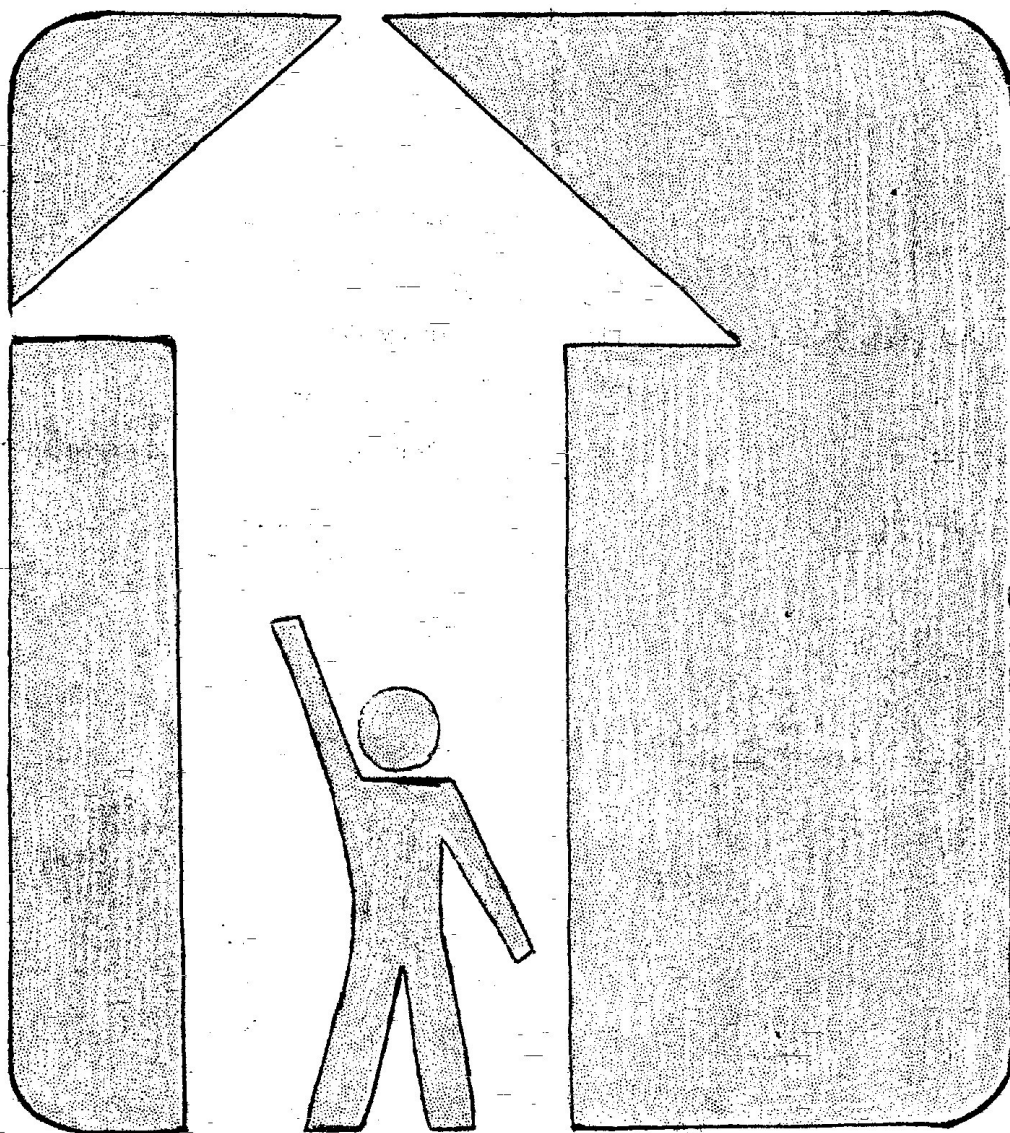


I.S. NATIONAL REPORT



FOR DISTRIBUTION TO MEMBERS ONLY

NO. 11
SEPTEMBER 8, 1972

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NAC MINUTES 8/24

Present: Ron T, Dave F, Xx Mike S,
Joel G, Jack T, Sy L

Absent: JC

1. REPORT by SL xk on Boston and NY branches. Boston branch investigating possibilities for activity in two projects: tenants' union work (in working class area) and hospital organizing drive. NY branch hoping to carry out new industrialization drive and colonization of NJ. Class series have been given or are in preparation on the history of Trotskyism, class nature of the Soviet Union, plus plans for detailed "seminars" on other topics. NY telephone fraction is being decreased by comrades leaving and/or fired; a NY exec motion states that NY telephone will continue to be a priority, with certain comrades who are leaving to continue to function with the fraction and for replacing those who leave with recruitment or new industrialization.

Discussion of report.

MOTION(JT): NAC requests that no comrades leave NY telephone until consultation with NAC. FAILED 1-4-1 (JT for, JG abstain).

MOTION (SL): NAC requests a letter from the fraction explaining reasons for comrades leaving telephone, and information regarding the reality of priority status being accorded to NY telephone work.

2. CONVENTION RESOLUTIONS TABLED TO NAC. Report and recommendation by DF that DF and JC be instructed to make ~~xxxxx~~ political recommendations on disposition of said resolutions and amendments. A special NAC meeting will be held to deal with them for incorporation into final convention documents, which will then be sent out for all members and contacts.

3. DEVLIN TOUR. Discussion of possibilities for arranging speaking trip for B ornadett or Devlin in this country later this year. Nothing definite at this time.

4. BAY AREA MEETING INCIDENT. Discussion of controversy over private meeting ~~xxxxx~~ hold in Berkeley by some I.S. members from out of town with members of another political tendency, with a view toward recruitment to the I.S. (fuller report will be forthcoming later).

MOTION (SL): SL continue correspondence with parties involved; ascertain fuller information of the incident at the meeting; and present to NAC a political statement regarding political questions involved in recruitment of tendencies. AMENDMENT(RT): Statement drafted by SL should also include guidelines on the rights and responsibilities involved in recruitment and political work by comrades travelling to areas where I.S. branches exist. PASSED 4-1-1 (SL against, JT abstain).

AMENDMENT (JT): In addition to general rights and responsibilities, statement should also include a discussion of the specific issues raised in the specific incident in question. PASSED

Xx SL MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED 6-0.

NAC MINUTES 8/25

Present: same as 8/24

1. NEW OFFICE. Discussion of moving N.O. to new office (in same building). There are a couple of possibilities for renting offices which cost more but are better equipped, larger, and more efficient. MOTION to move to new location PASSED 5-0-1 (DF abstain). Committee of SL, RT, JG to investigate implementation.

2. PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY. Discussion of developments inside minorities in the SWP and the need to establish a political critique of the fundamentals of "orthodox Trotskyism". Five members of POT have left SWP to join Spartacist League; others have formed reorganized minority "Leninist" faction with some relation (not clear) to the Sparts.

MOTION (DF): (1) JG and SL are instructed to attempt to work out a common draft or

outline of a document examining the historical development of Trotskyism and the 4th Int'l and the degeneration of "orthodox Trotskyism", to serve as a political orientation to guide our political debate and discussion with tendencies and individuals considering themselves Trotskyist. PASSED 6-0.

(2)The WORKERS POWER editorial board (NB active E.B. consists of DF, SL, JC, JG, plus KL as consultative member without vote) is instructed to solicit and/or write articles discussing the history of the international revolutionary movement taking up, among other questions, the failures of the Trotskyist movement with respect to the working class upheaval of the 1930's and its subsequent theoretical and political degeneration (NOTE: such articles are not a substitute for, nor to be confused with, the basic political document discussed above in which detailed aspects of the politics of all major existing Trotskyist tendencies inside and outside the SWP will be discussed. Such material is necessary for contact and recruitment work but not for our press).

AMENDMENT (SL, accepted as friendly): SL to bring in political statement on attitude and orientation toward Trotskyist tendencies (NB this is the same motion in effect as was passed at meeting of 8/24).

In discussion of part (2) of the DF motion, the phrase regarding the failures of the Trotskyists in the 1930's was deleted on request from SL, on the basis that it implies a political conclusion which has not yet been reached and must be taken up in the discussion. Following this, all of part (2) was TABLED by general agreement for a later discussion, with DF to draw up proposed outline on the nature and subject matter of such articles.

3. SOUTHERN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE. Discussion of I.S. educational conference byx for Southern region, projected by comrades in Knoxville. RT and JG to correspond with the comrades regarding preparations, schedule, etc.

4. MAL application from Austin ACCEPTED 6-0.

5. FUND DRIVE. THE NAC is projecting a fund drive for the fall. Discussion of national target figure: will be \$15,000, \$17,500 or \$20,000. (Last year's drive aimed at \$10,000 and collected \$12,000). Decision tabled for a report by subcommittee of RT, SL, JG who will propose branch quotas and allocation of funds. All implementation questions - director, starting date, etc. - tabled to same subcommittee.

6. BAY AREA TELEPHONE. Discussion of controversy in BA telephone fraction over strategy and program for a propagandistic campaign to be conducted in union local election. After a preliminary discussion, it was agreed to request a full report from the fraction on the election situation and to instruct RT to draft a proposal to be presented to the fraction.

