

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

# The Workers' Advocate

## Supplement



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Feb. 20, 1988

## Another racist ploy in Boston: Segregation in the name of 'stopping forced housing'

Below is the article Racist Politicians Defend "Forced Segregated Housing" from the Jan. 30 issue of **Boston Worker**, paper of the MLP-Boston:

Last fall Mayor Flynn announced plans to allow a few blacks to move into the projects in South Boston. This is long overdue. For more than 10 years the government has allowed this public housing to remain entirely segregated. But any hint of changing the "whites only" policy drives the South Boston political machine whacko. Now City Councilor James Kelly, the South Boston Information Center (SBIC) and the **South Boston Tribune** are trying to whip up a racist hysteria, using the false slogan -- "stop forced housing".

### Opposing "government tyranny" or supporting racist vigilantes?

With this slogan the racist politicians are trying to present themselves as fighting government tyranny. They claim to oppose the use of force to decide where people can live.

But in fact they are the biggest defenders of forced housing. They want to continue totally segregated forced housing.

Until 1973 there were more than 400 black families living in South Boston. It was James Kelly, John Ciconne and other thugs of the SBIC crowd who organized racist gangs to attack these people. Using arson, stones, and clubs they physically drove the black families out of the South Boston projects. This use of force was not reserved just for blacks but was used against whites who stood up to this racism as well. And all this was carried out with a knowing wink from the City Hall and the police.

As for government tyranny, the truth is that the government has cooperated with these racist political thugs by systematically excluding black and Latino people from predominantly white public housing projects. 83% of the people who are on the public housing waiting list are minorities, yet only 48 per cent of the vacancies go to minorities. This forces minority applicants to wait an average of nine months longer for an apartment than white applicants. Of the 400 vacancies that have come open in South Boston housing projects in the last three years not one has been offered to a black

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family even though black families have come to the top of the list.

It is this government tyranny against the black and latino people that Kelly and company want to preserve.

**"Defenders of the community" or Front-men for the Reaganite Offensive?**

The racist politicians proclaim that their first concern is for the welfare of the poor white families in South Boston.

Who's kidding whom?

Were Kelly and O'Neill concerned about any poor families, white or black, when they campaigned for Ronald Reagan? The Reagan government has cut federal housing spending for low and moderate income housing to 1/4 of what it was eight years ago, and this is a major cause of the nation-wide housing shortage, sky-rocketing rents and the growing homeless population.

Was Kelly concerned about poor South Boston residents who are being driven out of their homes by soaring rents when he led the opposition to the mild rent control and condo conversion control bills that came before the city council? No, at that time Kelly proclaimed that the "free market" would take care of everything. Well, it has taken

care of the yuppies and real estate speculators, but the working class families can't pay the rent anymore, much less buy a home.

The racists are bootlicking servants of the rich. They simply want to scapegoat the black people for their own crimes and those of their wealthy patrons.

**Another racist movement**

Workers, the attempt of the racist politicians to build a movement to keep blacks out of the South Boston projects is a dangerous threat to the rights of the black people and to the unity of all workers. The racist agitators want to create the same atmosphere of militant racism that they created during the anti-busing movement.

Within two weeks of the SBIC's anti-housing meeting, a racist gang armed with shovels and clubs attacked three black teenagers on their way to Savin Hill MBTA station. The homes of three minority families were vandalized in Brookline low income developments. These things are no accident. They show that the network of racists tied up with the political machine is being activated.

**Mayor Flynn's hypocrisy**

Mayor Flynn and the owners of the big capitalist news media are making a certain show of opposing Kelly and the open racists. But their opposition is half-hearted. They are worried that Kelly's blatantly racist movement may backfire and provoke a much bigger anti-racist movement among the black and the white masses. And they don't want that. At the same time, they want to keep the racists around to use against the people in the future. So one day they scold Kelly and his boys and the next they make friendly overtures.

**Stand up to the racists!**

It is up to the working people, black and white, to stand up to the racists. We have to nip their racist organizing in the bud. The crash of the stock market has shown that the capitalist system is heading for a major depression. The rich are bound to use racism more and more to divide the working people so that they can more easily be made to pay for the crisis. To defend the unity of the working class we must stand up to this racism. We can't let the rich continue to single out the oppressed minorities and deny them their equal rights.

**No to racist political hacks!  
No to segregation!**

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**Latest in the Ellis Lawrence case from Boston:  
ANTI-RACIST BUS DRIVER VINDICATED IN COURT -- AND FIRED ANYWAY**

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The Dec.20 issue of the **Supplement** carried the article "More Facts on the Ellis Lawrence Case". Below we carry the latest developments, excerpted from the **Boston Worker**, paper of the MLP-Boston:

For the last 3 months **Boston Worker** has been reporting on the case of MBTA bus driver Ellis Lawrence. On October 6, 1987, Ellis was beaten up and arrested by 4 MBTA cops for the simple act of verbally objecting to their beating of a 16-year-old black youth, Walter Coleman, in Mattapan bus station.

Not only was Ellis beaten and arrested but he was suspended by the MBTA with a recommendation to fire. And now, even after Ellis was cleared in court of all charges, the MBTA has fired him. ...

