

# THE COMMUNIST

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

"A communist should have largeness of mind and he should be staunch and active, looking upon the interests of the revolution as his very life and subordinating his personal interests to those of the revolution; always and everywhere he should adhere to principle and wage a tireless struggle against all incorrect ideas and



actions so as to consolidate the collective life of the Party and strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses; he should be more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any individual and more concerned about others than about himself. Only thus can he be considered a Communist." Mao-Tsetung

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## VIET NAM CONTINUES ANTI CHINA CAMPAIGN

# SOVIETS BEHIND S E ASIA CONFLICT

The more than a hundred refugees who arrived in Hong Kong on June 7. Insert shows a mother with her baby born on the junk which brought them there. (Photo - Ta Kung Pao)



In coordination with the Vietnamese authorities' shameful persecution of Chinese residents, the Soviet Union has launched a scurrilous propaganda attack against China in recent months.

The Soviet superpower, which today poses the greatest threat to Southeast Asia, has slandered the overseas Chinese as a "fifth column" which poses a grave menace to Southeast Asian countries. They have accused China of using overseas Chinese citizens to "interfere in the internal affairs of other countries" and to "engage in subversive activities". The Soviets have encouraged Viet Nam to persist in its anti-China campaign "no matter how tortuous the future road will be" and has assured Viet Nam that the "long-tested loyal friends, first of all, the Soviet Union, are giving great assistance". The Soviet imperialists, seeking to bring Viet Nam into their strategic framework for world domination, have attempted to compare socialist China of today with the Chinese dynasties in the past which exercised influence over Viet Nam, and they have urged Viet Nam to "resist" the Chinese "aggressors". In a message to Viet Nam from the

Kremlin and released by the Vietnamese press agency July 4th, Brezhnev and Kosygin accuse China of subjecting Viet Nam to "crude and blatant pressure" and pledge that "The Soviet Union ... is supporting and will support Viet Nam unswervingly".

### USSR SEEKS JUNIOR PARTNER

Behind this barrage of lies, distortions, fabrications, and incitations, USSR ambitions for hegemony in Southeast Asia stand exposed. The USSR has long coveted a foothold in Southeast Asia. Their aim is to enlist Vietnam in this undertaking, making them, like Cuba, a junior partner in the social imperialist scheme for world domination. Brezhnev means for Viet Nam to become his Southeast Asian draft horse, as Cuba is in Africa, carting the dung heap of Soviet revisionism throughout this region. Therefore, with the support of the USSR, Viet Nam's task is to establish regional hegemony throughout Southeast Asia. As our Chinese comrades warn, "This is a new way of operating in the current international situation, and a new gimmick in Soviet expansion."

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## POSTAL WORKERS WILDCAT AS BUREAUCRATS SELL OUT

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ARTICLE SUBMITTED BY A CORRESPONDENT

Postal workers in New York and San Francisco are carrying out the longest strike in the history of the post office.

The strike, a wildcat unauthorized by the postal worker unions, began at the New York bulk mail center when 1500 out of 1600 workers refused to report after their present contract expired on July 20th. The next day 90% of the San Francisco bulk mail center workers stayed out. Since then workers from various other locals have also joined the strike.

In an attempt to break the growing militant activity the US Postal Service (USPS) has fired over 200 workers for strike related activity and increased the harassment of all its workers. Inside the San Francisco bulk mail center some of those who have continued to work are being forced to accept 11 hour shifts.

### THE CONTRACT PROPOSAL

The wildcat activity reflects the widespread rank and file anger toward the new contract proposal negotiated by the postal worker unions and the USPS.

Among other things the contract proposal calls for a cut in real wages. Despite the lie being spread by the USPS and the bureaucrats who negotiated the proposal that there is to be a wage increase of 19.5% the actual wage boost is to be 2% the first year and 3% and 5% the next two years. The widely publicized 19.5% figure includes the cost-of-living allowance (COLA). But the COLA is itself a set back in comparison to the old contract. The "cap" placed on the COLA is such that no matter how much inflation goes up wage increases over the next three years cannot add up to more than 19.5%. At the current rate inflation over the next three years will add

up to more than 30%.

The contract also fails to strengthen the no layoff clause as workers were demanding. Under the present clause the USPS has been able to get rid of 60,000 workers over the last three years. This job elimination has been carried out despite rapidly growing mail volume which has led to greater and greater speed ups. Current plans by the USPS call for eliminating another 125,000 jobs over the next five years.

The contract also failed to take up other demands for elimination of the casual worker system, improved health and safety, stronger grievance procedure, and elimination of forced overtime.

Forced overtime was an especially critical issue as postal workers frequently face a mandatory 60 hour work week. Over the last three years the number of overtime hours worked would have provided 55,000 jobs, approximately equal to the number of jobs eliminated.

### BUREAUCRATS UNDERMINE STRUGGLE

In the face of the militant response of the rank and file the bureaucrats for the postal workers unions -- American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), and the Mail Handlers Division of the Laborers Union -- have gone all out to squash the wildcat activity and force workers to accept the lousy contract. Despite the fact that locals all across the country have been calling for rejection, the high ranking officials have used their access to the bourgeois mass media to urge acceptance. For example, although the rank and file bargaining committee of the APWU voted 29 to 14 to reject the contract union president Emmet Andrews on

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## A LABOR FORCE WITHOUT DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

IMMIGRATION SERIES

This article completes our series on immigration. In the first two parts we exposed the hypocrisy of the Carter administration's so-called humanitarian approach to the "illegal alien" problem. Carter's proposal for new immigration policies are intended to give legal sanction to the super-exploitation and national oppression of undocumented workers. These new policies will perpetuate and intensify the poverty and unemployment that drives workers out of their native lands and into the US to seek work "at any price".

The character of exploitation and oppression that undocumented workers face because of their illegal status is also duplicated by various "contract labor" programs that US agribusiness uses to bring foreign agricultural workers into this country. This final article in our immigration series exposes one of these programs.

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Every year ten to fifteen thousand agricultural workers from Jamaica and other Caribbean countries come into the US to work under the most exploitative conditions. They are driven into this country by the mass poverty and unemployment caused in their own countries by long histories of imperialist domination. These Caribbean agricultur-

al workers enter the US under Section H-2 of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952. Through this law US growers who can show that domestic labor is "unavailable" can negotiate contracts to import labor with the governments of specified countries.

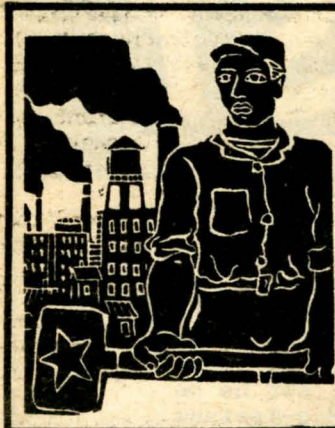
At present the Caribbean workers, who are the great majority of workers brought into this country under the H-2 program, come into the US to harvest sugar cane in Florida and fruit in some eastern states. These workers and others brought into this country through programs similar to the H-2 (there are several currently in operation in the US) are commonly referred to as "contract labor" because of the required government-to-

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# FACTORY EXPOSURES



FACTORY EXPOSURES is a regular column of THE COMMUNIST. We encourage all workers and Marxist-Leninists to send in articles concerning trade union struggles, local grievances, health and safety issues and other forms of workplace abuse.

## CORRESPONDENT CRITICIZES ONE SIDED OSHA LINE

Comrades, sometime ago THE COMMUNIST published an article entitled "Deteriorating Health and Safety - OSHA No Solution" (Vol. III, No.15). The focus of the article was the exposure of OSHA as an inadequate end in the struggle for health and safety. In this it did a good job. It clearly pointed out the serious weaknesses of OSHA and its uses in class society.

In some more recent articles, "Battery Workers Poisoned in Chicago Plant" (Vol. IV, No. 7) and "Bureaucrats Undermine Struggle for Health and Safety" (Vol. IV, No. 13), THE COMMUNIST exposed examples of how OSHA was actually used against workers in their struggle for health and safety. I have no line disagreement with this focus. Clearly we can't rely on OSHA in particular or the bourgeois state in general.

But I have criticism of what we are left with after reading these articles. There is no mention of if, when, or how we would use OSHA or its standards. We are left with the feeling that it is worthless and not to be used. I don't think this is the intended line. But by not speaking to just how and when we use OSHA and the weak reference to resistance from the working class we are at a loss as to what to do.

In our work on a health and safety committee we have come

to the position that when the company fails to live up to OSHA standards we would use this fact and engage in struggle with the company. But we rely on the direct action of the masses as our means, not federal inspectors and long court cases. Nor do we foster the illusion that OSHA standards if lived up to all down the line would make for a safe or healthy place to work.

Another criticism would be that there is no clear reference to the role played by the mass struggle for health and safety. The effect of this movement had or has on OSHA is not spoken to. We have to extrapolate what effect the struggle has had on the bourgeoisie in regards to health and safety.

I am not sure of the history of health and safety struggles but this is something we need in our work in the health and safety committee. I am not sure where one would research these things. Any suggestions, comments, criticisms, or clarifications would be greatly appreciated.