7. THIRD WORLD BULLETIN. SL to write to NY, Chicago, and LA asking for contributions toward a perspective for implementing the I.S. line on black liberation and third world work.

8. INTERNAL BULLETIN. Discussion of articles in recent bulletins. DF is preparing a reply to "Making Our Marxism a Science" by John S.

MOTION(JG): (1)The reply by DF to John S. will be drafted for the NAC and discussed by the NAC, ~~xxx~~ with a view to publishing it as an NAC statement. PASSED 5-0-1 (DF abstain).

(2)The NAC will discuss all major articles submitted to the bulletin and consider possible replies. PASSED ~~xx~~ 4-0-2 (RT, DF abstain).

9. DETROIT. Discussion of motions from Detroit exec requesting:

(1)a member of the "national majority" to serve on the Detroit exec (meaning probably someone from the NAC); and (2)guidance on functioning in the Detroit Federa-

tion of Teachers (DFT). The DFT is facing a double squeeze resulting from a mounting budget crisis (which has led to threats of shortening the school year by 1/3), and the Roth decision on two-way bussing (which both puts the DFT in conflict with elements of the black community and contains the threat of union-breaking). The Detroit exec wants guidance from the NAC on how to implement the national line of opposition to the forced two-way bussing plans, since the Detroit branch overwhelmingly disagrees with this line.

MOTION (DF): We rule out the possibility of allowing SL or JC to serve on the Detroit exec at this time owing to their other responsibilities for the NAC. We are tentatively willing to allow RT or DF to serve, providing this does not prove to conflict with other responsibilities. We also recommend that RT as industrial secretary work closely with the Detroit exec with respect to industrial work. PASSED 5-0-1 (MS abstain).

10. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. Discussion of invitation to int'l conference called for the fall by LUTTE OUVRIERE. Conference will be all-inclusive, as in the past (a procedure with which we disagree), and will result in a continuations committee open to representatives of all participating tendencies.

MOTION(JG): (1)We accept the invitation to participate in the conference. PASSED 5-0-1 (MS abstain).

(2)We state our objection to the all-inclusive character of the ongoing committee (note: by "inclusive" we mean the fact that tendencies are invited to participate whose divergent politics make any discussion in depth impossible, ranging from the Labor Committee and Socialist Forum in the U.S. to Italian Maoist groups). PASSED 4-1-1 (RT against, MS abstain).

(3)Between now and the time of the conference we will discuss our attitude toward future conferences. ALL FOR.

(4)We will attempt to draft one or more resolutions for the conference on topics to be discussed there. ALL FOR.

The three topics for discussion at the conference are: sino-American relations and the meaning of the new detente; the Common Market and the possibility of a European bloc; the tasks of revolutionaries in trade unions.

MOTION(DF, MS): The NAC will prepare a resolution on Sino-American relations; we will ask Brian M. to draft a resolution on the trade union perspectives question; and ask Walter D. to draft theses on the Common Market in the context of the international crisis of capitalism. PASSED 6 -0.

NAC 8/31/72

Present: All except Mike S.

0. The editorial board held a discussion of the ~~xxxx~~ number of pages of WORKERS POWER, in the light of problems that came up in terms of trying to fit available copy into sixteen pages for #63. The editor wishes to place the following motion and vote from the E.B. in the minutes.

MOTION(JG,DF): WORKERS POWER is a sixteen-page newspaper and will continue to be such for the foreseeable future (recent 20-page issues having been due to the summer monthly schedule). Thus the ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ responsibility of the editorial board will be to design issues on the basis of sixteen pages, discarding whatever is necessary ~~xx~~ even if this means not printing articles we have decided are good. This is opposed either to a conception of beginning to publish 20 pages now, or to printing 16 or 20 pages depending on the quantity of available copy for a given issue. PASSED 2-1-1 (SL against, CH abstain).

NOTE(by DF): The motivation for the above motion is that, while we often have enough copy on hand to fill 20 pages, we generally have barely enough good copy for 16. We also have secondary difficulties of a financial and technical character which would hamper moving to 20 pages; these however could be overcome if the political circumstances warranted expansion. Any plans for expansion must have as a pre-condition a perspective for increasing the amount of high-quality writing for WP. I will propose expansion to 20 pages at the point where I feel that the potential exists for a qualitative improvement in the political quality - not just quantity - of the newspaper through such expansion.

1. BUSSING AND THE TEACHERS' CRISIS IN DETROIT. Report from Jim U. (Detroit) on the situation facing the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT), including the possibility of a strike forced on the teachers by Board of Education demands for reduced salaries and other measures (note: in the meantime this strike was averted when the union and Board agreed in essence to a nextension of the previous contract). The Detroit exec has requested guidance from the NAC on the line to be pushed by the DFT fraction with respect to the bussing issue and the Roth decision, which the DFT has come out against but is supported by ~~xxxx~~ many teacher militants with whom we wish to work.

MOTION(DF):

(1)Our basic position, in line with the positions adopted at the convention, is that both the pro-Roth and the anti-Roth decision forces represent bankrupt, racist dead-end strategies. We oppose both - the anti-Roth forces as defenders of the privileged status of white suburbs, and the pro-Roth forces as liberal proponents of a program offering false hopes to the black community. To pro-Roth forces among the blacks we emphasize that the issue of the Roth decision will be settled in fact in the courts, over the heads of both the black community and the teachers, and that whatever the courts decide we will have to fight for the elementary rights of both (note: there are union-busting aspects to the Roth decision in that it completely scrambles up the bargaining unit picture and potentially could leave the entire negotiation of teacher contracts in the hands of the courts). PASSED 4-0-2 (JG, JT abstain).

(2)Our program for the DFT and the strike, should it occur either now or in the future when money ~~xxx~~ to run the school system is gone, will emphasize in positive terms the need for an alliance with the black community by the DFT. Among other demands, we will raise the concrete call for an immediate doubling of funds to inner-city schools. The DFT should also state its willingness to support, should it arise, a movement for black ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ community control of black schools.

~~xxxxx~~ Last sentence FAILED 1-3-2 (DF for; JG, JT abstain); rest of part (2) PASSED 4-0-2 (JG, JT abstain).

(3)We will raise our point of view opposing the program of the Roth decision among teacher militants with whom we come in contact, but will attempt to work with such militants around a program for the strike and the DFT even if we are in disagreement on this point. PASSED 4-0-2 (JG, JT abstain).

AMENDMENTS (CH): (1) Although we seek to build alliances with any groups in the Black community, we expect the union to be the main arena for activity around our point of view. FAILED 1-1-4 (CH for, DF against).

(2) The self-interest of the union now leads to a program of leading a massive fight for quality education for the black community, if possible in alliance with elements in the black community, as the only way to defeat the attack by the Board of Education. In addition, posing such a program, posing the DFT as the champion of education for the black community, is the only way for the DFT to counterpose itself to the racist opposition to bussing. ACCEPTED

Correction: In part (2) of DF motion, the phrase referring to "alliance with the black community", should also read "...through an appeal especially to working-class forces within the community".

2. FUND DRIVE. Report by JG and recommendation for \$15,000 national quota. Report adopted 6-0 as basis for letter to branches. Letters from SL and fund drive bulletin by Karen Kaye will be sent out (Karen K. will again serve as national fund drive director).

3. PERSPECTIVES ON RECRUITMENT. Preliminary discussion of draft statement by SL regarding the fundamental principles of the I.S. and the basis for recruitment of tendencies and individuals considering themselves Trotskyist. Discussion to be continued.

4. BAY AREA TELEPHONE PERSPECTIVES. See motion by RT in this national report. AMENDMENT TO RT PROPOSAL (JG): The demands of the campaign, in order to build a rank and file group, should be similar to the demands, or basis for the formation, of such a group. Demands for nationalization under workers' control, and even for a labor party, are today not shared by advanced militants. Our job is to win them to such conceptions. It is not necessary, and normally counterproductive, to begin rank and file groups on such a basis, since these demands are often as restrictive as an explicitly socialist caucus would be. Our conception is that we would propagandize and fight for these demands within the rank and file movement where appropriate (the labor party slogan being the more immediate), but that they should not be the basis for initial membership under ordinary circumstances. FAILED 2-4 (JG, JT for).

Statement by JT on JG amendment: I do not believe it is a question of what should be the case, but of what is the case. A campaign around certain issues tends to attract certain people and repel others. The character of the campaign will be quite important in determining what kind of group is built.

Motion to NAC on the Bay Area Telephone controversy

1. Given the newness of the present NAC, the lack of a national Telephone perspective, and our unfamiliarity with the specifics of the Bay Area Telephone situation, we are proposing the following as recommendations to the Bay Area Telephone fraction.