Ellis has been cleared of all charges. You would think that the MBTA would reinstate him as a driver. But no, the T has fired him instead. The management claims that Ellis's action of pro-

testing the police beating was an act of insubordination.

Imagine that, the MBTA police engage in an unjust, racist and illegal beating of a young man. This fact is upheld in court. And yet the man who protests this activity is fired while the police are not punished at all. This stand of the MBTA management shows the real attitude of the capitalists toward the rights of the black people and the workers.

But Ellis does not stand alone. Thousands of workers have read about his case in **Boston Worker**. Hundreds of MBTA workers and workers from other shops have expressed their support for Ellis. 200 workers showed up at a fundraising dance to help Ellis and his family financially. Workers, the MBTA management's treatment of Ellis is a sign of the capitalist authorities' contempt for all of us. Now is the time to make an even bigger show of support for Ellis and to demand that the T reinstate him with full back pay. <>

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**400 MARCH IN BOSTON AGAINST SHAM HAITIAN ELECTIONS**

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From the Jan. 30 issue of **Boston Worker**, paper of the MLP-Boston:

On Saturday, January 16th, downtown Boston was alive with the cry of revolution as 400 Haitian immigrants and American workers marched to denounce the tyranny of the U.S.-backed military regime in Haiti (called the CNG). Starting with a huge picket line that covered all of Government Center, the demonstration then took over Tremont Street and marched to the Commons. Revolutionary slogans and songs filled the air. The revolutionary workers of the MLP,USA participated in the demonstration and carried a banner which proclaimed "CNG NO! OCCUPATION NO! REVOLUTION YES!" At the Commons, several speeches were given, including one by a represent-

ative of the Party.

The demonstration was held to denounce a sham election held by the CNG on January 17th. These elections were a complete mockery of democracy. There was no secret ballot; completed ballots had to be turned over to a soldier for inspection before they could be counted. There was no right to criticize any of the candidates or the election process; both were decreed to be crimes punishable by fines and prison. Clearly the Haitian generals only wanted a civilian front-man, while they continued to be the real power. **And this is exactly what they got.** A bloated bourgeois professor named Leslie Manigat was declared winner and his first official statement was that he wants a 'cooperative' relationship with the army.

But the people in Haiti made it very clear that he represented no one but the oligarchy and the

generals. On the 16th a general strike called to protest the elections drew participation as all factories and transport facilities were shut down. On election day, despite the repression, and the presence of 40 U.S. warships off the coast of Haiti ready to back-up the regime, a boycott was organized. **More than 90% of the eligible voters boycotted the elections.**

The demonstration in Boston played an important role in exposing this sham among the working masses here. Thousands of people saw and sympathized with the demonstration and hundreds of leaflets were distributed along the march route.

By contrast, neither of the major bourgeois newspapers, **The Globe** or **The Herald** reported on it, although both of these mouthpieces for the rich claim to sympathize with the suffering of the Haitian people! Clearly the activists will have to continue to find ways to address the masses directly if we want the truth to be told. For our part, as the comrade said in her speech, "the MLP, through the **Workers' Advocate** and the **Boston Worker**, will continue to bring the truth about the revolutionary struggle in Haiti to the working masses in the U.S." <>

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#### PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DUKAKIS AND HEALTH INSURANCE

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From the **Boston Worker**, paper of the MLP-Boston:

A few months ago Governor Dukakis was making a big splash about his state medical insurance bill. This bill would have required all employers to pay 80 per cent of health insurance costs for all employees working more than 17 1/2 hours per week. But this bill was just for show, to impress people during a Presidential election year. So when employers screamed that providing such insurance would cost them too much, Dukakis watered down the bill to almost nothing.

But a most telling example of Dukakis' real intentions with regards to providing health care for the workers is his treatment of his own MBTA workers. [The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority, which covers metropolitan Boston, has connections to the state government.] Today 30 per cent of the MBTA workers are part-time workers. Most actually put in a 60 hour week, but because they are not paid for layover time on split shifts they are only paid for 25 to 30 hours. The T pays a maximum of about 25 per cent of the cost of medical coverage for these part-time workers. To get coverage these workers then have to pay about 200 dollars a month or more out of their own pockets. And many, many workers can't af-

ford such a sum and have to do without any medical coverage.

But perhaps Mike Dukakis was planning to set things right with the new T contract coming up? Not on your life! The recently released MBTA budget for fiscal year 1988-1989 calls for no increase in funding for medical insurance, even though it plans to add hundreds of new employees. And how is this to be accomplished? By increasing the number of "part-time" workers and continuing to pay only a minuscule part of their medical insurance costs.

The part-time system on the T is nothing but a cruel method of cutting the wages and benefits of the newer workers. Fighting to improve the wages benefits and conditions of the part-time workers is an important battle for the T workers. Unless they wage this fight they will all be dragged down.

