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INTRODUCTION TO N.Y. TELEPHONE PERSPECTIVES DOCUMENT

Bill Hastings 3/25/73

The following document on perspectives for our work in telephone was written by Brian Mackenzie shortly after the start of the CWA strike in July 1971. The intense involvement of our fraction in the activities of the strike together with a desire to see the outcome prior to finalizing our perspectives meant that the document was not amended and voted on by the fraction until after the end of the strike in 1972. The length of time since the voting in N.Y. on it and its publication nationally necessitates some up-dating.

To begin with, the document assumes an understanding of events, names and forces in the union and the company that could be obtainable from reading the coverage of our work in Workers Power. It assumes, for example, an understanding that only the plant department (craftsmen) are in the CWA, the traffic department (operators) in a company union called the TTU, Carnivale was the president, at the time, of CWA Local 1101 (Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx at the time of the strike) and Dempsey was at the time an executive board member who opposed Beirne and therefore Beirne's flunky Carnivale.

Several things have occurred in the interim. Immediately prior to the return to work, UA took the initiative in organizing a defense committee in the local. The leaflets we put out were issued over the names of more than half the chief stewards in the local. The defense committee, however, never got off the ground as it was, in a sense, the first casualty of what developed after the strike. Demoralization, cynicism, the breaking up of work groups from before the strike, transfers, firings, harrasement by the company all took their toll on the most militant sectors of the local, not to mention the more backward elements. It would be a while before any degree of self-confidence would re-emerge. At any rate, the defense committee was one way in which we sought to have UA take the initiative in building something larger than itself.

Shortly thereafter, elections were held for convention delegates. UA was only strong enough to run one candidate. We never took a formal position regarding the candidates in other areas (three delegates were to be elected by the whole local to represent three geographic areas), however most UA members critically-supported Dempsey and Schaefer while pushing our candidate against the third on their slate.

The program we ran on included the following: censure of Beirne and impeachment of the International Vice-President for our area for selling out the strike; committing the CWA to organize the operators with a rank and file approach instead of its traditional top-down method; a big city caucus in the CWA to actively fight the Beirne leadership, to fight racism and sexism in the company; no rate increases for the company; complete International support to strikes over local issues; and independent political action by the labor movement. Our poor showing--we came in fourth out of six--indicated our relative strength compared to oppositionists like Dempsey and Schaefer. (Our percentage would have been bigger if the vote of Brooklyn members had been counted (see below on Brooklyn).

At this point when it became clear that we had not succeeded in breaking the militants from types like Dempsey, the majority of the fraction still opposed any joint block or caucus with them. Instead we were for posing certain issues in our newsletter and leaflets which called for certain specific campaigns that would enable us to work jointly with the militant stewards, chief stewards and rank and filers who still actively supported Dempsey and Schaefer.

Later, Dempsey first and then Schaefer came out with their programs for which they were running for office. Besides the usual points about dues decreases and more union benefits, they both called for building a big city alliance in opposition to the Beirne machine and for forming delegates' assemblies in the two locals (this was after the split--see below). When this occurred, the fraction felt there was sufficient basis for critical support because, if enough rank and file organized pressure could force them to carry out their program, it would be a tremendous step forward for the ranks of the CWA. Our critical

support, which was based on their program and the active support for them by the militants, consisted of giving our content to their program and attempting to differentiate ourselves on that basis, but also of actively building support for their election. It is interesting to note that both demands for a big city alliance and the delegates' assembly were raised much earlier by UA and picked up by them. (See document by Ken Morgan on our work in the elections.) Dempsey's victory opens up for us an ability to intervene in 1101 and to attract to us the militants in the local.

During the election for convention delegate in 1101, the CWA broke the local in two--Brooklyn (1109) and Manhattan-Bronx (1101).--Heavily backing a reputed gangster in 1109, Beirne took complete control of it. Schaefer was defeated in his bid for the presidency partly because of his own unwillingness to build a real movement around the issues he was raising. His defeat proved the final straw for many militants in 1109, many of whom have since quit the company, dropped out of all union activity or aggressively talk against having anything to do with the union. Since most of the decent stewards fall into that category, there has been an almost complete turnover in the steward bodies at the most militant buildings. The new stewards, faithful to the local president, have done nothing to organize any fight. The result is that it will be much longer in 1109 to rebuild the movement that existed before Beirne, the company and the state smashed us.

The company has also continued its harassment of the operators. Largely as a result of this and the generally poor conditions and pay of the operators, together with the company's automating of positions and actually at times moving them out of the city, the workforce in traffic has changed drastically. Most of the militants from the operator organizing drive are either not with the company or have been transferred to new locations, etc. The company completely closed down the operator positions at the building that had been the most militant and organized activity by operators during the strike. Another group of operators will undoubtedly develop to take part in the next organizing drive, but they will almost all be new women.

Beirne's latest move to merge with the postal workers will completely change the nature of the CWA. If it goes through his way it will not be for the good. The threat of what this merger on the local level may do to the already existing locals may force some of the local leaders like Dempsey to actually move towards a big-city alliance. Such a move, despite his bureaucratic content to it, will open possibilities for us to intervene nationally much more than we have been able to in the past.

As a whole, the perspective is still what we are operating on. Specifically the questions of the IS's task in industry, the nature of spearhead groups like UA, the program put forward and the stress on uniting the operators and craftsmen are still the broad relevant questions in our work today. We do not believe that it is necessary to change this perspective because of the several changes I have noted that have occurred.

Finally, even though the size of the telephone fraction is down considerably from its high point for a combination of reasons, our presence in 1101 is as significant today as it has been in the past. UA's active work in the stewards bodies and in fighting for our conception of a delegate assembly has increased our reputation and influence among what we consider to be our "constituency"--the militant stewards, chief stewards and rank and filers who fought to change the direction of the strike into a real fight and not a sell-out.

## NY TELEPHONE PERSPECTIVE

by Brian Mackenzie

### The IS in Industry

The bulk of this document deals with the IS perspective for building a rank and file movement in telephone. In this sense it is a perspective for militants as well as IS comrades. Such a perspective would lack focus unless we were aware of the primary task of the IS itself -- a task that can only be carried out by ISers and without which the overall perspective would prove unworkable. Put bluntly, this task is the creation of a significant "cadre" of indigenous workers that share what amounts to a socialist view of their work in the labor movement. While they may or may not view themselves as socialists, they should have a long range strategic conception of the struggles they are involved in that is substantially similar to ours, including an understanding of the basic class position of workers in society, the need to transform the trade union movement into a vehicle of rank and file struggle, the need for IS by labor, a political understanding of racism and sexism, and the ability to operationally overcome residual racism and sexism. This "cadre" would include those workers recruited to IS on a "single Jack" basis, but would be broader.

Without such a grouping in any industry it will be impossible for the struggles now in process to develop in a seriously political direction. At a more immediate level, it will be impossible for ISers to stabilize the kind of rank and file organization needed to spearhead our general perspective. The perspective outlined below is based upon the priority of this task and assumes that such a "cadre" can be developed, in part, soon enough to play a role in carrying out the more far-reaching aspects of the perspective. As a telephone perspective it is particular to that industry, but it assumes the context of a general labor perspective.

### Assessment of past IS practice and perspective in NY tel.

The perspective that we operated on for the first year and a half was basically that the major events facing us would be the Traffic election and the contract and that what was needed was a rank and file organization which could intervene in these and other events as they came up. In this aspect we were largely correct -- that is, these were the major events and our grasp of them from the start enabled us to develop and pose strategy and program well before the organizing drive and contract expiration occurred. Due to our own inexperience, however, this was the fullest perspective for that period that we could have developed at the time. But a more complete perspective, one which went past the contract was never worked out. In fact, the perspective discussion took place prior to the formation of United Action (UA) and we failed to have anything more than brief discussions of

short-term perspectives since. The result, largely unavoidable given our lack of experience and time in the industry, was a great deal of pragmatic trial and error within the general conception of building a large rank and file organization which was expected to reach its peak during the strike. This did not happen.

Although there have been abundant "fuck-ups," mistakes and breakdowns in the functioning of the labor fraction, this is not a critical cause of the failure of the initial pre-strike perspective. In fact, the fraction functioned well enough to intervene continuously and to pose clear tactics and programs for all the major events of the past nine months in both traffic and plant. The problem, rather, has been political. The fraction has lacked both a notion of the IS's particular task ("cadre" development) and a long-range strategy for dealing with telephone unionism. Obviously the lack of an overall IS labor perspective has not helped matters. The result is that while we have stuck to a fairly consistent orientation around the contract, and, inter-relatedly, the traffic organizing drive, our week by week functioning has been pragmatic and short-sighted.

The failure of our work in UA was most clearly demonstrated by the falling apart of the group right after the strike started. This was due to a number of causes, but the main one was the failure on our part to decide among ourselves on our conception of UA and to then discuss this in the UA meetings, winning the non-ISers to our point of view. Instead, while we may have changed our conception of UA from a rank and file organization to that of an organization of organizers, to the other people in UA there was no such change. Since the notion of rank and file organization was never really posed in a clear way inside UA those people who viewed it as a pressure group could continue to do so. And as a pressure group we did well enough so there was very little reason for the non-ISers to bring other telephone workers to the meetings. After all, from their point of view we were accomplishing a lot.

Another problem was the failure to tie together building a city-wide group (which is a necessity in telephone) to our work in the individual garages and buildings. There was never any discussion of how the two were interrelated and therefore, with perhaps one or two exceptions, UA had no real presence in the CO's and garages. The result was that when the strike took place and there was nothing to intervene in city-wide and we lacked a base to call our own demonstrations, the group fell apart except for the hard core (the steering committee). Third, the IS failed to play the full political role it should have. This will change easily with the imposition of wage controls and their immediate effect on telephone. But until July not more than 2 or 3 non-IS members of UA knew that we had a broader view of things. Consequently, UA struggled along from week to week and this contributed to the collapse of the group when the strike came.