2. In line with the labor perspective and appropriate sections of the Tasks and Perspectives document, we should view our work in the trade unions generally, and in the CWA specifically, as part of the process of organizing, training and politicizing the advanced layers of the working class. With this in mind, the proposed propaganda campaign should be part of a strategy of building rank and file organization in the local in question. Given the present level of consciousness and organization in the Bay Area CWA, a reflection of the general level of struggle in the working class as a whole, what is called for is not a socialist propaganda campaign (this is our disagreement with the proposal of the Bay Area Telephone fraction) but a campaign that focuses primarily on the questions posed before Telephone workers and a strategy for dealing with these. In this sense, the campaign should be considered part of our agitation, that is, directed toward a broad audience with the idea of making a relatively limited number of ideas clear to as many as possible, and as part of an implementable perspective for the CWA rank and file itself. The major issues covered must be questions that are relevant to the post being contested, specifically the struggle against layoffs and the resultant speedup, the campaign for elected stewards and related democratic questions, and the general fight against the Beirne machine locally and nationally.

low it should be clear that the problems of Telephone workers cannot be solved in one CWA local, within one International, or within one country. In order to pose our strategy as a realistic one, we must place our approach in the context of the emerging social crisis, the ruling class attack on the working class, and the key to a successful working class response. People should want to know why we are for a revitalized labor movement, what are the steps (generally) necessary to get there, and why the possibility for it exists. This means that while the issues emphasized should be those suggested above, it is essential to put forward a program that is broader than what is actionable. The program put forward in the Tasks and Perspectives document reflects the overall character of the period we are entering, and consists of the core of demands that this implies. As such, it is something we wish to win people to, although we expect that this will occur over time. Moreover, not all of the demands are relevant at any given time, and are not meant to be forever and always put forward en bloc. In fact, if we wish to be relevant and understood, some demands will be emphasized at some instances while others will wait their turn.

At this time, the major question posed before the working class is a break from the capitalist parties, without which the fight against the wage controls, layoffs, etc. cannot be pressed to its fullest. The demand for an independent party of the working class (or a labor party, if the term will be more understood), must therefore be an important part of the propaganda around the campaign.

One further consideration. Generally speaking, the program we put forward in the non-IS propaganda that we are involved in or put out directly, must be internally consistent, as far as is possible. This does not mean that we refuse to work in groups, write for and distribute newspapers that do not have the full Transitional Program. It does mean that where we have influence, we seek to put forward a program that makes sense. For example, demands for 30 for 40, no layoffs, an end to speedup, etc. in a backward near-bankrupt industry should be accompanied by the demand for nationalization of that industry under workers control. Without the latter, there would then be no counter to the threatening (and relatively honest) claim that the other demands, if implemented, would lead to the bankruptcy of the particular firm. In the case of the Telephone company, the age of its equipment, quality of service, and its function as a public utility make the demand for the nationalization of ATT under workers' control, if raised carefully and in an educational manner, a relevant and necessary one.

A program that we would like to see receiving a subsidiary emphasis in the campaign would consist (in part) of the following:

Jobs for All-30 For 40
Open all jobs to women, blacks and other oppressed groups
Equal Pay for Equal Work
Fight the wage controls-for wage increases without price increase
Immediate withdrawal from Vietnam-Reconvert the arms economy to rebuild the cities
For a Labor Party
Nationalization of ATT under workers' control

3. We request of the Bay Area Telephone fraction a statement of what they intend to do in regard to the campaign, and a report and assessment of our intervention after the election.

Submitted by Ron T.

Insert at the end of section 2

The rank and file group we seek to build in the local need not be built on the basis of the program we put forward in this campaign, that is, we may find that militants willing to work with us in such a group may not accept that program. Nevertheless, we should not limit the campaign solely to demands that are immediately acceptable to the advanced militants.

Amendment by Sy L. (accepted as friendly)

In addition to the advocacy of a labor party, the objective situation demands another point of concentration in the campaign. Strike after strike in the US is being isolated not only by the companies alone, but with the connivance of the labor bureaucracy. Lordstown, Norwood, Fedders are only the most immediate and familiar cases in a general series. By and large in these situations the working class is taking a beating. The situation in the CWA is acute from this vantage point. The successful isolation and defeat of the NY Telephone workers is only one piece of evidence that Beirne has and will employ this strategy. This must be a major focus of the campaign. It is our duty to warn the workers of what they may not be aware of and the threat it poses to them. An appropriate demand(s) relating to support for such strikes and an exposure of Beirne's strategy is necessary.

Passed 4-2 (Joel, Jack)

Notes on Selling Workers Power

by a member of the Stakhanovite
School of Newspaper Sales Workers

(Greg Iden, NY Branch, I.S.)

(This article was originally written prior to the convention, and it is only now that I have gotten around to typing it up in stencil-form. I am sorry for the delay. The article has been slightly revised to reflect its being typed after the Convention.)

It is true that, up to now, political eclecticism and a pragmatic method of functioning - "if it moves, function in it," then one week later, "leave it and function in that group over there" - make it difficult and have made it difficult for the rank and file membership of I.S. to maintain the sort of optimism necessary to perform so elementary a task as selling our organization's newspaper. Optimism does not flow from "kvetching around," to use one expression - or "beating around the bush" about politics, to use another - but rather, from clarity of political direction and the guidance that flows from that. The national organization has up to now not received that guidance. Hence, the pessimism/optimism syndrome, an interesting variation on manic/depression. Anyway, the other side of this alteration in membership moods and the consequent gearing of the individual member's activity to his/her mood-changes is the (or has been the) moralistic exhortation to "sell" that has periodically emanated from the editor (now copy editor) of WP.

Since, however, the problem hasn't been moral, but political, it could not be solved by moral exhortation, but rather only by a more consistent programmatic orientation on the part of the national leadership. Without such an orientation, it would be difficult to expect that the suggestions about to be made herein - i.e., the technical aspect of selling, which is conditioned by the above-mentioned moods of the membership, which, in turn, are conditioned by how much clarity and programmatic direction is provided - will or ever could be implemented by the membership. Demoralization or confusion lead to immobilization. The only long-term solution to the uneven development of the organization - ups in one geographical location, downs in another - not to mention the lack of theoretical development in all sections - is political.

Nevertheless, the last Convention did provide a change, and, it is felt by this writer, a healthy change in direction for the organization. The seriousness and commitment and increase in morale of people reported by our delegates were only reflective of the change and the hope underlying it that this change really signifies the new direction it purports to signify. With that consideration in mind, then, here goes:

1) When you sell, buttonhole people. While I'm not suggesting you should physically assault them, eye contact is absolutely critical in getting their attention. Through experience, I have found that it is better to pick off people one by one, saying something like "Check out Workers Power," or "Would you like to buy a socialist/workers/revolutionary newspaper?" or some such variation, than it is to simply stand around yelling, "Workers Power, buy a social-

Alden, Selling Workers Power (2)

newspaper," and so forth.

2) Modesty about your ideas is a hindrance to effective selling. You're selling the newspaper of the one tendency in America that will probably - given the state of the current Trotskyist Left - be the nucleus of the future American revolutionary workers party, and the organization that in the more immediate future will be the hinge for regroupment of other Trotskyist militants in all other socialist groups. Don't be shy about being in that tendency (sorry for the exhortation; again, the only way of making such exhortations more than that is for the organization's new direction to really mean that; but that's still no excuse for passivity where opportunities do abound); optimism is the hallmark of revolutionary politics, as Trotsky's life testified to.

It is true that political leadership - its clarity - and level of optimism in the organization are intertwined. Still, where we are now is different than where we've been. And the future looks hopeful.

3) If you want to sell lots of newspapers, but you also want to write down the names of all contacts - including every one who might vaguely be interested in I.S. - forget it. It's one or the other. I've gotten to where I can sell an average of 100-125 papers per issue, but that's being aggressive in the selling and letting the contact work lapse.

Contact work is important, obviously. The best way to sell, I think, is to sell in teams of two or more. One person's primary responsibility is contact work, discussion with other people, and so forth; the other's main responsibility is selling the paper. Division of labor was created by the bourgeoisie, but it is a definite aid in getting the ideas of revolutionary socialism distributed.

If you come across a contact who is very interested in socialism and, possibly, I.S., then contact work should take precedence (this is predicated, again, on a one-person selling set-up). And again, such decisions are up to an individual's judgement, but should be seen in the context of our overall priorities. For instance, I've sold at Brooklyn College, a working class college; often, I'll get into discussions with black students there with (possibly) less interest in socialism than some whites. The thing is, if one's white (as I am) one's never entirely sure whether the apparent "disinterest" among the blacks is only a surface cover for mild (or not-so-mild) suspicion. That's why judgement and the organization's programmatic priorities are intertwined in such cases. We should view black people and white people in this light - the light of our organization's pressing need to recruit black Trotskyist cadre.

4) Try to be conscious of both potential buying audience as well as the contents of the paper, and, when possible, correlate the two in your selling. In other words, if you're selling at a school where there are many black and/or Puerto Rican students, it's good to mention as part of your "selling line" any article on, say, Angela Davis, the black movement in general, PR movement,

Alden, Selling Workers Power (3)

and so forth. For example: "Check out Workers Power; read about the Angela Davis frame-up trial," or "Read about frame-up of a black auto worker in Workers Power". By the same token, if you're selling at a factory or office to workers, you especially want to stress articles directly concerning them (at a telephone installation, you might say something like "Read about NY telephone strike in Workers Power," and so forth.).