The Carmen's union and the T management are currently in contract negotiations. But the union leaders are refusing to even tell the workers what they are demanding in the negotiations and have pledged not to strike. Union president Romano even tried to pledge not to engage in overtime bans or any other mass action. Such a policy can only lead to further concessions. If the workers are going to fight on any issue, whether its the part-time system or medical benefits, the rank and file will have to get organized on their own. <>

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**Paid informers, no hearings, drug hysteria**  
**DEMOCRACY IN ACTION -- BODINE ELECTRIC CO. STYLE!**

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From the Feb. 1 issue of **Chicago Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-Chicago:

The week before Christmas Bodine Electric Co. carried out a purge of employees suspected of drug-dealing. Nine people were called into the office and on the basis of accusations by two paid informants were "convicted" of selling drugs. They were given the choice of resigning on the spot or being arrested and prosecuted. Under those circumstances it is not surprising that all nine resigned.

Some people thought that these resignations must be proof of guilt since, supposedly, if innocent they would have fought the charges against them. This presumption of guilt is wrong. If faced with trumped up charges by the company, one could easily be sent to jail on the testimony of paid informants. And even if acquitted, there is the time, money and personal agony of a legal defense not to mention the pleasantries that the Chicago Police Department (so caring and sensitive) lavish on defendants who can't make bail.

Anyone under that kind of pressure is more likely to resign and go for another job (where you may even have something to gain) than go for a day in court where you have everything to lose. The accused may have been guilty or innocent but these forced resignations proved nothing.

While these "drug-related resignations" were taking place the company said nothing officially but it did launch a rumor campaign to spread fear and hysteria. Many people believed that 18 or even 32 were fired and that the company was getting ready to fire a lot more. And there are persistent rumors that the company has a list of 100 alleged drug users that it will use later. The company's campaign produced an atmosphere of tension and pressure for a more intense pace of work. It even spoiled the end of the year Christmas parties.

Bodine is a typical capitalist hypocrite. While

boasting about alleged freedom, it practices tyranny over the workers. Little more than a year ago Paul Bodine wrote an anti-communist letter to the employees and one of its priceless tidbits was that, supposedly, we workers have "the right to choose your own employers." Excuse me, Mr. Bodine sir, but didn't you just force out nine employees without any hearings, any trial, any "due process"? They didn't have the right to choose where they work. You made that decision for them.

Didn't you, Mr. Freedom Bodine, hire informants to spy on workers? Tell us please, do you, as rumored, have a list of 100 workers alleged to be drug users? If so, then what's the difference between Bodine Electric Co. and a police state?

Drugs are bad and we are against them. They damage one's health and can contribute to accidents. Drugs also dull consciousness and can weaken our ability to stand up to the company. But we are also against persecuting people for using drugs.

Bodine workers, beware! The company may use the recent firings as an excuse for more harassment. At many workplaces in Chicago drug testing has been instituted. This is not to help drug addicts recover but to harass all the workers. The cheap drug tests administered are unreliable and often have a race bias (for example, in laboratory studies dark-skinned people often gave a false positive for marijuana). The bosses want to use drug testing to increase their profits by weeding out "inefficient" workers (not to mention militants), cutting their absenteeism, and intimidating their entire work force into a more intense pace of work. Bodine may have similar plans.

The capitalists are on the offensive against the working class and Reagan's crusade against drugs is part of this attack. To defend our jobs and livelihood we must fight every part of this offensive, from production speed up to drug testing, "Just say no!" <>

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WHO IS TELLING THE TRUTH TO THE NEW YORK TRANSIT WORKERS?

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Issued on Jan. 18 by the MLP-New York under the title "Who is lying, Mr. Hall?":

A whole lot of meaning sometimes gets packed into just a few words. So it is with a short paragraph recently written by "our leader," Sonny Hall. Observe:

"One word of caution; be aware of a small group who are saying we must strike and not to trust your Union. The last lying leaflet I saw was signed 'Marxist-Leninist Party'. Transit workers are too smart to be misled by their private revolution."

Sonny Hall, Dec. 1987 **TWU Express**

Oh, we are stung! You hurt us, Mr. Hall! Can it be that we have erred? Are we such wicked liars???

But wait a minute. What, precisely, has so offended you in our "lying leaflets"? What, exactly, were our lies? You do not say. Not one word. Maybe we should help you out and repeat a few of the "lies" we have written since you filled John Lawe's sellout shoes.

\*\*June, 1985. You presented transit workers with your first contract. You claimed there were "No Givebacks." This was a lie. We listed real givebacks in our leaflets, including: work rule givebacks; freezing the night differential; loss of Civil Service rights; and lower starting pay for new hires. But a TWU leaflet said, "MLP LIES. Our answer to the [MLP] leaflet...is that they have badly misjudged the intelligence of the transit workers. [There are] NO GIVEBACKS. Not one benefit of present membership was given back." (TWU leaflet, 7/19/85)

Who was lying, Mr. Hall? You or the Marxist-Leninist Party?

\*\*December, 1986. You signed an agreement with Kiley and Cuomo for binding arbitration of future contracts that cannot be resolved through negotiations. You gave away our right to vote on our contract in exchange for a "relationship of trust" and a union seat on the MTA Board. You called this a "big victory" for transit workers. We said this was a lie. While another test will come this spring, it is already clear that your new "trusting relationship" with Kiley and Gunn has brought nothing but givebacks and grief to transit workers.

