, as well as, again, publicizing the whole thing to all the workers, and trying to make the bosses look as exposed and ridiculous as possible.

Now, of course, whether the violation involves a grievance or a hearing, many times the "proper" course ~~is~~ would not be to depend on the above methods as even the first course of action (not even allow the hearing to take place). If half the workers are about to be laid off, or scores are slated for firing or suspension, then a work stoppage or walkout might very well be the order of the day. But even these have more of a chance for success if some of these other things have been done in the past about lesser attacks by the bosses, giving the workers ~~a~~ confidence that the union--and us among that--~~are~~ know what the hell we're doing, are serious and not always going off half-cocked, are capable of answering every argument ~~and~~ more of the boss, and then some. This makes more workers more ready to take part in militant confrontation, not provided for ~~in~~ in the "normal" rules.

In the case of hearings, it should be remembered that they often involve a worker's job. If a serious approach is not taken, and the job is lost without having done everything, it does more than most other things in destroying the other workers' confidence in the union; if the union can't defend a worker's job, nothing else matters too much, is the way that many, if not most, workers look at it--and rightly so.

4. Shop meetings. Often we use the general ~~meeting~~ local-wide union meeting as the only barometer of method of organizing workers "officially" around a particular issue. Actually sizeable attendance at union meetings usually occur only at peaks of struggle. But the "doldrums" in between need not be "doldrums." The thing to do is concentrate on uniting workers at the

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point of production. Some of those methods were just described. Along these lines, the shop meeting can play a key role. Firstly, all the workers are right there, altogether, "with little place to go," as it were. A steward, committeeman or delegate who also works right there in that department and is responsible for it for grievances, etc., usually can "legally" call a meeting any time, over whatever problem is faced at a particular time. In fact, it's not a bad idea for shop meetings to be called on a regular basis, to air complaints, draw workers into some minimum responsibility, and generally keep consciousness at a heightened level (all of which can build towards higher levels--attendance at local-wide meetings, running for office, writing leaflets, organizing actions, etc.). It would lead to the workers themselves thinking of the shop meeting as a place to look for leadership and collective action, which doesn't involve time taken away from the family, a 2nd job, etc. A lot more can be said for the shop or department meeting, but suffice it for now to point to it as a useful tool to "get things going" and involving workers in broad, collective discussion, especially if we're the shop official in position to call them.

5. By-laws. It appears that many of our members who either want to run for office, are asked to, or want to get others to run, know next to nothing about the procedure to do so, when the nominations are, the elections, the election procedure, the qualifications, etc., to say nothing of the general union constitution. These are not rules that change from day to day. When you know about the election procedure for one year, you know about it to plan for all succeeding ones. This requires both studying the by-laws as well as getting close to knowledgeable local officials and talking with them. Those places where every member does not automatically get a constitution and by-laws book (or contract, for that matter), can see a struggle

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waged about this very point, for every member to have copies. In any event, there ~~can't be~~ ^{can't be} the slightest notion about "taking power in the union" without a real working knowledge of the constitution and by-laws, even if they are "no good" and would be slated for change if a rank-and-file-led group were to take power. To get to that point, we still have to work through the present procedure to a large degree. If we don't study and know it, it means we're not serious about all the other "bigger" things we talk about like mass demonstrations, strikes, confrontations, etc. And, again, such a working, detailed knowledge shows other workers we mean business, can help defend them when they're under attack, can win, and leads to greater confidence in our leadership.

6. Newsletters. Some locals have publications. Many don't. Ones that do obviously reflect the position of whoever is in power. In any event, the local paper is a big way of mobilizing workers and equipping them with the facts and the ~~the~~ line with which to conduct militant struggle. If one exists, we should try to get on it, write letters to it, get others to do the same, and, in those cases where not too much attention is paid to it, take a lot of responsibility on it to be able to really get across a rank-and-file line. Publishing the bosses' profits and holdings always stirs heightened consciousness. Reporting other workers' militant fights sets examples not found in the daily papers. Answering various bosses' ideas strengthens workers for future battles. Homey news reports of births, marriages, etc. brings workers closer together. Humor always puts the boss in his place. A regular, militant newsletter is of great value in organizing militant struggle. If the machine controls the paper, or prevents one, we should either work through the structure to get one or write for one, or in some way guarantee regular communication between the union and the members that means some-

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thing. The integral role of a newsletter can be seen from our own experience in the Detroit AFSCME local where it's turned the whole union and class struggle with the city bosses and higher union officials upside down.

7. Committees. Recently we've been joining union committees--all to the good. Again, this is another place where we can get together with workers in an organized way to fight the boss, and, incidentally, wind up with a caucus out of it or have the committee serve that function. There are committees in virtually all unions; at least, the constitution provides for them. The grievance committee is among the most important, although many times never meets. Others include the organizing committee, particularly important in industries in which a lot of organizing is the order of the day--government workers, hospitals, small-shop industries, etc; the civil rights or FEPC (Fair Employment Practices Committee) in many of the former CIO unions like steel, UAW, IUE (UE), etc. (possibly that would have been a better way to conduct an anti-racist struggle in Lynn-GE than through an "outside" committee); bargaining committee, and others that can be newly-created (our 30/40 committees) or are created for specific issues or times (contract negotiation, elections, drawing up demands for the next contract, resolutions for the union convention, etc.). And when we get on them, and persuade others to join them, we need a lot of ~~time~~ patience in working on them. Our members are used to Party meetings more than any other type. We can't expect that kind of discipline at union committee meetings. But they are very ~~useful~~ useful in raising issues before the whole membership, and in organizing events that draw in many workers not ready to be on the committee itself.

8. Resolutions, Conventions. As we assume more lower-level responsibilities and positions in the local, we also must turn our eyes to the bodies of

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the union above the local. This means knowing what they are, how one gets elected to them, when their meetings and conventions take place, when resolutions have to be taken up to send to them, etc. While the activities of these higher bodies are no substitute for rank-and-file organization in the local, as that begins to take place, it can begin to spread its effect by making it felt in these conventions and higher bodies. In the railroad locals we always made a big point of discussing resolutions to be sent to the district and international conventions. It involved many workers in drawing up their idea of contract demands, injected a lot of good ideas on class solidarity and democratic trade union principles into resolutions and thereby local-wide consciousness, and either exposed higher union sellouts or put them in a position where they had to do something. And, ~~xxxx~~ if we were to get elected as convention delegates ~~in~~ in, let's say, a union like ~~the~~ AFSCME or UAW or ~~the~~ the AFT or some other union which we now are working in many locals, it's conceivable we could form caucuses of a number of locals' delegates to put forward a united position at a higher-body convention, district, state or international level. My guess is not more than 1 in 10 or 20 of our members in unions knows when the next international convention of his or her union is, or when and how resolutions get to them. Again, while no substitute for on-the-job, local action, it's also a logical next step from it, and sometimes can help organize it. A sectarian attitude towards this area of activity again means we're not serious about really influencing the labor ~~movement~~ movement. (Many times it's what happens at these higher union levels that catches the eye and ear of millions of workers across the country, far beyond ~~our~~ our local or even international union.)

9. ~~Some~~ Laws. While we point out that laws are bosses' weapons, we can't take a blanket hands-off view of them, partly because workers have a certain amount of faith in them which won't be dispelled by simply condemning their use, partly because they sometimes offer a broader way of getting workers into action behind a particular fight which can't be done by so-called "direct action" and partly because they can also be used to actually win things. For instance, many states and the federal government have safety laws. No doubt they are violated, as if they don't exist. But there's nothing wrong with calling a safety inspector down from some government agency to put pressure on the boss ~~in~~ about some blatant violation or hazard. More often than not it will embarrass him ^e enough to produce a change which can save lives and limbs. And the "danger" that workers will then conclude that laws are "neutral" and ~~is~~ favorable (sometimes) to workers can be dispelled by pointing out that it was the action of forcing the inspection, not the law itself, that caused the change. And usually the ~~the~~ reaction of the boss to being forced to give in on something produces an attack on another front which only serves to ~~the~~ sharpen the class struggle.

Likewise, getting an injunction, however temporary, to stop or restrain a boss from moving against workers ~~from~~ ^{from} or violating an agreement can often get workers behind a movement which can unite them and lead to a higher level of struggle, especially after the temporary holding action lapses back into the courts' favoring the boss. It helps the workers see that we have no alternative but to pursue more militant forms of struggle, which they might not be ready ^d or convinced to do initially. For example, when the international union tried to void the election of one of our fellow CP members in the 1950's in the freight handlers and clerks union (because he was a communist and the

first black worker elected to such a local position in control of a local in the union nationally), and also tried to put the local in trusteeship (seize it and its treasury), one of our many tactics to fight it was to get a court injunction stalling it, enabling us to get the \$30,000 treasury into a vault where the international couldn't touch it, and help us conduct a 2-year many-sided battle which finally won and saw the party-led forces take over the local. But, throughout that period, it also enabled these forces to mobilize the local--especially with use of the money--to fight many class battles, including support of a railroad tugboat strike that tied up New York City for ten days and brought Kennedy's direct intervention via Labor Secy. Arthur Goldberg. Now, the court injunction didn't do all this; it was done by direct action. But the use of the courts and a good labor lawyer gave some breathing space through which workers were able to be organized, developed confidence that their newly-elected officers were pursuing all avenues to fight the bosses and their union lieutenants, etc.

10. Lower-level union-official meetings. As we enter the first rung of union leadership--steward, committeeman, delegate, legislative rep, committee official, etc.--we should immediately pay attention to the fact, or possibility, that these officials come together, or should, in their own meeting local- or even city-wide, to deal with common problems. Becoming steward enables us to come in contact with other stewards and try to influence them with our ideas, thereby enabling our ideas and actions to spread far beyond the 25 or 50 workers for whom we might be responsible. It's through these bodies that strikes get organized, bargaining demands get hammered out, etc. In fact, if we and our forces were to take power in the local, it's usually through these bodies that we would be able to really organize and mobilize the entire membership behind a common action or goal.