## WC RESPONSE

We welcome this criticism submitted to THE COMMUNIST. We agree that our analysis of OSHA has been one-sided. While our exposures have shown that we can never rely on OSHA to win the struggle for health and safety, they have failed to explain how we do use OSHA, despite its limitations, as one tool in our day-to-day

organizing.

In workplaces across the country the working class is spontaneously rebelling against deteriorating conditions of health and safety. Some of the forms this struggle has taken are health and safety committees, pull-outs, sick-outs, wildcats, and strikes. In the fight to win communist leadership of this struggle, tactical flexibility, the utilization of all means and issues, becomes critical. It would be characteristic of the petty bourgeois radical not to use OSHA simply because it is weak or a part of the bourgeois state apparatus.

Overall the question of tactics demands that we study the concrete conditions in our workplaces. In some places the struggle may be at a low level or the conditions may not be acute. In other situations the level of struggle will be advanced or the unsafe conditions serious. Whatever the situation our task is to utilize tactics that correspond to the conditions that exist and that will move forward the struggle and consciousness of the masses. These tactics include grievances, petitions, surveys, investigations, health and safety committees, leaflets and newsletters, and OSHA complaints, as well as the direct action of the workers through slowdowns, strikes, and wildcats.

As our correspondent correctly puts forward, in making tactical use of OSHA, the key point is that we cannot rely on it as an end all in the struggle for health and safety. OSHA standards and procedures can be incorporated into our use of grievances, safety committees, literature, etc. At the same time OSHA cannot be a substitute for the direct mass resistance of the workers.

In general in fighting to lead the struggle for health and safety a fundamental aspect of our tactics must be exposure of the trade union bureaucracy. It is the opportunists that dominate the

trade unions who subvert the workers' struggle for health and safety by diverting it toward bureaucratic channels, restricting the direct action of the masses, and putting forward reform measures like OSHA as an end all. For the bureaucrats the issue of health and safety is just one more means by which to advance their personal careers. Militant speeches on health and safety are perennial planks in the platforms of do-nothing trade union bureaucrats.

As communists our overall task in the trade unions must be to expose and isolate the opportunists and win the trade unions over to communist leadership. The struggle for health and safety must be a component part of this overall struggle for leadership of the trade unions.

## SUM UP THE STRUGGLE FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY

A task before all Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers is to sum up both our knowledge of the concrete conditions and our practical experiences in the struggle for health and safety. We call for factory exposures that sum up the work of health and safety committees, struggles for safety clauses in contracts, direct action such as slowdowns, strikes or wildcats in defense of health and safety, etc. A specific focus is how comrades have used OSHA or been abused by OSHA. We must learn not only from our gains but also from our pitfalls and mistakes. In addition, while we intend to sum-up the spontaneous mass struggle for health and safety and its effect on the development of OSHA, we also call for correspondence on this history from our readers.

It is only through this sum-up of both the concrete conditions and our own practical work that we will deepen our grasp of the tactics required to move the struggle forward at this time. We put forward this task not only to our own cadre but to all advanced forces.

# STEARNS STRIKE ENTERS THIRD YEAR

On July 15, a rally was held by the miners in Stearns, Kentucky to commemorate the second anniversary of their militant strike for union recognition and a contract. Despite an all day rain storm over 400 people--miners and supporters of the strike from around the country--attended. In the course of the rally, over \$6,000 was contributed to the Stearns Miners Relief Fund--80% of this from Districts in the UMWA. Numerous solidarity statements were made and there was entertainment from a theater group and singing group from New York City.

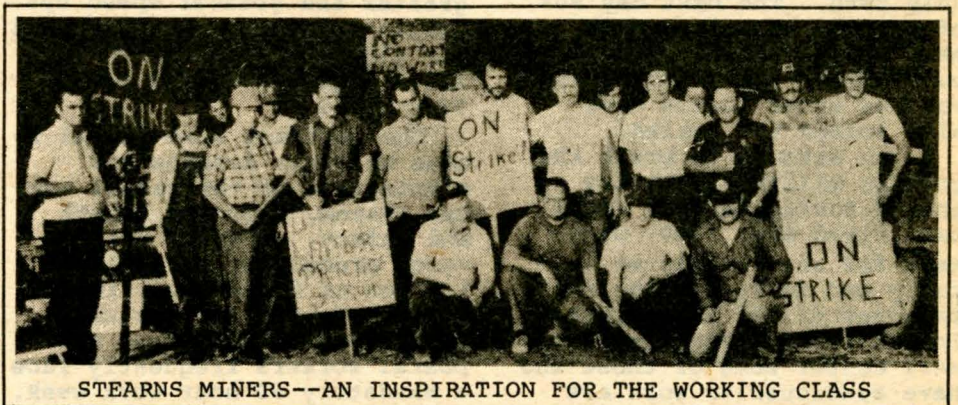
The struggle in Stearns has been long and bitter. The Blue Diamond Coal Company has made every effort possible to crush these miners and their families. In particular, these capitalists have used the state to suppress the workers' struggle. The strikers are currently under an injunction which limits things like the size of their picket lines. Eleven of the strike-leaders have spent almost 60 days in jail. One of the picket captains and a leader in the strike faces up to 60 years in prison if convicted of charges brought against him, plus he is being sued for \$9 million for a false charge connected with his support for a strike in another mine!

Scabs have been brought in the mine in an effort to de-

moralize the strikers and create divisions within their ranks. In the course of the strike, 8-9 scabs have been wounded and one killed. There is a constant war going on. A short while back, the house of a leader of the strike was shot into with the bullets narrowly missing his wife, who is a leader of the Strike Support Women's Club. These incidents are only examples of the character of struggle the miners face. Yet, they have remained firm and united.

What should a strike like this mean to us? First, the example of these miners, their commitment, fearlessness, and determination, should inspire us to take up with the renewed vigor the revolutionary task of bringing to an end the criminal system of capitalism which is the source of the miners' misery. As Engels said, "People who endure so much to bend one single bourgeoisie will be able to break the power of the whole bourgeoisie." The Stearns miners have displayed qualities to be emulated by the entire working class. Their struggle provides us with great confidence in our revolutionary cause.

Second, this struggle underscores the importance of taking up the struggle to organize the millions of unorganized workers. The capitalists are trying to crush the unions and prevent their ex-



STEARNS MINERS--AN INSPIRATION FOR THE WORKING CLASS

pansion into new areas. The determination of the Blue Diamond Coal Company, J.P. Stevens, Coors, Farah, etc. adequately demonstrates this fact. The battle at Stearns is the key to opening up the rest of the unorganized miners in Eastern Kentucky and in the southern states. The effect of non-union mines was dramatically felt in the last national strike. In Eastern Kentucky there was no decline in coal production during the strike whereas it fell to as low as 2% in some organized states like West Virginia. A victory in this strike insures progress in the effort to organize; a defeat dampens it.

Third, because of these facts, every revolutionary, trade unionist, or progressive person should take up the effort to support the Stearns miners and their families. Over the length of the strike they have received broad support from working and progressive people. For most of the strike the UMWA has provided strike pay. And, thousands of people and many groups,

organizations, unions, and UMWA Districts have contributed other material and financial support to the Stearns miners who have travelled to every corner of the country to speak about their struggle. But, as the duration of the strike grows, as the novelty wears off, and as Blue Diamond intensifies its efforts to crush the miners' struggle the importance of this material and financial support becomes more critical.

It is also at this critical period in the struggle where, despite its financial contributions, the shallow character of support for the Stearns strike by the UMWA's top leadership becomes painfully apparent. In preparation for the July 15th rally the UMWA leadership promised to mobilize mass support by union members. Instead, miners were notified of the rally only a week before, if they were notified at all. Only a handful of UMWA districts were to be represented.

# DEVELOP PARTY TYPE UNITS AND A NUCLEAR STYLE OF WORK



This is the first of three part series which presents a sum up of factory work by the Revolutionary Workers Collective (RWC). We will also include in the series comments on the sum up made by the Pacific Collective (M-L). Our commentary will appear with each part. It will focus on some, but by no means all, of the issues raised by these organizations, and we encourage readers to submit their own views of the debate.

We have a number of significant disagreements with the positions brought forward in the sum up. However, that does not diminish our view of its value. It is an effort to seek truth from facts. As we pointed out in our series on Revolutionary Training:

"Especially at this time we need to pay attention to the struggle to build party organizations on the plant floor (revolutionary cores and nuclei) which lay the basis for giving leadership to the economic and political agitation of the working class.

Sum ups of these struggles must also have a high priority in our work if the party we strive to create is to be 'trained and taught correct revolutionary tactics on the basis of its own mistakes.'" (THE COMMUNIST, v. IV, no. 14.)

That kind of effort is still the exception in our movement. For that reason, the initiative of the RWC in evaluating their work and in testing that evaluation in the pages of a national newspaper is an example to be followed. We encourage other comrades to use THE COMMUNIST in the same way.

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"MILITANT TRADE UNIONISTS -- NOT COMMUNISTS"

In the first part of their sum-up, the RWC criticizes errors made in the strike work by the August Twentieth Movement and the Bay Area Communist Union. These criticisms are open and above board and our columns are open to these organizations for response.