The debates that took place in the fraction were tactical and short range in nature. As they did not refer to any long range perspectives they were cloudy and unclear as to differences in di-

rection. The cloudiness and limited direction of these discussions has made them incomprehensible to LS members out side of telephone. Similarly, it has been difficult for UA members to see the implications of LS proposals. In many instances the illusions of UA members have been reinforced by this pragmatism. All of this hindered building an ongoing rank and file organization.

Equally important with this is the fact that the perspective of building a large rank and file organization in the pre-strike period proved unworkable. Part of the reason for this was the failure to tie together our work on the shop floor to the work in the city-wide group. This gave us a periphery of many people who did not become a part of UA since that meant going to meetings every week and working on the bulletin. It is clear now that any city-wide group that is going to exist must have a strong base in at least several of the large UGT's or garages.

Because we were, in fact, operating as merely a short-term interventionist organization (typified by the bulletin which came out only when there was an immediate event we wished to speak to) there was little reason for the group to grow. UA attempted to have a day to day influence on major events and on the local leadership. Because we were dealing with a new, inexperienced leadership in 1101 and a poorly consolidated organizing drive in Traffic, we were, in fact, able to have a marginal but visible effect on certain events. For a while, this led us into believing that we were fulfilling our perspective. But this period in both Plant and Traffic was atypical and is rapidly drawing to a close. This doesn't mean that UA will be unable to influence events; but it will not do so because it is in the process of becoming a mass organization. Nor will it become such an organization simply by carrying motions in a union meeting, etc. The role and definition must be changed and made clear. The modification of the large rank and file organization perspective which stated that UA was an organization of organizers, though more realistic, was still inadequate without a program which could tie together our work on the shop floor to the city-wide group. UA has been able to express the unorganized rank and file discontent and therefore is still the organized embodiment of a potentially large rank and file movement. But given its present size it would be only a joke to consider it that movement at this time.

Another failure of the LS in UA was to fully integrate Traffic and the questions of racism and sexism. These were dealt with but, in practice, because we expected UA to become a broad mass organization, they were played down and usually limited to the minimal notion of "unity." The same is even truer of other political questions, such as the war. It should now be obvious that we cannot attract or hold blacks or women without dealing more directly and concretely with racism and sexism.

The major achievement of the LS telephone fraction has been to establish its members, through UA, as respected militants with serious ideas. This is no small task. Furthermore, we have established UA as a respected organization and newsletter and have a good deal of political capital on which to build in the future.

### The Context

The imposition of a wage-price freeze and the near certainty that some form of incomes policy will follow, have opened the political situation. The widespread attack on labor that fell heaviest on public employees has now taken a more general form and caused a political stir in the labor movement as a whole. Although most telephone workers escaped the immediate effects of the freeze, the general effects of a state clamp-down on labor will be felt throughout the industry in the coming months.

In NY, Plant and Traffic workers may feel the effects even in terms of wages - a forced acceptance of the national settlement and even elimination of retroactivity. Clearly, political issues that appeared abstract in the past are now on the agenda.

Wage-price controls will certainly strengthen the hand of the Bell system in terms of implementing its 10 year plan of investment and rationalization. While Bell is a virtual monopoly, only marginally affected by competition, it does feel the need to maximize profits. Furthermore, for literally the first time, Bell faces opposition from nearly every sector of society, including Big Business. Also new is the existence of potential competition in the form of foreign telephone equipment and technological transformations that could threaten Bell's monopoly. Bell won control of the satellite system and excluded its use as a domestic carrier, but an unfavorable climate could reopen this question. Thus, for various reasons Bell has been forced to embark on a prodigious investment program. AT&T Chairman Tomes has estimated that Bell will need from \$100 to \$200 billion in the next ten years to implement this program. Neither current profits nor any conceivable rate increases could finance such a program. Tomes states that AT&T must drastically increase its profit rate to attract investors. Both the internal and external means of financing are inadequate. The "secret" source of capital - and of an increased profit rate - is, of course, labor, intensified labor. That is, speed-up, reorganization of jobs and a general rationalization of production methods. This will be both the means of getting and the result of improved equipment. The particular forms of job reorganization or speed-up and their timing are impossible to predict. Immediately it will certainly mean a continuation and growing intensification of the arbitrary enforcement of Absence and Lateness Control, various forms of production and performance indices, management harassment, etc. The introduction of such a "productivity" scheme, already under way, will be piecemeal and long term. The actual rate of speed-up will in part be set by the expansion of telephone service demand. In general, a work force of stable size, the same or smaller than exists today, will be handling a growing amount of work.

The CWA, unlike most unions of semi-skilled and skilled workers has never taken any serious interest in job definition, job control issues. There are no union work rules or contractual clauses covering the nature of the work itself. Such customs or agreements as do exist beyond wage questions-- are purely local and



usually informal. Furthermore, the Bierne machine, being labor statesmen of a "forward-looking" type, are all agog at technological advance. In short, the current CWA Int'l. leadership is in no way equipped to resist speed-up or work changes. The company need not negotiate things that the union does not raise. It is only as the effects are felt locally that job control will become our issue.

As productivity programs are generally introduced slowly and piecemeal so as not to arouse general resistance--until it is too late--it is essential that U.S. point to and explain the broad picture. Without this, no one will be able to fight the particulars. Anyone who has doubts about this has only to look at the absolute success that Bell has had in introducing and enforcing, to their satisfaction, the absence and lateness control plan. Only now, after 5 years of implementation has the local even raised the issue. The Int'l. quietly allows this plan to be enforced in most major areas. The CWA leaders occasionally sight the Traffic Production Index system as one of Bell's more barbarous methods of sweating female labor, but never has the Int'l. bargained over or resisted the implementation of this precious management prerogative. In N.Y., Mr. Oberst assures us the Traffic Production Index has risen dramatically in the past years. In short, initiative on production and job control issues will not come from this Int'l. As we have seen with absence control, they will arise locally and then only to the degree that sectors of the ranks are vocal about them. The CWA Int'l. bureaucracy has maintained an autonomy of action and a resistance to pressure from below that is remarkable even for today's labor bureaucracy. This is partly a result of the structure of the CWA, which excludes direct rank-and file intervention, and partly due to skillful maintenance of a machine based on rural and small town locals. Although Bierne himself plans to retire at the end of his present 3(5) term, his machine will remain intact unless the urban locals are able to mount a united challenge. This has never happened. The almost federal structure of CWA has meant that relatively militant locals have remained isolated or have grouped on a regional basis; e.g. the N.Y. State and Michigan locals. In a way, CWA resembles the Bell system in structure. At any rate, CWA does not have the usual structure or method of bargaining of industrial unions.

The pretensions of its leadership to social unionism (CWA is the "community-minded union," just like Bell is just an organization of people from your community) are nothing but pretensions.

In spite of some liberal rhetoric concerning blacks and women, the special needs of these groups go unrecognized by the Int'l. leadership. Blacks and women are largely absent from leadership positions. There are no women on the Int'l. Exec., in spite of the fact that 55% of the CWA membership is female. Bierne's promise to close the gap between men and women was broken without even a fight at the bargaining table. The Int'l. has apparently recognized the usefulness of black staff members and organizers to smooth the waters, but seems to have no interest in fighting discrimina-

Telephone Perspective, Cont'd. (6)

tion in the industry. An opposition based on urban locals will have to deal seriously with racism and sexism in the union as well as in the industry.

No survey of the national context would be complete without a reference to the International Black caucus. Despite its opportunist character, and unsophistication, we are going to hear more from it especially as Peretta tries to give himself more of black organization here. We should handle largely in terms of how we handle his facile efforts to avoid organizing a real black caucus in the local. But at some point we should expose its national program as evidenced at the last convention. For example, though its chairperson is the woman president of the Detroit Traffic local, it put forward no demands relevant to women or traffic. In fact its sole program was to make idle threats of a walk-out if the demands for more black representation weren't met. We should be for both an international black caucus and a women's caucus, either in coalition or with over-lapping memberships as two of the possible forms. As an essential part of the program we pose is the demand that they be genuine membership organizations. As the I.S. we make clear that we see them as transitional to more class-wide formations.

In the past, the situation in N.Y. has been defined largely by this fact: that half the work force, the women in Traffic, have been in the company union--TUU. This has meant a division in the work force even beyond that endemic to CWA.

The disastrous defeat of CWA in the recent Traffic election threatens to perpetuate this situation. It is possible that TUU, frightened by CWA strength, may attempt to exacerbate the situation by strengthening its organization in one way or another. In any event, it is clear that a trade union type opposition is excluded for Traffic. At the same time, some sort of motion can be expected within the next three years. Wildcats are a possibility and the emergence of a pro-CWA committee in 2-2½ years is likely. Thus, while the possibilities for action and organization may be minimal in the immediate future, a long-term perspective for Traffic is a necessary part of any rank and file perspective.

#### Long-Range Goals in this Period

In general, the "period" under discussion is the next three years, the life of the present contract. This perspective is long-range in the sense of that three-year period. As events move ever more rapidly, the goals for the whole period must be general. They are nonetheless important as they define the direction of our more immediate work.

The major goal of I.S. telephone work should be the building of a national opposition organization in the CWA, based on local organizations and with a program for making CWA a fighting industrial union. Although the platform will be filled out as events change, the following demands should be central:

### CONTRACT

1. One year national master contract bargained by a national committee containing directly-elected local representatives.
2. Unabrogated right to strike during the life of contract nationally and locally.
3. Union control over speed of work, manning, job definition and classification, etc.
4. Equal starting salary for all telephone workers, equal access to all higher paying skilled jobs for black, Latin and women workers in all departments. System-wide upgrades, promotions and transfers before new hiring. Open all jobs to all - end "women's jobs" and "men's jobs".
5. 30 hour work week for 40 hours pay.
6. Full Cost of Living based on local Consumer Price Index in major urban areas and national Consumer Price Index in other areas.
7. Unlimited time-off for stewards, with no need of prior notification.
8. Union shop.
9. Grievance procedure based on the principle of innocent until proven guilty.
10. Company-paid, employee-controlled day care centers.