5) Try to be conscious of little nuanatial things of individual psychology. For example, be conscious of reluctance on an individual's part to buy which is not total reluctance; in other words of a hedging which is nonetheless open. Again, people ought to be buttonholed, and, where any openness exists, they should be spoken to about buying the paper. Strike up a conversation with such people about the paper, its contents, mention the I.S. if possible. Project confidence and optimism.

6) If on some evening or day, you don't have as many papers as you want, make a decision as to who you mainly want to sell them to and stick to it. One evening, I didn't have that many papers, but there were articles on the Angela Davis trial in the issue, and I was selling at Brooklyn College where many black students attend. So I decided to concentrate on pushing the papers when black people were around more than when others were around. The papers got sold, too. And this was valuable for getting our politics known to black people - very important in this period.

Much of this article has a tone sort of out of Mao's "Little Red Book". That is, the advice is very mundane and very practical and mundanity and practicality are often devoid of politics or clever aphorisms. For the dryness I apologize; it's a result of the day-to-day tasks capitalism makes us do, not necessarily to the personality of the writer.

7) If you sell at a demonstration the best - but in terms of work, hardest - way of really selling is simply to go to people on a one-by-one basis and ask them individually if they want to buy Workers Power, "a really good revolutionary socialist newspaper," "with articles in this issue on" such and such. Last spring, at an FPQ demonstration, I took 30 copies with me and sold 28 that way. It took me about 4 or 5 hours - since, as we all know, the SWP doesn't build their demonstrations on the highest level of politics or with anything of a working class content (social composition-wise or program-wise) to them, and this little factor will affect the rate at which we can sell papers with the sort of line WP has. Still, I was able to get our politics out in that time. And with effort, this can be done. Another comrade at the same demo sold 30 copies. It can be done.

8) I think it's best to sell at a regular location, regular time. In some instances - as when you sell at a school - you can sell one week on one night, the next week another night. So, say, I sell WP on Monday of one week, Tuesday of the next. That way you get to the maximum number of people, since some classes are every other night.

That's about all for now. 7/30/72

DISPOSITION OF CONVENTION REFERRALS BY NAC, WITH MOTIVATION

Chris H.

(NOTE: The Convention referred to the National Committee certain minor amendments to Convention documents, which were in turn referred by the NC to the NAC. A subcommittee composed of Dave F. and myself was selected to make recommendations on each amendment. The subcommittee determined that with the exception of the numerous amendments on program, motivation should be made in writing for our recommendations on each amendment. The following is the record of the special NAC meeting of September 1 which considered the referrals, including the NAC vote and the subcommittee's motivation. The number of the Bulletin in which each amendment originally appeared is given. It should be noted that other NAC members, whether agreeing with the subcommittee's recommendation or not, were free to submit their own motivations.)

I. AMENDMENTS ON PROGRAM (T&P)

1. Amendment by Jack G. (Bulletin no. 27, bottom of p. 9 of Jack G. amendments): recommendation by subcommittee to ACCEPT, changing "with no reparations" to "without compensation." 4-1(JG)-1(DF). PASSED.*
2. Amendments by Bill Hastings (no. 27, last page of his amendments): first amendment, on liberation movements, treated as basis for a new amendment by NAC majority (see below). Second amendment: recommendation to ACCEPT, changing point (c) to: "rank and file control of the unions." 6-0. PASSED.
3. Amendments by Joel G. (no. 27). The following recommendations and dispositions:
 - (1) To ACCEPT. 6-0. PASSED.
 - (2) To REJECT. Author revised to read: "For a confiscatory tax..." 4-0-2 (CH, DF). PASSED.**
 - (3) To ACCEPT. 4-2 (CH, RT). PASSED.
 - (4) To ACCEPT. 5-1 (RT)
 - (5) To REJECT. 4-1(CH)-1(DF). PASSED.
 - (6) To REJECT. Revised to read: "Retirement at age 60 at a fully adequate income. 4-2(CH, DF). PASSED.
 - (7) To ACCEPT point 1, REJECT points 2 and 3. (i) 6-0. PASSED. (ii) 4-2 (CH, RT). PASSED. (iii) 1(JG)-4-1(JB). FAILED.
 - (8) To ACCEPT, changing first point to read: "International cooperation among unions. Voting on this change: 3-2(JG,JB)-1(SL). Voting on amended version: 6-0. PASSED. AMENDMENT: To add slogan "American union wage to follow American investment" - TABLED.
 - (9) To REJECT first two points, as redundant to Hastings amendment; to ACCEPT third point, changing slogan "for workers' defense guards" to "for self-defense of the Black community." Voting on this change: 2-4 (vote not recorded) - FAILED. Voting on original wording: 6-0. PASSED.
 - (10) To REJECT. Three proposals were made: (i) by JG, point should read: "For an independent party of the working class. For a workers' government"; (ii) by RT: add "For a workers' government" as separate numbered point of program; (iii) by DF: retain original, i.e. "For an independent party of the working class." Voting on JG: 3-2(CH, DF)-1(RT). PASSED.
 - (11) REDUNDANT TO HASTINGS POINT AS MODIFIED (see below).

* NOTE: MS absent, hence total is 6 votes throughout.

** NOTE: Voting in each case is on the amendment, not the recommendation; thus here and elsewhere the amendment passed, the recommendation was defeated.

4. Amendments on Black Liberation, presented after caucus of SL, CH, RT, DF:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>(A) For the liberation of Black people and other oppressed peoples</p> <p>(a) End all forms of racial and ethnic discrimination in all aspects of life</p> <p>(b) Smash discrimination and racist practices in the union movement</p> <p>(c) For the independent organization of oppressed groups to further their struggles</p> | <p>(B) For the liberation of Black people and other oppressed peoples - For the liberation of women</p> <p>(a) End all forms of racial, sexual, and ethnic discrimination in all aspects of life</p> <p>(b) Smash discrimination and racist practices in the union movement</p> <p>(c) For the independent organization of oppressed groups to further their struggles</p> |
|---|--|

(A) 1(DF)-3-2(JG, JB); FAILED. (B) 3-0-3 (JG, JB, DF); PASSED

II. AMENDMENTS ON LABOR PERSPECTIVES

1. AMENDMENTS BY DAVID SHOEMAKER (BULLETIN NO. 25). Recommendations and votes:

- (1) To ACCEPT. MOTIVATION: The statement in the document appears incorrect. 5-0 (RT absent); PASSED.
- (2) To REJECT. MOTIVATION: The observations in the first paragraph of the amendment are interesting; we cannot verify off the cuff whether they are all correct, however, this paragraph by itself would be misplaced in this section of the document. However, the political purpose of the observations is to buttress the argument made in the next paragraph, which seems incorrect. We do not accept that there is a hard-and-fast connection between the amount of economic "give" in an industry and the behavior of the labor bureaucrats in contract talks. For example, steel is economically hard-pressed, but the lack of democratic organization and tradition in the USWA is also of major importance in allowing the bureaucrats to get away with murder; in the "dynamic" auto industry the bureaucrats have not been equivalently dynamic; etc. It seems at least one-sided to view economics as the determining factor in contracts and the internal situation in the union as affecting only the expression of this factor. VOTING: 0-5 (RT absent); FAILED.
- (3) To REJECT, and SUBSTITUTE the following on p. 8; after para. 3: "As our industrialization program continues, the development of national communication among members in a given industry, the development of national fractions, and the initiation of national and regional meetings of members in given industries are important steps." MOTIVATION: Much of the language of the amendment, such as describing ours as a "dual-level" perspective, seems questionable; the discussion of the relation between our organization and the development of the rank and file movement is confusing; and the amendment is misplaced in the document. The substitute is clearer and better placed. VOTING: (a) on original amendment: 0-3-2(JG, JB)(RT absent); FAILED. On substitute: 5-0; PASSED.
- (4) Treating the amendments to pp. 20 and 23 as involving the same issue, to REJECT both. MOTIVATION: Disagreement with substance of amendment. Obviously whether to advocate a black or women's caucus in a given situation is, as the amendment says, a tactical question; however what is under discussion at this point in the document is our general attitude to this phenomenon, our general advocacy or otherwise. We agree with

the document that in general, the situation of blacks and women in industry is such as to warrant advocacy of caucuses, with the precautionary notes already present in the text. VOTING: 0-5-1 (SL); FAILED.

2. AMENDMENTS BY JAMES CROSS (BULLETIN NO. 27). GENERAL MOTIVATION: With the exception of ra. 4, which involves historical interpretation, these amendments embody a unified viewpoint toward the rank and file movement, a viewpoint with which we disagree. That is, that methodologically the decisive question in evaluating a rank and file group is whether it has already decisively broken with the bureaucracy and capitalist politics, and that politically the chief question for socialists in trade union work is to beware of the trap of opportunism. We believe, on the contrary, that methodologically the decisive questions in evaluating a rank and file group are whether its program represents a vehicle for struggle by the ranks and whether the opportunities for genuine rank and file involvement and direction of the group exist; and that politically, for socialists in industry opportunism and sectarianism, submergence within and counterposition to the actual movement are equally dangerous traps. We disagree with Cross's statement to the convention that the Mackenzie document fails "to challenge the perspectives of those who are blind to the dangers of opportunism"; the document is not a polemical document, but a perspective; and we are in substantial agreement with the perspective.