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Even further, it's through some of these bodies that the eventual power can be won. So such bodies and their members become a key way to influence a big portion of the rank and file ~~who~~^{who} we might never see. Concentration on other stewards or delegates or department reps is absolutely necessary in leading a local in an organized way.

There are other things which also make up "the guts of work in the unions" (union meetings themselves, which are not ~~an~~^{an} all-or-nothing barometer and which we are making some dent in currently; support of workers in battle in other locals and unions, also which receives a certain amount of our attention, through WAM and other ways, although not nearly enough and hardly ever swiftly enough; how to unionize a non-union boss, a subject ~~which~~ which possibly could use a handbook by itself, etc.). I have ~~pointed out~~ pointed out some things here which are not necessarily automatic parts of our members' trade union activity, many of which could require an article or whole pamphlet by themselves. But it's been written about here at length not because I would foresee such violent disagreement or conflict over them, but in order to give more of a feel what taking the trade unions seriously means.

Now, of course, it would be very easy--and simplistic--to conclude that such a concentration on the structure of the unions would lead us down the path of economism, opportunism, CP-type revisionism, etc. But the ~~the~~ whole point of becoming immersed in the unions is to be able to ~~point~~^{point} this #1 mass organizations--and first line of defense--of the working class in a leftward and revolutionary direction. Naturally if all we do is file grievances or try to enforce safety rules, while we could get elected to office and win the local as the "good guys," we'll end up the same as the bad guys. But it's through these myriad of activities ~~the~~ unions offer that we get into a position to build a base, a communist base among workers, pointing out the relatio

~~to~~ to our revolutionary ideas every step of the way. Otherwise, to convince workers intellectually of our ideas without becoming involved in the kind of struggle and structure they are part of, will not do the job of winning the workers into the Party to function the way a communist should. This section of the report is an attempt to describe what that "becoming involved" means, in a serious way.

Furthermore, our ~~method~~ often-used method of "going to union meetings" and/or seeking out the militants with which to immediately form a caucus to "fight the leadership," probably won't work. The fact is, a creative and broader mass outlook would open up an avenue to work THROUGH the union, as bad or sellout as it may be, patiently, with intensive, 24-hour-a-day devotion, to learn it through and through, seeking minimum goals from each step of activity if we can't go "all the way" every time we'd like to or *when* it would be necessary to really win; to see that local officials can be won (one of the reasons they don't represent workers well, many times, is not because they've consciously sold out but because they either don't know what to do or don't have the forces to combat the harassment or bribery of the boss and/or higher union officials--a situation which the lack of a Party and a Left is in large measure ~~responsible~~ responsible). As briefly described, we won an actual formal leadership in our railroad local by just such a method, forming a/caucus late in the day. We used many of the union forms to serve ~~the~~ the various purposes of a caucus (the local newsletter, which we got passed in the union; a grievance committee, which we got functioning; resolutions committees, which we organized; hearing defense activities, which, especially, solidified unity between black and white ~~the~~ workers, etc.). Of course, the essential ingredient missing was a communist outlook which would have led us to recruit some of these workers into the party. And perhaps, had we had that outlook (which

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~~we~~ was deliberately excluded), we might have found it necessary to form a caucus sooner (not restricting us to merely using the union ~~structure~~ structure for that length of time), out of which we could have recruited to study groups and the Party, and also which might have ~~also~~ raised the level of class struggle ~~more~~ sharper and faster. In any event, the point is made: know the union structure, work through it, organize it, build it, winning --the only way to know what we're taking power of-- the confidence of workers through all that, while showing the necessity of communist ideas to advance in all these areas every step of the way.

Why we are joining PL

June 8, 1973
SF, Calif.

We feel there are many reasons to join PL now. The wage freeze, raging inflation, talks about returning to the controls of Phase I, unemployment and rumors of new and greater recessions are all issues that make working people fighting mad. Those of us who know what should be done must be committed to winning working people to socialism. Also the racist theoreticians are pushing racism on a massive scale. Jensen, Hernstein and others are coming out with new books all the time. In addition to hating racism we realize how the ruling class uses racism to divide working class people. Therefore we should not leave it up to others to lead the fight against racism but we should take the lead and fight for socialism at the same time.

If we accept the fact that failure to win the masses to socialism was a main cause in the turnabout of revolution in Russia and China, then we and others who realize this should be committed to winning people in this country to socialism. The issues are there and workers and students are angry. We have a vehicle in the 30 for 40 campaign to reach people, discuss the issues, fight racism, and in the process win many to socialism. In this way if those of us close to PL join and fight to build the party, the worker and student movement and party membership can snowball. It will be much harder for fascism to destroy our party if masses of people are committed to it.

Perhaps its scary for some of us to know that the FBI may have some of our names, but if we back off because of the FBI attacks, they will only become bolder. It is especially important to let them know their attacks make us more dedicated to building socialism and not less, and that their attacks make it clearer that we are on the correct road to revolution.

Some things we think would strengthen the party are:

- sharper and more extensive criticism and self criticisms.
- working harder to win people to socialism, going beyond reforms; more mass participation in understanding and fighting revisionism wherever it occurs. we should take the lead.
- using our literature more to win people to the struggle against the ruling class and to our party and socialism.

-by three people who just joined the party in San Francisco
(two active in the 30-40 campaign and one SF State student)

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BUILDING THE PARTY AMONG HEAVY INDUSTRY WORKERS!

For over a year I have worked on a job with 4 to 5000 workers. This job is heavy production with very brutal working conditions (heat, long hours, racism, speed-up). In this situation the party's ideas and leadership could significantly better the lives of myself and the other workers and push the ruling class that much closer to the edge. Rank and file caucuses, union committees for 30 for 40, job actions, and strikes are possible tools for taking power in our union, battling the company and winning other workers to joining P. L.

~~██████████~~ The results of my work are as follows:

1. A couple of guys understand the party, read our literature, and want to take on the company with our ideas. They have agreed to form and build a P. L. study group.
2. I have a reputation for being militant among a number of workers and the union.
3. There are about 10 guys who have read Challenge, know I'm directly involved with the working class struggle and support it. Three of them consider themselves activists and support the ideas in Challenge. They have said they want a group to fight back against the company.
4. My friends and I have brought about 10 different people to union meetings.
5. All these people have been exposed to 30 for 40 through my talking or literature. Three people have distributed WAM & PL lit on the job.

There is a very big gap in what has been accomplished vs. what could have been, according to estimate of the party and myself. There are 3 main reasons why I haven't accomplished what I could have, in terms of doing my work and building the party.

FIRST - I have a ~~mechanical~~ mechanical day-to-day way of doing political work. That is, I find myself in situations at work where I put out what I think is the party's position, such as why we need 30 for 40, why we should fite the company, what is racism & communism, why we need the union, e tc. There are two things wrong with ~~this~~ the way I do this. ~~On~~ the one hand, I don't plan and think out what their disagreements are and therefore what there reactions will be, thus these discussions don't necessarily win people to the party's positions. Also, I always find ~~if themselves~~ myself IN situations - things haappen to me - instead of me making situations happen because I've planned and set them up that way. (I respond to ~~events on the job~~ what this or that worker says WITHOUT conducting a protracted, planned-out struggle.) ON the other hand, since I don't have an

overall view and a real analysis of what the trends are with people each political act is a "high" or "low" in itself. That is, I decide to do things based on the last conversation or the last event that happens, rather than what the situation really is. This method absolutely prevents me from seeing what I'm doing wrong, and also makes it harder to struggle with people the next time, ~~based on the~~ Because of the fear I have. The end result of this approach of hiding your head and moving ahead without seeing the problems, knowing who should be concentrated on and how, is that people don't get won over, I become more timid and ~~and~~ fearful of struggling, and nobody gets won. Also, without an analysis, the help of party lit and other members is never brought to bear. Little actions with a little analysis leads to less action with fewer results.

SECOND - the second main weakness is wanting to do political ^{work} ~~work~~ separately from my personal life. That is, I tend to ^{talk} ~~talk~~ in work, talk during crises, etc, but not go to movies or parties or become very close friends with people I'm trying to win over (Despite the fact that I "know everybody" on the job!) I see more and more clearly that to win somebody to ~~winning~~ pl or even to other serious commitments like fighting the co. or taking power in the unions, requires that they have a lot of trust in me, my ideas, and see that I eat, sleep, and talk, that I am afraid just like them, and am very serious about the class struggle. The proof of this is that the 3 people who've done the ~~most~~ most are the people I have spent the most time with - going over their house, ~~meeting~~ meeting their wives, and whom I've had some friendship with over a period of time. I haven't been able to and won't be able to get ~~active~~ active committees, caucuses, etc. and especially recruit other workers to the party without breaking down the personal barriers that I set up.

THIRD - the third weakness is that I have no plan to actually recruit workers to the party. Up until three months ago my main discussions, 80% of ~~my~~ my discussions with people weren't about the party, but instead about 30 for 40, the unions, and reform. The people that knew about the party already were left at that point and if they asked questions I answered them quickly and left it at that. I distributed Challenge to two or three workers who liked it but who

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were not necessarily the most political or active; I never gave out any other kind of literature.

To significantly change my work for the better I have to figure out with my club the situation in the plant, make a political analysis of the job, each person, etc. This would be a better position from which to convince people I know of the necessity of fighting back, how to do it, and that they also have to join PL.

A close friend
in Boston

TO FIGHT RACISM, TEACHERS MUST FIGHT FOR 30 FOR 40!!

In Bulletin 9, Kitty explained why she felt 30 for 40 was wrong for teachers. I disagree politically, and also think her account of the WAM convention teachers' workshop is mistaken.

1. THE FIRST REASON KITTY opposed 30 for 40 for teachers is that unlike "almost every other industry" where "30 for 40 is clearly the answer to the most pressing needs of the workers in that job," in the case of teachers this demand "will not attack the key problem in the schools, which is racism - not toward the teachers, but toward the students."