Who was lying, Mr. Hall? You or the Marxist-

Leninist Party?

\*\*1985-87. You promised that transit workers would have contract in hand 90 days after ratification. Transit workers waited. We had lots of patience. Over 2 years later we wrote a leaflet, "Where's Our Contract?" (Aug. 4, 1987) It [the contract] finally appeared in October, some 2 1/2 years late (not worth the wait), barely 6 months before it expires.

Who was lying, Mr. Hall? You or the MLP?

You also accuse us of telling workers "not to trust your Union." To this we plead guilty--if by "your Union" you mean Sonny Hall, the Executive Board and the sold-out bureaucracy.

But in our distrust, we are joined by thousands and thousands of other transit workers who have distrust and contempt for you and your sold-out crew. You don't believe us? Just ask your brother honchos who get thoroughly denounced by ordinary transit workers at monthly union meetings. Those aren't words of love we hear. Or be extra bold: visit the shops and barns or track quarters or (dare we say it?) call a mass mobilization of all shop workers. But don't expect handshakes and warm embraces if you do. You will be sorely disappointed.

Finally, you tell workers not to be misled by the Marxist-Leninist Party, a "small group" advocating "strike" and "private revolution." You slander us and try to intimidate transit workers from being in contact with us. It seems we are a thorn in your side.

But let's be even more honest. You are not just after the MLP. You know there is widespread and growing opposition to the TWU misleaders. This worries you. With your attacks on militant positions, you want to stifle all rank-and-file opposition to the sellout policies of the TWU bureaucracy. That is the main purpose of your "word of caution."

But on one thing we agree. You express confidence in the intelligence of transit workers (though you don't mean it). We have genuine confidence in transit workers. We tell them the truth. We point out their enemies. And we call a sellout by his right name. Yes, transit workers will certainly throw off those who mislead them. But who will that be, Mr. Hall? You or the Marxist-Leninist Party? <>

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**PLANT-GATE PROTEST AT CHRYSLER'S JEFFERSON AVE. ASSEMBLY PLANT**

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The following articles are from the Feb. 10 issue of **Detroit Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-Detroit:

**PLANT-GATE PROTEST STIRS UP JEFFERSON ASSEMBLY WORKERS**

A plant-gate protest February 3rd stirred up workers at Chrysler's Jefferson Avenue assembly plant.

At shift change a picket line was set up across the street from the Freud St. plant entrance. The picketers raised clinched fists. For an hour and a half they shouted, "Bring Back the Laid Off, Fight Job Combination!" and other slogans.

The spirited protest got an enthusiastic response from workers leaving from 1st shift and entering for 2nd shift. Many workers stopped for a while to watch the picket line. Some said, "This is exactly what's needed. Keep it up." Others declared their agreement with various of the picket sign demands like "Restore washup time," "Restore full SUB" and "Full medical benefits". When picketers hollered, "Job combination" or "Layoffs", some Jefferson workers joined in shouting "NO!" The most hearty response came when picketers shouted "Unity with Kenosha, To hell with Iacocca!" [Chrysler announced it is shutting down the Kenosha plant and claimed that this would save jobs at the Jefferson plant.]

The protest was called by the **Detroit Workers' Voice** (local paper of the Marxist-Leninist Party) together with a network of Jefferson workers who are either laid off or are suffering overwork in

the plant. Chrysler and some UAW hacks threatened to fire or cut off unemployment benefits for any Jefferson workers participating in the protest. Because of these threats, people from other workplaces carried out the picket line. All told, about 20 postal workers, hospital workers, steel workers, sanitation and cab drivers, and unemployed workers joined the picket line. They showed the working class spirit that an attack on any worker is an attack on us all. We all have to join together to build up the struggle of the entire working class against the offensive of the capitalist class.

The plant-gate protest stirred up the plant. This must be built upon to organize further actions both at the gates and inside the plant. Don't let the foremen take our jobs, stop the line! Don't let jobs be combined, slow down! Don't accept the layoffs, fight for every job!

Being laid off does not end the struggle. Laidoff workers played a key part in organizing the plant-gate protest. And they can organize stronger protests in the future. The job actions in the plant, the protests at the plant-gate, these and other struggles have to be built up into a powerful movement that can fight the job combination and bring back the laid off. <>

**COMBAT INTIMIDATION!  
BUILD THE NETWORK OF RESISTANCE!**

When word got around that there would be a plant-gate protest, Chrysler tried intimidation to stop it. Chrysler spread rumors that it would take pictures, get names, harass, and even fire Jefferson workers that participated in the picket line. A union hack told one laidoff worker that his unemployment benefits would be cut off. Meanwhile, Chrysler attempted to track down and intimidate anybody suspected of working with **Detroit Workers' Voice** in the plant.

Why is Chrysler so scared that it's resorting to these vicious threats? Because it knows this protest is not by "outsiders". Rather **Detroit Workers' Voice** is working together with a network of Jefferson workers. And, with the help of the **Detroit**

**Workers' Voice**, these workers are getting organized independent from -- and in opposition to -- the betrayal of the union bureaucracy. Chrysler's their own hands, then it won't be so easy for the company to combine jobs and layoff workers whenever it wants.