Specific MOTIVATION and DISPOSITION:

- (1) To REJECT. The difference here is not simply a question of caution; what appears to be involved is the conception, expressed in other amendments, that it is primarily the program of the national caucuses which determines whether they represent a political advance; on the contrary, we agree with the document that the phenomenon itself represents a political advance in the situation, representing much higher potentialities for struggle even if, as will often happen, they are less advanced in program than a local group. Even on the point of caution, we reject the need for agnosticism; we are confident in saying that in general, national groups will be an advance. VOTING: 0-6, FAILS.
- (2) To REJECT. Any rank and file group can be diverted by the bureaucracy if the latter is skillful, but we reject the conception that the bureaucracy is likely to organize such groups and the implied conception that in this period, "a significant break of the rank and file to the revolutionary left" is so imminent as to make a militant rank and file caucus a drag on the class struggle; see also the passage "~~deleted~~" from the document by this amendment. VOTING: 0-6, FAILS.
- (3) To REJECT, but SUBSTITUTE a rewritten version, namely: "the phenomenon of their emergence and their political direction are of crucial importance" in place of the phrase deleted by Cross. MOTIVATION: Again, we reject the conception that it is, primarily, the political direction of these groups that determines their significance, and agree with the document that the phenomenon itself is a major advance; however, we feel it important to avoid an uncritical attitude toward such groups - the wrong program (not an imperfect one, but a fundamentally wrong one) can shortcircuit the possibility of a group's doing any good. With the previous two amendments defeated, the wording suggested here seems to us not to unbalance the generally correct attitude to the emergence of these groups expressed in the document. VOTING: (a) on original amendment: 0-6, FAILS; (b) on substitution: 3-2(RT, SL)-1(JG), PASSES.

- (4) To REJECT. We agree substantively with the sentence proposed for deletion. While the motivation of the amendment is of course not up for a vote, we disagree with it - the facts cited in the motivation, indicating the dissipation by the American Trotskyists of the favorable chances vis-a-vis the CIO which were represented by Minneapolis and the recruitment of the Musteites, constitute the best motivation for retaining the sentence proposed for deletion. Moreover, the sentence in question refers to the whole Fourth International, not just the American section. VOTING: 1(SL)-5, FAILS.
- (5) To REJECT. While no one could object to setting up a study group where people are interested, the emphasis here implies a wrong assessment of the rank and file revolt and our tasks. First, our work in caucuses is not simply a question of "the practical details of actual struggles"; the document stresses, correctly, that it is through the presentation of programmatic ideas in this context that we primarily advance the struggle and attract people to our politics. Second, the formation of workers' study groups in Marxism-Leninism on a wide scale as a major part of our political work is unlikely to be successful in this period; rather, in most cases we will be in the position of educating individual worker-contacts in Marxist politics in the course of patient contact work aimed at recruitment. 0-6, FAILS.
- (6) RULING BY CHAIR (SL): Redundant , "play a propogandistic role," to Ken P. amendment passed by convention, and hence out of order. Political MOTIVATION against this amendment and no. 8 nevertheless follows; We reject the motivation of issuing socialist bulletins as a way to avoid the danger of opportunism, the contention that not issuing socialist bulletins involves "a fundamentally Menshevik 'stage theory' reasoning," and the equation of not issuing socialist bulletins with "abstention from all criticism" of the people we work with. We follow the approach taken by Tasks and Perspectives, 32-33, regarding socialist propaganda as primarily the job of Workers' Power, supplements, and agitational leaflets, while shop bulletins should be devoted mainly to transitional ideas and should be regarded as organizing vehicles for the type of in-plant organizations we see as feasible in this period, i.e., broad rank and file caucuses organized around transitional demands rather than socialist caucuses. While we are not opposed to presenting socialist ideas in a rank and file newspaper, we do not see this as the general function of such papers.
- (7) To REJECT. Suffice it to say that this amendment would rule out affiliation by a local caucus to any of the national organizations mentioned in the sentence to which the "conditional clause" is added - UAC, TURF, UNC! The amendment would rule out making a fight within any of these groups for the politics it itself advocates. VOTING: 0-6; FAILS.
- (8) RULING BY CHAIR (SL): Redundant to Ken P., out of order. SEE ABOVE.
- (9) Treating this and no. 10 as representing a single issue, recommendation is to REJECT. The first amendment, while literally correct, skirts the most important issue - the SL's outright hostility to any group not based on the full program as proposed by themselves; willingness to unite on single actions is little compensation for unwillingness to cooperate (not with other sects, but with rank and file workers) in building an opposition caucus. The second amendment explains the SL's isolation as due to "stylistic deficiencies" which obscure "their often formally correct politics." The question is precisely politics - not ideology, but the Trotskyist methodology. Trotsky did not regard the Transitional Program, or even a transitional program, as a minimum prerequisite for building a

group in the unions; for example, he proposed the idea of building broad groups around the single demand of the sliding scale of wages and hours, bringing in the other transitional demands gradually, etc. It is more true to say that the SL's formally correct, or at least orthodox, ideology is rendered sterile by their incorrect method. VOTING: 0-6, FAILS.

NOTE: Alternative and opposed motivations may be forthcoming on some of these.

3. AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF AN INDUSTRIAL FRACTION. On p. 9, in paragraph on Teamsters, (a) at end of first sentence, delete "in which we have a presence," substitute: "in which some of our members have been active"; (b) delete third and fourth sentences ("Although we have a good deal of influence in TURF, our actual presence in its ranks is very thin. TURF must be a national priority, so our presence can be fleshed out") and substitute: "Our activity by members in the IBT has been limited to --- cities and our work in building the rank and file opposition in the Teamsters must be increased and broadened. While our ideas have had some impact on the best elements in TURF, it is important that this work by members not working in the industry be substantially supplemented by an increasing number of working members, who can play a more active and direct role." This wording further amended as follows: for "---," substitute "a few"; delete "on the best elements." Recommendation to ACCEPT; MOTIVATION: The use in documents of jargon which is scary to people we are trying to work with ought to be avoided; it should be noted that the amendment as submitted was itself not entirely free of such jargon. VOTING: 6-0, PASSED.

III. CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

AMENDMENT BY JACK BARISONZI (BULLETIN NO. 27). To REJECT. MOTIVATION: The formal membership of the National Committee should continue to reflect the conceptions that the NC is elected by the convention (not the branches) and that it is politically reflective of the divisions at the convention. Nevertheless there is a real problem of lack of communication to branches without NC members of the proceedings of the organization between conventions, and to the NC of the views of members in these branches. Hence the subcommittee further recommends a change in the standing rules of the NC to the effect that each branch not having a member on the NC shall be entitled to one observer who shall have speaking rights but not voting rights following that portion of a speaking round or other speaking procedure in which all regular members of the NC entitled to be heard shall have been heard, except if lack of time shall make such speaking period unfeasible. VOTING: (a) on amendment: 0-6, FAILED; (b) on proposal on rules: TABLED. It was stated by the subcommittee that they intend to submit this proposal as a motion in the future.

IV. AMENDMENTS ON GAY LIBERATION

1. SECTION 8 OF "AUTHORS' AMENDMENTS TO GAY LIBERATION PERSPECTIVES" (BULLETIN NO. 26)(divided and tabled to NC by Convention). Recommendation to TABLE and organize a discussion among (but not limited to) gay comrades. ACCEPTED,
2. SECTION 7 OF SAME DOCUMENT, ON POLITICAL ACTION. To ACCEPT. MOTIVATION: The objections raised to this section center on the call for "independent

"gay candidacies" in conjunction with the call to oppose Democrats and Republicans and work for a working-class party; the objections have involved the general methodology of independent political action. We feel that the central questions involved in the latter dispute are not applicable, i.e., the feasibility of non-class parties as an instrument for breaking people from the Democratic Party. The document does not call for a gay party, but for gay candidacies; essentially these are protest or propaganda campaigns, and it is our understanding that socialists may always support or call for such campaigns while recognizing their inadequacies; it is emphasized that the political basis of such campaigns should be, aside from a program of militant homosexual-rights demands, such general social issues as may be applicable and the propagandistic call for a working-class party. Such a campaign would have a significant effect in breaking some sections of the gay community out of their dependence on traditional political mechanisms and in creating support for the conception of a class party. On the other hand, the call to oppose Democrats and Republicans and to work for a class party, without the call for an independent homosexual-rights campaign, asks the gay activist to take no political steps in the name of his or her own movement, while working for a long-range solution which appears exceedingly far-fetched to people who have never been accorded the slightest acceptance or respect by the other movements; thus it is a sectarian counterposition of our preferred alternative for any action that might be taken at present by the gay movement. Moreover, not just in the consciousness of gay militants but in fact the likelihood of a real fight for gay rights by any independent working-class party, without the prior political organization of a segment of the gay community on an independent and pro-working class political platform, is very slight. The position embodied in the document, in contrast, has already demonstrated its ability to cohere people searching for an alternative to Democratic Party politics: it has commanded the support of the Detroit Gay Activists, the Gay Liberator newspaper, the Michigan Gay Confederation, and the San Francisco newspaper Gay Sunshine, whereas the simple call for (1) no support to Democrats and Republicans, and (2) work for a working class party which would support the gay struggle, would have sunk like a stone.