### CWA INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURE

1. Direct election of convention delegates just prior to convention by local membership.
  2. Contract ratified by members voting in locals.
  3. Direct election of bargaining committee by locals.
  4. Direct election of national officers.
  5. Direct regional election of Int'l. V.P.'s.
- #### Political and Community Action
1. Active opposition to all forms of incomes policy, or other statist attempts to abrogate collective bargaining.
  2. Active opposition to rate increases for consumers, propose higher rates for business if system needs more money.
  3. Active opposition to the Vietnam war and other wars conducted by the U.S.
  4. Active political action for jobs for all -- end unemployment, open the labor market to women, blacks, Latins, etc.
  5. Tax the corporations, banks, and rich for the money needed to end unemployment, discrimination and poverty.
  6. Independent political action by labor.

These of course are our demands, the ones we fight for as a national opposition develops. While they are in no way a condition of support and participation, we should present them as part of our general strategy.

The importance of having the conception of a national opposition is particularly pressing in telephone. The nature of the industry and its technology make local strikes limited in impact. If, as is likely, the CWA Int'l. leadership continues to sell out nationally in contracts and oppose local actions during the life of the contract, the locals and the local opposition will be limited in what they can affect to an even greater degree than locals in other industries. This fact, well known among telephone workers, is a major source of demoralization and cynicism about local motion. A local opposition will have difficulty in growing if it cannot present at least a conception of how to change the Int'l.

The structure of the CWA, notably the large role played by local presidents, means that local opposition groups will have to seek actual power in the local in order to seriously change the Int'l. The dismantling of Pierre's bureaucracy will require a block of the urban locals acting in concert. It should be understood that this is not a scenario for what will happen or a strategy of orderly stages of development of a national movement. It is simply a statement of goal and intention that points the general direction of the movement. It points to certain tasks required in building local movements, most important of these is internalization by local oppositionists that they are building an opposition movement bent on taking power in the local on the basis of a program. This is counterposed to the more timid conception of a pressure group.

The actual possibility of a national opposition is today rather remote. In all likelihood, the bulk of motion will occur locally. The importance of posing the idea of a national opposition is primarily political. Nonetheless, I.S. should not shrink from making probes or even initiating proposals in this direction such as a national conference of local groups. Even tentative steps in a national direction can help to generate the kind of consciousness and vision needed to build and sustain local movements and organizations. Events such as wage price controls imply a national orientation, but they do not guarantee that such consciousness will arise spontaneously.

#### NEW YORK PERSPECTIVE

The major goal of I.S. work in the N.Y. Telephone Co. continues to be the development of a rank and file movement of serious proportions. At the same time, it is now clear that building such a movement is not a simple matter of recruiting to a rank and file organization. In fact, it is not primarily an organizational question. Motion in the ranks depends primarily upon objective conditions (productivity push, wage price controls, unemployment rates) and upon subjective conditions largely beyond

our control or influence (factional developments on the local Executive Board, general response of local leaders to situations, form and content of new traffic-local, development of third world and women's consciousness and struggle, etc.). Our major concern must be in the direction of the motion that exists and develops. Influence on the direction of that motion requires a continued interventionist approach to events. In the past, intervention has meant, above all, seeking to directly influence the policy of the leadership of local 1101 and on the Traffic In-Plant Committee. As stated, the loose situation that existed both drew us in that direction and actually allowed us to have a marginal influence. This situation no longer prevails in Plant or Traffic.

In 1101, the factional situation revolves around an open struggle for top level power (Dempsey vs. Carnival, Brooklyn localists vs. 1101 and each other). While U.A. support to specific actions, resolutions, etc., is permissible, serious blocking with one or another faction is senseless. Furthermore, our ability to influence, through persuasion or pressure, the leaders of these factions is less than marginal since their eyes are transfixed in the upward direction. United Action, as an opposition group (more later) should seek to win militants at the base of these factions, but should have the stance of being a tendency independent of these factions in program and function as well as name.

While it has always been our conception that U.A. sought to influence and direct (and organize) the ranks, this must now be translated into practical terms. In terms of immediate influence, U.A. eyes should be on the shop-floor and stewards level of this union. Our broader program is posed as one to be carried out by a movement of the rank and file which seeks power, rather than a program to be implemented piecemeal through pressure. We call on the present leadership to implement it (calling on all factions of the leadership) in the way all oppositions do, but we are clear to our constituency that we do not believe these opportunists will or can implement it or any major part of it.

The defeat of CWA precludes the possibility of the sort of rank and file group advocated for Plant and renders unstable any sort of city-wide organization. We do not see ITU as a serious arena for CWA organizing, even though we favor remaining members of ITU and, where possible, using the delegates position to lead local struggles. The most certain development, and the most important, is the emergence in 2 years or so of a CWA organizing committee based on the operators themselves. The organization of the operators into a real union and their ability to play a role in the fight within CWA remain the primary goals of our perspective. Thus, whatever immediate or short range possibilities that exist should be seen in this context. While the CWA's sell-out, bungling, elitism and male chauvinism prevented mass loyalty to CWA, the process of struggling to get rid of the ITU and for a real trade union undoubtedly raised the consciousness of many operators about what a real union can do on the shop floor. Grievances and the simple fact that one does not have to take everything the company can dish out are more widely understood than in the past. We can expect, and participate in organizing, limited local struggles over grievances. Militants in Plant can play an im-

important role in the development of such struggles through support, technical advice, etc. The potential for this should be used to build in every way cross departmental contacts, meetings, movement, and even organization. On the building level Operators should demand joint meetings and support from the men. Whatever steps toward unofficial unity that are possible should be pushed. While it is probably not possible in its full form, we should work for a de facto joint stewards council - not between CWA stewards and IU delegates, but between CWA stewards and Traffic militants at the building level.

While any city wide group of Operators is likely to be small and unstable, to an even greater degree than U.A., we should work to build and maintain such a group. The remnants of the in-plant committee and the '65 committee may provide some of the personnel, but it is to be expected that the radicals in Traffic will be the bulk of the group - its stable core. While we should encourage radicals and militants to be active in U.A., our fundamental perspective for Traffic should be for an independent Traffic group that views itself as the embryo of a future union organizing committee. As the bulk of the general program presented here is for re-making CWA, it is also largely applicable to the making of a local. Most of the democratic and militant ideas embodied in this program, including a national opposition, will be indispensable for the militant wing of the future organizing drive. The timing, however, will probably have to be quite different in Traffic. While the present strike in Plant raises most of our program to relevance, the same will not occur immediately in Traffic - if only because the IU is not the same sort of arena. On the other hand, women's demands and black and program-blatant male chauvinism was one of the causes of the CWA defeat should not be lost on anyone. The independent organization of Traffic workers is simultaneously the independent organization of women and we should be aggressive in bringing that fact to consciousness.

Although the immediate possibilities are minimal, though by no means nonexistent, the IU ought to maintain a presence in Traffic with a view to larger intervention in 2 years. Traffic remains one of the most fertile areas for the organizing of working women in the next few years. We do not, however, recommend large scale or short term industrialization in Traffic now.

The development of organized rank and file groups requires a context in which motion is to some degree organized by union institutions itself. Our aim, and to a degree our expectation is that this will or can occur at the stewards level in Plant. If U.A. is the organized arena for U.S., the stewards are the organized arena of U.A. In our view the stewards are the first line, organized expression of rank and file consciousness (including low consciousness and apathy). Because they do hold an organizational position, stewards are required to think more tactically and operationally than the ranks in general. Nonetheless, given the stewards ratio (1:20) seldom are they far out of touch with their constituents think or are willing to do. Our task is both to enlarge the consciousness and willingness to

act of the ranks generally and to push the stewards to lead and to take hold of the possibilities of struggle--and to push these to their limits.

It is our assessment that the major possibilities for immediate action will center around shop floor expression of the absence and lateness Control Plans, productibility and job changes, racial and sexual discrimination (embodied in issues such as upgrades, promotions, and redefinition of jobs in ways that prevent acquiring skills), and overtime. U.S.ers, as individuals and as U.A. members, should propose strategies and tactics for winning immediate gains and should point out the broader implications of the issues--pointing to the U.A.-IRF programs.

In pointing to the need for planned, comprehensive resistance on the building or garage level we pose as our "shop floor" program the following:

#### ORGANIZATIONAL

1. Weekly building-wide (Plant and Traffic) stewards meetings
2. Monthly building-wide (Plant and Traffic) stewards newsletter including reports on grievances.
3. Immediate election and certification of new stewards and Chief Stewards as needed.

#### STAND ON ISSUES

1. Refusal to recognize Absence and Lateness Control and building-wide resistance to each application of it.
2. Resistance to changes in job definition--based on customs and grievance president. In particular, each craftsman must have the right to learn all the skills of his craft.
3. Resistance to arbitrary, unrequested transfers to other gangs, boards, or jobs. In other words, resist breaking up work groups in Plant and Traffic.
4. Resistance to production intensification--Traffic Index, Frame Index, Repair-Install quota, etc.
5. Broadening of breaks by support "informal-spontaneous" establishment of customs. For example, the Operators' "minute" should be tested (i.e., broken) in mass form, and where Craftsmen have 20 minute coffee breaks; operators should begin taking 20 minutes, with the clear understanding that stewards will back them up.

#### MAJOR TACTICS

1. Mass grievance-dumpings--real and threatened--coordinated building-wide
2. Overtime or A.E. refusals
3. Quickie stoppages--designed to embarrass 3rd line management

into reversing 1st or 2nd line decisions

These tactics should be used consciously to get resolution of grievances at 1st or 2nd levels.