Did the chassis workers wait for the UAW hacks to do something last November when the car fell off the line and almost killed a worker? No, they shut down the line and demanded Chrysler restore the clean up jobs.

Or did we wait on the UAW bureaucrats to protest the layoffs in December? No, the resistance network inside the plant organized the black arm band and sticker protest.

The picket line on February 3rd was also organized by this resistance network.

And what about back in '85, when Chrysler was trying to screw the workers in the last contract? Did Jefferson workers wait on the boys at Solidarity House to call out a national strike? No way! The network of militants in the plant organized the workers to walk out early. Along with the workers at Dodge Truck and in St. Louis, the Jefferson wildcat forced a national strike. And that's the only reason we got back even a part of all the concessions Chrysler stole from us since 1979.

Today, a whole list of workers have already

signed up their addresses and phone numbers so -- even when they're laid off -- they can get in touch and get organized to fight. This resistance network must be expanded and better organized. By combining secret, underground organization with public protests (like the stickers, or plant-gate protests, or job actions in the plant) we will build a movement that can fight back against Chrysler.

Every worker who wants to fight back should sign up on the list and become part of the resistance network. Join the organization that's building the struggle! <>

### 2500 KENOSHA WORKERS PROTEST PLANT CLOSING

On February 2, over 2,500 workers joined a protest against the planned closing of Chrysler's Kenosha plant. Many Kenosha workers have declared they shouldn't wait for the shut down, but strike now against Chryslers' job elimination.

Unfortunately, the UAW leaders are still holding them back. The UAW hacks turned to Jesse Jackson, Democratic Party presidential aspirant, for help to block the workers' struggle. While decrying the "economic violence" by Chrysler, Jackson

told the workers to trust their fate to a lawsuit against Chrysler. And he appealed to Chrysler to be benevolent to its workers.

But Chrysler's never given workers a thing unless it was forced to. Jefferson workers, stand together with the Kenosha workers! Fight for every job at Jefferson! Support that same fight at Kenosha!

**Unity with Kenosha,  
To hell with Iacocca!**

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**At Great Lakes Steel in Detroit  
RIGGERS SHUT DOWN CARSHOP IN PROTEST AGAINST ASBESTOS**

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From the Feb. 12 issue of **Detroit Workers' Voice**, paper of the MLP-Detroit:

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On January 13, riggers working in the rail-car repair shop shut down the shop in a one-day refusal to work. They were protesting the company imposing an asbestos hazard onto them.

On January 12 a slab car was pushed into the shop for repairs. Seeing the car has asbestos on its deck, the riggers' safety man had the shop foreman agree to have the car removed for cleaning.

But having the car removed upset the higher bosses. R. Walters (who is in charge of the company's asbestos abatement program), J. Kirchinsky (who is in charge of the mechanical shops) and D. Gould (who is in charge of the GLS environmental department) conspired to order the car back into the car shop to be cleaned. The riggers report that Kirchinsky bellowed, "It is our car and our car shop and we will do what we want to."

The next day, January 13th, the riggers found the car pushed back into the shop with the asbestos still on it. At this point the car shop workers walked out of the shop and refused to work. The safety man sealed off the shop and declared it an asbestos hazard area. This threw Walters, Kir-

chinsky and Gould into a frenzy but they were unable to force the workers back to work. In the end the riggers won their demand and forced the company to remove the car from the shop to clean it.

The riggers are now circulating a letter about the incident signed by the car shop workers. This letter points out in part that the company has "displayed complete contempt for our health and well-being. We had high hopes that under the cooperative contract things would improve. However a recent incident indicates that our opinions, experience or physical well-being count for very little among people who make decisions at this institution."

This incident shows once again the company's disregard for our health. It also shows that when the company says "cooperative partnership", they really mean "cooperative dictatorship", they dictate and we cooperate.

The real success of the workers' action lies in the fact that a mass of workers acted to take matters into their own hands, on the spot, to fight the problem. This experience is important to all of us. It is only through relying on ourselves and organizing mass actions that we can successfully fight the company. <>

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**CORRESPONDENCE ON THE LITERARY DEBATE:  
STATEMENT BY ONE OF THE AUTHORS OF THE DRAFT LETTER ON THE JOURNAL STRUGGLE**

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The Buffalo Branch of the MLP organized a forum on Jan. 16 to discuss the questions of content, rather than method, in the literary debate. Everyone concerned was invited and agreed to this. However, questions of method were again raised at this forum.

Just before the forum began, the two authors of the draft letter requested permission to give prepared statements. This was granted; after the opening presentations the two authors gave their statements as the first part of the discussion. One of the authors, comrade P, later sent in her statement for publication in the **Supplement**. It appears below, along with our comments on it.

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**[Statement by Comrade P, One of the Authors  
of the Draft Letter, to the Jan. 16 Forum]**

I would like to read a brief prepared statement which, because it was prepared in advance does not touch on all the points I anticipate will be raised by the speakers, nor does it deal with all the issues raised in the Literary Debate, as presented in the pages of The Workers' Advocate Supplement or Struggle, but rather speaks to only two points which I nonetheless think are of importance.