CHANGES AND AMENDMENTS: The following changes made in the text as submitted, by CH: (a) first sentence, "our position" for "our orientation"; (b) lines 3-6, in place of quote from DGA statement, "an independent working class party based on rank and file labor and the struggles of other oppressed groups, including gays"; (c) line 9, end of sentence, insert in parentheses: "(We expect such opportunities to be relatively rare.)" AMENDMENT by SL: DELETE point 2 of the position and the sentence beginning "Where the possibility..."

VOTING. On amendment by SL: 4-2(DF, CH), PASSED. Motion to TABLE resulting text, for consultation and possible revision. 5-1(RT), PASSED.

V. OTHER AMENDMENTS

REGROUPMENT: AMENDMENTS BY CROSS (BULLETIN NO. 25) AND GEIER (NO. 27). VOTING: Cross: 0-6, FAILED. Geier: 6-0, PASSED. To be printed as appendix to Tasks and Perspectives. 6-0, PASSED.

POLITICAL ACTION: BY RAMIE (BULLETIN NO. 26) AND BARISONZI (NO. 27). VOTING: Ramie: 0-6, FAILED. Barisonzi: 1(SL)-5, FAILED.

PREFERENTIAL HIRING (AMENDMENT TO LABOR PERSPECTIVES; BULLETIN NO. 23). AMENDMENT BY RT: "We urge black and brown workers to reject and repulse efforts on the part of the ruling class through government and private agencies to mobilize them against white workers // around the issue of preferential hiring and in counterposition to the slogan of Jobs for All (such as the Philadelphia Plan in the construction industry). In these cases, we urge black and brown workers to place the demand for preferential hiring in a subordinate position behind the call for Jobs for All." DIVIDED (division indicated by double slash mark). VOTING: part 1: 6-0; part 2: 3-3 (JB, JG, DF). Part I PASSED, part II FAILED. VOTING on amendment as amended: 5-1 (SL).

MOTIVATION on the amendments on regroupment, political action, and preferential hiring will be forthcoming. The above motivations are by Chris H.; supplementary, counterposed, or contrary motivations may be forthcoming.

BOSTON I.S. TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES

Randy M.
Davy F.
Derek B.

(This document was adopted 8-0-1 by the Boston I.S. after a two-week political discussion in which a number of political differences were expressed. This document was prepared after the first branch discussion.)

The following proposal takes the recent national convention's Tasks and Perspectives document as its point of departure. We expect the current crisis of capitalism to grow in intensity in the coming period, and we view the task of the I.S. as the sinking of real roots in the working class, especially at the point of production, and the readaptation of the organization as a whole to this industrial emphasis; and at the same time, we seek to develop a social program that speaks to the needs of the American working class as a whole, so that it can grow in unity and political militancy.

To a degree, local and regional conditions are an obstacle to the direct implementation of this perspective in Boston. Boston is not a major heavy industrial area. The traditional regional industries, such as textiles and footwear, are in decline; even the aerospace complex is not in good shape. Finance and insurance institutions, higher education and hospitals dominate the employment picture. Few of the I.S. priority unions are strongly represented in this area.

Nevertheless there is room for our efforts here. Our major priority remains reaching the working class, a task we can approach in a number of ways.

INDUSTRIAL WORK

We already have people in the AFT and in telephone. We should offer them political guidance and practical support as they continue their work. In the case of telephone, educational work with contacts is possible. While the situation of our member in sheet metal is not ideal, he should be supported as needed.

There seems to be a rank-and-file movement in the hospitals in Boston, and job openings exist. We should make a probe there to see if intervention is possible or desirable.

There is rumored to be a rank-and-file formation in Teamsters, which we know little about at this time. ---- may be hiring (at least women), and it may be possible to get in by this means.

In all these cases, the Labor Fraction has responsibility (((continues)))

for guiding this work, subject to the supervision of the branch, which should receive regular reports.

ARENA WORK

There are in the Boston area certain remnants of the New Left and student movement moving in the direction of working-class political socialist activity. We should make an effort to influence and to recruit such people through both political discussion and participation in common work, in particular where working-class people are participating. Working-class work of this sort can lead into other kinds. In such cases we should participate on a positive basis, that is, where we believe we can improve and build existing efforts.

Formations of the sort we are describing are likely to be less stable and less effective than industrial formations. As a result, our intervention should be experimental in nature-- with the goal of examining the potential of certain movements and organizations in terms of our goal as revolutionary socialists. Specifically:

- (1) Black and Puerto Rican work. We may have a contact in the latter, but the state of the branch at present is such that the best we can do is keep tabs on the press in the search for opportunities for intervention.
- (2) Irish. There is a movement with real working-class component in support of the IRA in Boston, with a potential for putting us in touch with working-class people who are moving politically. Irish work, furthermore, is being done elsewhere in the IS. It appears that this work will have to be done from the outside, keeping tabs on the various groups, co-sponsoring demonstrations, forums, and the like. Certain New York ISers can help establish contact with the movement. The branch should also schedule a discussion on the question.
- (3) Tenant organizing. The general social crisis reflects itself in urban decay, increased taxation and other factors which lead to rising rents and deteriorating housing. Our job is to help those in motion around this question see this problem as a symptom of the general crisis of the society which needs to be countered by the working class as a whole, particularly at the point of production and through working-class political action. Links are possible with trade-union groupings, and propaganda can be made around our social program, notably on taxation and the need for an independent working-class party. A probe should be made into the Somerville tenants union in particular.
- (4) Women's liberation. One branch member should be assigned to monitor events in the remnants of the organized WL movement. Particular attention should be focused on propaganda opportunities at the Women's Center and at the Women's Studies Center

(continues)

Program at Cambridge-Goddard.

(5) **Gay Liberation.** One branch member should be assigned to monitor events in the Gay Liberation Movement. Press and publications should be read regularly. We should be prepared for general kinds of propagandistic intervention.

(6) **Radical America.** Radical America offers the I.S. an opportunity to reach radical intellectuals and the industrialized New Left. Branch members of the editorial board should give periodic reports. The branch should offer political guidance to members engaged in this arena.

All probes, investigations etc. are intended to provide a factual basis for a programmatic intervention, that the information so obtained be discussed in the branch to formulate our perspectives and that the exec be responsible for organizing the discussion.

PROPAGANDA

We should make every effort to spread our ideas to the widest possible audience. This task can be accomplished with greatest efficacy through a proper understanding of the relationship between ideas and material conditions. That is to say, political motion of a certain sort makes certain of our ideas directly relevant to ongoing struggles. Our propaganda work, it follows, should be evaluated in terms of the working class, its composition, situation and struggles, offering means to carry that struggle further. At the same time, there is an audience for general socialist propaganda, an audience which we still must address.

Specifically, in the next period, we can:

(1) Hold forums and educationals: an Irish debate in the early Fall, and possibly a more intimate educational on the political economy of the Boston area, which can be of interest and use to radicals who are sympathetic to us.

(2) Distribute the WP systematically, in line with the goals established in the national T & P--the advanced layers of the working class and secondarily, working class students and young radicals in general. Priorities (in this order) should be a local auto plant, the Kendall Square area (near telephone and other industry), Boston State College (a largely working-class school), and demonstrations and marches.

(3) The possibility of a radio program should be investigated.

BRANCH FUNCTIONING

The Boston branch is new, and includes people with differing political backgrounds and styles, as well as actual positions. Within the national line, ~~with~~ which we have an obligation to test out in practice, we should attempt to integrate all members of the branch into disciplined fractions (continues)

subject to the branch, so that different approaches may be tested out in practice and subjected to criticism based on experience. Whenever possible people with different politics should work together in fractions.

In addition, we need to make an effort to organize our political work and internal functioning professionally, with clearly assigned responsibilities, regular records and reports, etc. In particular, we need specific assignments on responsibility for the newspaper (articles and sales), record-keeping, finances and recruitment. Labor and educational fractions are delegated those responsibilities, respectively. Special attention should be given to:

- (1) Industrialization, which should be the subject of on-going careful discussion.
- (2) Internal education. A specific proposal, which we endorse, has been worked out by the education committee, for a serious discussion on transitional program. In addition, provision where appropriate should be made for contact classes or educationals, outreach, and the guidance of more advanced members.
- (3) Recruitment, which should be a specific responsibility, with careful files and follow-up work ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ a necessity. Regular reports are essential.
- (4) Women's fraction/caucus. The fraction-caucus should meet periodically to discuss questions concerning women in the IS and the role of the IS in the women's movement.