We are fully aware that building level actions and organization is susceptible to parochialism. Thus, our conception of a rank and file movement led largely by stewards is city-wide. Shop floor struggle is, for us, a spring board to broader struggle. It is not a first "stage" of building such a movement but one of a number of simultaneous steps in that direction. The local-wide and cross-local aspects of our work are of equal immediate importance -- even if they do not seem to net the same kind of immediate results or emotional satisfaction. In the long run of this 3-year period, the more political city-wide and national work is of greater importance. The city-wide orientation for a steward-led rank and file movement requires an organized spearhead, and that, of course, is the major role of U.A. and the

U.A. - Purpose, Role and Program

Outside of this new Chief Stewards Council, which is largely beyond our reach by direct intervention there is no city-wide stewards or mass rank organization. The advocacy of a city-wide stewards organization by U.A. does not fill this vacuum; nor can it be entirely filled in the near future. Even given such a formal organization, the conception of stewards as leaders of a movement will not automatically arise. With or without institutions this feeling of being part of a movement can only arise when it is posed consciously and openly, as a matter of political necessity. This is the role of U.A.

We do not believe that U.A. will become a mass rank and file organization at this time. Rather, we view U.A. as a spearhead organization -- one which is attempting to build a rank and file movement both by developing strategy and program for it and by intervening in situations as they arise. Our work to build a real rank and file movement will largely be done by our work in the garages and C.O.'s as well as operating city-wide on a long-range oppositional program. To be effective, this program and orientation should be unfolded as early and completely as is feasible. U.A. should use every opportunity to fight for its program including local meetings, stewards and chief stewards meetings, union elections, etc. U.A. should seek an organized presence inside district and local-wide steward bodies. A U.A. caucus inside these will be necessary if we wish to be a serious opposition in the local. U.A. should present motions and resolutions as appropriate and when possible run candidates for office either in coalition with other militants and rank and file groups or by ourselves. This is a different self-conception than that of strikeback which considers itself a political sect of telephone workers. U.A. must be seen as the organized nucleus of any future rank and file movement. Otherwise, it will be impossible to recruit to or to be considered a serious opposition.



So far our activity has been on a solely short term inter-  
ventionist perspective. This was most clearly demonstrated by the  
bulletin which came out only when there were events which we could  
immediately intervene in. This may have been correct for the  
past, but after the contract we will need a more ongoing presence.  
We should have issues directed at particular conditions at  
work and more political events around us which may or may not be  
immediately actionable. We should aim for a regular monthly  
appearance of the paper which does not preclude issues at  
special times, but merely guarantees a continual presence of the  
group.

While it would be crystal-ball-gazing to present a time-table  
or scenario, it is possible to describe generally our interven-  
tion in some of the predictable major events of the next three  
years.

## 1101 ELECTIONS, 1972

U.A., in coalition with other militants and groups sharing our  
general programmatic outlook, should run an opposition slate -  
as full one as possible. This slate should be seen as distinct  
and in opposition to all of the existing "power factions" in  
1101.

## 2) THE MOVE FOR A BROOKLYN LOCAL

U.A. and Thru should oppose the formation of a Brooklyn Plant  
(or for that matter) Traffic Local. This means, above all, a  
serious attempt to build a base in Brooklyn, particularly to  
Brooklyn, that can fight such a move.

If the Brooklyn Local should become a reality, U.A. and its  
sympathizers should field a programmatic opposition slate along  
the lines of general U.A. program suggested here.

In addition to union events, there will be a number of prob-  
lems and circumstances that U.A. and Thru will have to deal with.

1. Any Traffic group will, of course, be a women's group. Thru  
should push women's issues and demands as a part of general program.  
U.A. should support these demands in addition to whatever demands  
are raised for or by Plant women. U.A. seeks to recruit Plant  
women, but is in no way hostile to an independent women's group  
in 1101. U.A. shouldn't propose it, but it should support it  
if it arises. Thru men and women are aggressive in pushing for  
the particular demands of women and in raising questions around  
sexism generally.

## 2. BLACKS AND THIRD WORLD GROUPS

U.A. and Thru are racial and sexually integrated organizations.  
As in the case of independent women's organization, however, we  
enthusiastically support the formation of Blacks, Puerto Rican or  
generally Third World groups. As is always the case, we may be

critical of program. We critically support, and seek a working relationship with, Telrum. Our assessment of Telrum is that it is not a specific political tendency but a broader black radical grouping. While its potential is difficult to assess at this time, we should urge it to become a broad-based black caucus, rather than a revolutionary organization. The Black Workers Council (BWC), which is a revolutionary political organization should be encouraged to enter and build U.A. and TRP, in addition to whatever else it does.

### 3) TOWARD A N.Y. PEL RCF COALITION

The multiplication of RCF groups (mostly led by politicians) presents a serious problem to the credibility of U.A. This repetition of "movement" sectarianism confuses people and makes it difficult to take even sane groups seriously. U.A. should favor the formation of a city-wide, cross-local RCF Coalition organization.

However, the experience of the strike committee shows that such a formation must have a programmatic basis. The development in U.A. of a program must not turn it into a sect such as a strikeback. The fact that we have the best reputation is due to our functioning which has been in a very non-sectarian manner. U.A. came out of functioning in the Strike Committee in a highly political way without losing any of its credibility.

### POLITICAL SCOPE AND EXTENT OF U.A. PROGRAM

The imposition of a wage-price freeze and the certainty of permanent controls to follow has significantly changed the political situation we function in. Political questions and ideas that previously seemed abstract are now at least propagandistically valuable. The fight against wage controls requires raising broad class-wide actions, tactics and strategies to be real. Thus, the political General Strike and IRA by labor must become a part of the U.A. program. In addition, the specific class content of inflation, taxes, etc., becomes clearer. Parochialism and illusions will be widespread and tenacious, but to a degree there will be more on the defensive as government action takes dollars out of workers' paychecks by fiat. Whether or not slogans for general political action by labor gain wide sympathy is doubtful, but also not primary. The type of militant we can attract to U.A., IRA in the coming months will be the most open to our ideas. To a degree not possible before debates over issues such as IRA or activity in the PE will be seen as serious arguments with political consequences by these militants. This fact in itself will alter the consciousness of the militants around us. We should fight to make IRA (General Strikes and electoral action) a part of U.A.'s program as soon as those groups begin to attract numbers significant to guarantee a real debate. Before this we should introduce these ideas in UA newsletters and propaganda in such a way that it is clear this is not the official program or a requirement for membership.

In the past, our approach to racism and sexism has been to limit discussion of these issues to strictly trade union, practical arguments. While this will continue to be the major programmatic thrust (an ~~new~~ group is not a revolutionary party of organization), our joining of these issues should be broader. That is, we should not shrink from discussing them as general social issues. In general, this may arise in the context of labor-type issues, such as unemployment, the effects of racism and sexism on the whole, labor movement, etc., but will necessarily go beyond analysis of unions or the work place. We will find this crucial when discussing ideas such as ~~IRA~~.

Finally, it should be obvious that no successful spearhead group can be built in Traffic without racism and sexism being in the forefront of its program. Consequently, the plant group will have to be strong on these issues as well - even beyond dealing with racism and sexism in our plant department.

The general program we fight for in U.A. is the following (The shop-floor program is, of course part of our program for U.A. as well as a means of building these groups. The timing and tactics of introducing the program are another matter.)

FOR A FIGHTING N.Y. LOCAL:

1. No acceptance of the wage-price freeze, subsequent controls, or other attempts in Gov. to abrogate our contract or right to bargain and strike
2. No recognition of absence, lateness, reliability or production control; a coordinated city-wide strategy of grievance dumping, quickie strikes, slowdowns, overtime or AB refusals conducted on the local in cooperation with all CWA Locals
- 2a. Penalties for working management in the form of fines or a step system leading to dismissal
3. Monthly membership meetings
4. Establishment of a delegates assembly as the primary organization body of the local.
5. Establishment of district stewards councils (composed of all stewards), which meet at least monthly
6. Election and right of recall of all stewards and chief stewards with automatic certification
7. Elimination of sections of by-laws making stewards and chief stewards responsible to the President and Exec Board. New articles making stewards responsible to their constituencies
8. No acceptance of new "control" plans, job redefinitions (formally or in practice), gang or work group sizes, production indices, etc., without negotiation by the local. No implementa-

tion without ratification by the membership.

FOR THE UNITY AND EQUALITY OF ALL TELEPHONE WORKERS

1. Immediate opening of all crafts to those in less-skilled, lower paying jobs regardless of sex, race or dept.
2. No new hiring into top crafts until upgrades and promotions without exams and on the basis of seniority in service are exhausted. Posting of all openings at all work locations. All necessary training to be on an on-the-job, full pay basis.
3. Immediate dismissal of management personnel for racist or sexist practices, insults or allegations.
4. Establishment of local committees on racism and sexism with members to be chosen by membership.
5. Establishment of a metropolitan UAW coordinating council composed of representatives of all Metro. locals. This council should implement action of city-wide issues including political issues and actions.
6. One local for Plant and Traffic: meaning one Manh., Bklyn-Bronx local, one Queens local, etc. (This will be one of the earliest actionable issues. We will surely lose the first round, but we should not abandon the slogan as it may be openable again at a later date.)
7. Union endorsement of major "movement" actions and defense cases (our first opportunity to implement this may be the Nov. 6 anti-war march.)

U.A. POSITIONS ON MAJOR UNION SOCIAL AND POLITICAL MOVES

1. Total opposition to wage-price controls, incomes policy, etc.
2. For immediate withdrawal from S.E. Asia and support to major anti-war actions.
3. Endorsement of major women's rights actions, especially those concerned with job-related issues.
4. Support of black, Puerto Rican and Third World liberation struggles and endorsement of major events.
5. Support and endorsement of black, Latin and women's caucuses in all unions. (This must include the consciousness that such caucuses are an integral part of the <sup>black</sup> movements and not a peculiar side-issue.)
6. For a city-wide Tel. Workers Coalition
7. For a city-wide <sup>UAW</sup> cross-union movement and council

8. For national and local general strikes against wage-price controls

9. For IPA in labor

10. For a new opposition movement and electoral slate aimed at implementing the major points and thrust of our program in taking power in the locals

11. For a national new organization aimed at replacing the Pierre machine and implementing the program described earlier.