The right opportunist errors identified are common to the trade union work of communists. For example, it is a hard task, not an easy one, to connect economic agitation over day to day demands of the working class with political agitation for our revolutionary goals. If we are to become skilled in this there must be a definite struggle to break with the spontaneous tendency of inexperienced comrades to tail trade union politics. We need economic agitation on strike demands, negotiation procedures, conditions for contract settlement, etc. -- as Lenin says, these remain an important lever in the economic struggle." (WITBD, p. 68). But he also warns that "this, taken by itself, is in essence still not Social Democratic (communist) work, but merely trade union work." (Ibid., p. 69).

Other errors identified by the RWC also show the failure of communists to fight for political influence at the workplace. Lying low, being friendly but apolitical, thinking only of coffee and donuts on the

picket line, shying away from struggle, conciliating with redbaiting, and failing to take up criticism of the trade union officials -- without a doubt these errors raise the basic issue for every comrade engaged in trade union work: whether we will function as communists or trade union militants.

AN ECONOMIST APPROACH TOWARD BUILDING A CORE

Did RWC function as communists or as trade union militants in developing the work of their core? Certainly they were open as Marxist-Leninists to workers who joined their core but our job would be easy if this were enough to characterize communist work. In fact, we think the RWC failed to create the core as a party type organization, but instead adopted a narrow, economist approach to the work of their core which prevented them from consolidating advanced workers.

We would define a factory core as a party type organization at the workplace made up of communists and advanced workers and modeled after the factory nucleus. Factory nuclei, of course, are the basic units of a communist organization at the workplace. By modeling a core after a factory nucleus and calling it a party type organization, we mean to emphasize that it should act as much like the primary unit of a communist party as possible. It should be small, there should be agreement on adhering to security measures, there should be voluntary agreement to discipline and the core should function in a conspiratorial manner. It should include within its scope all matters which would fall within the scope of a basic party unit -- political education and the study of Marxism-Leninism, all aspects of the class struggle nationally and internationally, matters concerning the collective life of core members, work in the workplace and in the unions, criticism, self-criticism, etc.

Of course, unity around these points starts at a lower level and is developed to a higher level through struggle. Nonetheless, overall a core prepares advanced workers for membership in a democratic centralist organization. It is an opportunity to test them, train them and consolidate them, and it is political consolidation which must be our primary goal. Unlike a caucus, for example, a core does not exist primarily to serve plant work.

In order to make a core a party type organization in the workplace, we must adopt a nuclear style of work. What we mean by this is a style of work that gives priority to establishing a leading group which will function in a disciplined, conspiratorial manner in carrying out a definite political line under definite leadership. Mao says:

"a leading group should be formed in each unit in the course of the movement. . . . In every organization, school, army unit, factory or village, whether large or small, we should give effect to the ninth of Stalin's twelve conditions for the bolshevization of the Party, namely, that on the establishment of a nucleus of leadership." (CONCERNING METHODS OF LEADERSHIP)

What is necessary is the kind of work that can lay the basis for building a core. This does not mean that there must first be a core before any other work can unfold. It may be that to establish contacts in a workplace by building a caucus or a safety committee or election activity will be the first step. It does mean that, whatever the tactics, we adopt a nuclear style and give priority to establishing a leading group as soon as conditions permit.

We don't think the RWC grasped

either the necessity to make the core a party type organization or based its core activity firmly on a nuclear style of work. Instead, because of inexperience, comrades approached the task of building a core in a narrow and economist way.

For example, while it is clear that comrades of the RWC were open with core members about being communists, it is also clear that the focus of their activity was economic, not political work. The goals which defined the core, even the motivation for it, were exclusively devoted to the strike and to work in the plant. None of the goals put forward were wrong in themselves, but they lacked breadth of scope. They did not approach the core as a party type organization in embryo taking up all problems falling within the scope of a primary party unit. Instead they tended to narrow the work of communists and to turn the core into a tool of economic struggle. RWC's conditions for the formation of a core and criteria for core membership reflect the same narrow focus. In this perspective, it is not surprising that as the struggle in the plant cooled down, comrades were not able to sustain the work of the core.

We would emphasize that without regular use of a nationwide newspaper devoted to comprehensive political exposure, it is virtually impossible to avoid such narrowness in core work. This is a lesson of WHAT IS TO BE DONE? Topical political exposures, Lenin wrote, are the chief means of training leaders in revolutionary activity. (See "The Chief Means of Revolutionary Training," THE COMMUNIST, v. IV, no. 12.) In this respect we encourage all local collectives such as the RWC to make systematic use of THE COMMUNIST in their work and to work with us to make THE COMMUNIST a better tool for their work.

The tendency of the RWC to belittle the significance of Marxist-Leninist leadership and collective discipline in the activity of the core reflects the same narrowness. RWC says it is incorrect to demand that core members follow the leadership of one particular organization. This is incorrect. How can a party organization modeled after a factory nucleus function without a single, leading line? Differences will certainly arise in a core, but they should be resolved according to the model of democratic centralism. Where the leadership or line leading the work has been incorrect it can be corrected in the course of struggle by criticism, self criticism.

Similarly, it is significant that the RWC does not make a willingness to function in a disciplined manner a criteria for core membership. In our view core members must be (1) active in the struggle of the class (not only the plant), (2) open and willing to study Marxism-Leninism, (3) willing to act in a disciplined, collective manner, and (4) willing to adhere to security measures and function in a secret manner. Attention to leadership and discipline is essential to creating a party type unit which can provide a good framework for politically consolidating advanced workers.

In fact, it seems clear to us from the facts reported that RWC's major error was in lagging behind the needs of core members for Marxist-Leninist ideology, politics and organization. In spite of workers (not necessarily all) who took up the study of Marxism-Leninism in the course of the strike, and in particular who took up the successful study of Kota's TWO OPPOSING LINES IN THE WORLD TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, which is not an easy book, RWC pretends that they "jumped too far ahead of individuals that composed our core" and that they "overestimated the level of the subjective factor." We were

not there, but to us this sounds too much like the refrain of the economists exposed by Lenin in WHAT IS TO BE DONE? For example: "the mass of workers themselves have not yet advanced the broad and militant political tasks that revolutionaries are attempting to 'impose' upon them." (WITBD, p. 128).

Why did this economist trend that was lagging behind pretend to be too far ahead? Lenin pointed out that it was essentially a theoretical justification for avoiding the imperative task of creating a strong, disciplined organization of professional revolutionaries.

The pieces fit the puzzle. Inattention to discipline and leadership complements a narrow focus on plant work. The core becomes a means to develop "intermediate and active lower strata workers into advanced and thus deepening fusion." The essential task of party building -- taking Marxism-Leninism to the best representatives of the working class and training them as real political leaders, that is, "winning the vanguard to communism" -- is abandoned.

Incidentally, we are not convinced that jumping "too far ahead of individuals that composed our core" was a 'left' error as RWC suggests. In our own experience when someone who has read some Marxist-Leninist books takes up study with someone who has not, if the person familiar with the material does not pay close attention to preparing his material for presentation in a measured, step by step, ordered way, it has often looked like he was very learned and very advanced and that he could not explain things because they were too complicated. Then it looks like the person unfamiliar with Marxism is backward and that the Marxist-Leninist has left too far ahead in failing to recognize how backward the student is. But on closer examination we have always found that the real problem is lack of preparation by the Marxist-Leninist, not ignorance of the student, and that the main thing was that the Marxist Leninist was lagging behind in his tasks, not that he had left ahead. In plain English he was not prepared. That is the main problem in bringing Marxism-Leninism to the advanced. Not that the advanced are too backward.

WIN THE VANGUARD TO COMMUNISM

We have serious differences with the RWC over their characterization of advanced workers. For now we can only briefly identify our differences rather than argue them, but we will return to the question in the third article of the series. Comrades should recognize, however, that RWC's line on the question is much the same as the line of the Marxist Leninist Unity League which appeared in CLASS STRUGGLE, #4,5, and which we analyzed and exposed in "Win the Vanguard," THE COMMUNIST, v. II, no. 11.

Briefly: RWC incorrectly narrows Lenin's view of the advanced worker and incorrectly criticizes the concept of the "relatively advanced". We hold that an advanced worker must be open to communism and accept it consciously, but we do not find that a willingness to "study, study, study" occurs spontaneously. In our view, Lenin is also referring to working class leaders who are just being drawn to Marxism.