Of course teachers are not as badly off as, say, black high school students. And I certainly agree that racism is the key thing we must defeat in the schools. Indeed, it is key in EVERY industry which Kitty mentions, and in all other industries, in fact in every aspect of life! All true. The question is not WHETHER racism is the big problem, but how should we deal with it. We DO need parent-teacher-student unity. But this has to become more than the nice-sounding phrase which it's been up til now. The parent-teacher-student alliance must be rooted in a serious trade union movement among teachers! How can we win teachers to a serious, long-term fight against racist abuses if they take the missionary line of seeing themselves as well-off professionals whose economic situation is separate from the horrible conditions of the black and white working class students? They must fight racism on a clearly WORKING CLASS basis, they must learn that racism is spread in order to set up the WHOLE working class, including teachers, for the kill. (See the latest PL mag for a good discussion of this - ought to be required reading for teachers!!!)

30 for 40 - as formulated at the WAM convention - is key to building the militant teachers' trade union movement, conscious of its relationship to the rest of the working class - that makes real unity possible.

ON PAGE 53, KITTY MENTIONS a number of ^{demands} ~~demands~~ - lower class size, and reading and bilingual programs - which she says are anti-racist. ALL these ^{demands} ~~demands~~ were part of the WAM 30 for 40 program formulated at the convention. In addition, I think 15 hours teaching time plus 15 hours free (preparation) time at school - the final formulation of the shorter work week for teachers -

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30 for 40 is key for teachers

is anti-racist too. It means more preparation time, which improves teaching quality. It means more time to meet with parents after school - very important for building parent-teacher unity, and something which is often impossible for YOUNGER teachers, who are forming their habits of relating to parents, because they are swamped with preparation. Since teachers would be spending half their time in free periods, it would mean hiring twice as many - more, because we're also demanding smaller classes. This cuts teacher unemployment and makes it harder for school boards to fire anti-racist teachers. We could make a fight for training MORE bilingual and reading and other specialty teachers - it would be easier to make ^{such a} fight this way, because they would be hiring! And of course this makes ^{it} more possible ^{to fight for} our demand for hiring minority teachers preferentially.

Of course, this isn't enough. WAM should fight anti-worker ideas, especially the big one - racism - and most importantly, in the schools. But HOW are we going to struggle with people to conduct this fight? I say, do it ~~based~~ based on a clear understanding that teachers are workers - even if they are somewhat better off than many - who MUST UNITE WITH THE REST OF THEIR CLASS! I got a very different impression from Kitty's piece - indeed, from what many party members said at the WAM convention teachers' workshop.

2. SECOND OF ALL, KITTY says 30 for 40 is mechanical because: a) teachers have never fought much for shorter hours and b) because, having disregarded teachers' real feelings and the real conditions, some of us are just trying to squeeze our teachers' program so it'll fit in with the "party line."

A) REGARDING THE FIRST POINT -I'm not familiar enough with the history of teachers' trade unionism, and I think it bears more investigation. But even GRANTING that teachers have never anywhere fought for shorter hours - so what? Are we supposed to stick to bad traditions? Or CHANGE the way people think? For a long time people said hospital workers couldn't be organized because they often oppose going on strike. That's because

been won to believe that they ^{they had}

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^{had}
~~was~~ no right to close down the hospitals. It turns out that when we FIGHT this wrong idea, we are able to organize hospital workers in a very militant way! So the question is not whether or not teachers - left on their own, and perhaps with bad influence from their organizers - fight for shorter hours, but WHY they ^{may} hesitate around this.

I think teachers draw back from fighting for shorter hours because of professionalism, precisely the view expressed in Kitty's article, that teachers aren't "ordinary" workers with workers' problems. ^{Thus, teachers often tell us that "we} ~~provide a key service,~~ ^{we must} be true to ^{our} ~~the~~ profession, etc." Both my parents were CP teachers during the '30's, and in all their discussion of the Teacher's Union (in which both were highly active) I never got the impression they were organizing workers. This same professionalism leads many teachers to oppose fighting for other ^{demands} ~~tu demands~~ - like more wages! ALL THE MORE REASON FOR US STRUGGLING AROUND THESE WRONG IDEAS!

At one point, Kitty says it's OK to fight for demands that [↑]PARALLEL 30 for 40 as long as we don't call it 30 for 40. But why not call it by its name? I think many of our teachers are scared to tackle the anti-worker professionalism of other teachers. (Perhaps this professionalism is strongest in some of our closer friends!) In Boston, teachers in & close to PL raised EVERY ASPECT of the WAM 30 for 40 program but choked at calling it 30 for 40! They didn't want A) to get into discussions with more middle-class oriented forces about how 30 for 40 was rooted in WORKERS' history and how, today it aims at uniting ALL WORKERS and b) they didn't want to get all messed up with becoming identified with WAM (a communist-connected AND working class organization -- double jeopardy!!)

B) REGARDING THE SECOND POINT - We ARE trying to fit teachers "into our line." But this begs the question. OUR LINE is that we need an ALL-EMBRACING workers' 30 for 40 mass movement in order to GO ON THE OFFENSIVE vs. the bosses and, most important, lay the basis for PL leading the defeat of racism among workers. We ESPECIALLY need to fight for this among teachers where a) conditions are getting worse in every way fast b) there is so much racism and c) there is such an ingrained attitude rejecting unity with other workers. Sure this is hard - because it's important!!

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(But then, they say it don t come easy...)

3. THERE WAS A LOT OF CONCERN IN THE TEACHERS WORKSHOP at the WAM convention - as well as in Kitty's article - that the parent-teacher alliance would be destroyed if we fought for 30 for 40. Of course, looking at things realistically, AT THIS TIME the parent-teacher alliance is a hollow phrase, since it hasn't been put in practice too much. That's the key task! People at the workshop were afraid that parents would reject teachers as selfish if teachers pushed 30 for 40. BUT -

* As we have noted, it's perfectly easy to explain how the WAM 30 for 40 package is very much pro-student and very much directed against racism. Especially since part of the plan is to fight racist ideas as an attempt to hold back the working class. (Of course, the party would take this struggle further.)

* MOREOVER - why not ally with parents AS OTHER WORKERS. Imagine the effect of thousands of teachers agitating kids and parents for the 30 hour week! Now THAT'S an historic role! What a step it would have been - for workers everywhere - if the Philly teachers had had the shorter work week as their number 1 demand! Instead of flimsy ^{Kitty's} missionary unity, this is REAL unity.

AS FOR THE WAM CONVENTION - I think Kitty misunderstood some of the arguments made there. NOBODY argued against allying with parents; nobody argued that fighting racism HAS to be missionary, and that we should only fight "for ourselves" (teachers, that is.) On the contrary, 30 for 40 was seen as key to allying parents & teachers, and as a positive part of the anti-racist program.

~~_____~~
Comradely,
Yared Israel

At the WAM convention there was a lot of discussion about 30 for 40 for teachers. This was the first national discussion about 30 for 40 by teachers. A large proportion of people in the teachers' workshop were in the Party, and the strongest opposition to 30 for 40 as a strategy for teachers was raised by Party members. Resistance to 30 for 40 has come out in less open ways. In Boston, we have been discussing 30 for 40 since before Christmas. Supposedly, we agreed to build 30 for 40 in our schools and in the union. In practice, we have done almost nothing about it. We wrote one very unclear leaflet which was handed out to very few people and to almost no one in our own schools. Since then our only effort around 30 for 40 has been selling WAM newsletters, talking to a few friends at school about it, and involving a couple of people in writing an article for the WAM newsletter. When the busing issue came up in Boston, we used it as a justification for dropping 30 for 40 "for the time being." I want to try to explain why 30 for 40 should be the #1 demand for teachers and to look at some of the reasons why teachers in the Party are so resistant to ^{take} ~~take~~ up this demand.
^

The Situation in the Schools

The schools are being used by the ruling class as a main arena for building racism. The ruling class seems to have a plan for making the cities all black and the suburbs all white. By cutting essential services in the cities (Moynihan's racist plan of "benign neglect") and then using this as a justification

for slightly lesser cuts in white working-class suburbs, the ruling class can generally lower the standard of living of the entire working class. Not only is racism used to justify cuts in the schools, but the racism built in the schools develops a climate for making cutbacks in all spheres possible.

The schools have a key role in this plan. Federal and local cuts to city schools are justified by racism. Arguments are that "the kids don't learn anything anyway" and that "the kids just tear the schools apart." When the school committees cut funds to the schools and the schools do deteriorate, it is not surprising that people who can afford it move out of the city, especially when racist fears are added to the objective conditions in the schools. The busing issue adds fuel to the fire and hastens the flight to the suburbs. Workers who flee to the suburbs are faced with soaring prices of housing, food, etc. When they must finance new school ^c construction to serve the growing population, they can't afford it, ^{so conditions also deteriorate in the suburbs.} Families that remain in the city must send their children to schools that are physically decaying and where their kids do not learn basic skills. Working conditions for teachers get worse and worse as teachers are laid off, and those who remain face larger classes and a heavier work load. Of course, there are thousands of unemployed teachers and more who will be unemployed as they graduate from ed schools to face a shrinking job market. It becomes obvious that the schools are in the middle of a full-fledged attack by the ruling class, and this is part of the ruling class' need to make more and more profits off working people.

How should we answer this attack?

I don't think there is any question in the Party that it is necessary to fight racism in the schools. The question is what is the most effective way to do this. We are faced with a full-scale attack and we must answer it with a strong unified effort. We must win people to see that what is happening in the schools is not isolated from attacks in every other sphere. 30 for 40 is a good demand because it would vastly improve conditions for teachers, would improve the quality of education for children, and would link the struggle in the schools to other workers' struggles.

Too often demands for smaller class size and ^{more} preparation time have been seen as things that would be nice, but not essential. This allows the school committees to play one demand against the other. In Boston, we have been told that we can only have a raise if they cut back the staff. Given the low reading scores in city schools, high teacher unemployment, and high turnover rates in city schools, we see that these improvements would be more than just "nice."