--endit--

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The July-August issue of Workers' Vanguard (WV, publication of the Spartacist League) contains an article on the CWA in the East Bay Area. Included in it is an attack on the IS. This report is being written to give other IS members factual background in case they come up against Spartacists on this question. The report reflects my own personal views, but I have shown it to other members of the phone fraction in the East Bay to check for the accuracy of the facts. The members from San Francisco have not had a chance to comment on this, and may disagree with some of my assessments.

Workers' Vanguard claims that the "role of the MAC [caucus set up by the Sparts] has been exemplary"; and that the Bell Wringer (BW), the caucus and newsletter that the IS has been supporting, is "spontaneist", supports only narrow trade union issues, and is soft on the labor bureaucrats.

BACKGROUND ON THE MAC. The MAC (or Militant Action Caucus) was set up in 1970 by the Spartacists. For about a year and a half, ISers in the phone company supported the caucus, even though the Spartacists and their supporters dominated it. Although there were shifts in the group, and the Spartacists lost on some questions, the MAC became increasingly sectarian over time. Their publication came out less and less often as they concentrated on internal education (which included Spartacist publications). The caucus became more and more disciplined, functioning more like a revolutionary sect than a rank and file caucus. Members had to accept virtually all of Trotsky's transitional program.

Yet even so, the caucus had won a certain amount of respect among militants (partly due to the work of our comrades). It had raised all kinds of political discussion in the local. Thus we were reluctant to break from it and form a competing caucus, because we didn't want to function in a sectarian way. However, the sectarianism of the MAC forced us to do so. In April, we initiated the Bell Wringer, and have been putting it out roughly bi-weekly ever since.

In this short period of time, the Bell Wringer has been fairly successful. Two additional workers are involved in it. It has gotten a fairly good reception. Two of the issues have been in tabloid form, and each have sold 100-150 copies in addition to ones given away free.

While in a few months, the Bell Wringer has not succeeded in attracting a large number of union militants to it, it has been able to work with other militants. A group was formed, the Committee for the Election of Stewards (CES). The CES consists mainly of the people who work on the BW plus several shop stewards. The CES has put forward bylaws proposals to allow for the election of stewards. The members of the Committee are also talking about making it an on-going group, not one that would dissolve after the by-laws proposal was passed.

The BW has attempted to stay between two extremes (of simple union militancy, and of being too "heavy" on politics. Most of the material in the BW has been about union or company issues, although we have linked these issues with larger issues.

SPARTACIST CRITICISMS OF THE BELL WRINGER. Anybody who has worked with the Sparts are probably aware that they use all kinds of distortions and half-truths in their denunciations. Here are some of them in this article in Workers' Vanguard:

***WV claims that the BW has never raised the demand for a labor party. This is untrue. To quote from a front page of an issue of the BW, "We need a Party controlled by the rank and file of labor, not the big corporations." The BW does not, however, have that demand as its central issue. It is not even part of a formal program, since the BW is new and the people working on it have not yet felt it proper to develop a formal program at this point. But Democratic politicians have been denounced several times.

We were going to have a long article on McGovern and the need for a labor party, but the other members of the BW wanted to discuss it more first.

***WV writes: "criticism of the local bureaucrats is subdued in line with spontaneist theories which reject Lenin's insistence that consciousness and program must be created by the vigorous and forthright intervention of worker-communists. The 30 May issue of The Bell Wringer disingenuously explained 'We have our own criticisms of Blasingame [Local President], but we think it is up to the rank and file to decide what to do about him.'"

The Spartacists lifted this last sentence out of context. It was not intended as the whole BW program, although that's what the Spartacists would like to have their readers believe. It was in an issue of the Bell Wringer written while there was still the possibility of a strike. The major article of that issue dealt with how that strike ought to be fought and on what program. There were criticisms of the union leadership in it. In a separate article of that issue, we wanted to deal with a specific question of many union members, namely why go out on strike to protect Blasingame since he was a sell-out. In this article, we wanted to explain that it was up to the rank and file (and not the company) to get rid of bad union leaders, but that in this case, the union had to be defended.

It is interesting to note that Workers' Vanguard accuses the BW of not attacking the union officials, because they have a long quote from the following issue of the BW. However, they don't mention that the article from which the quote is taken is entitled "NOT A SELLOUT . . . BUT A GIVEAWAY", and that the first sentence reads "Last week, CWA leadership, both internationally and locally, completely exposed themselves to the ranks as bureaucrats." To have quoted this would have contradicted their previous statement that the BW did not attack the union leadership. Clearly it was not a case of oversight, since they quoted extensively from that issue.

***The issue of shop stewards being elected: WV has a long quote from the June 7 issue of the BW on elected shop stewards. WV attacks it because it doesn't talk about the class enemy, and therefore will be a wedge to bureaucrats. It is interesting that the MAC would never have anything to do with the issue of elected shop stewards when it was proposed until the BW initiated it. (Previously, it had been one point among many in their program, but they had been unwilling to act on it). Now they have jumped on the bandwagon. After the Committee for the Election of Stewards put forward their proposal, the MAC said it had its own proposal.

A BW member proposed to the MAC that only one proposal on elected shop stewards be presented, and gave the MAC a copy of the proposal of the CES. The MAC was to look it over in a couple of days and give comments on it.

Unfortunately the CES's proposal did have one major failing. In writing the proposal, something was quoted out of the existing by-laws which would have given the District VP of the International the right to approve all stewards. This was clearly a mistake, and when pointed out the CES agreed to remove it from their proposal. It had gotten in their by oversight, and not intentionally.

However, the MAC did not simply point out this mistake. They informed the CES by writing a leaflet which they handed out at the phone company, denouncing the CES, the BW, and in particular naming a member of the BW (who had not been publicly identified before). The MAC clearly was not interested in having only one proposal on elected stewards. They were interested in denouncing any other group that might be competing with them. Once the BW made the issue of elected stewards an issue in the local, the MAC had to tack on to it their attacks on capitalism, etc, and distinguish themselves from the other proposal. And they did so as only sectarians know how.

The leaflets that the MAC hand out read like most typical Spartacist leaflets: long, attacks on other groups, end with militant slogans about capitalism like "Forward to a workers' government!" At union meetings they speak like they are in a meeting of left sects. The result is that they tend to drive people away from union meetings and also from rank and file groups in general.

SIZE AND INFLUENCE OF THE MAC. At this time the MAC is bigger than the BW. However, to the best of our knowledge, all members of the MAC are ex-student radicals, which are the only people the MAC can relate to (after two years of existence). One member of the MAC was elected as alternate representative to the union local executive board from the traffic department by a vote of 73 to 71 (out of roughly 1000 people eligible to vote). WV claims this as a big victory for the MAC and their politics.

Thus far the BW has not run anybody for elections because it has been so new. We are not exactly sure why the MAC person was elected. They do have a certain amount of respect from union members because they are known as militants. The votes might have been more against the union leadership than for the MAC. Also, the opponent was black, and they might have gotten the racist vote. Of course there is always random voting.

ONE FINAL NOTE: The Bell Wringer is not the property of the IS. We don't agree with everything it has done, because we believe in rank and file organizations rather than sectarian organizations. Thus at time things may appear that the ISer would not like. C'est la vie.

APPENDIX: THE MAC LEAFLET OF AUGUST 10

(Since this was written, the MAC has put out another attack on the BW, the CES, etc., which is worse than the last. I am reprinting a large section of it for several reasons. 1) Some of these charges will soon appear in Workers' Vanguard, probably. 2) I want to give people a very good idea of how the Spartacists function in a rank and file group. Remember, this is not a Spartacist leaflet, but the MAC. The leaflet was two sides of a legal size sheet. I am omitting roughly the first third. The leaflet is being copied word for word except for two things. Initials replace names that the MAC wrote out; and the footnotes are added to explain the MAC distortions.)

the MAC leaflet: WE NEED ELECTED STEWARDS! DEFEAT THE BLOC WITH THE BUREAUCRACY!

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 . . . The Militant Action Caucus has been a consistent force in this local. Armed with our program which gives a political focus to the union struggle, we have pointed to winning strategies and have exposed the cowardly and sellout actions of the leadership. We are having an increasing effect, and the more effective we are, the more we embarrass the leadership, the more they will try to get rid of us. This local is becoming more and more polarized between the leadership and the Caucus. It is because of this polarization that forces have formed to try to replace the leadership and head off the effectiveness of the Caucus.¹

A ROTTEN BLOC

The Committee for the Election of Shop Stewards is such a formation. Its leadership is not so much interested in elected stewards as in running for office. V--- and B--- are key figures in the November local counter-slate. Neither has ever stood for the election of stewards before.² Why have they changed their minds? B---, a chief steward appointed by the Blasingame regime, has never voiced any serious opposition to the leadership. V--- called for adjournment of the May emergency strike vote meeting before there was any discussion,³ and she denounced any criticisms of the local bureaucrats role in the Franklin St. "work holiday" as divisive. The participation of V--- and B--- in the Committee is an attempt to put a democratic face in order to get elected this fall.