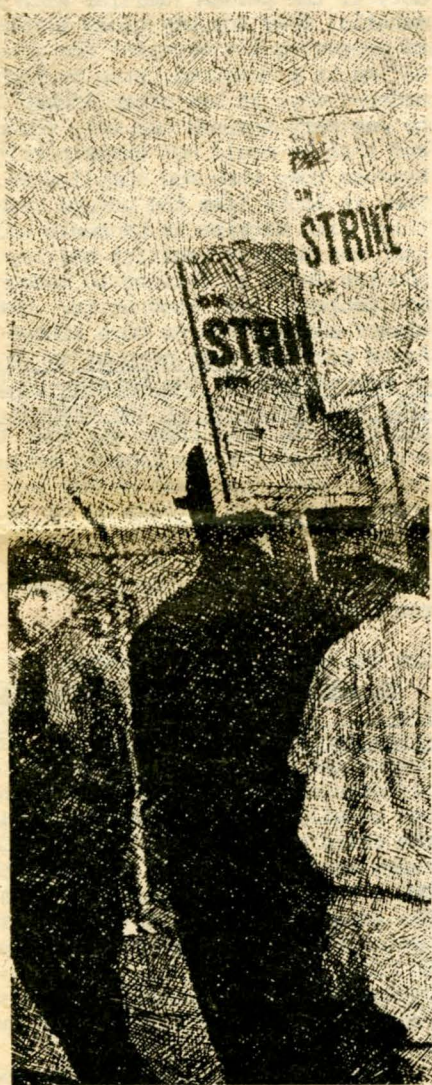
Second, RWC replaces the task of winning the advanced with the task of winning the intermediate to the level of the advanced. But this is inconsistent with making party building the central task. Party building means winning the vanguard to communism and at this time, contrary to the position of the RWC, the key to fusing communism with the workers movement is just that -- taking Marxism-Leninism to the best representatives of the working class and transforming them into real political leaders.

Third, we doubt RWC's assertion that "we had not seen (or have we seen) any advanced workers in this plant." Our own experience in similar workplaces shows that this particular form of blindness is due to our own errors of line or methods of work, not the absence of advanced workers. This is particularly true in basic industry. Our ability to penetrate this sector, which is decisive, depends on our ability to win over the advanced in those situations,

INTRODUCTION

This is a summation written by the Revolutionary Workers Collective of work done by it and other communists during a strike at a major plant in the San Francisco Bay Area. Before, during and since the strike, the RWC cadre working at this plant conducted their work through a fraction consisting of themselves as well as members of the Pacific Collective (M-L). We think that our work in this fraction represents an advance in our struggle for communist unity and provides a lesson for other communists as well. The work in the joint fraction has enabled the two small organizations involved to have a far greater impact at this plant than either would have been capable of alone. Through struggle within the fraction, both collectives have deepened their understanding of how to do communist work within the trade unions.

While the RWC is primarily responsible for the writing of this summation, which represents the unity that we have achieved, the Pacific Collective contributed substantially to it by suggesting and helping to write several of the sections and by criticizing earlier drafts produced by us.



Strikes are schools of warfare for the working class and for communists as well. The anti-revisionist communist movement in the US is still young and its ties with the working class remain quite tenuous, despite the fact that young communist intellectuals have been working in industry for almost a decade, attempting to fuse the communist and working class movements. Our efforts to form a genuine anti-revisionist communist party remain unfulfilled, despite pretensions of the Communist Labor Party (CLP), the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and the October League (OL - now the Communist Party (M-L)) to have completed the task. Our view is that no organization can claim to be the vanguard party of the working class in this country until it has both united large numbers of advanced workers and Marxist-Leninists around its program for revolution in the United States, and demonstrated its ability to provide correct leadership to a broad range of mass economic and political struggles.

It is with this perspective that our cadre approached the recent strike at a company in the Bay area. At the beginning of the strike we had very few cadre in the plant, and their experience was quite limited. None had worked there for as much as a year. We were somewhat unclear as to how strong a role the

main union in the plant would play during the strike, but assumed that it would both be strong and conservative. We were unprepared to discover how weak and ineffective the union would be and how small was the leadership's base among the 1600 members in the plant.

GOALS FOR THE STRIKE

In formulating our goals for the strike, we grouped them according to: (1) Party building, (2) Work in the union and (3) Struggle with the company. Our party building tasks we saw as, first, refining and developing our political line on the tasks of communists in the trade unions and within the working class movement; second, struggling for the greatest level of unity possible with the other Marxist-Leninists working in the plant; and third, winning advanced workers to communism and working with intermediate and class conscious workers to help raise their political level.

We saw our work within the union as the first step towards the long term goal of transforming the union into a mass revolutionary organization. To accomplish this transformation we must teach the rank and file the irreconcilability of class contradictions under capitalism, the role of the state, the strength which the workers can build through unity and organization, and the historic mission of the working class. The bureaucrats who serve capitalism must be exposed, isolated, and replaced by class conscious workers and communists.

Towards the company we formulated our main goals for strike work as wresting the greatest amount of economic concessions possible from the company. At the same time we planned to use the opportunity provided by the strike to carry out educational activities using the company as a model of a huge multinational corporation during the period of advanced capitalism. Our tasks were to expose the company's role throughout the world, explain the connection between advanced capitalism and worsening economic conditions, and do education on the nature of the state.

It is in the context of these goals, which we believe to have been correct, that we can sum up our work during the strike.

PARTY BUILDING

At this point in history, communists must evaluate all of their planned and completed work within the context of party building, our central task. No class within society can contend for or hold power without a political party (or parties) that represents its interests and can lead the class in battle for those interests. The working class in this country has been without such a party for at least 30 years since the degeneration of the CPUSA into reformism and class collaboration. But a party cannot be proclaimed into existence. There are dozens of organizations in the US that have announced that they are the true vanguard of the working class. None of them has yet been able to convince many workers of the truth of these assertions. The question becomes: When is a party a party? We hold that for an organization to deserve the name, communist party, it must demonstrate, in concrete practice, its ability to unite communists, win advanced workers to communism, and lead the masses in struggle.

Key to this process is the development and implementation of a correct political line on the major questions facing people of this country today and in the period ahead. When we say "political line", we do not mean a set of simplistic slogans such as those found in the OL's November 1975 call to unite or the Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee's (MLOC) outline party program. Nor do we mean that it is necessary to develop encyclopedic treatises on every aspect of the domestic and international situation. What we do mean is that on the major questions facing the American people: the international situation, the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and other national questions, the ques-

# RWC STRIKE PARTY

tion of women's oppression, the building of a united front against imperialism within the US, the struggle for democratic rights, and particularly, work within the trade unions and the working class movement generally, communists must be able to set out a general but complete and accurate summation of the objective situation, an elucidation of overall goals and the strategy for reaching those goals, and tactics for waging struggle during the immediate period.

During the strike, we were able to develop our understanding and political line on work within the established industrial trade unions. In general, we think that our goals for the strike work demonstrated an overall correct analysis of this question. Rather than attempting to summarize that analysis point by point at this juncture, we will try to bring it out as we go through the various aspects of the work.

UNITING MARXIST-LENINISTS

The most important lesson we learned about the task of uniting communists during the strike confirmed a lesson previously summed-up from our study of the Albanian and Vietnamese revolutions: that is, that Marxist-Leninist unity is most significantly advanced under pressure from the masses and in response to the needs of the mass struggle. Prior to the strike, none of the communists in the plant had demonstrated either significant leadership in the day to day struggle or the existence of a strategy for work in the plant. Most were even newer to the company than we were. Just before the strike, a loose caucus was formed to do agitation around strike demands. The caucus included members of our collective, individual communists, and members of the August Twenty-ninth Movement (AIM) and Bay Area Communist Union (BACU).

Our plan for working with other ML's in the plant was to begin to develop liaison relations that would deal specifically with the work with those communists with whom we had some degree of principled fraternal relations; to investigate their line and plan for work in the plant; to put out our line; and to see what unity could be developed to build the struggle. We went through a period of investigation, having had limited experience with some groups. As a result we saw AIM and later BACU as organizations with which we could unite around different forms of practice related to the strike.

RCP's practice during the strike was very low profile. Their line during the strike was totally eco-

nomist. They struggled against any criticism of the trade union bureaucrats (TUB's) and would not take up the struggle against anti-communism which was an attack on all progressive forces in the strike. Other left groups, such as CLP, did not want to have any association with either communists or work with them in any form for fear of being red-baited, and in their practice around the strike saw working out contradictions with the TUB's rather than rely on rank and file to resolve them through struggle. The OL, which had no one in the plant despite a long history of selling their paper outside, sold THE CALL, talked to workers on the picket line, and issued some leaflets, most of which duplicated the information and points being made by caucus leaflets. Their effect was negligible. The "Revolutionary Wing" was not in the union, but still managed to play a thoroughly disruptive police agent role. They did three or four long propaganda leaflets during the strike, striking the main blow against the "phony" communists. They named individuals and communist organizations in the plant, criticized the errors these organizations and individuals were making, and claimed they were selling out the rank and file. Many of those they exposed were not open communists. They also told very destructive lies to workers on the picket lines about the other communists and distorted those events they could not lie about. In the short run they had a negative effect, adding much fuel to the anti-communism which both the TUB's and the backward workers were using to isolate our leadership in the strike. In the long run the Wing's leaflets left a lasting impression that communists are just a bunch of crazy fanatics, not unlike the religious cults who spend half their time denouncing each other, and are more interested in recruiting people to their organizations than really changing the conditions in society.

The main critique of communist organizations in the strike will be of AIM and BACU for two reasons: (1) that besides ourselves, they had the most cadre and influence in the strike, and (2) we had some degree of unity with them around the practical work.

AIM's errors were thoroughly rightist throughout the strike. They began the strike with their energies going into developing the strike machinery, and ended the strike discouraging workers from attempting to shut down the plant when it was clear that militant action was necessary to show the company and the TUB's that we wanted a decent con-

# SUM-UP - - - - BUILDING TASKS

tract soon, and to keep production from going out of the plant.