What holds teachers back from fighting these conditions? One thing is racism. Many teachers think, at one level or another, that black and latin kids can't learn anything no matter what the conditions. Therefore, there is no use in really fighting. Many people are very cynical and feel like you can't win anyway. In Boston, 50% of the teachers are non-tenures (less than 3 years in the system) which indicates that many teachers get frustrated and cynical and leave or are

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fired. Teachers are also usually isolated from parents, and it is a very realistic fear on the part of teachers that they can't win big demands without broad support. Philadelphia is a good example. They might have closed the schools indefinitely in Philadelphia if other workers hadn't been on the verge of striking.

No demand will automatically solve the problem of how to fight racism and build a parent-teacher-student alliance. However, 30 for 40 gives the Party a chance to fight racism by fighting the racist conditions in the schools and also gives us the opportunity to point out how the ruling class uses racism to divide the working class and hurt whites as well as blacks. 30 for 40 allows us to unite with parents for better schools and with parents as workers in the fight for a shorter work week. It will be up to us to show how 30 for 40 for teachers will mean a better education for students since ruling class propaganda will always try to make teachers look like lazy bums who are just out for themselves.

30 for 40 would mean:

1. More preparation time. 3 hours assigned ^{time,} ~~time,~~ 3 hours _A unassigned time per day. Unassigned time would be used for preparation, meeting with teachers and parents, clerical work, and tutoring kids.

2. Reduce class size. This is a demand against speed-up, but it is also a demand for a smaller work load since with fewer students you have less preparation to do. Teachers generally agree that you can't really teach if you have a large class no matter how much preparation time you have.

3. Hire more teachers. At least 1/3 more classroom teachers, reading, bilingual, science, music, art, P.E., etc. teachers would need to be hired. This would help the kids tremendously and also help teachers, both employed and unemployed.

The school day for children would not be shortened.

We should also fight against racist curriculum and harrassment. We don't want to teach racism under ideal conditions, and the fight against racist curriculum would strengthen the fight for 30 for 40.

Although 30 for 40 for teachers should be an excellent strategy for teachers, in Boston we have resisted putting it into practice, and we have also resisted raising the Party with people at school. The following seem to be the main obstacles.

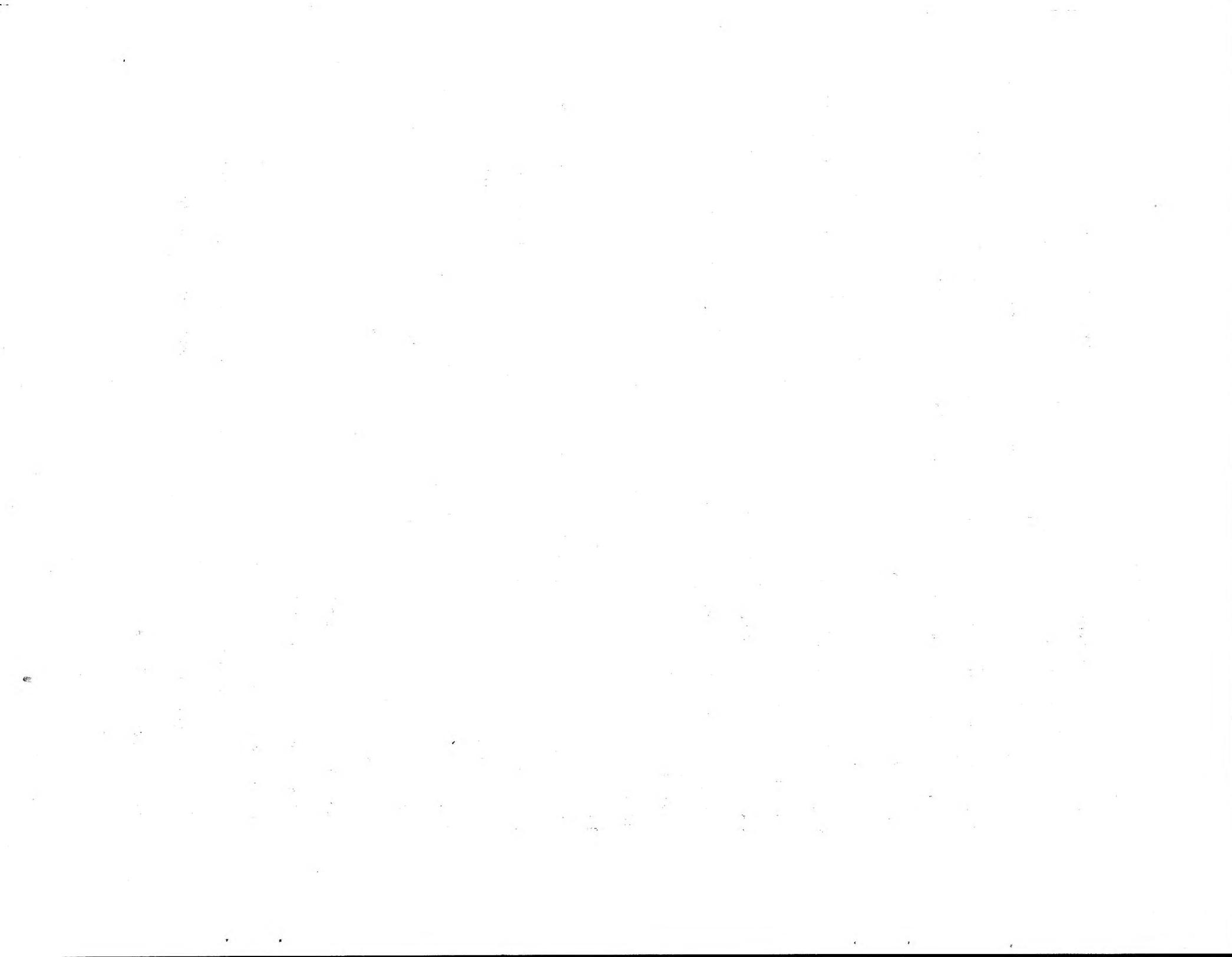
1. Fear of struggle, fear of raising an independent line, and fear of being identified with the Party. There is a fear of raising our ideas with friends at school for fear that "they won't like us" or that somehow teachers are "different" and wouldn't like communist ideas. From our little experience, there is no basis in fact for these fears. Teachers have been open to our ideas.

There is obviously reason to fear harrassment from administrators. However, at my school the principal is just as likely or more likely to harrass you if you don't fight back.

I think fear of raising an independent line is one part of the fear of raising 30 for 40. It is much easier to raise traditional teachers demands (e.g., class size) than to raise something new which would require a big fight to win. We have

been tagging the mass movement. Given the present leadership of the mass movement and the attacks by the ruling class, teachers could not win anything without our ideas. Even if teachers won some reforms, we would not have built the political understanding to maintain them or built a movement that could fight for more.

I am afraid of being attacked and red-baited by the union leadership. We proposed a demonstration when the School Committee, in an extremely racist move, gave a new high school building to an elitist white school instead of to the predominantly black school to which it had been promised. The union president said he was sure PL and SDS would be in there causing trouble no matter what the union decided. He attacked us despite the little we have done. Instead of making me want to put my politics forward more boldly in the union, it has made me somewhat afraid of being bold about 30 for 40 at the AFT convention. I think our club has similar fears about our principals, but we have not been very open about our politics, so we haven't been attacked. There is a fear of having both the administration and the union out to get you. I think this is really a fear of the people. We sure can't rely on sellout union leaders for our jobs. Teachers at my school are very pro-student and at union meetings, which many progressive teachers don't attend, we can often get 1/3 of the vote on issues we raise. If we put our ideas forward more boldly, we would meet many more teachers who would work with us.



FURTHER COMMENTS ON FIGHTING RACISM, NATIONALISM

I think there is a persistent weakness in the party in being involved in the issues and organizations black people are involved in, and this contributes to our inability to raise politics with black students and win them to PLP.

For one example, last year there was the first African Liberation Day March in Washington -- 20,000 people came to it. The basis of it was support for the total liberation and independence of Africa; the leadership was Pan-Africanists (Owasu Seduke, Stokeley Carmichael, Imamu Baraka), and Nationalists/Liberals (3) Fauntleroy who is a congressman, I believe, and Revisionists -- the Panthers. There were lots of sellers from the Militant, the Panthers, and other groups, but only three people selling C-D: one Party member who was involved in organizing the demo in DC, and 2 sellers from Boston (including me.)

This year there was a conference of Black Social Workers in New York, which the papers said involved 5,000 people (think probably at least that many.) Only one Party member (me) was there. I sold 80 C-Ds there, during breaks from workshops and plenaries -- which only showed the potential for getting our ideas out if we had had more of a plan, and more forces.

In self-criticism, I must say that in both these instances I knew about and was planning to attend the events myself, but did not discuss it with other people and had a completely opportunist approach: I was gonna go, as an individual, along with friends -- not to raise PL's line on anything, not to try to influence the course of things there. The first event (the demo) I did nothing to inform people, but expected Party members and friends to be there; this year, I began calling around the thinking about the conference a week before it happened, although I had been planning to go for three months -- with the result that no organized, collective effort was made by the Party in either case.

I think this is a serious criticism of my work, related to opportunism and tailing my base among black students, and the black liberation movement generally. In practice, it amounts to racism -- being sharp politically with white students about the need to fight racism, but not fighting nationalism with black students, who are more likely to be won to PL.

In addition, I think that it is a criticism of the party as a whole and of the leadership that there is no plan for events like this, and no emphasis on participating and struggling within them.