#### SPECIAL TRAFFIC DEMANDS

1. Open upgrades and promotions into Plant Dept. crafts, without exams, based on seniority and desire, all openings to be posted in Traffic locations.

2. Upgrade of salary and conditions to parity with lowest crafts of all Traffic work.

3. A democratic, open union organizing committee

CONTRACT (SEE "LONG-RANGE GOALS", starts p. 6)

#### TIMING AND IMPLEMENTATION

It would be useless to attempt to rebuild U.A. by plopping down our full program. Implementation must proceed along the lines of major events - and it is clear these will be different in Traffic and Plant. We should show our full program and strategy to those relatively close to I.S. and win them to it, but in building spearhead groups we need some sense of timing.

Although we seek to make the Traffic group a spearhead organization, though not a trade union opposition, the timing and implementation will most likely be very different. In the next two years actions of any Traffic group are likely to be sporadic rather than continuous and defensive rather than offensive. In short, before an organizing drive can focus things, activity is likely to be pragmatic. It will be more difficult to introduce program concretely. In spite of this, our primary job is to point to a programmatic approach. Shop floor and womens demands will be relevant before trade union demands. In general, we point to the need for broader organization, informal while that is necessary, as the most effective way to win both shop floor struggles and to fight discrimination against women.

In Plant, although we must rebuild U.A. almost from scratch, there is a greater continuity of reputation. While demoralization is likely to prevent significant recruiting to U.A. for 2 or 3 months, it will be possible to expand and solidify the present core and lay the basis for a broader programmatic approach. Shop-floor work and functioning around the stewards' arena can solidify

our roots as individual U.A.ers, and the regular publication of U.A. can lay the educational basis for a take-off in the late fall. UA is important in the early implementation of this perspective. A combination of educational and agitational articles (including shop reports) can enable us to set the tone of a larger UA and to a lesser degree shop floor and local-wide events.

Wage-price controls will be an important issue. Beyond insisting that the locals resist and break such controls on our contract, we should raise programs for broader resistance. Even if we are only able to raise them propagandistically, we should demand that ILO fight within the labor movement for total opposition; that ILO favor a one day general strike; and that ILO immediately approach other affected unions (AFL-CIO, UFT, UFW, UAW, IAH, etc.) to mount mass demonstrations of opposition to the freeze.

#### WESTERN ELECTRIC, LOCAL 1190

Our involvement in 1190 is new and, as yet, we know little about the general situation in Western installation or 1190. One fact, however, stands out above all others. 1190 has virtually no internal life. Not only does it not have meetings, but its stewards ratio (1-200) and structure precludes union involvement at the shop floor level. These facts, of course, suggest the initial program for organizing in Western and 1190: regular membership meetings; a steward for every foreman, etc. It will be impossible to determine how Flanagan's ostensibly militant stand during the strike affects his popularity and the chances of organizing an out and out opposition, until we return to work.

In long range terms, the orientation should be to build an opposition group along the general programmatic lines suggested for NY Tel. The lack of immediate possibilities, however, means that U.A. will have to reach and attract at least an initial group of Western workers. To this end, UA should carry regular articles on 1190 and Western. Wherever possible ILO and Traffic U.A. members should talk to 1190 members about 1190. Western workers should be invited to U.A. meetings to do something about their conditions.

We are going to have to discuss just what grievances Western workers do have and what can be done about them in a post-contract situation. In the long run any intensified investment program by NY Tel. will certainly mean a speed-up for Western installers. We must pay close attention to any push in this direction.

#### INDIGENOUS CADRE DEVELOPMENT

The development of an indigenous worker "cadre" (described earlier) is the necessary condition for a stable local organization and movement. The development of this "cadre" is the primary task of U.A.ers - above their day-to-day work. While this development can only occur in the context of struggle, it is to a large degree an educational task - rather than an organizational matter.

The posing of a long term telephone perspective is central to this task, but it is not enough.

We must educate our contacts in terms of a general labor and working class perspective, i.e., a transitional politics and class analysis. In the end, only socialist consciousness can guarantee the integrity of such a cadre, but for the coming period, socialist consciousness is not likely to be as wide-spread as a fairly sound transitional consciousness. While we use every opportunity in our day to day work to build this consciousness, more will be needed. The labor fraction should plan, for the winter a series of educationals that explicitly get across a class conscious trade union perspective. In addition, the fraction should urge the labor to hold regular forums on labor or labor-related issues and events; and we should be prepared to provide speakers. Finally, we should not hesitate to draw appropriate contacts into other arenas - women's movement, Melliciano Defense, Anti-war, etc.

#### SOCIALIST RECRUITMENT

In the final analysis, all our work in unions is directed at the reintroduction of socialist ideas and politics into the ranks of labor. Socialist recruitment, both to the ideas and to the labor, is never a task for tomorrow, but one for today. Reality means that this crucial task will take a single Jack/Jane form. Limited immediate possibilities in no way make this basic task less important. The question of recruitment involves the entire labor organization, and implies changes in the organization. While these are beyond the scope of this perspective, the following activities are minimal:

1. Regular distribution of workers power at telephone buildings
2. Frequent forums on both broad and immediate labor questions and events
3. Regular discussion of labor fraction work in membership meetings

## EVALUATION OF OUR ROLE IN THE RECENT C. I. LOCAL ELECTIONS

KEN MORGAN

This is not meant to be an analysis of the functioning of the IS telephone fraction in NY in the recent past, nor that of the United Action group. It is limited to an examination of our work around the local elections. Therefore some important aspects of our work, e.g. our desire and efforts to contact and work with militant black workers at NY Tel, are hardly mentioned here. The reasons why our work around the election campaign (and indeed in the union) do not much advance our perspective in this area are beyond the scope of this document. The perspective document of the fraction, for which an updated introduction by Bill H. is being prepared, and Kim's "Assessment of our first 2½ years in NY Tel" provide much of what is missing here.

The position in which the telephone fraction found itself in the post-strike period is generally known. Briefly, there was a general rank and file demoralization, felt most acutely by those whose consciousness had been most altered through the events of the strike. The strike activists were unable to maintain their cohesion, and the firings, suspensions, constant harassments and general tightening-up by the company, and the union's total lack of response, all tended to lower the level of possible activity.

The group of militant workers who had actively participated in the strike and who had been changed by their participation (and to some extent by our intervention) retreated--to the stewards' organizations in an area where these existed; or to inactivity or cynicism otherwise. Many were fired or were harassed out of their jobs; others left on their own.

The splitting off of Brooklyn by the International contributed to the demoralization, if for nothing else, than because Brooklyn had contributed an out-of proportionally large number of the strike activists. In Brooklyn itself, placed under the direct rule of the International pending the setting up of the new local, the demoralization and cynicism were even deeper than in what remained of 1101. The International control meant, among other things, that the stewards and chief stewards were no longer automatically in control of the grievance procedure, or anything else. Even this basic level of shop steward responsibility went through the administratorship.

In both 1101 and the new Brooklyn local (1109), United Action was unable to mobilize large numbers for a defense committee on an ongoing basis. Our network of active sympathizers, who had distributed UA at their workplaces before the strike, and who to some degree made up our political constituency, was more or less destroyed. We increasingly lost contact with whole groups of people who, while they rarely if ever attended UA meetings, distributed the newsletter, (even contributing to it occasionally), shared many of our conceptions, and considered themselves part of the group in some cases, or looked to it for leadership in others.

The upcoming local elections (there were first by-law elections in Brooklyn) were seen by most of these people, (both the old UA network and the strike activists in general) or at least those who had not completely disappeared, as the first opportunity to begin to do something once again. Most of them simply did not feel anything was possible until the local leadership was changed.

The Brooklyn situation was the less promising. Al Ruggeiro, a former secretary of 1101, had helped the International engineer the Brooklyn split. Through



the International he controlled the entire apparatus of the local grievance machinery, newspaper, etc. as well as the electoral procedure itself. He had jammed his incredibly undemocratic by-laws through, and ran on a platform of craft representation. Besides being Beirne's man, he was also a gangster. In short, a perfect candidate to preside over the dismantling of a union.

Ray DeForest, a former VP of 1101 ran essentially on one issue: re-uniting Brooklyn to 1101. But he was seen by most people as Carnivale's man in Brooklyn-- and re-unification as being put back under Carnivale. Combined with his geographically limited base of support, this made his candidacy hopeless (though not as hopeless as the completely dishonest vote-count was to make it seem).

Tom Schaefer, the third candidate, had the critical support of UA. Even more than in the case of Dempsey (see below for a fuller discussion applied to 1101), Schaefer had been the opposition to Carnivale in the eyes of the strike activists. As Division Steward from South Brooklyn, he had acquired a city-wide reputation for militance. Young, bearded, and wearing jeans, he had led all candidates for convention delegate, even outpolling Dempsey in the latter's home area. Schaefer had actually mobilized people during the strike, although he was afraid of doing anything, once they had responded to his call.

Around Schaefer had been grouped some of the most militant and most approachable of the strike activists.

UA re-established contact with some of this group through Schaefer's electoral meetings. There UA members presented criticisms of Schaefer's "leave it to me" campaign and his general unwillingness to actually mobilize the ranks. His program was similar to Dempsey's (see below) and UA raised similar criticism.

The total demoralization in Brooklyn, affecting even Schaefer's best people, and Ruggeiro's control of the election and union apparatus, meant that the election raised little enthusiasm or even interest in the ranks. The general feeling in Brooklyn was that Beirne had destroyed the union's effectiveness and that nothing much could be done about it.