AIM put out two very simple, economist leaflets towards the end of the strike. The closest AIM came to going beyond trade union agitation were occasional statements/speeches at union meetings. They were never open in any way publicly as communists, and in our experience did very little one to one communist agitation. The main difference we had with them at the outset of the strike was over our seeing the primacy of political agitation, i.e. a strike committee bulletin as well as other higher level agitation; and their concentration on the organization of the struggle, for example to get coffee and donuts to the picketlines, or to get people to sign up to do various tasks to develop the bureaucracy to carry out the strike. We said that both are necessary, but for people to get involved in the strike, they must understand it politically. AIM felt that if you could just get people to volunteer for strike tasks, that would bring them into the struggle. This was referred to as a "social worker" mentality by several workers.

It is our view that AIM's failure to be open communists, even to close contacts, was the main reason they failed to consolidate anyone politically as a result of their work in the strike. A secondary reason was their failure to take on the anti-communist attacks in an aggressive way.



During the first half of the strike, AIM's line was that some of the TUB's were in the united front and they should not be criticized. Nor did they think that we should reconstitute our pre-strike caucus for fear of alienating the more backward workers and TUBs. This was a clear error of liquidating the independence and initiative of communists. These lines changed midway as the TUBs became very much exposed for their treachery.

AIM cadre held the line that they would discuss the day to day practical work, but refused to meet organizationally to struggle over line differences or develop a higher level of unity around the work. We made several overtures but AIM never followed up. AIM clearly liquidated ML's Unite.

Overall, AIM's role in the strike reflected that organization's swing to the right early in 1977. When AIM determined that party building was no longer the central task, it liquidated its cadres' role as communists and turned them into militant trade unionists. Abandoning the work of uniting Marxist-Leninists and winning the advanced to communism AIM cadre were reduced to being generally reliable, but almost apolitical participants, not leaders, in the mass struggle.

BACU's errors were also of the rightist, economist type. They had a clear strategy about laying low, and lay low they did. Their presence as communists was non-existent. They did play a progressive and strong role in organizing and occasionally leading many of the day to day struggles, but their leadership was consistently of the middle course. BACU did no communist agitation in the strike. They did play a role in writing/organizing the strike committee bulletins and caucus leaflets.

Their practice was to get it on socially with people but we saw little evidence of consolidating people politically. In fact their consistent cautious, economist approach to strike tactics/strategy was criticized many times by our intermediate worker contacts. No BACU people were ever open as communists, and they took a very defensive posture in respect to the anti-communist attacks. This is contrary to their line about the necessity of having an open communist presence. Both AIM and BACU clearly underestimated the progressive workers they were dealing with and opportunistically act as though by being friends with people/workers you can win them to the struggle for socialism.

Throughout most of the strike they struggled against any public criticism of the TUB'S and had the line of mainly unity and very little struggle with some of the backward, rabidly anti-communist stewards who were trying to destroy our influence at every opportunity. They did have a base among the stewards but they failed to give political leadership and did little to unite the more progressive stewards.

During the strike BACU had a positive, non-sectarian approach towards other ML's and engaged in discussions of the strike work. Upon returning to work, relations degenerated between us due to heightened political differences and scapegoated us for errors in the strike work and other yet to be summed up reasons.

In day to day practice, the workers forced the communists to work together, and this was generally good. The combined resources of the various organizations allowed us to issue frequent leaflets through the mass caucus that developed, organize demonstrations and fund-raising activities, etc. However, the working unity that did develop evaporated as soon as the strike ended, with the usual differences surfacing. Both AIM and BACU have consistently shied away from struggle. They flatly refused to respond to overt red-baiting that broke out within the plant after the strike. They argued against the caucus putting out its summation of the strike "because the climate is not right," and helped to kill the caucus by refusing to help organize meetings and bring people to them. They have also been very reluctant to engage in struggle with us to clarify unities and differences, always pleading that they were "not ready". The result of all this is that not only has unity not been achieved, but also there has been a failure to clarify differences.

Our view of both AIM and BACU is that while they both often contributed valuably to the strike work, their overall roles were economist. Their actions were, at best, those of militant trade unionists - not communists.

At the same time, we must share substantial blame for the failure to further the unity of Marxist-Leninists. Meaningful unity can be developed only on the basis of political line, an impossible task when an organization (such as ours) has failed to develop, clarify, and put out its line. Had we been able to do so prior to and during the strike, this would have provided a basis for both discussions and struggle, and possibly greater unity. Our weaknesses in this work reflect our lack of maturity as an organization as well as our small size and limited resources. Prior to the strike we had failed to carry out thorough research and investigation; consequently we had only a very limited understanding of a plan for strike work and could do little to provide leadership to other communists in the plant. We must also admit a somewhat sectarian

approach to work with the other M-L's and so we did not consistently pursue consultation and struggle with them.

WINNING THE ADVANCED TO COMMUNISM: RAISING THE POLITICAL LEVEL OF INTERMEDIATE AND CLASS CONSCIOUS WORKERS

Prior to the strike, we had set out as one of our most important goals the consolidation of a group of class conscious workers into a core that would study Marxism-Leninism and apply it to the strike situation and to a long range plan for winning leadership over the union.

Early in 1977 we attempted to organize a rank and file caucus. We developed an outline plan for such a caucus which included much of what is still our plan for work today—i.e. a shop newspaper, election of BA's, etc. A few workers were attracted, one of whom joined the core.

The caucus never got off the ground for several reasons: (1) We neglected the objective conditions. We were too new, had too superficial an understanding of the conditions/contradictions, and most importantly, we had no real base to draw upon.

(2) We had a general plan but it was too abstract.

(3) We were immediately red-baited which helped to isolate us.

We dissolved the group after meeting several times and not expanding. Also AIM and BACU left, saying we were too "left" in our approach, that a caucus like this was too much, too soon.

We summed up our attempt as a "left" error, although we did learn a lot from talking to workers about the caucus and hearing their feedback both in the plant and in our caucus meetings.

When we had our union contract proposal meeting, we spoke along with other left forces, agitating around contract demands and how to determine priority demands. Following this meeting there was much more movement in the plant among progressive stewards and other workers for some form of organization—i.e. a strike committee to prepare for the strike. Things were now concrete and real to people to make it worth their time and energy to begin to organize and meet about the upcoming strike.

We (AIM, several progressive stewards, and ourselves) organized an informal strike committee which included workers, stewards and other left forces, BACU, and CLP. (CLP soon dropped out—the committee was too critical of the TUB'S for them). The group became the basis for what was later a strike caucus. We met for four or five weeks before the strike and put out three leaflets, summarizing the most important contract demands for the rank and file and other strike related information.

It became clear to us that given the developing political relationship we had with several workers that we needed another form in which to discuss tactics and strategy which would be on a higher level than in the caucus, where communists and progressive workers could then give more conscious leadership to the strike.

We then decided to organize a core of class conscious workers and communists in order to:

- (1) Develop tactics and strategy for the upcoming strike.
- (2) Develop a long range plan for work in the plant and in the union.
- (3) Develop the leadership of these workers in agitation and organization.
- (4) Study Marxism-Leninism - bring the science to the plant.

Simultaneously, we had been following the polemics between the League for Proletarian Revolution (M-L) and the Marxist-Leninist Collective on the nature and composition of cores. We united that a group of the most class conscious workers active in the day to day struggles, willing to work closely with communists and open to study M-L would aid us in developing intermediate and active lower strata workers into advanced and thus deepen fusion. We differed from views put forward by these two

organizations on the level of development of the workers to be included in the core and on the level of unity necessary for core members (we did not hold that workers had to unite on the central task of party building, etc.) We proposed a lower form level of unity because: (1) We had not seen (nor have we seen) any advanced workers in this plant; (2) To demand that potential core members unite around following leadership of one particular organization and to demand their unity on the central task would have overreached (overread, ed.) the concrete conditions in which we were working (in these conditions workers were just becoming familiar with communists, the communist movement, and the tasks of communists—the level of class struggle prior to the strike was relatively low and there had been previously a dearth of socialist agit/prop.)



Our criteria for core members was that they (1) were active in the struggle in the plant and in the union, (2) that they were willing to study/check out ML, (3) that they would work with communists and (4) that they were committed to developing and implementing a long range plan for political work in the plant and in the union. Those workers who eventually became our core were talked to and worked with in the day to day struggle before being asked to join the core. We were open as communists when we approached them.

WORK OF THE CORE

Initially, the core meetings focused on the general plan for the core. Early on we summed up that the plan developed by our fraction for the core was overly ambitious, so we deleted a proposal that related to research and investigation tasks for the core. We saw early that the core members were eager to discuss tactics for the strike and were responsive to the study materials to the degree that they were linked to real questions that members had regarding the conduct of the strike. In regard to core study plans, our plan did not reflect a scientific view of the level of core members. Rather, it reflected what we felt it would be important for them to study in order to win them over to M-L, in general. Consequently, we ran into several obstacles:

- (1) Resistance on the part of core members to disciplined study and discussion;
- (2) Inappropriate study materials;
- (3) Lack of adequate preparation on the part of M-L members of the core to lead discussions in such a way that core members would grasp the principles we were seeking to teach.