1) I am one of the authors of what is now referred to as the draft letter. In the Summer of '85, I read parts of this letter to and had discussion with comrades from Buffalo, as well as from other cities with whom I had had a personal relationship and/or had had previous discussions on literary questions. I did not then, nor do I now consider this to be gossip or a backhanded method of operation.

I hold that there was never any mistake of principle made in the way this letter was written or discussed. My only mistake was to never have finished the letter and sent it into Tim Hall [the editor of Struggle], and this was surely an error on my part. But the letter was never hidden from the MLP. I consider discussion with comrades to be discussion with the Party, and in fact to the best of my knowledge, a Party comrade was in possession of a copy of the letter from the Fall of '85 to the present.

It has been claimed that my activities created

a demoralized and discouraged atmosphere towards Struggle. I was not aware that such an atmosphere existed, and I find it difficult to understand how my views and discussions could have been responsible for the creation of such an atmosphere. However, if that is the case, than I am truly sorry that such a thing has happened.

2) I stand by the views as expressed in the draft letter. I do not think they represent a liquidationist or non-materialist attitude towards literature, but rather a response to the first Struggle editorial, in which a number of serious questions were, I thought, dealt with in a far too glib manner. These are issues which I had intermittently investigated, thought about, and discussed, largely with my co-author, for the 5 years prior to the writing of the draft letter -- issues such as the materialist assessment of various literary trends, the relation between form and content, and the path forward for the development of proletarian literature -- issues which incidentally, led me to take an interest in the Brecht-Lukacs Debate. To this day, I do not have easy answers, or sometimes answers at all, to these questions, but I feel there is nothing wrong or heretical in asking them. On the contrary, as humble as these efforts are, I feel they can only serve as a positive factor in enhancing the situation for proletarian literature.

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**Comment by the Supplement:**

We would like take this occasion to thank comrade P for sending in her written statement. We believe that it is important in complex issues of this sort that written statements be used. This allows all comrades to judge the issue. From the

August 20 issue of the **Supplement** last year that began our coverage of the literary debate, we have striven to "objectify" the debate by providing documentary material on the views of all parties to this discussion. We therefore regret that the other author did not send in his statement, and that this brief statement by comrade P is the first

and only statement sent in to us by those comrades who hold what we regard as liquidationist views on literature.

We also think that her statement verifies the necessity of our Party to deal with the issues raised in Buffalo at the time of the writing of the draft letter. Far from these being historical issues that have long been forgotten, it is clear that comrade P and others still hold to these views as the basis of their stand toward literature. This applies both to the views expressed in the draft letter and to the other views pointed to in the **Supplement** of Aug. 20. They also uphold the method used in promoting these views in 1985 and since then.

We would also like to comment on a number of the issues raised by comrade P in her statement.

### On the Differences

The tone of her statement is one of bewilderment. All she has done is ask some questions. So why are all these bricks suddenly falling on her head?

But Comrade P is not being straightforward when she puts the matter in this way. We think that she should have thought about, and presented, the whole story.

In fact, after the publication of the first issue of the literary magazine **Struggle** in 1985, she put forward the view that the stand on literary matters should change. She was dissatisfied with the class standpoint in literature. She also recoiled from the connection of cultural work to active revolutionary work, denigrating this as "setting leaflets to music". In discussion, she cast doubt on the concept of building a revolutionary literature trend and instead focused on the concept of greatness in art.

This views also found expression in the draft letter. The very first paragraph of the letter raised the issue of "a definite problem...which has fundamental bearing on the orientation" of **Struggle**. It said that "We feel this problem is serious, with potentially harmful consequences..." And it denied the existence of a correct Marxist-Leninist line on literature.

It was comrade P's right, of course, to demand that views change. But it is the right of other comrades to oppose such a change if they feel it would be harmful and an abandonment of the revolutionary struggle. For her to neglect to mention that she was raising problems which had a "fundamental bearing on orientation" is to prevent any possibility of understanding how and why the literary debate developed.

### On Glibness

In her statement, comrade P says that the issue that the first editorial in **Struggle** treated a number of serious questions "in a far too glib manner". In contrast to this glibness, comrade P stresses that she does not "have easy answers, or sometimes answers at all."

Is that so?

But comrade P holds that the important part of literature goes beyond classes, politics and ideology. She already has this answer.

Comrade P set forward in discussion in 1985 that poets like Pound and Eliot had expanded the ways of seeing things and created new ways of saying things.

Comrade P's draft letter set forward that there was no consistent Marxist-Leninist theory of literature.

And comrade P was demanding a change in the activities and views of the revolutionary writers.

It seems to us that comrade P had lots of answers. What comrade P lacks is not answers. What she and the other author of the letter lack are serious, worked-out views and evidence for their views. Or at least, they have not made such views available to us and other comrades.

### On Demoralization

Comrade P also seems bewildered that anyone has raised the issue of demoralization with respect to the draft letter.

In fact, the connection between the draft letter and demoralization in revolutionary work is well-known. The authors of the draft letter themselves were more and more setting aside revolutionary work as they developed the ideas of the draft letter. Since then they have become pretty passive indeed. And the other discontented comrades who agree with abandoning the class standpoint in literature are mainly a few comrades who have also become more and more demoralized with revolutionary work in the present.