Without going into the whole question of the Brooklyn local, or attempting to formulate a perspective for our work there, it is enough to say that the 1109 election campaign did not open up the same possibilities for action as did the campaign in 1101.

After Ruggeiro's victory, Schaefer did not even show up for the first membership meeting. And the previously omnipresent Al Ruggeiro, whose face had appeared all over the local newspaper, has since become unfindable.

In 1101 there were also three presidential candidates, each with a full slate. Carnivale, the incumbent, attempted to ignore the question of how he had led the strike, and run a "service" campaign: his administration had instituted an auto insurance plan, was setting up a dental plan, etc.

During the strike, Carnivale had shown himself entirely unwilling to go against the International bureaucracy in any serious way. The strike seemed like an embarrassment to him, something that had intruded on his activity. He was an inexperienced, vacillating non-leader. He did not even possess the normal set of responses from which union bureaucrats usually make a choice: he nor bureaucrats...

could deal with political criticisms neither politically, nor by red-baiting, nor bureaucratically except in the clumsiest manner, by not doing anything, nor even by strong-arm tactics. He had been elected because he had been the "out", and because he had the covert backing of the International. His base of support was a geographically (and perhaps ethnically) limited area, plus the little baronies of his allies. Having lost the International's support (for his inability to carry out the International's desires), his "allies" looking around for a better "leader", Carnivale did still possess the resources of the incumbent. In the end, his control of the election committee was almost enough to win.

The International's new candidate was John Smith, an ex-treasurer of the local and former close associate of Brooklyn's Ruggeiro. His only activity during the strike had been a violent red-baiting attack during its last days, in which he urged people to return to work. Smith was almost certainly financed directly by the International, and in any case, was the representative of the bureaucracy's political program: business agents, craft representation, friendly relations with Beirne. Smith's campaign raised these, but was mostly based on charges of theft and corruption, mostly about Carnivale, some of which may have been true, but which certainly applied even more to Smith's term as treasurer. The slick advertising campaign for Smith's "Committee for Responsible Leadership" and its constant mail-outs seemed to make a threat to be reckoned with. Smith's strength was in fact very limited. Other than one building (his own) he had no organization--that is he had no organized group of supporters. His appeal was to the most reactionary workers, to a hoped-for "silent majority" who had opposed striking, who were disturbed by the long-haired young stewards and the activism of the recent influx of telephone workers. But by its very nature this "silent majority" was incapable of organizing, or exerting or exerting its weight or even of expressing itself. It is hard to judge how many people actually did listen to Smith seriously. Many who were initially attracted by his attacks on "pressure groups" or on Carnivale were probably impressed by arguments that he was Beirne's agent (everybody hates Joe Beirne). In any case, many of those to whom he addressed himself were too cynical or too apathetic even to vote for him, and Smith was probably genuinely surprised that his extraordinarily well-financed campaign netted so little (under 25% of the vote).

The third candidate was Ed Dempsey, one of the "opposition bureaucrats" of the strike. His program was genuinely different from those of the other two candidates, in what it said, in to whom it was addressed, and in the opportunities it offered. Dempsey called for a delegate assembly, and an alliance of big-city locals against the Beirne machine. (What he meant by these will be discussed later). He also had some demagogic issues (dues increase, financial allegations). He favored a single local with operators, though he never really mentioned this.

But his campaign was genuinely based on the chief stewards and stewards' bodies in Western and Northern Manhattan, the only areas where such bodies actually existed. Many of the strike activists were drawn into activity around his candidacy.

United Action, with no opposition, adopted the IS fraction's position of critical support of Dempsey. The fraction discussion was based on the assessments of the candidates given above. We felt that Carnivale's election would

leave us floundering in the same way as before, increasing demoralization, and allow the company to continue dismantling every gain the union had ever won. We felt that a Smith victory was equivalent to an International takeover, and that the possibility of ISers functioning in 1101 would be seriously impaired and perhaps made altogether impossible. We considered a Smith victory as close to the destruction of the local.

In contrast, we felt Dempsey represented something of a sufficiently different nature so that his election was desirable. The question of an independent UA campaign for educational purposes was rejected for several reasons. We did not have the ability to wage a local-wide campaign even had we wanted to; we had found in Joe Nabach's UA campaign for convention delegate that we had failed to reach very many people: the people we were trying to educate about programmatic questions and who were open to such education, were not open to the methods we had chosen. In that case, and we judged even more so in the localelections, those to whom we were trying to talk felt that the defeat of Carnivale and Smith was necessary to achieve the program that we were advancing to them. In other words, an independent campaign by us would have isolated us and our program from the very people we were attempting to convince: the militant stewards and others who had seen many of the political implications of the strike and who were therefore ready to listen to our analysis and were attracted by our program. This stratum of advanced workers (which is what they are) would have seen an independent campaign at best as irrelevant (which it would have been), or at worst as helping to defeat Dempsey (which it might possibly have done) and therefore as against their interests. In either case, our positions would not have been listened to.

It should be stressed that it was our view that these militants were quite correct: that Dempsey did, in fact, deserve support, though of course not the uncritical and unthinking support he would have liked.

United Action published two issues in which the lead articles urged voting for Dempsey and three leaflets on specific issues: the big-city alliance, racism, and the question of business agents vs. stewards. In all these, UA's position was critical of Dempsey. We argued for example that Dempsey's idea of a big-city alliance (which slogan he had picked up from us) was an alliance of big-city local bureaucrats. To this we counterposed a rank and file conception. Similarly, an article on the delegate assembly advanced the notion that such a body should control the local and take the place of the executive board rather than of the membership meeting, which we suspected was what Dempsey had in mind. The leaflet on business agents was essentially a response to Smith and was more educational than the rest. In putting forward the counterposition of stewards vs. business agents, and our analysis of the differences, we also of course raised our notion of rank and file unionism. The leaflet called on Dempsey to make his position clear. (Partly, I believe in response to this, Dempsey spoke very strongly in favor of a local based essentially on the stewards--this to meetings of his active supporters, meetings made up largely of stewards.)

The UA leaflet on racism attacked the fact that all the candidates had attempted to ignore the issue completely. Dempsey's formal position on upgrades and operators' organizing are in fact quite good--his failure to discuss them was partly due to an opportunistic fear of alienating whites holding racist sentiments and partly to his own lack of sensitivity and insight into questions of this type. We argued in the leaflet that Dempsey's election would at least

open the possibility for a fight on the questions of racism and sexism.

It is quite possible that, mostly by geographical quirk, UA's support may actually have made the difference between Dempsey's winning or losing. UA was Dempsey's only organized support in two places in the Southern Manhattan division. Our position of critical support undeniably influenced quite a few votes, and given the dishonesty of the vote, these votes may have provided Dempsey's winning margin. In an honest election, our assessment is that Dempsey would have won much more easily. Dempsey himself always claimed that he felt UA's endorsement, critical or otherwise, hurt his chances. This is certainly objectively false, and almost certainly, in view of his actions towards UA, not really Dempsey's opinion.

UA was able to re-establish links with organized groups of the most conscious telephone workers. These often saw themselves as a kind of "left" pressure on Dempsey (although most of them would not conceive of it in terms of "left" or "right", that is they are unaccustomed to looking at their own actions politically). They saw us then, not as a left pressure but as a left pole of attraction--and in this case the conception of "left" is understood in the political sense, when applied to us. Everyone understood our criticisms of Dempsey, and these appeared valid to many. UA is viewed by most in this group as a legitimate force in the union. The increased contact we have established, and the respect we have earned will open greater possibilities to us on the delegate assembly, operators organizing and contract bargaining, all of which are upcoming.

While it is the view of the fraction that our critical support of Dempsey was politically correct and that our criticism was both sufficiently vigorous and open so that there can have been no misunderstandings as to what our position was, we also feel that in tactical terms we did not sufficiently orient towards the groupings of advanced workers described above. Thus, while the political substance of our bulletins and leaflets was correct, we feel that they were partially directed to the wrong audience. We believe that there was too much of an attempt to speak to the "average" rank and file, and that, to an extent, our literature argued to much about things that the advanced workers already understood--rejecting Smith as the tool of the International, for example. While these arguments were absolutely correct, and had an influence in reducing Smith's vote, the people we are trying to reach already agreed with us. Of course, we did make this argument in the context of the need for a national opposition to Bairne, of the necessity for union democracy, etc., and in that sense we did partially advance the consciousness of the militants. But generally, this type of argument was directed towards the rank and file as a whole, and our resources are so limited that this necessarily made our work with the militants suffer.

As I say, this failing was not black and white, but it did reflect a failure to fully apply the national perspective as presented in the MacKenzie labor perspective document. The reasons for this partial failure are twofold.

First, a genuine disagreement in UA as to this perspective. The ultimate source of this disagreement is a disagreement on the need for a revolutionary cadre organization, as contrasted with "NAMish", early new-left conceptions. Our orientation towards an advanced stratum of the class simply does not make sense if one disagrees on the more fundamental question. More immediately, this disagreement

comes out in differing conceptions of what the newsletter should look like: should it, in a sense, do the job the union itself is failing to do, or should it address itself to a more limited group who are most receptive to it? The IS fraction has put forward its perspective and is arguing for it.

Second, and related to the above, was a tendency to do Dempsey's work for him, since he seemed incapable of doing it himself. The CWA is a relatively backward union, and we have often found ourselves, for example, being forced to argue the industrial union arguments of the '30's, while dealing with the vastly changed social situation of the '70's. The lack of political tradition, and the general low level of trade-union consciousness of most telephone workers creates a milieu which exerts strong psychological pressure towards doing the union's work for it. The basic union educational work that other unions have carried out, however limited, has been pretty much totally missing in the CWA. Some of UA's literature in the past has reflected an only partially consciously-made decision to fill this gap. When to all this is added our serious estimate that Smith's election would probably destroy any possibility of activity in 1101, it is apparent that there was much pulling us in the direction of abandoning our orientation towards the most advanced workers in favor of a sort of "mass line". To UA's credit, this never happened, nor did we allow these pulls to mute our criticism of Dempsey. UA always maintained its independence and cooperated with Dempsey's official campaign only on that basis.