We made both right and "left" errors regarding study: The right error we made was on the role and frequency of the study. In our bowing to spontaneity during (and after) the strike, we underestimated the importance of study in consolidating the core and raising its level of class consciousness. We didn't struggle for study consistently enough, let it slide whenever we ran into the various forms of resistance (lack of preparation, late for meetings, spontaneously discussing tactics, etc.) that core members displayed.

# SUM-UP

CONTINUED FROM P.5

Simultaneously, and principally in our view, we made the "left" error. We overestimated the level of the subjective factor, didn't do a thorough analysis of the level of the individuals in the group and tailor our study plan to reality. Rather, we often jumped too far ahead of individuals that composed our core who were predominantly progressive, class conscious but lower strata workers. We assumed that core members grasped the content of the study and would be able to integrate the principles and the analysis into their developing views on strategy and tactics. We hoped that this was occurring, but did not, in a materialist manner, check the developing views of the core to see if this integration was actually occurring. This reflects some voluntarism on our part. Actually, the core did need a lot more focused and specifically prepared study materials and discussions to make a qualitative leap in their grasp of the stand, viewpoint and method of Marxism-Leninism to be applied to our concrete conditions.

Summed up, while we did introduce study from the perspective of M-L to core members, our method was erroneous.

Core members did begin to see that they could learn from a communist analysis of history, that the role of communists in this country had been in the interest of the working class. The most successful study was on the TUB'S—where we used TWO OPPOSING LINES IN THE WORLD TRADE MOVEMENT by Kota and writings of William Z. Foster on TUB'S and the labor aristocracy.

All core members shared the desire to have joint discussion of tactics, especially during the strike. Attendance and participation in meetings that focused on tactics was high. As our work developed we were able on several occasions to discuss our approach to a particular situation in advance and then carry out the agreed upon tactics. On the other hand, sometimes we were too liberal/too ruthless in our methods of struggle. When this occurred we obtained false unity. In our view this was the strongest area of our work with the core.

The main achievements of the core during the strike were:

(1) The tactical leadership of the core was instrumental in the rank and file pulling off many of the most important events and actions of the strike: rallies, the picnic, shutting down the plant, etc.

(2) Core members saw their ideas translated into successful tactics. There were different levels of understanding in linking theory with practice within the core.

(3) Core members saw the importance of planning and organization in leading a struggle.

(4) An important breakthrough in our work was the close, principled working relationships we built with the workers as a result of our working together. We demystified the myths they had heard about communists.

Note: The preparation of the communists for these discussions of tactics was often times not as thorough as it should have been based, we think, on not summing up periodically the current conditions and developing a general view as to what was to be done.

## DEGENERATION OF THE CORE

Following the strike, the work of the core degenerated dramatically. This was due to many factors:

(1) Demoralization and fear of repression after the strike allowed for individualism on the part of the members to flourish. We had not adequately prepared ourselves or core members for the retreat period.

(2) Belittling theory - the core, with the exception of one intermediate worker, never grasped the relationship of the study to our practice. They did not inter-

nalize the importance of grasping M-L to developing a scientific analysis of the situation and developing a plan in the interest of the working class flowing from this analysis. Additionally, but no less important, the belittlement of theory was an important factor in the resurgence of individualism following the strike. Members were not armed to wage the ideological struggle internally in changed conditions, and thus capitulated to the pessimism that permeated the atmosphere after the strike.

(3) We did not sum up our work systematically enough for the core to experience some sense of progress (or limited successes). We did not recruit. Since the core was composed of intermediate and lower strata workers who were not communists, they viewed our size and our impact in a somewhat static one-sided way. We did not do our work correctly to alter these perceptions.



"WE HOLD THAT THE BASIC UNIT OF A COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION IS THE NUCLEI OR CELL IN THE PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT (FACTORY, WORKSHOP, MINE, OFFICE, STORE, FARM, ETC.) WHICH UNITES ALL MEMBERS OF THE ORGANIZATION IN A GIVEN ENTERPRISE, AND WE WILL BUILD OUR ORGANIZATION ON THAT BASIS. WE MUST MAKE EVERY FACTORY OUR FORTRESS.... THE CELL IS THE PRIMARY ORGANIZATIONAL LINK BETWEEN A COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION AND THE WORKING CLASS AND THE MECHANISM TO JOIN COMMUNISM WITH THE WORKERS MOVEMENT. FACTORY NUCLEI ARE SMALL, CONSPIRATORIAL UNITS OF APPROXIMATELY 3 TO 7 MEMBERS WORKING IN THE SAME PLANT. NUCLEI MUST TAKE UP ALL GENERAL PROBLEMS OF THE ORGANIZATION, PARTICIPATE IN WORKING OUT POLICY, CARRY OUT THE DECISIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION AND APPLY ITS LINE AND POLICIES IN ALL WORK."

WORKERS CONGRESS (M-L) - RESOLUTIONS ON FACTORY NUCLEI

(4) Finally, we did not help core members concretely to develop agitational skills (speaking, writing, etc.) so necessary to raise their level, and essential for them to function as the key connectors between the communists and the broad masses. The same weakness can be observed regarding their organizational skills.

Overall, our work with the core showed us that Lenin's definitions of advanced, intermediate, and backward workers in "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social Democracy" remain valid today. The pragmatic substitution of the concept of the "relatively advanced" for the advanced leads to serious errors when the "relatively advanced" worker does not respond favorably to the demands placed upon him by communists. We have found that there are very few advanced workers who want to "study, study, study, and turn themselves into conscious (communists)" and are ready to "become fully independent leaders of the (communist) working class movement." Advanced workers are themselves products of objective conditions and their number reflects in particular both the development

of the working class movement and the role of communists within it. As communists within the working class movement, we are part of the objective development of the future advanced workers. We hold at this time that the development of advanced workers from among the ranks of intermediate and class conscious workers is key to the fusion of the working class and communist movements. This development is a slow process that demands patience on our part. We have no other choice. The composition of both the O.L. and the R.C.P. reflects the voluntarism inherent in pretending that a militant, possibly class conscious worker is in fact the equivalent of the working class intellectual described by Lenin. Many of the individuals recruited by the O.L. and the R.C.P. from the working class are of course well meaning and dedicated, but their low level of political development and lack of standing within their own class contributes to their organizations' failure to develop leadership in the working class and their continued domination by the former students and intellectuals who formed them. Our experience with a core of class conscious workers has validated this understand-

is being done in a plant that has no previous exposure to socialist agit/prop and when the communists have just entered the plant and haven't investigated the level of the most progressive workers. When a combination of the above factors is present, a group of workers united around the need to put out a newsletter, or united around planning tactics in union meetings might be more appropriate until the consciousness of the workers and the objective conditions change. The right error would be to seek to form only caucus level groups with a much lower level of unity; e.g., uniting around struggle for democracy in the union when objectively workers are present who are open to study of ML.

While our work with members of the core was overall consistent and systematic, we failed almost totally to work systematically with other class conscious workers or to engage in activities to develop the class consciousness of workers as a whole. The most important aspect of this failure was the fact that throughout the entire strike we did not issue one piece of written communist agitation or propaganda. This was not due to a lack of prolixity on our part. Within the rank and file caucus and on the union's bulletin committee we helped issue a score of broad agitational leaflets to help popularize strike demands and activities and to expose the sell-out roles of the trade union leaders. What we failed to do, except verbally, was to take advantage of the many opportunities that existed to take these issues to a higher level by, for example, showing the connection between the company's hard-line stance during the strike and the crisis of capitalism, or explaining the material basis for the bribery of the trade union bureaucrats. We can't think of many "excuses" for our failures in this area: we were worried about breaking the unity of the caucus by acting independently, we did not want to lose our jobs, we didn't have enough time, etc.

The truth of the matter is that our failure represented economism on our part and was a significant failure to take advantage of an important opportunity to do independent communist work.

Because we failed in our responsibility to raise the political level of the spontaneous economic movement, we contributed to the atmosphere of helplessness and defeat which developed at the end of the strike. Because in the end they were forced back to work with a contract containing many negative features and because of the increased company repression after the strike, many workers have concluded that the strike was a failure, or, at best, a waste of time and money. In this situation, one of the most important tasks of communists is to explain the long-term nature of the struggle against capital and to link the partial victories and partial defeats that develop in every spontaneous movement to the overall struggle. If we had done this effectively, we would have helped dispel the negative atmosphere that existed in the plant following the strike and armed the working class for the daily battles on the shop floor.

TO BE CONTINUED



The plan of the Workers Congress (Marxist-Leninist) is to fight for a newspaper modeled on Lenin's ISKRA as the main link in the fight to prepare the conditions for a new Communist party. While we discuss questions from our own definite point of view, our columns are open to all Marxist-Leninists and revolutionary workers for topical exposures, polemics and reports on their work.

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# CONTRACT LABOR

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

grower contract.

While at present the actual number of foreign workers brought into the US as contract labor is relatively small, agribusiness is aggressively demanding its expansion.