(MAC leaflet, cont'd)

Another key segment of this formation is the Bell Wringer. A grouping which says it agrees with the Caucus program, but not with our strategy of counterposing to the bureaucracy a leadership based on our program. The Committee for the Election of Shop Stewards was organized by the Bell Wringer to undercut the growing influence of the Militant Action Caucus. Election of stewards has always been part of our program and the Bell Wringer knew we had a by-law proposal we could not present at the June meeting for lack of a quorum.⁴ Why have they produced a counter proposal? We challenge them to show any political superiority in their proposal;⁵ in fact it is still less democratic than the Militant Action Caucus proposal. Their original by-law change called for giving veto power to the International. Embarrassed by the anti-democratic nature of their proposal and pressured by some of their newer members,⁶ they altered this one detail of their proposal. But from their continued refusal to support the Caucus proposal, we must conclude that their proposal is only an excuse for the rotten bloc with V--- and B---. The Committee for the Election of Shop Stewards exists only to muster support for the sell-out slate which they will support in November. It is the Bell Wringer/V--- - B--- bloc which will be responsible if the vote is split at the union meeting: the onus will be on them if their opportunist tactic insures that neither proposal passes.

SILENT PARTNER -- THE INTERNATIONAL

But why was the clause giving veto power to the International included in the first place? And why, in the July issue of the Bell Wringer, was there no explanation of its previous existence and its removal? Because there is a third factor in the Committee for the Election of Shop Stewards--the C.W.A. International bureaucracy. Although the local leadership opposes election of stewards, this does not necessarily mean the International does. The Blasingame regime has become an obstacle to the International's attempt to pacify and manipulate the membership of this local. The International blames Blasingame's blatant heavy-handedness and stupidity for the growth of the Caucus' influence. The local leadership is opposed to elected stewards because it will take away some of their power. But elected stewards does not take very much power away from the International because of contract provisions and the C.W.A. constitution. Faced with growing militancy, the International can afford to make some concessions to head off unrest and quiet the membership. The International welcomes the aid of the Committee to Elect Shop Stewards in attempting to stop the Militant Action Caucus. M--- OF THE COMMITTEE SOUGHT INTERNATIONAL ADVICE IN LOS ANGELES AND RECEIVED SUPPORT⁷ [emphasis added]. At a local Executive Board meeting, V--- presented her ideas on the subject with the International rep by her side, supporting her and even prompting her. The International supports the Committee's by-law proposal and will probably support their slate in November. To quiet the discontent in the local and head off the Militant Action Caucus, the International needs a local leadership with a militant face; a leadership who mouths smooth phrases about democracy, but whose loyalty is with the International bureaucracy. V---, B---, and M--- have stepped forward to fill this position.

BELL WRINGER IS JOE BEIRNE'S HANDMAIDEN

The Bell Wringer has made more than a rotten bloc with "progressive" bureaucrats. They have played right into the hands of the International which is the silent partner behind the scenes. They claim to be radical, but in refusing to fight for leadership based on a working class program, they have capitulated to the status quo and become handmaidens to Joe Beirne. In their zeal to get elected and to co-opt the role of the Caucus, the Bell Wringer has wheeled and dealt itself into a bloc with people who are no different from those now in local power and who we will also have to defeat before the local can fight for the membership.⁸

Because two counterposed proposals now exist which creates confusion among the members and could lead to the defeat of both, the Militant Action Caucus asked for a meeting with the Committee, which they refused. They claimed to be afraid we would publish our analysis of what they would say at the meeting.⁹ If they disagree with what we say about them in our leaflets, why didn't they say so in the Bell Wringer? For two reasons. One, because they can't answer our charges. Two, because the Bell Wringer has a conscious policy not to

MAC leaflet (cont'd)

attack our members political positions.¹⁰ They say this creates "divisions" within the union. This is the same argument the bureaucrats use. The Caucus, however, understands how critical it is for the strength of our union to expose the positions of those who put themselves forth as leadership. Time and again members have been misled by candidates who talk militantly to get elected, but who really have no differences with the current leadership. The rank and file must be alert to future sellouts. What will the Bell Wringer say next year when V---, if elected, is instrumental in further weakening the union?

The Militant Action Caucus stands on a full program which speaks to the needs of workers in C.W.A. We are fighting for elected stewards, but our program goes beyond this issue to struggle for working class political power. Because of our approach we are able to interpret events, warn of sellouts, and present a winning strategy. We are the only group which will not sell out the membership. The Bell Wringer refused to learn these lessons while they were in the Caucus and now they are going exactly where we predicted opportunism would lead them--right into the arms of the bureaucracy!

FOOTNOTES

1. The claim that the MAC influence is growing is little more than assertion. The only evidence they could cite is the election of one of their members as alternate representative to the executive board. However, as pointed out above, there are a variety of reasons why they could have gotten votes. As it is, the total number of votes the MAC candidate received was about 7% of those eligible to vote. Other than that, the MAC has not been able to carry out any kind of actions, or significantly influence any groups of rank & file.

2. It is true that some members of the Committee for the Election of Stewards (CES) are interested in running for office. That doesn't mean they are "bureaucrats". It is possible that one of them may move in that direction, but in general their attitude toward elections stems from illusions rather than opportunism. Also it is completely false that the stewards had never been for elected stewards. In fact V--- was able to come up with a proposal rather quickly because she had worked on it in the past. In any case, our attitude toward this kind of people is not to assume that they are perfect, but that they can learn.

3. This criticism of V--- is correct except that the MAC puts an evil intention into her mind. They neglect to mention that at that meeting the MAC had created an atmosphere of sectarianism. When a MAC person spoke, instead of making concrete motions that would help a strike, she just did a general harangue. The MAC was able to speak only after the members had overwhelmingly voted down a leadership motion to adjourn. However, after the MAC had spoken, and with no concrete proposals to discuss, there was a general mood to adjourn. Thus, V---'s motion to adjourn was passed. We of course think she was wrong, but feel that her mistakes flow more from a lack of understanding rather than a bureaucratic mentality.

4. Election of stewards had always been a part of the MAC program. However, they were unwilling to take any action on it, and that is one reason why the Bell Wringer was formed. Only after repeated issues of the BW, and the formation of the CES had made elected stewards into an issue of the local, did the MAC finally "come out" with their proposal. However, they did not give members of the BW advance information about what they were doing.

5. The two proposals are not tremendously different. However, the CES proposal is better because it has provisions for stewards councils and education committees for steward that the MAC proposal leaves out. (It is interesting to note that the Spartacists resort to super-democratic posturing in their criticisms here.)

(footnotes to MAC leaflet, cont'd)

6. This statement is a complete fabrication. As stated above (see p. 2 of this article), the phrase was removed when it was discovered because it was an oversight. The whole Committee was new, so there were no "newer members". The MAC had a chance to tell the CES that their proposal was bad and could be improved by removing that phrase. Instead, they chose to make a public attack on the CES.

7. This is the grossest kind of falsehood and misrepresentation and slander. It sounds like M--- went to Los Angeles for the purpose of getting advice from an official of the International. The MAC knows perfectly well that this would not have happened. What had happened was that while M--- was in LA for the CWA convention, an International official came up to her, and talked with her for a while. When she came back, she told a member of the MAC about it in a conversation. The MAC then took it from there.

8. Again I will repeat here that merely because the MAC claims that the CES is no different from the local leadership doesn't make it true. In fact, one thing the MAC doesn't say is that they tried to recruit all of these "incipient bureaucrats" to the MAC, but failed because of their sectarianism. To their world view, an honest rank & filer could not disagree with them. If they don't like the MAC they must be going for the bureaucracy.

9. The MAC has a habit of publicly quoting things that people say in informal conversations. Thus, even if they were quoted honestly, there would be a reason for CES members to feel uneasy about being in a meeting with the MAC. In such a meeting they couldn't have a real discussion about what to do; every word a CES member would say would have to be carefully chosen, because they might find it printed up the next morning.

More important than this, is that MAC quotes are often distortions. I have given a few examples above. Let me give one more. In an earlier leaflet, the MAC claimed that a certain member of the CES really did not believe in elected stewards. As evidence they said "He was even hesitant about presenting the bylaw". The reason why he was hesitant had nothing to do with not supporting it. He told other members of the CES that because he didn't understand all the legal things involved, he would feel uncomfortable about being the one to present it. The MAC knew this, but twisted the meaning around to make it fit their polemics better. When confronted about this, a member of the MAC said "Yeah, I knew that's what he said, but I knew what was really in his mind [?!]".

Another reason why the members of the CES did not want to meet with the MAC is because previously they had tried to work out having only one proposal on elected stewards but had been shafted by the MAC (whose idea of working out a joint proposal is to write a public attack). The members felt they didn't have to go through this again.

10. The BW does not have a "conscious policy not to attack [MAC] members political positions." However, up to this point, the BW has felt that to build a rank and file movement, we could not debate with the MAC. Since this is what the Spartacists and the MAC are into, each response to the MAC would be met by an escalated attack; etc. However, because of the grossness of the charges, the BW is talking about having some kind of Where We Stand article explaining its attitude toward the bureaucracy, etc., while trying to keep sectarianism to a minimum.

The members of the BW have been perfectly willing to discuss with the MAC their differences, but the nature of the BW newsletter will not be determined by the MAC.