The opinion of the fraction is thus that while our position was correct, our tactical activity did not carry out the general labor strategy of the organization as much as was possible. We feel that UA has improved steadily in this respect, more and more reflecting our orientation. The increased number of articles on political themes and the changed tone of articles of "purely" union matters are examples of this. The purpose is to make both the UA group and newsletter into instruments for applying our strategic orientation, and thereby testing that strategy in practice, in the working class.

## LESSONS OF OUR FIRST TWO AND A HALF YEARS IN NY TELEPHONE

### INTRODUCTION:

This will be neither a history of IS involvement in NY telephone, nor a perspective document for the immediate period. Rather it will attempt to draw and explain some of the major lessons of our experience there since we first entered in January 1970. Except where necessary, this document will not recapitulate the history of the major events, such as the January 1971 and summer-winter, 1971-72 strikes. Detail on these and other events, including internal union affairs are available in past issues of WP and in Joe Sabach's article in New Politics.

The NY Telephone experience is atypical in a number of ways. Notably the lack of a militant tradition in CWA, the newness of the NY locals, above all the rapidity of events in a short period of time. In a period of little more than one year (1/71 - 2/72) I.S. had to intervene in two strikes, one of which lasted for over half that whole period, two officer elections, a major organizing drive, two contract rejections movements (one successful, one not), and a crushing post-strike demoralization. This is quite a compressed sequence of events and required a good deal of hectic activity from a relatively small group. It goes without saying that we long ago drew the lesson that industrialization in groups is essential, for very few individuals could have intervened effectively in such a turbulent situation. Although such a sequence of events is, itself, atypical, many of the events, taken by themselves for analytic purposes, is in some ways typical. In any case, some effort is made in this document to point out what is unique to NY telephone. Comrades will have to draw their own conclusions about what is useful to them in other industries, or other parts of the telephone industry.

The main IS involvement has been in NY Tel. Plant, with 3-5 comrades there. In addition, one comrade was in NY Tel. Traffic from 10/71 to the present (currently on a leave of absence from the Co., with an option to return), and one comrade in Western Electric Installation for about the same period. While Traffic has always been a central part of our perspective and activity, and will be dealt with in some detail, Western proved untenable for one person and not promising enough to justify further industrialization. As nothing much happened there, it will not be discussed in this document.

### THE BIRTH OF A CONSCIOUSNESS

Until the early or even mid-1960's, NY Tel. plant and traffic divisions were composed of an older, largely white ethnic (Irish and Italian) stable work force. Telephone traffic in NY skyrocketed, in the 1950's. Moving years too late to save collapsing service, NY Tel. began a vast hiring program. First in Traffic, the older workforce was all but replaced in the early 1960's by young black women. Shortly afterward, in the mid-1960's thousands of young men, still mostly white but with some blacks and latins for the first time, were hired. In traffic company unionism was preserved by an older cadre of (mostly) white women. Local 1101 of CWA was founded in the early 1960's on the basis of the old work groups - who also led an attempted bolt to the Teamsters around 1965-66. In traffic, where no union yet existed, the mass influx and turnover precluded the rapid formation of groups that could be the basis of a self-generated union drive. Not until 1970 did

such an outburst take place on the basis of a new strata of black women. In plant the mass influx and turnover found a ready-made union organization, and a strata of older men who monopolized the apparatus of the union. If their work groups, i.e. basis of power, was washed away in the late 60's, they at least had the union apparatus to hold onto. The thousands of new telephone workers that flooded plant and traffic had no stable groupings until recently. In traffic this meant that the STU leaders were able to insulate that company union from any serious influence from below - as happened with NY State employees and the CSMA. It meant also that the failure of both Dist. 65 and CTA to build a competing infrastructure on the basis of emerging work groups or strata of militants prevented a massive self-generated union drive. In plant where the union was firmly established, the lack of solid work groups up to the time of the strike, likewise precluded a self-organized response to the existing union leaders, both in union elections and meetings and in the big strike.

The theory of the primary work group explains a good deal of the form that events took in the nearly three years we have been in NY Tel. In terms of these work groups, our involvement began when mass turn over was still the rule and no solid primary groups existed in the work place - though, of course, there were other types of social groupings. Only following the organizing drive and the strike did the economic situation, a company hiring freeze, and a change in Co. policy toward the workforce create the beginnings of such groups. It is my own estimate that these primary work groups are only now emerging as a factor in work place and union affairs - with very different effects in plant and traffic. For the moment, further discussion of traffic will be suspended until after discussing the the organizing drive.

The nature of the period we are in prevented, however, the usual relationship between work group and shop floor leader. That is, the big strike that began in July 1971 forced the union into a protracted battle before any new leadership had arisen on the basis of solid work groups. In part, the stewards' position had been penetrated by younger militants. In part, the Carnivale leadership represented the dissatisfaction of the more volatile young workers - though these who voted for him certainly didn't get what they wanted or expected. In fact, they got something even worse in many ways than the old leadership. But being totally disorganized in any form these newer workers had no way to influence Carnivale any more than the old leaders. In short, Carnivale had no organic ties to the ranks. The leadership that entered the 1971 strike was a combination of the older "appartriks" and a rootless group with no constituency to be responsible to. But 1101 conducted two mass strikes in 1971. Clearly some core of militants must have existed.

This core was based above all on the younger stewards. And, indeed, in the course of two strikes this group became quite visible, quite cohesive, and very militant. By the winter of 1971-72, 1101 possessed what very few unions have today, a hardened, experienced fighting core of several hundred militants. It is this group that has been, since January 1971 the constituency toward which ISers directed their activity. It was, and is, toward them and their consciousness that the public face of United Action directed itself. Indeed, most would agree that it is this strata of the labor movement generally (its age varies from union to union according to its history) that is today the IS' main

constituency in the labor movement.

But in telephone a unique problem exists. Because this group of stewards and militants was forged before primary work groups were more than embryos, the allegiance of these militants to the most active local leaders above them is stronger than their ties to the ranks. Combined with other peculiarities of 1101's structure this has made the traditional task of breaking these militants from various sections of the local bureaucracy extremely difficult. Given the excellent steward ratio, about 1-20 or so, the stewards would, had their been strong work groups, have been able to involve more rank and filers in strike action and union affairs, and would have been proportionately less tied to their Division stewards and Vice Presidents. As it is, most stewards lost any real contact with their pre-strike work group. For the same reasons, neither the stewards nor the chief stewards succeeded in mounting their own strike activity, as against the inactivity of the leadership, on a scale massive enough to win the strike. For this reason, again and again, stewards and chief stewards adopting United Action proposals would prove unable to carry them out. Failing this, they again and again returned to dependence of the more militant local leaders. In brief, the lack of established primary work groups, pulled together by extended shop floor struggle, made the entire stewards organization of 1101 rather a shell. Hundreds of stewards simply disappeared during the strike, and fortunately were replaced after the strike. The hundreds who were active in the strike were "free agents" responsible to no one below them. When the strike ended and they returned to their pre-strike work groups, which to an amazing degree remained in tact, they were immersed in a sea of defeatism and demoralization from which these militants have yet to recover. In the months since the strike, most work groups have remained stable. There is virtually no turnover in the work force now and only certain groups are haunted with continuous transfers. The militants, of course, remained stewards. If their first eversion in their work group was a conservatizing experience, the months of work in these groups have tied these stewards more solidly to the ranks. The cold winds of unemployment have long killed any dreams of moving on. Shop floor struggle has arisen, of course, and is poking holes in cynicism. The militants of our constituency are now gaining some very hard experience of new sorts, but this time in a more tested and time worn relationship with their fellow workers. Our constituency in the past was, in reality, a rootless and volatile group of militants. Now that constituency is becoming rank and file leadership. They are not conscious of this and there are no guarantees what they will do. But the situation is clearly different and more nature.

#### THE CONSCIOUSNESS AND UNITED ACTION

The IS line in UAW has been carried out largely through the activity of the United Action group. Up to the Jan. 1971, 2 week strike, we had no organized form of intervention other than the fraction. In fact, of necessity, this first 9 months was the period during which the first Isers dug their initial roots. In the fractions all were agreed on the need for some sort of organization, but it was difficult to see how it could be generated. The Jan. strike solved that problem. Out of the experience of that strike it was possible to initiate a group on a perspective centering around the upcoming contract fight. For use



of course, the strategy and tactics of the contract fight included more political questions such as divisions in the class, the effects of the war, racism, sexism, and the labor bureaucracy. The initial issue of UA emphasized these issues. The two actionable cutting edges of UA strategy for the strike were the organization of traffic into CWA and the necessity of a unified national strike for a national master contract. It was around these themes that we successfully organized for-union meeting in the pre-strike (pre-July) period. The positive response we received justified this program.

The weakness in our conception, however, was in what we expected UA to become. When we initiated it in Jan. 1971, we fully expected UA to be a more or less continuously growing rank and file committee that would attract at least a semi-mass base. This estimate was based, not simply on optimism, but on the mass volatility we had observed in the past 1101 strikes (1969 and Jan. 1971). Furthermore, given the priority of operator organizing we attempted to recruit operators to UA on the expectation that the summer strike could very possibly be a joint plant traffic strike, or in any case, that a CWA victory in traffic was a near certainty. In all of these estimates, we were wrong. There were, of course, many events and circumstances that contributed to the failure of the operator drive and to the emergence of a semi-mass movement around the contract in plant, but the importance of the lack of developed primary work groups, tested in struggle, is central. Volatility existed, in plant and traffic, but basic shop floor organization was missing.