## EXPANDING THE H-2 PROGRAM

In particular many employers who rely heavily on foreign labor (and undocumented workers) are calling for expansion of the H-2 program as a method of counteracting any negative effects of Carter's proposals to put tighter controls on the flow of immigrant labor into the US. In response to this growing demand Secretary of Labor Ray Marshall stated last summer that an increase of up to 100,000 in the H-2 program was possible.

The attractiveness of this H-2 program to American agribusiness is rooted in the economic situation of the Caribbean countries where the workers are recruited. Centuries of imperialist domination has created havoc with the economies of these third world countries. Their development has been one-sided and suited to meet the needs of one imperialist power or another for specific cash crops or raw materials. The most characteristic feature of this one-sided development is mass unemployment and poverty.

In Jamaica, for example, unemployment remains chronically at 25% or higher. And, because Jamaica is too poor to provide welfare, unemployment or social security programs, this also means that poverty and desperation reaches great depths among the people.

## NO BARGAINING POWER FOR WORKERS

In such a situation workers have very little bargaining power when agents for US agribusiness arrive to feed on the desperation created by US imperialism and negotiate for contract labor. In fact, the workers have no bargaining power at all. In the contract "negotiations" the workers are represented by Caribbean government officials whose primary concern is the continuation of the contract labor programs. For them, the export of labor is a means of stabilizing social and political tensions which result from the great unemployment and poverty in the Caribbean.

Each year, the contract agreement reflects the complete compromise of workers' economic needs to ensure the continuation of the programs. The work agreement always leaves the obligations of the workers vague so as to give the growers a free hand in interpreting the contract.

In theory, Caribbean government officials represent the interests of the contract laborers once the workers are on the mainland. But, there are never any duties or methods written into the contract for carrying out this "representation". In fact, there are no grievance procedures for the workers to follow if their rights are abused.

On the other hand, by contract provision the grower has the right to terminate a worker's contract and repatriate him at the worker's own expense virtually at will.

## "ADVERSE EFFECT WAGE RATE"

Specified into the standard contract labor agreement is a "minimum" wage set by the US

Department of Labor. This wage is called the "adverse effect wage rate". In theory it protects the jobs and wages of US agricultural workers by setting a wage floor for agricultural work. Before a grower can contract for foreign labor he must show that there is no domestic labor available at the "adverse effect wage rate".

In practice, the growers make no serious effort to recruit domestic workers, and, more importantly, the adverse wage rate is itself based on prevailing wages that have been depressed by decades of importing labor at substandard wages. It is therefore too low to attract domestic workers. In 1977, the average adverse effect wage for 10 eastern states was \$2.74.

Actually the "adverse effect wage rate" used to contract foreign labor acts not as a minimum wage but as a wage ceiling. First, because the employers know that they

have access to an abundance of labor in the poverty stricken Caribbean countries they never have to offer a higher rate. Secondly, because of their total lack of rights the Caribbean workers have no way of bargaining for more. Finally, because the growers have total control and power to interpret the terms of the contract it is easy for them to find ways to cheat the workers and pay them less.

## THE PIECE RATE SYSTEM

In one investigation by the Department of Labor, it was found that 65% of all foreign sugar cane workers were receiving less than the "minimum" wage. In another case, the Atlantic Sugar Association, one of the largest growers was found to have paid its workers on the average 20% less than the minimum wage over the entire 1973-74 harvest.

The growers are able to avoid paying the minimum wage by exploiting the piece rate system used in most agricultural harvest work. While the adverse effect wage is clearly specified in all contracts, the piece rate can

not be. In cutting sugar cane for example, the piece rate can vary from field to field or even row to row depending on the estimated number of tons of sugar per row.

US domestic workers who work piece rates are constantly in a state of bargaining over the piece rates. Foreign workers who can be deported for failing "to diligently and faithfully perform the duties of an agricultural worker" are in no position to bargain over piece rates or to refuse piece rates that make it impossible to earn the minimum wage.

Piece rates which under a normal rate of work could not earn the minimum wage are also used to induce greater and greater speed-up. They are especially effective in this way when they are combined, as they normally are under contract labor, with a minimum work quota that every worker must achieve or be sent home.

The effectiveness of these methods was recorded in a recent study of the sugar industry. This study showed

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# POSTAL WORKERS

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nationwide TV claimed widespread support for the proposal and said that he expected the contract to be ratified. He also claimed that the contract is "good and just, the best we could get."

New York, where strike sentiments are high, is the key local. Other locals across the country have made it clear that if New York strikes they will follow. To block this the executive board of the New York local prevented an immediate strike vote and established a lengthy and delayed voting process.

Although Moe Biller, the president of the large New York local, is calling for a

strike, he refused to take action to back this up. Biller has even said that he will obey the court injunction that outlaws even taking a vote on whether to strike.

In general union bureaucrats are claiming that the contract proposal is a victory because the USPS "gave up" their takeaway offer. But, in this period of rising inflation and deteriorating working conditions the "nothing lost, nothing gained" character of the contract proposal actually amounts to something lost. As one striker said, "They tried to pull a rabbit out of the hat at the last minute to prevent a strike. But it was a very skinny rabbit."

Using their union newspapers to try and win support for the sell-out proposal, national union officials have threatened that rejecting this contract will mean reopening all questions and ending up with a worse contract by losing even the concessions that were "won". Among the wildcat strikers and much of the rest of the rank and file the trade union bureaucrats have completely exposed themselves as the main obstacle blocking a national strike and the advance of the postal workers' struggle.

## GOVERNMENT SIDES WITH USPS

The USPS not only has the union bureaucrats helping them ram through a bad contract, but they also have the help of the supposedly impartial legal system of the state. First, completely disregarding workers rights to organize and bargain collectively, the law makes it illegal for postal workers to strike. The New York courts revealed how far they will go in this regard when they issued an injunction that prohibits even voting on a strike. And in San Francisco the federal prosecutors issued restraining orders that hauled 30 strikers into court and threatened them with up to six months in jail and \$1000 fines for any strike activity.

The USPS also has a plan coordinated with the Pentagon to call up the national guard to move the mail if there is a national strike. Overall this activity shows once again

that the state is never neutral. It sides with the capitalist against the workers.

Despite the attempts by union bureaucrats, the USPS, and the government to squash the wildcat and intimidate workers into accepting the contract proposal, rank-and-file support for the wildcat, for rejecting the contract, and for a national strike continues to grow. In Washington DC, on July 23, 50% of the workers called in sick. When roving pickets from the New York bulk mail center arrived at the New York General Post Office they found that workers had already walked out. Workers in APWU locals in the northeast regional area, the East Bay area on the west coast and in San Francisco not only called for rejection of the contract but demanded amnesty for strikers who had been fired.

## MARXIST-LENINIST LEADERSHIP

There can be no denying that the righteous militance of the postal workers has unfolded spontaneously and without class conscious leadership. The relative ease with which the treacherous trade union bureaucrats undermine this struggle once again exposes the low level of communist penetration and fusion with the working class.

We must transform the character of our work from that of tailing after the angry movement of workers to one of leading it in nationwide struggles. This means first of all uniting our revolutionary science with the advanced workers who come forward and reveal the strength of their class stand and ability to lead in struggles like the postal wildcat. It is only by organizing these advanced workers into a new communist party that stretches across the country and is rooted in party cells in every major workplace that we will acquire the strength to win the mass of workers over to our side and throw out the traitors who presently control the trade unions.

We will build this party, however, only in the process of leading the daily struggles of our class. Communists involved in the post office strike must be able to apply Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions and provide the organization and leadership needed to wage the contract struggle and the strike.

# STEARNS

CONTINUED FROM P. 2

UMWA President Arnold Miller did not attend the rally. Instead, he sent a trembling nervous representative to read a statement and then to say that Miller had planned to attend but couldn't do so because someone had threatened his life the day before!?

This "mobilization" is in contrast to the power the UMWA has in its contract to call the entire union out for a day and genuinely put the great strength of the UMWA rank and file behind a rally for the Stearns struggle.

The real sentiments of the top leadership are reflected by James D. Blair, Vice President of Pension Affairs, who works out of Washington, DC, who has been saying publicly in reference to the Stearns strike, "I'm afraid we're going to lose that one." It is this kind of spineless leadership that sabotages the extraordinary struggle of the Stearns miners in the most despicable way -- while posing as a friend.

For these reasons we must take up the task of educating the masses of working and progressive people about this important struggle and bringing forward their material support. Send contributions to the: Stearns Miners Relief Fund, Old Post Office Building Whitley City, Ky.

# VIETNAM

CONTINUED FROM P. 1

Already Viet Nam has 40,000 troops in Laos, and is deeply involved in the internal administration of that country. It has carried out a naked war of aggression against Kampuchea and has gone so far as to attempt a coup d'etat aimed at overthrowing the revolutionary government of Democratic Kampuchea. Part of its effort to establish regional hegemony is to force Kampuchea to join its Indochina federation; Leng Sary, Deputy Prime Minister of Kampuchea, said in Japan June 7th that the "conflict between Viet Nam and Kampuchea is not a border conflict but a conflict between a country which wants independence and a country which wants it to be a slave".