It has been my experience that many white comrades have the illusion that nationalist leaders "do not have a base" among black workers, therefore black students who follow them must be "petty bourgeois" and reactionary; or that the only people who will show up to these things are die-hard nationalists who we don't have to pay too much attention to anyhow. This is related to weaknesses in winning and working with black students in general, so that people don't try to build the party with "nationalist" students. (The opposite attitude, which I have, is that these leaders have such a base that you can't fight them, which amounts to the same rotten practice of not winning black students -- in my work -- to PL). Suppose that we took the rallies against the war with the same attitude that we take these: we would never have gotten any foothold in the anti-war movement from which to raise our politics, we would never have been able to influence it in an anti-imperialist direction: we would have no Party among students.

I think this bad practice stems from both sectarianism in general in our work, and racism. Both were reflected in the articles in Bulletin No. 3 from Cleveland. The solutions to how to deal with nationalism was to more actively denounce nationalist misleaders -- no proposal for working with black students, or working within Afros, or fighting the racism of white students in lack of ties with black students in and around the party was discussed.

This article was correctly criticized in Bulletin No. 3, and hopefully more discussion and plans will be developed for how to fight racism; do united front work with black students in national formations; fight nationalism and build PLP will be devised.

Another weakness in the work with black students and workers is that we do not study and do not understand the state of the black liberation movement. How many Party members understand Pan-Africanism, who its spokesmen are and what the ideology is? How many Party members even know the countries in Africa, much less the political situation in those countries generally (independent, colonized, etc.) How many party members know the general line of the Republic of New Africa, James Forman, or even the Muslims? As one example of ignorance -- or arrogance -- an article in C-D (Vol. 9, No. 16) about Kawaida Towers still called Imamu Baraka Leroi Jones, years after he had changed his name in accordance with African nationalist philosophy. The examples used to prove him an enemy of workers were from 1968 (? or earlier) Newark rebellion. I don't see how we can win black people who are at all political to our line if we don't know (or respect enough to print) the current positions of misleaders we attack. This is a function of racism within our Party, I think.

Similarly, in the local areas we work in, how many Party members know the issues, grievances, and leaders and organizations in the black community. If we don't know, are we doing work to find out?

Without this kind of knowledge it is impossible to fight nationalism. You are reduced to saying, "a boss is a boss", "it's a class struggle", with no information to back this up. I make this criticism of myself too, because I don't pay enough attention to what is going on and to what black students I am supposed to be working with are oriented to. This just feeds into my opportunism, because it makes it impossible to win people and is also an excuse for not trying.

I was glad to see an article in PLP convention bulletin No. 3 about the black liberation movement, and thought it was generally accurate, in pointing out the demise of black organized misleadership and the rise of black elected officials. However, I think it is wrong to say the leaders of the 60's have been exposed: many of them have made the transition to becoming or working with black elected officials -- witness Imamu Baraka, Huey P. Newton. Others like Stokeley have moved into new things. As I think the leaders, especially the more militant nationalists, aren't weak politically, I think the ideology of nationalism is fairly strong. These people can mobilize thousands if they want to. What you see is they are unwilling to mobilize people; they have a no-struggle program called "developing alternative institutions", and therefore they don't do a lot of things that they did in the 60's. (I think they are beginning to realize their organizational weakness, and that's part of the reason for the Black National Political Convention and other African Liberation Support Committee -- to bring all nationalists together to work to become "the" spokesmen for the masses).

Also, I think the Muslims can have influence on the black liberation movement -- providing a model for all these and other nationalist forces to follow -- black business, black schools, black institutions with a militant-sounding rhetoric to cover up the institutions' basically exploitative nature. Minister Louis Farrakhan was the keynote speaker at the Black Social Workers' Convention April 20th and addressed 3,000 people; he gets crowds wherever he goes. My experience with black students is that while many wouldn't join the Muslims, and reject the religion, authoritarianism, and gross capitalist/bourgeois features of their ideology and practice, they respect the Muslims for stopping dope, developing independence, stability and pride, and they think they're a positive force. They are perhaps the largest organization outside the

NAACP, and they are well-disciplined and organized. (We need to investigate the percentage of their membership that is lumpen, working-class and petty-bourgeois. It is my impression that all three groups are represented.)

Of course, the point about the Muslims and all nationalists is that their strategy is no solution to the problems the masses of black people face -- at best, it exchanges one master for two (The R. C. and black flunkies) and probably intensifies oppression of workers while doing this; (they can get away with alot more, at least temporarily.) Many black people, particularly working people, see this -- and this is why we can win them: we are the Party that has actually something to offer, liberation. However, people will go along with a nationalist strategy in the fact of the intensification of racism.

You have a situation where many black people see through the system, see the government and business as the enemy -- including black students; at the same time, racism is being shipped up in white people -- one example is bussine, and, in some schools, open attacks on black students being favored by the administration. Therefore it is crucial that PLP build the anti-racist movement. We can ally with students who are nationalist around issues relating to genocide, ideology, exploitation -- and in winning white students to fight these things, provide an alternative to nationalism. This will also undercut the nationalist leaders who are anti-struggle, and will attempt to sabotage militancy, confrontation against the ruling class, pro-working class demands.

I propose that the Party should do the following things to correct the weaknesses I have named and improve the work:

1. intensify anti-racist thrust in fighting ideology, more seriously
2. develop struggles around worker-student alliance, particularly exploitation of black workers on and off campus.

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3. change the practice of Party members so that people have ties with black students and workers that are not one-sided: i. e., finding out what's interesting to our base, going to lectures, films, etc.

4. initiate a study campaign around present black leaders, organizations and ideology: Pan-Africanism, Cultural nationalism, etc.

5. initiate a study campaign of African liberation movements, and African countries, leadership, in general.

6. study RRIII relating it to two above points.

7. more practice and involvement in the black communities in cities where these communities are significant -- with the perspective of meeting people, analyzing the forces in the community, developing plans for struggle -- the information on community leaders to be shared by the whole party, where relevant.

8. reports from clubs on specifically what they are doing in united front work with black students, workers organizations and how they are raising the independent line -- these should come out regularly, be concrete, so other clubs can use them for their practice.

9. updating the Black Liberation Pamphlet -- when we have the knowledge and experience to do so.

10. have someone responsible nationally and locally for knowing about every black event and making sure, where it's relevant, that people are mobilized and planning to get involved and raise PL in these events.

Claire K.

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A very important aspect to the growth of our party is our international development. Why? Our party belongs to a new wave of history. In the old communist movement, that represented by the CPSU and the CPC, nationalism was the thing. This concept of placing the "national interest" above proletarian internationalism has played an important role in putting the Soviet Union and China back into a capitalist framework. As a result class struggle has been set back. It is a sad development but it is an objective reality we have to deal with. There is no country or leading Communistic movement that people around the world can look to. The international revolutionary movement has been lost momentarily, and this we owe to nationalism. At one point PL held this view and supported black nationalism. We have grown and seen the danger of nationalism and have broken with this ideology. We have adopted the internationalist outlook and this makes our party part of the new wave of history. We must stress this point to people we work with, whatever the particular issue we are fighting against. For example, the issue of Challenge dedicated to the situation in England probably made this clear to a lot of us. When selling it to Puerto Rican workers, it was very encouraging to hear them say: "That's right. That's the way to fight!"

About a year ago a friend went to Vienna and there he found a copy of Road to Revolution III. This same article has been translated into several languages. Our party is known and its line discussed in many places outside the US. Though this is good we must make an effort to widen our influence.. In a previous bulletin, the International Committee suggested that people with contacts or who are traveling abroad should try to get and send information about the mass movement to them.

This is a great idea, but we must expand it.

In Boston we have formed a group of foreign students. The group is over a year old and so far has done nothing else but discuss; India, the Middle East, China, Greece, Ethiopia, etc. There is a lot to be learned in this kind of discussion, however, we found out the group would collapse if it did not engage in some sort of activity. We decided to publish a newspaper and started looking for things we could get involved in. The group right now is in very bad shape. Some people have dropped out. Others are away and we haven't had a real meeting for almost two months. There were two main reasons for this. First, foreign students are in a delicate position in this country. It is hard for them to get involved in left politics because of immigration (specially now since immigration is trying to restrict the rights of all foreigners in order to make it harder for them to be here). The other reason, actually the most important one, is that we didn't have a plan. I looked at ~~it~~ ^{the group} as something extra, not really important for me to build. I was working with SDS at the school so I just considered the meetings as something good to go to. Never trying to build a base for the party among those people there. As a result of all these things nobody really thought there was a point in having the group. The first year there were from eight to ten people who came regularly. Then we jumped to fifteen to twenty people for about two months. Now only five people make up the group None of these people are any closer to the party than they were a year ago (except one who was won to the party's line outside the group). That is a real loss to the party.

Now we are trying to involve new people in the group. We have planned a film festival with radical films from other countries along with forums after the films. Also the

question of basebuilding and its importance is being discussed and some plans are being made by people in the group. As of the writing of this article a new PI club was formed to build the party among foreign students.

Through this experience, me other party members and friends involved have learned the importance of this group to the party. When these people go back, they can spread our ideas to their friends and to the organizations they belong to. We can establish formal contact with other progressive and revolutionary parties around the world. Our goal should be to build a new international.

Some things we can start doing now are:

1. If we have friends that are foreign, form a study group with them, ~~pay~~ pay special attention to discussing the party's ideas and how they relate to their country. If this is done, get in touch with the International Committee.
2. A challenge club or party base group can be formed out of the study group to specifically win people to the party. If we had done this in Boston, we could have recruited one or two people and we wouldn't be crying over spilt milk now.
3. If not many foreigners are in contact with the party, the best thing to do is to have forums or films that deal with foreign countries. Many foreign students are radical and this could be an excellent way to meet them.
4. If any kind of event is held, literature should be distributed. The party has some literature dealing with other countries and international issues. Be sure to have read

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since it is important to develop our understanding of the international movement.

5. Involve foreigners in writing articles to challenge about what is going on in their countries. If they belong to the organized left, ask them for literature, posters and other material, and keep them in contact with the IC..