It is not simply a coincidence that this passivity and demoralization developed along with the draft letter. The ideas of the draft letter lead in that direction.

The draft letter deals not just with literary affairs, but itself draws the connection to the attitude to political trends. It, in essence, condemns maintaining an independent communist stand as doctrinairism and sectarianism against those with unclear ideas. But if one regards communist independence as sectarianism, then doesn't it stand to reason that one would have less and less enthusiasm to do the protracted and difficult (but liberating) work of upholding communism in the

midst of the period of the Reaganite orgy of the bourgeoisie and the reformists?

The draft letter denigrates the value of the Marxist-Leninist theory for literary questions. It uses the same type of argument that is used by bourgeois critics to denounce Marxist-Leninist theory on other issues as well. But once one starts down this road, how can one maintain enthusiasm to promote Marxist-Leninism and class-consciousness among the masses?

Comrade P admits that it was a mistake not to finish the draft letter. But she gives no reason for this mistake, and simply shrugs it off as not a "mistake of principle".

But the draft letter, as we pointed out above, talks about serious problems with a fundamental bearing on the fate of revolutionary literary work. This should be an important matter. Yet the draft letter was never finished; these criticisms were never sent in to **Struggle** or some other Party journal; they were not brought to a Party body; and no other method was used to take them to the whole Party. Doesn't this seem to indicate a certain demoralization and passivity? The authors of the draft letter believed that they saw a serious problem that, uncorrected, would hurt the revolution, and then they just dropped the issue and even complained when the **Supplement** finally brought things to the attention of the whole Party.

#### On Gossip

Comrade P is upset with the methods used by the **Supplement** in bringing the literary debate to the whole Party. In contrast, she directly asserts that there were no errors of principle in the way the draft letter was written or discussed.

Comrade P does say that it was a mistake not to send the draft letter to the editor of **Struggle**, comrade Tim Hall, whose views and editorial were being criticized. She states that it was not a "mistake of principle", and apparently does not regard it as an example of "gossip or a backhanded method of operation".

Comrade P actually goes to the extent of implying that the Party really had the draft letter all along. She states that "to the best of my knowledge a Party comrade was in possession of a copy of the letter from the Fall of '85 to the present." She doesn't say who she is referring to, so for now this is a mystery. But she implies that she believed that the whole Party knew about her views or even had the draft letter.

*Is that so?*

Last year, in 1987, she was upset when a comrade informed her that a copy of the draft letter had just been sent in to the central Party apparatus. Why did this bother her, if she believed

that the Party had access to this letter from 1985?

And why, in 1985, did the authors of the draft letter read it to various comrades but not give them a copy to examine? This peculiar method was used by the other author of the draft letter, and according to her statement, it seems comrade P also used it. Given the length and complexity of the draft letter, it was certainly an odd method of soliciting views on the letter. It did, however, ensure that the discussion on the draft letter would be restricted to narrow circles.

Comrade P may believe that the other author of the draft letter had special responsibility to bring its views before the Party, and in fact he did bear such special responsibility. But, comrade P, although perhaps you are not aware of it, in 1985 the other author of the draft letter went to the extent of hiding his views at crucial moments. At one point, he was asked directly by some comrades dealing with **Struggle** what his views were, and what were the views among other comrades in Buffalo. All he put forward was support for **Struggle**. On another occasion he and comrade Hall, the editor of **Struggle**, met together. He didn't see fit to say anything at all about the problems of "fundamental bearing on orientation".

But back to the issue comrade P raises about possession of the draft letter. Of course, it is true that at least two comrades around the Party had possession of the draft letter. After all, both comrade P and the other author had the draft letter. This didn't ensure that the whole Party or any Party body had possession of the draft letter. It would have ensured this -- if comrade P or the other author had used Party methods to deal with their criticism of **Struggle** or if they had at least invested in a few postage stamps to send in their criticisms to **Struggle**. But there is no such thing as a group of people where what one person knows is automatically known to everyone. That only occurs in science fiction stories about telepathy. In real life, it takes constant attention to maintaining proper methods of collective, communist life to ensure that the body of communist activists as a whole can deal with the serious issues of revolutionary work.

#### On the Methods for Dealing with Controversies

Comrade P expresses surprise that the methods used by the authors of the draft letter have been criticized. But this criticism simply aims to uphold basic methods of communist organizational work. So it is worthwhile to try yet another method of showing what the errors were. To show the points at stake, we would like to make a comparison to another controversy that arose in the communist circles of another country. We will show that the

issue of "objectifying" controversies was not invented by us, but was also used by Lenin.

In the first years of the twentieth century, a conflict arose between the so-called "Economists" and the revolutionary Marxists among the Russian communists. This is described in such works of Lenin as the famous book **What Is To Be Done?**

It seems to us that the authors of the draft letter have duplicated some of the methods used by the Economists.

1) The draft letter was not circulated in 1985 or even finished. After the **Supplement** publicized the literary debate, the discontented complained about why it was being discussed in the press.