It is this drive for regional hegemony that explains Viet Nam's about face on the subject of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Viet Nam initially considered the Association an imperialist tool. More recently, in order to peddle the USSR's hegemonic proposals for a "system of collective security in Asia", the Vietnamese authorities have proposed that ASEAN become the organization for Southeast Asian regional cooperation.

Also, Viet Nam's recent entry into the Soviet dominated Council for Mutual Economic assistance is further evidence of Soviet intentions to use Viet Nam to peddle its influence in Southeast Asia. A Japanese newspaper editorialized June 30th, "Viet Nam's admission into the C.M.E.A. has increased the danger of its being deeply emeshed in the Soviet-controlled system of international division of labour, as is shown by its precursor Cuba." If the Vietnamese tie their economic development to the Soviet schemes they can look forward to a national economy unable

to function for a single day without Soviet meddling, just as the South Vietnamese economy could not function for a single day without U.S. aid and the U.S. military presence. They can look forward to a nation being forced to jump and beg at the commands of the USSR.

## HOSTILITY TO CHINA PROVOKES EXPULSIONS

The recent campaign to expell Chinese nationals from Viet Nam must be seen as a component part of the Vietnamese authorities' striving for regional hegemony.

From the time of the liberation of all of Viet Nam in the spring of 1975, the Vietnamese authorities have begun a campaign against the Chinese citizens residing in Viet Nam. One aspect of this is the in-sistance by the Vietnamese authorities that the Chinese nationals in Viet Nam become Vietnamese citizens.

Unfortunately in south Viet Nam this continues the reactionary policies of the U.S. puppet Ngo Dinh Diem who in 1956 and 1957 issued decrees compelling Chinese residents in South Viet Nam to take Vietnamese citizenship and give up Chinese citizenship. On May 20, 1957 China protested this policy and pointed out that the question of citizenship of Chinese residents in South Viet Nam could be settled reasonably only through negotiations by the countries concerned on the basis of respect for the voluntary choice of the Chinese residents themselves.

This position was supported by the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and by the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Workers Party. In 1955 the two parties of China and Vietnam acknowledged after consultation that the Chinese residing in north Viet Nam may by steps adopt Vietnamese nationality voluntarily on condition of their enjoying the same rights as the Vietnamese nationals,

and after being given sustained and patient persuasion and ideological education.

In addition they agreed to solve the question of the citizenship of the Chinese residents in south Viet Nam through consultation following the liberation of all the south. Between 1960 and 1968 the South Vietnamese National Front for Liberation issued several proclamations declaring that "all decrees and measures of the U.S. puppet regime regarding Chinese residents shall be abrogated" and stated explicitly that "the Chinese residents have the freedom and right to choose their nationality.

## VIETNAM FORCES CITIZENSHIP ON CHINESE NATIONALS

However, in February of 1976 the Vietnamese authorities did a complete turn about. They ordered those Chinese residents in the south who had been compelled to involuntarily accept the Vietnamese citizenship forced on them during the Diem rule to re-register as Vietnamese citizens. Large numbers of Chinese residents refused to register their non-voluntary change of citizenship. In order to compel them to accept new citizenship, the Vietnamese authorities resorted to cancellation of household registers, reduction of food rations, sacking of Chinese employees, withholding of jobs, and the imposition of exorbitant taxes.

As the anti-Chinese campaign has escalated, Chinese residents have been deprived of their means of livelihood. Their homes have been raided by security agents in the middle of the night. Valuables have been seized and confiscated and the owners have been driven from their homes. Faced with these circumstances many had no choice but to leave Viet Nam and have returned to China.

The Vietnamese authorities contend that Chinese nationals

are obstructing socialist transformation and that China's protests are acts of interference in Viet Nam's internal affairs. But the target of socialist transformation of capitalist industry and commerce is the means of production of the capitalist and not the personal possessions and means of livelihood of wage laborers, peasants, independent artisans, and small retailers. By Viet Nam's own admission, only one in one hundred Chinese living in Viet Nam is a capitalist. Furthermore the overwhelming majority of the expelled Chinese come from the north where socialist transformation was introduced long ago. Therefore it is incapable that it is not socialist transformation but hostility towards China that has brought about the persecution of the overseas Chinese by the Vietnamese authorities.

## FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN VIETNAMESE AND CHINESE PEOPLE CANNOT BE DESTROYED

China and Viet Nam are neighboring countries linked by common mountains and rivers and a bond of friendship formed by decades of protracted revolutionary struggle. In the last ten years alone China has proudly upheld its proletarian internationalist duties and has given Viet Nam \$18 billion in military aid and economic assistance.

While the Vietnamese authorities have pushed their anti-China campaign, reports from refugees constantly emphasize the friendly ties between the people of Viet Nam and China. Yang Tzu-an, a former miner in the Coc Sau Coal Mine in Quang Ninh Province, said, "We have gone through thick and thin with the Vietnamese people and formed close ties of friendship with them. When I was compelled to leave for the motherland, many Vietnamese workers were unwilling to see us go and tried to persuade me to stay. I said to them: 'We fought against U.S. imperialism together and shed our blood on the same battlefield. At that time, U.S. planes were bombing us and life was really hard. Yet we never thought of leaving. Why must I leave now? Because your government is discriminating against Chinese residents.'"

Yang Tzu-an continued, "Many Vietnamese friends told me that what they (the Vietnamese authorities) are doing is against the will of the people." Feng Chi, a former school teacher, said, "The Vietnamese people are friendly to us. Many are unhappy to see the Vietnamese authorities persecuting us Chinese residents, and they have been quite sympathetic to us. When we were leaving, quite a few Vietnamese friends came to bid us farewell. The traditional friendship between the peoples of China and Viet Nam cannot be destroyed by anyone."

## THE WOLF AT THE BACK GATE

The people of Southeast Asia have a glorious tradition in opposing imperialism. They have fought long and hard and they have made great sacrifices in the struggle against French, British, Japanese, and U.S. aggression. Today they are confronted with a new and ferocious superpower, the USSR, which is pushing its brand of imperialism and is trying to take over where the U.S. has been thrown out. The recent events in Southeast Asia clearly show that the people of Southeast Asia must vigilantly guard against the wolf of Soviet social imperialism sneaking through the back gate as they repulse the tiger of U.S. imperialism out the front gate.

# CONTRACT LABOR

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that where it took 2.4 hours to harvest a ton of sugar in 1963, a decade later it took only 1.6 hours. This was an increase in productivity of 30%.

## THE POWER OF DEPORTATION

This character of exploitation of Caribbean workers extends to every aspect of their working conditions. Contract laborers are no more capable of getting their employers to live up to their contractual or "human rights" obligations around health and safety, decent housing, medical care, etc. than they are of getting their minimum wage.

The basis for this special vulnerability of contract labor is the virtually complete denial of democratic rights that is enforced by the growers' power to deport workers arbitrarily. The growers never hesitate to exercise their power to repatriate or to remind workers that they have this power.

To speak out, protest, agitate or organize around work conditions, meals, wages, piece rates, speed-up, benefits, etc. almost automatically leads to deportation. In one season, the Florida Sugar Association Producers deported 600 out of 5200 cane cutters they employed. In another significant case in 1976, the mill and refinery workers (US workers) went out on strike against the Glades County Sugar Growers Cooperative. At the same time the

Growers Cooperative also employed five to six hundred Caribbean contract workers. These workers supported the strike. Everyone of them was immediately deported.

## A LABOR FORCE WITHOUT DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

As we stated in the first article of this series, "New Attack on Undocumented Workers" (THE COMMUNIST, VOL. IV, no.10), the intent of Carter's immigration proposals is to give legal sanction to the denial of political, legal, and trade union rights of undocumented workers.

It is this same character of being a labor force without democratic rights that is behind the bourgeois demand to expand the labor contract program. The sole basis for dividing the working class in this way and denying one sector its democratic rights is, of course, nationality. And, it is this denial of democratic rights that is the basis for the super exploitation and oppression of immigrant workers. That some immigrant workers are brought here legally as contract labor and others come illegally as undocumented workers has meant very little with regard to the degree of their exploitation.

There are temporary advantages for the bourgeoisie in this reactionary move. The denial of democratic rights for immigrant workers results in super-profits and acts as

a drag on the economic struggle of the entire working class. And, by fanning national chauvinism the imperialists take the heat off themselves and put the blame on "foreign workers" for the unemployment and other ills of capitalist society.

But, these advantages are only temporary. In the long run the modern migration of nations created by imperialism will be a significant factor in overthrowing imperialism and carrying out proletarian revolution. As we concluded in the second article of this series, "Aid Scheme for Mexico" (THE COMMUNIST, VOL. IV., no. 13), "In the era of imperialism, proletarian revolution depends on a common revolutionary front of the proletariat of the imperialist countries with the liberation movements of the oppressed nations. Workers from oppressed nations, like Mexico, who join the multinational US working class strengthen our ability to build that common front against our common enemy."

This unity between immigrant and US workers in common revolutionary struggle presupposes, however, taking up the struggle to unite what imperialism has divided. This means bringing to the forefront of our revolutionary program the uncompromising demand for equal rights of all workers in every sphere of economic, social, and political life. It is only on the basis of this struggle against the bourgeoisie's attempt to build a labor force without democratic rights that we will be able to forge the broadest possible unity of the multinational US working class.