City Hospital 40 SELF-Criticism
Lois Roberts

During the time I was at City Hospital a lot of struggle went on there (by aides against speed-up and double shifts, against the budget cuts, etc.) but no one was ever won from these to the party. I think ~~because of that~~ this is because we were not talking to people enough about the party during the struggle and didn't get to know the people we were working with, doing things or going places with them. The City Hospital club did not struggle with each other ~~enough~~ enough about how to talk to people about certain things in the party line. Example: How do you talk to a person to show that a hospital is racist with its medicine and that a hospital is a profit making institution.

We did have some discussion in the club about racism around the cuts, patient care, but not enough for me and us to understand how to get it across to the next person. I feel the club ~~is~~ has a lack of communication with each other, not calling each other to see how the work went that day or discussing any problems they may have had in trying to win a worker over. I think the reason for this is that people ~~never~~ often just want to do their own little thing and not worry about how the next comrade is doing or whether the work is going forward.

I've felt at times that I'm not contributing that much to the party. All together I've been around the party for 3 years (a member for over a year) and it's not that I haven't learned anything. Examples: I was convinced with a lot of struggle that racism is that main thing we have to fight, that there is no lesser of two evils in these electoral campaigns, that you have to fight racism by preferential upgrading and hiring and much more. But sometimes when the other club members talk about the base building or about the party, it's not made clear enough and rather than ask them to explain what they mean a little more I guess I pretend to myself that I know what they are talking about. I try to get into the conversation, but if I lose what the others are talking about I just sit and listen, hoping I catch on to what they point is. I blame myself for not asking more questions as well as them for not explaining more.

Lois 22222

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We are working with some people at City Hospital. They are either working with the party or with WAM and we now have a PL study group and some people are getting more involved.

But I am helping to start a new club with the workers in the medical section and others who have built a base with workers and I think what we can do in that new club is make sure comrades at all times know what's going on. We have to ask each other what we think about the club and other club members' work. (Simple to do), and have plenty of discussion about the party itself, why we have to have it, to recruit to it, and about our base building. Make sure when we recruit new members that we talk about all the things that new comrades should know. Do things together so we can discuss things knowing more about the activity. Really get in to detail about each person's particular work, their friends, how they explain our ideas, instead of just base building in general. Keep up with every members struggle each and every day. If any problems come up, discuss it, don't just say talk to the club leader about this. We have to solve problems together, to be able to make this revolution, that is what the club is all about.

Lois R.

WHO'S AFRAID OF RACIST IDEOLOGY??

Unfortunately, I think we are. For two years now anti-racism has been our main strategy among intellectuals, yet despite some very positive response to our line in certain mass situations (at professional association meetings, & the Democratic Convention) we have not begun to generate mass anti-racist activity among students and intellectuals.

There are certainly lots of reasons for this. Recently we've begun to discuss how we must improve our understanding of how racism hurts all of us in order to win masses of people to oppose it. We should begin to write and study articles on how racism hurts all non-ruling class people in the US, referring specifically to people in different occupations and economic situations. Doing this will help us correct our sectarian view that only a very few people (like us) have an interest in fighting racism.

Another reason for failing to build the mass movement against racism is our own racism, manifest clearly in our weak or non-existent ties to Black students and faculty. Personally, I have done virtually nothing to strengthen or even maintain my relationships with Black faculty and students. This certainly hinders me in fighting racism, as it does most of us.

Besides these problems, which are very important, there is the fact that, as I see it, we are largely afraid to fight racist ideology. Among students this is probably reflected most in our reluctance to do classroom work, which we have been talking about for quite a while now. Among intellectuals, this comes out in ~~some/other~~^{ways} equally sharp, and in some ways more devastating, a fashion. For example, at the SDS conference on Mayday (whose explicit theme was the battle against racist ideology), we organized a workshop of intellectuals. In it we had a major struggle over whether or not to make the ideological fight against racism ~~should be~~ our primary task. Many of our closest friends and some party members argued that we should link up all struggles against the ideology with attacks against racist practices. Now it's all well and good to attack racist practices, but this approach meant downplaying the ideological struggle on the part of those who should in some sense be leading it. I think that we are very reluctant to openly tangle in an all-out battle with racist ideology among our intellectual friends.

Consider briefly our experience at various faculty conventions. Every time we attend we are received positively. Two Christmases ago UAG got about 500 names thru this type of activity. Anthropologists have passed anti-racist resolutions two years running and other disciplines are doing pretty well also. But have we really built a base for anti-racism in these fields? I don't think so.

We seem to shy away from the type of patient, hard, long-term intellec-

tual work that is required to transform a lot of potential into political reality. Instead we have mainly presented resolutions at once-a-year gatherings censuring some of the grosser racists around. Thus while we have seriously hurt the work of racist beasts like Jensen, we have yet to defeat the ideas which the masses of intellectuals share with these creeps and have done almost nothing to weaken the hold of the racist "culture of poverty" theory on the minds of most honest intellectuals.

Recently in a study group, one comrade described the method she used to win people to oppose Banfield as a racist. She would pick out "the most atrocious things" he said and prove what a horror he is. This is the general approach many of us, including myself, adopt in faculty work. But is it really winning anyone over? Or is it just appealing to liberalism? Most people are shocked when Banfield suggests selling black children, but are they equally repulsed when he, or someone else, says that black children are not motivated for achievement because of their home life? In defeating Banfield are we really rooting out the ideas which he plays upon in masses of people? Isn't that, after all, the reason we attack Banfield in the first place?

To do more than simply shock people with gross racist quotes (which is not the worst thing in the world) we have to do some homework to defeat racism in a more total fashion. More importantly, we have to organize our work so that we are encouraging masses of intellectuals to also reject and attack these theories. We have to create a movement of intellectuals who reject blaming-the-victim ideologies in all their forms. This means that we have to be much more active in our disciplines, organizing study-groups, giving papers, holding symposia, writing books and articles, etc. This is very possible to do. We could work in and write for organizations like URPE, the Radical Historians, etc. as well as publishing in more established journals. Many of these groups of young radical faculty have regular conferences where many people are open to our line. We've done very little around this so far, and my work in the Radical Historians Caucus has been very sloppy, but the possibilities are staring us in the face.

~~In my work~~

A lot of these possibilities have been pointed out before but have not been taken advantage of. First of all, we have tended to want to keep faculty working on campus. ~~which is alright but does~~ This may contribute to the work of SDS on a campus, but it doesn't generally build a mass base among faculty. Partly this is due to the age and academic positions of our comrades, who tend as a rule not to have tenure and ~~are not~~ are often graduate students. Secondly, we have done very little study on these questions which inevitably ~~makes~~ makes most of us sheepish about fighting against what we haven't read.

For example, most of us have not read or studied the works of some of the major racists we are attacking. I hadn't read Jensen until I had started writing the PL book! Others are unfortunately in worse shape. And we've done even less study on the culture of poverty stuff. Unless we begin serious study on these question in the party, and with our friends in whatever kinds of study-groups² we can establish, we will not be able to carry this ideological struggle into the disciplines where it must be defeated.

My work around the PL book (which should be out pretty soon) has shown ~~me~~ me the positive value which such an approach can have. First of all, by seriously studying the arguments of Jensen et al my confidence and ability to defeat the ideas increased a lot. So did that of those who helped do this research. When we understand more we can be much more effective and are much more enthusiastic. Secondly, by doing this research we found information which can aid the whole party and many intellectuals in smashing these theories. We now understand their political role much more clearly and see the ~~importance~~ importance on fighting it more than before. When you discover the CIA and the big bankers developing the IQ test and publishing Jensen etc. you realize how serious the whole thing is. Thirdly, by showing a serious interest in this intellectual work, we came into contact with a number of people who can themselves take a lot of leadership in this struggle. Because they realize that we take this stuff seriously they respect us, our movement, and our whole political line much more now. The ~~success~~ recent success at the psychologists' meeting flowed directly from the work on the book. Fourthly, out of work I did on the book, and previous research, I wrote a paper for an academic conference. I got an excellent response, created a fair amount of controversy, and met some people who want to form some kind of a group to do research on this stuff and organize panels at future meetings.

In summary, I would suggest that we beef up our plans for inner-party study on racism (particularly its history, which shows clearly its effects in screwing all workers), and that this approach of doing serious^{ly} intellectual work be our strategy for organizing faculty and graduate students. If we do this right, we can create and expand centers of opposition in the different disciplines which can influence large numbers of faculty and provide an alternative to the anti-people ravings which presently constitute the essence of bourgeois science and social science.

Comradely,
Jim Cronin, Boston

A lot has been written about increasing the sale of C-D. Many articles say that some party members disagree with the political content of the paper and therefore do a poor job of selling it. Many suggestions have been made in the bulletins, some good and some not so good, to improve the paper. I think the content of the paper is **IMPORTANT** to discuss. However, I don't think that is the only reason party building work through Challenge is so weak.

The fact remains that in several reported cases where C-D sales have been regular over a long period of time along with party contacts, the struggle against the bosses has been sharper. (Despite the paper not being perfect). This is one of the exciting results of consistent C-D sales. And reason to fight for increased and regular sales.

About a year ago in Chicago we changed the thrust of paper sales. We stressed selling at steel mills and other job sites as opposed to mass neighborhood sales. Lately, selling on the job has been reemphasized. This strategy is important in order to build the party among the leading section of the working class. Sales are potentially stronger now because we are more focused.

I think in order to build the party and WAM through Challenge sales we now have to concentrate on the quality of our sales. Too often we talk about numbers sold but seldom about the conversations we've had about the paper or the new people who are interested in the party. It seems to me that it's anti-worker and anti-communist to think that people will buy C-D over and over again but don't want to get involved.

Also, sellers meet many more militant fighters than one party member can possibly meet in one department. **IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR PARTY MEMBERS WORKING IN THE PLANTS TO GET NAMES OF INTERESTED PEOPLE IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN PARTY BUILDING AND WAM WORK IN THAT PLANT.**

Selling in a mechanical way becomes tiresome. Annoying factors like weather and lateness become easy excuses for not selling. Selling with the main idea to build the party, which means talking to people about the paper and what's bugging them reaps results. We used to do it. Another thing that helps sell the paper is to have read it. Know what you're selling so you can point out specific articles of interest. We must work out a plan in Chicago whereby each seller gets a copy before selling time so it can be read.)