The same thing took place in the struggle against Economism. It was the revolutionary Marxists who brought the Economists' declarations of principle to light, and the Economists opposed this. Lenin wrote that:

"...the notoriety deservedly acquired by the **Credo** [statement of beliefs] was due precisely to the frankness with which it .. blurted out the fundamental political tendency of 'Economism,'...

"The **Credo** was not invented, but it was published without the consent and perhaps even against the will of its authors. At all events the present writer, who took part in dragging this new 'program' into the light of day, has heard complaints and reproaches to the effect that copies of the résumé of speakers were distributed, dubbed the **Credo**, and even published in the press together with the protest! [Referring to Lenin's article **A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats**, see Collected Works, vol. 4, pp. 171-182] We refer to this episode because it reveals a very peculiar feature of our Economists, viz., a fear of publicity. This is a feature of Economism generally, and not of the authors of the **Credo** alone. It was revealed by that most outspoken and honest advocate of Economism, the **Robachaya Mysl** ["Workers' Thought" newspaper], and by the **Rabocheye Dyelo** ["Workers' Cause" newspaper] (which was indignant over the publication of 'Economist' documents in the **Vademecum**), as well as by the Kiev Committee, which two years ago refused to permit the publication of its profession de foi [statement of belief], together with a repudiation of it, ..." (**What Is To Be Done?**, Ch. I, Sec. C)

2) The Economists, when forced to defend their views, constantly appealed to the "freedom of

criticism". At the same time as they complained about the publication of documents setting forward their views to the whole movement, they self-righteously presented themselves as innocent victims of persecution whose "freedom of criticism" had been denied. In fact, the Economists were demanding a fundamental change in the character and stand of communist organization. But when they met opposition, they tried to present the issue as simply one of worthy socialist revolutionaries being persecuted by doctrinaires. They thundered about "ossification of the party -- the inevitable retribution that follows the violent strait-lacing of thought".

It seems to us that comrade P has fallen into this same practice when she neglects to mention that she is seeking a major change in the stand on literary questions and instead innocently asks why there is so much controversy over a few simple questions.

3) The Economists had lost faith in Marxism. They instead trailed behind the fashionable bourgeois and petty-bourgeois views of their day. Their loud cries against Marxist "orthodoxy" and for "freedom of criticism" were not the clothes worn by staunch crusaders against the dominant views of their time. Instead they were the banner of surrender to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology and to ideas spread in university circles.

Comrade P and the draft letter have similarly surrendered to ideas fashionable in today's official cultural circles. This goes so far that the draft letter is even upset at the slight to the cult of the obscurantist poets Pound and Eliot

4) The authors of the draft letter were quite convinced that they were, in the words of the draft letter, "on to something". They were quite definite in believing that the literary sphere went beyond Marxism-Leninism.

But what are they replacing the materialist standpoint on literature with? They did not even finish the draft letter. And after referring to "the existence of proletarian literature over the past 100 years", the draft letter ridicules the very existence of "a well-worked out and correct line on literature". All comrade P can do is talk about is the lack of "easy answers".

It appears that the authors of the draft letter set themselves free of any consistent theoretical framework. It is reminiscent of what Lenin said about the Economists:

"...The case of the Russian Social-Democrats very strikingly illustrates the phenomenon observed in the whole of Europe (and long ago noted also by the German Marxists) that the celebrated freedom of criticism does not imply the substitution of one theory for another,

but freedom from all integral, and considered theory; it implies eclecticism and lack of principle." (**What Is To Be Done?**, Ch. I, Sec. D)

We hope that comrade P, the other author of the draft letter, and the other discontented comrades reconsider their stand. We would be happy to see them once again take their stand side-by-side with the other comrades in revolutionary struggle. But time has shown that no real unity can be developed without addressing the serious ideological differences. In this case these differences have been expressed sharply in the literary debate but they concern whether to

uphold an independent communist stand in all activity. Our first priority has to be to maintain the Marxist-Leninist and proletarian stand that is the lifeblood of our Party and the precious legacy of the untold struggle and sacrifices of the masses of communist activists. Let those who wish to uphold the revolutionary mission of the working class join together! Let those who wish to stand aside from the class struggle drop their pretension to communism! Let those who are confused look seriously into the issues at stake, for Marxist-Leninist theory is one of the vital weapons of the revolutionary working class! <>

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**ARTICLES IN THE SUPPLEMENT ON THE LITERARY DEBATE**

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August 20, 1987:

Editorial: On the literary debate  
Literature and the Class Struggle

September 10, 1987:

Correspondence: Redwing on the literary debate

October 20, 1987:

Correspondence on the literary debate:  
--Chairman of Prisoners United for Revolutionary Education  
--From a Los Angeles supporter

November 10, 1987:

Editorial: New developments in the literary debate  
Draft letter on the first issue of Struggle  
In defense of revolutionary literature: A reply to the draft letter -- Part one

December 20, 1987:

Correction to the article "New developments in the literary debate"

January 25, 1988:

A reply to the draft letter -- Part two

February 20, 1988:

Correspondence on the literary debate:  
Statement by one of the authors of the draft letter  
and comment by the Supplement

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