All that's been said about plant sales applies to on the job sales too. It makes a difference how we sell the paper as to whether those people will continue to buy it. Buying for curiosity or because you are a friend doesn't last. Discussing an article, relating it to your work, can make the party vital not just interesting.

We have increased our sales, by itself good, but let's improve the quality too. Build the party! Talk to people! Discuss Challenge! Get names!

TURN IN NAMES TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE: Inland, Denny or Shelly; U. S. Steel, Bart; Youngstown, Mike W. ; Hotpoint or Telephone, Mike B. ; CTA or Ford, Willie; Stewart-Warner, John K. ; Woodlawn Hosp., Howie; Cook County Hosp, John B. Mardy

... I should be tried in a serious way. Some people get donations regularly because they ask for them. BE BC... People know you're serious when you ask for money.

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On the Right-Wing Trend in Faculty Work at U. Conn.

In the past year a significant anti-racist united front has developed among faculty at the University of Connecticut, but the party hasn't been built within the UF. This opportunism is all the more serious because the UF has fought several battles and grown somewhat in size. Hopefully this report on the effects of opportunism will make it more obvious why we have to build the party among middle-class forces.

At U. Conn. the main anti-racist organizing among faculty has been done by the Committee Against Racism, a group which is not led by the party but has several members who are friendly to us. This group spent most of the last six months trying to get the U. Conn. faculty senate to pass a resolution against teaching racism in the classroom. CAR influenced a number of senators in that direction, but it didn't get an anti-racist resolution passed. In fact, the senate passed, by a close vote, a rightwing statement mildly deploring racism and defending academic freedom for racists. The party's estimate is that CAR was probably lost in the senate because it didn't convince enough of the faculty that the people against whom the resolution was obviously aimed were really racist and that their ideas were dangerous enough to outlaw. CAR decided not to attack specific academics on campus as racist, even though these guys attacked CAR left and right. The result was that many good people wondered whether CAR wasn't afraid to say what it thought because it had a weak case. This doubt kept a number of people from joining or defending CAR. It also made people more susceptible to the racists' propaganda that CAR was an anti-scientific, witch-hunting organization out to destroy every academic's freedom to do his work. Irrespective of the senate vote, if CAR had taken a more forthright

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stand, it would have defeated many of the doubts and exposed the racists' lies about its position. This would have led to its growing in membership from the senate debate, which it did not.

In this situation the party and its newspaper were the only forced putting forward that people like professors Greene, Laughlin, Ginsburg, and Page were dangerous racists who had to be stopped from teaching their genocidal garbage. It was extremely important that C*D be sold to as many faculty members as possible and that PL's line be discussed with them. This was not done. C-D was sold only to 5-10 faculty on a regular basis and I had no serious discussions of PL's line with faculty members outside CAR until the end of the semester. My failure to spread the party's line in public amounted to accepting CAR's weak position while appearing to argue against it ~~in public~~ inside the organization. My failure to win people closer to PL and to taking leadership from PL meant that no basis was laid for changing that position in the future. Recently I have taken some steps to put forward PL's line to a few faculty outside CAR, but still very timidly. It seems clear that unless a number of faculty are won to PL, the ability of the UF to strike any serious blows against the campus racists will be minimal, even in the short run.

PL's line is crucial for anti-racist intellectuals in at least these ways:

1. It wins them to understanding the seriousness of the current racist offensive by showing its roots in ~~the~~ capitalism and by showing what it will lead to if we don't stop the new Nazis. This is crucial to defeating anti-communist fears that the anti-racist

movement is a "withh-hunting crusade by leftwing totalitarians who don't care who they hurt." Fear of this accusation is a major factor behind CAR's timid approach to the campus racists.

2. It fights faculty liberalism towards racist academics and towards the administration. By exposing the class allegiance of these guys, we help destroy the notion of "a community of scholars" that the administration uses to hoodwink faculty into defending the "rights" of them and their stooges. In this way we weaken the strong faith of most faculty in the idea of "academic freedom" by showing that it protects not them but their enemies and the enemies of the working class.

3. It wins intellectuals to seeing that racism hurts white people as well as black people and other minority groups. This helps fight the tendency of white intellectuals to see political activism in missionary terms. People with a missionary attitude generally don't stick with the ~~firm~~ fight when the going gets tough.

4. Maybe the most important single effect of PL's line on intellectuals is that it fights elitism - anti-worker and anti-student ideas. This elitism has to be beaten if intellectuals are going to contribute to a working-class led revolution. Even the most pro-working class non-communist intellectuals are fairly elitist. Several XCAR members were angry when SDSers attacked racists that CAR was treating with kid gloves. They thought that they knew better than mere students what needed to be done. Only a revolutionary outlook can get faculty to reject their elitist training and follow the lead of more oppressed workers and students.

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One effect of not building PL among faculty is that the party is deprived of an important source of funds. At U. Conn. almost no money was raised for PL among faculty during the second semester. This is extremely serious because one of the most important contributions that relatively well-paid professionals can make to revolution is financial. When we don't raise ~~xxx~~ money from these people who have it, the party's work in all areas suffers.

I think that the reason why my work in building the party has been weak over the past ~~xx~~ year even though I am working in a vigorous UF is that I ~~am~~ share many of the ideas that the party's line fights. This suggests that one of our goals internally has to be to win ourselves closer to the line through education as well as practise. My own greatest ideological weakness is anti-communism and fear of a-c. I don't put forward the line because I am afraid of an a-c reaction like "You commies want to destroy people's freedom." My fear of this reaction is at least partly due to a lingering hidden agreement with this crap. I think that the basis of this idea in myself and others is the false and corrupt notion that intellectuals can make a comfortable peace with the ruling class ~~and~~ and that workers' power isn't really in the ~~xxx~~ our interest. Both illusions about freedom under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and anti-worker fears of the dictatorship of the proletariat have to be smashed if we are to win ourselves and intellectuals we work with to siding consistently with the working class. Only a revolutionary outlook and PL's line can do this job. WE MUST BRING PL'S LINE TO ALL INTELLECTUALS.

Tony Krook

FIGHT RACISM: BUILD A BASE ON YOUR SCHOOL PAPER

-AL F.

I worked on my school paper for 2 quarters. (At my school, we're involved in a fight against Edward Banfield's racist text, The Unheavenly City.) During this time, I wrote several ~~times~~ "objective" articles about our campaign. By "objective," I mean I quoted as many reactionary professors, administrators and students, as I did members of SDS and PLP and anti-racist friends. The paper however (a weekly) is widely read, and my articles did help to get our position out to several thousand students, faculty, campus workers, night school students (mainly white collar workers) and alumnae. I also got to write one guest editorial.

About half the articles I ~~was~~ wrote, though, were completely non-political. I did this because I figured that the price ~~is~~ of admission for writing an article about a racist text was to write a non-political article about, for example, the homecoming queen or a student ventriloquist. To some extent, however, I did view the paper as a united front, and I wrote non-political articles for this reason also, that is, to build the non-political aspects of the ~~is~~ paper.

My main weakness though was that I didn't view the paper as a united front, to anywhere the extent that I should have. By this, I mean I viewed the paper mainly as a convenient (and free) springboard for our ideas. In other words, I didn't hang ~~around~~ around the office or join the staff in all-night work sessions or go down to the cafeteria with people, i.e. get to know the people there and build a base for communism. I was invited to staff meetings, work sessions and parties, but I was usually too busy "doing political work" or homework, which was true to the extent that I didn't have a strategy for building a base there.

Recently, one editor, a casual friend of mine, was prodded by the paper's "advisor" (a Dean) into writing an hysterical anti-communist attack on SDS. This would not have happened if I'd built a base there.

The staffs of these school newspaper are, I believe, very important to work with and win, because the newspaper is a very political weapon ~~which~~ which either builds racism or fights it. (Unfortunately, because I didn't play a strong role, in almost every issue of the paper, there continues to be at least 2 racist articles per issue, about the need for more campus cops or whatever.) The administration fully realizes this and they pay half-tuition to key editors and full tuition to the editor-in-chief, this in a school which viciously cuts backs on financial aid to blacks and all working class students.

Here are some suggestions of things you can do as a reporter for your school paper:

1. Interview racist professors, deans, and administrators, etc. This provides you with ammunition to prove our case against the university. Also, if these quotes appear in the newspaper and in our leaflets at the same time, I think it gives our position much more credibility. Also you'd be surprised how many ripples a reporter can create by investigating racism. I kept after the head of the sociology dept. for a week and within an afternoon, the secretaries and the whole dept. knew a reporter had been there to do an article about Banfield. I finally got the interview with him, and after I got it, he called this racist professor into his office and yelled at him for 45 minutes.
2. Interview people who are fighting back on campus around one issue or another. In the course of doing one article, I met (and got to know) one student who came to the SDS conference on racism and later did some work with us. Generally speaking, I think its fairly easy to use

your position on the paper as a kind of bridge to get to know other anti-racist students and faculty in the student gov't, black studies program, faculty senate, etc.

3. Do book reviews of racist texts, similar to Challenge's Mein Kampf Book of the Month Club (or whatever those crazy comrades in ~~NY~~ N.Y. call it), and identify the courses in which they're used.

If you don't think that'll create a flurry of letters-to-the editor about racism, you've got another think coming.

4. Work towards getting yourself elected to the editorial board or to getting yourself a weekly column (or if you're on a campus daily, maybe 3 times a week) "From the Left," or whatever, and use it to put forward our line on racism, Kulture, jewish fascism, watergate, etc.

5. Figure out who on the staff is most winnable and work with them jointly on team-investigation projects dealing with racist books or incidents, or do a research story on ~~the~~ ^{the} trustees and call it, "The Racists Who Run N.U." or CCNY or UPenn or UCLA or whatever.

6. Try to get the paper to sponsor or co-sponsor seminars or forums or debates (which they would tape and reprint excerpts from) dealing with racism.

7. BUILD A BASE FOR PL AND FIGHT BACK AGAINST THE BUMS WHO RUN THIS COUNTRY. You can do all the above things and more, but unless you're building a base on the paper among the staff, there's something seriously wrong with your work. Furthermore, without a base, it's only a matter of time before the university attempts to move in and bounce you out of there, and this is no joke.

These bums who run the country --and they are bums, they sit around, don't do any work, they're worse than hippies, ~~they~~ ^{THEY} understand the importance of controlling these student papers. It's our job, I think, to win these papers to our side, to the side of the working class.

I would like to propose that 3 pieces of party literature be produced for our mass work, in addition to the pamphlet on racism that I presume is still in the works. The political usefulness and financial abilities of the Party to produce the pamphlets could be discussed by the NSC, NC or the convention itself. It is fiscally conceivable to put out these pamphlets over the next couple of years, I believe they would have some usefulness.

1) A pamphlet on "What is the Progressive Labor Party?", explaining what the Party's principles are, why we adhere to them, how we are organized and how we fight for reforms and revolution. It would have sections on our work in trade unions, hospitals, universities and among teachers, welfare workers, intellectuals, etc. It might have a short history of PL, in terms of what we've done during the last 10 years or organizing and how our line has evolved through the lessons we've learned in day-to-day political work. The pamphlet might include a few pictures of PLP and united front demos, Challenge selling or other forms of class struggle. This pamphlet could be produced in a fairly limited quantity to last over the period of several years. In other words, it would be something with the potential saleability of the TU or Student pamphlet, rather than a "hot item" like the McGovern pamphlet. Its usefulness would be that whenever we meet anyone interested in the Party through C-D sales, U. F. activity, etc. we could sell them a copy of this pamphlet to acquaint them to a greater extent with PL. A comprehensive pamphlet would probably give a better picture of what PLP is nationally than any single party member or friend could give to an interested person through conversation. The Party person who met such an individual could then follow up this "contact" and instead of just explaining all about the party, could instead discuss questions that the "contact" might have about what he or she has read in the pamphlet, C-D or other lit, and we could talk more to him or her about getting involved in what we are doing.

2) A pamphlet on the principles of communism. This pamphlet would explain in greater detail than the pamphlet proposed above what communists have thought and currently think about especially in terms of such concepts as revolution, the d. of the p., socialism and communism, etc. It would attempt to answer the questions the average worker might put to us about communism, along with some of the questions that politically advanced workers might think about. This pamphlet would of course be used in a mass way, but like the pamphlet mentioned above, would probably be of limited, but long-term, circulation. I suggest this because when I first showed some interest in politics, it was short pamphlets on basic principles written by leading Marxists that helped enliven my interest in M-L. Needless to say, such a pamphlet would be useful in study groups.

3) A pamphlet on the fight against sexism. Such a pamphlet has been discussed for a long time. With the political eclipse of a section of the petty-bourgeois or revisionist leadership of the anti-sexist movement, there is a chance that we could take more leadership in this vital area. The anti-sexist consciousness of the masses, after all, continues to rise and could be channeled into some very progressive struggles, were we to take more initiative around a concrete program

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of struggle. Such a program could be set out in the proposed pamphlet, in addition to an M-L analysis of the special oppression of women and its affect on the class struggle. If we don't have any lit. on the subject, people must turn to the revisionists, who have written the only short analyses of sexism that appear to be to the "left" of Gloria Steinem, with the exception of scattered classical M-L writings.

I would also propose that internal bulleting continue to be issued on a regular basis after the convention and that such bulleting have the same format as the present ones with articles contributed from mebers and friends around the country on both theory and practice. I would think 4 internal bulletins annually would be a good start, if this were possible financially.

Barry Sautman

P. S. It's not too early for someone to begin doing research for a pamphlet on Edward Kennedy. After all, he's the front-running candidate of the liberal imperialists for '76 and a member of the bourgeoisie that has build perhaps the greatest illusions about himself among workers and students, even 3 years before the election.

COMMENTS ON THE NLF-NORTH VIETNAMESE LEADERSHIP DURING TET, 1968

The U.S. ruling class pushed the line that the NLF led the Tet offensive in January, 1968 to gain strength at the Paris peace conference, which was just starting. U.S. propaganda also stated that the NLF had hoped to generate a popular uprising but that this failed to materialize. Thus, the imperialists wanted us to conclude that the NLF did not have the support of the people.

It is true that the NLF leadership organized the Tet offensive to jockey for position at the peace table. I remember quite well the morning of the Tet offensive listening to the Armed Forces Radio Network tell me I was under attack while at the same time 50 caliber machine gun bullets were coming through my walls. The same broadcast also reported that the NLF in Paris was arguing about the shape of the table to be used in negotiations. Here the Vietnamese people were fighting like hell and the NLF leaders were concerned about the shape of a table.

Did the NLF organize Tet hoping to generate a popular uprising to win points at the negotiating table? The purpose of Tet, indeed, was to gain points in negotiations. Its purpose was not to defeat U.S. imperialism. But I also believe the scam leading the NLF got more than they bargained from the Vietnamese people. There was a popular uprising in Vietnam. And in some cases it got out of their control.

What I saw the morning of the Tet offensive was only a small part of the popular uprising that swept Vietnam. I was in Gia Dinh, a suburb of Saigon, where I was caught in the left flank of the NLF's attack on Tan Son Nhut Air Base. I lived in a billet adjacent to the Joint General Staff Compound, the So. Vietnamese equivalent of the Pentagon. This area was under NLF control early in the attack.

The beginning of Tet (the lunar new year) is celebrated in Vietnam at midnight when people shoot off long strings of firecrackers hung from poles in front of their houses. This particular night, however, the sky was full of tracer shells. We thought the guns firing all over the city were So. Vietnamese soldiers celebrating Tet. What we did not realize is that the Vietnamese people were test firing their weapons before their attack which was to begin three hours later.

Huge caches of weapons and ammunition were brought into my neighborhood in hearses in funeral processions. I recall before Tet my friends and I discussing why there were so many funerals. They were long processions, often two blocks long.

The morning of Tet was an incredible sight. When helicopters flew over, you could see people all around firing from the windows and doorways of their homes. Guerrillas took over the Joint General Staff Compound, including an armory where they seized more weapons. People then took mortars from the armory, set them up and began shelling Tan Son Nhut.

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When three trucks of So. Vietnamese soldiers tried to enter the area, people in houses opened fire on the trucks in the street intersection, killing every soldier. Next a column of tanks tried coming up the street. A man ran from a house, jumped up on the lead tank and dropped a satchel charge in the turret. It was impossible for even tanks to come in. Intense street fighting continued for 3-4 weeks in many sections of Saigon after Tet began.

Approximately 600 Vietnamese were killed on the the perimeter of TanSon Nhut. 200 succeeded in getting on the base. As long as five days after the offensive began, you could walk in the heart of Tan Son Nhut and get shot at by guerrillas hiding in the attics of buildings. These guerrillas when captured told how they had been promised that reinforcements would come to help them take the base.

What in fact happened? Tan Son Nhut was effectively cut off from the outside. We were running out of food. No supplies could come in by land or air. No planes could land because the people around the base shot at them trying to land or take off. They even had anti-aircraft guns set up off the ends of the runways. So a handful of surviving Vietnamese fighters were left high and dry on the base while forces under the leadership of the NLF orderly withdrew from the city on the Saigon River. They withdrew while thousands of people continued fighting inside the city.

I recall at the time being quite confused as to why thousands of people kept fighting while a whole NLF battallion withdrew from Saigon. That a battallion of NLF troops can leave the city without seriously being attacked by U.S. or Saigon troops or planes raises serious questions of U.S.-NLF collusion. It was not a defeated army fleeing. It was an army withdrawing because its leaders had already made their political points for negotiations in Paris. The Vietnamese people were willing to fight. Their leaders were not, at least for workers power.

Tet showed clearly how revisionist leadership means death for both Vietnamese and U.S. workers. The leaders of the NLF and No. Vietnamese revisionists are butchers as much as Nixon. In Cho-lon, the Chinese section of Saigon, I saw areas of 4-5 city blocks completely leveled by U.S. bombing during Tet. Thousands of workers were slaughtered.

The wealthy Vietnamese bosses who back the NLF and No. Vietnamese are as much responsible for this slaughter as Nixon, or Johnson as it was then. The textile bosses and their revisionist leaders in Vietnam were ^{not} interested in destroying capitalism. That would mean killing themselves. They fronted off workers and peasants against U.S. bosses so the Vietnamese bosses could get a bigger cut off the profits made from Vietnamese labor.

I read reports of how the NLF was financed, how they collected taxes, etc. One fact worth mentioning is that a majority of the money backing the NLF around Saigon came from eight big companies in the city, mostly from the textile industry.

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The biggest contradiction working class GIs faced in Nam was that of fighting our class brothers and sisters. I will never forget the agonizing situation the morning of the Tet offensive, when several of my friends and I were unarmed and just waiting for the Vietnamese to come into our room and kill us. We all were sympathetic with the Vietnamese. In fact, several of us had openly talked to other servicemen about how it would be good for the Vietnamese to win. We decided we would fight for our lives, but we also decided we could not blame the Vietnamese for killing us.

Two great obstacles stood in the way of U.S. and Vietnamese workers unity--racism and nationalism. Racism pushed by the U.S. ruling class against the Vietnamese kept us from building close ties. Nationalism pushed by Vietnamese revisionists prevented Vietnamese workers from seeing the need for our support.

Revisionism kills workers all over the world. Ho Chi Minh and Lyndon Johnson fought for the same thing in Vietnam--their bosses profits. They only disagreed on which bosses, Vietnamese or U.S., should have the bigger share.

H.C. , Long Beach, Calif.