UA never built a hard core of more than 25, or a semi-mass "grapevine" of more than 100. Even more importantly, because it was not rooted in a real shop floor network - and could not possibly have been - it, like the stewards' organization generally, all but collapsed once the strike began. UA was left only with its hard core. When strike activity became continuous and militant after Nov. 1971, this hard core intervened in and influenced the hard core of the stewards and militants body. This militants grouping, however, as we have pointed out, existed in part because of what held it together from above - the more militant local leaders, above all Demsey and Schaefer. UA, which was no substitute for the real rank and file, was able to influence, at points even force the direction of tactical struggle, but it lacked the social weight to break these militants from their "chain" bureaucrats. The so-called "orientation toward the militant bureaucrats" which has occasionally been accused of UA in this situation. It was, of course, never an orientation toward the bureaucrats, but toward the militants - and in particular toward breaking them from these bureaucrats. This continues to be the primary task of UAW and of UA. During the strike it did not succeed. In the aftermath of the strike, it has become a long term orientation.

What could we have done to enhance our effectiveness? Above all, a more realistic understanding of the limitations of the situation. The realization that we were not going to have a semi-mass movement at that time, and the understanding that we lacked the social weight to break the militants en masse from their bureaucratic leaders; all of these would have helped us steer a clearer course. For example, we certainly would have emphasized the education and hardening of UA core members, rather than continuous attempts to expand membership. This would have given us a harder and larger core of activists during the strike, which, in turn would have made it easier to influence the militants

our intensive work suffered from our extensive work. It is for that reason UA not only did not grow from the strike, but in fact was cut down to the absolute minimum of a hand full of hardened radicals.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL - SOME LESSONS

It is hard to recall a labor bureaucrat as universally despised and as universally unchallenged as Joe Beirne. Though the actual mechanisms may be complex, it is no secret to us how Beirne avoids formal challenges with the union structure. Beirne has organized and reorganized CWA under the banner of "Divide and Isolate." He has fostered all the old divisions in CWA and sponsored many new ones - e.g., the division of the once unified Detroit plant and traffic local into two locals, the recent division of 1101 into two locals. By eliminating even a formally democratic regional set-up he has forced individual locals to depend directly on the international for aid and sexvng. Craft consciousness is encouraged among plant workers and traffic locals are insulated from plant locals. In many ways CWA looks more like a federation of craft locals and unions than in industrial union. But it is not a federation, because the international bureaucracy has nearly total control over bargaining, finances, politics, etc.

Any national opposition to Beirne and his machine must be consciously and aggressively organized. That is, it cannot be expected to arise spontaneously, as Beirne has the power to crush it locally or in the convention (unless it is strongly organized in advance). In fact, it is doubtful, if a national group such as PURE or UMC could arise or survive (in this immediate period) if it did not have the backing of one of the three or four largest locals. This is why Beirne has split all of these large, big city locals.

Based on this analysis, IDers put forth the notion of big-city alliance to defeat Beirne; ie, a national caucus based on the urban locals. We advocate a rand and file caucus based on the big city locals. In reality, no such smooth development could occur. 1101 has traditionally been anti-Beirne, as more most other NY State locals and many other locals in urban areas around the country. That is, not only the ranks are anti-Beirne, but the official local leadership as well. One's attitude toward the international leadership is always an issue in 1101 (1109) elections. Any opposition to Beirne is likely to be nixed by ICF and local leadership grouping.

From our point-of view, however, the local leaders of 1101 and other large locals are also bureaucrats - in terms of their relations to the Co., on the one hand, and the ranks, on the other. A failure, however, to understand the real opposition between local bureaucrats and the international apparatus can lead to mistakes. Understanding this only very abstractly, for example, we totally underestimated the local leadership's ability to lead the Jan. 1971 strike against Beirne, the Co. and Direct Government intervention. Furthermore, the settlement achieved by the leaders of that strike, while a compromise, was not a "sell-out," if that word is to have any real meaning. We were not prepared for that, and were unable to intervene at an important membership meeting. Our line for that meeting was essentially one of opposition to the local leadership with the expectation of a sell-out. In fact, the

real central issues were opposition to the international leadership and the question of state intervention, in the context of the coming summer strike. We did emphasize that this strike was a rehearsal for the big fight, but failed to demand of the local leaders that they lead a fight against Reims nationally, using the NY strike as a spring board. In short we did not use fully enough the divisions between local and international bureaucrats to expose the failure of both. We did, however, draw this lesson before the summer strike.

The point is this. The labor bureaucracy, as a distinct strata within the working class, has its primary roots at the international level. In the industrial unions, at least, it is here that the deal is struck with the capitalists. In most industries local leaders have little or no power in this respect. Obviously, they are also more immediately susceptible to local CIO pressure. This does not mean they do not repeat on a small scale the collaboration practices of the international bureaucrats. Indeed, they do, in grievance bargaining and over local issues, and in so far as they draw privileges from this process they are as genuinely bureaucratic as the international leaders. In unions where bargaining is decentralized, a large local or regional may be as fully a privileged bureaucracy as many internationals, e.g., AFSCME, DC 27 and the UAW in NYC. Bureaucracy is not an oak panelled room into which labor leaders walk and stay, it is a process based on class collaboration and the construction of an apparatus aimed at winning and sustaining privileges for labor leaders. Local leaders are drawn toward this goal and into the process. But within the process there are contradictions, competing strata, and so forth. Local leaders, above all, are susceptible to CIO pressure and even momentary control. Depending on the dynamics of a situation they can be forced to fight the core of the bureaucracy and to open the road for the rank. There are no formula, no set "criteria", but it is clear that under some circumstances we must support, critically, those sections of the lower strata of the bureaucracy against the upper strata - though never against the ranks.

We drew this lesson in NY telephone and attempted to apply it during the strike. Essentially, this involved critical support of certain local officers against others and against the international. This position of critical support was not the starting point of our position. The starting point was the attempt to break rank and file militants from these bureaucrats. "Support" did not consist of positive statements about these more militant officials, but rather criticisms and demands on them. On the basis of their more militant programs, and even partial adaptations of NY proposals, we supported them against the opposition of the other local leaders and the international. That is what is meant by support. This struggle did not end with the strike. It goes on and the same forces are involved. For this reason we extended this method to a formal endorsement of those same leaders and forces in the local elections in 1101 and 1102. This endorsement, was highly critical and emphasized not individuals but the forces and issues involved. By making clear our program and our criticisms in advance, we are in no way responsible for bureaucratic practices, capitulations, etc., committed by these officials should they win. This endorsement, by the way, is also an extension of our strike-time strategy for breaking the rank militants as it will again, to some degree bring us in touch with this militant section of the union. They, like NY, has been isolated from each other for some time now. It should be

understood that the bureaucratic, lackluster nature of the election campaign in 1101 and 1100 does not offer a lot, except an opportunity for some contact with our constituency on a citywide basis. The third consideration in making an endorsement was that in an election where the international is clearly pitted, through its local flunkies, against the militant wing of the local, we would discredit ourselves among the best militants by an abstentionist position.

#### TRAFFIC ORGANIZING DRIVE

The very nature of the traffic workforce, of course, made the traffic organizing drive a crucial experience for us and other militants concerned with the unified organization of the class. Not only, the problems of the labor bureaucracy and company economic policy, but racism and sexism -- in union and company -- were raised. It was for this reason that operator organizing was one of the two main principles of UA from its beginning. UA propaganda on this issue began in Jan. 1971, with the rest of our visible intervention, with a leaflet to the operators explaining the strike and calling on them to initiate organizing committee for a CWA drive. (We did not call on the operators to strike with us, as it was our assessment that this would only isolate a few militants).

The limits of the organizing drive imposed the direction and limits of our own intervention. As mentioned earlier, turnover in the work force -- and in traffic, the incredibly rigid organization of the job itself -- prevented solid primary work groups from "naturally" selecting a rank and file leadership capable of fielding a rank and file organizing drive. But there was a leadership group in traffic. The Service Assistant (SA) is not management. Technically, she does not fill the function of a foreman. She assists operators who need advice or help. In practice, of course, the company pressures the SA to increase production. SAs are picked, by management, for the same qualities that determine a natural work group leader, and, though they are company selected, they are, in fact, usually the people who would be such leaders. (The company also understands this theory). Most TTU delegates are SAs, and though their selection is not democratic either, they often do command some respect. That SAs fill this leadership role was best proven by the May 1970 wildcat. There is little doubt that the widespread success of this strike was due to the fact that the SA, and even many TTU delegates, supported and led it. It was from this group that the first organizing committee was set up, not by CWA which opposed the strike, but by District 65.

From May 1970 to early winter 1970, the District 65 committee shrank from hundreds to little more than 20 activists. Their main activity seems to have been TV appearances and the like. Although 65 gave the traffic committee considerable autonomy, it was unable to tie together these militants. By the Jan. 1971 strike the 65 committee appeared as a sectarian group of isolated militants whose bitterness against CWA prevented them from relating effectively to either strike or to the bargaining election. In the end they received 300 votes out of approximately 14,500. They also failed to explain effectively the race issue, on which they had a boundless advantage over CWA. Why 65 let such an opportunity slip is not clear. Whatever the reasons, they failed utterly to put in the resources and audacity needed to hold the loyalty of the leadership group they first won by supporting the May 1970 strike. When the drive began in earnest in the spring of 1971, they could only compete with CWA on a propaganda basis. On

this level, CWA had the strongest of all arguments, the unity of all telephone workers. So strong was this argument that even the CWA's inability to make it effectively did not prevent the operators from understanding themselves.

CWA never attempted to form a mass, or even semi-mass, committee or set-up of any kind. With many of the best militants rendered hostile or burned out by 65, the CWA could not have had the kind of base 65 initially had, had it been interested. The CWA international had and wanted only a shell committee of traffic women run tightly by CWA International Reps. Even the actual organizing was to be led and run by men (first white then black) from 1101. Given these facts, plus the presence of only one comrade in traffic itself, our ability to move the organizing drive in a healthier direction was limited. Furthermore, our comrade was white, while most of the active operators were black. The thrust of our direct intervention on the CWA "In-plant" committee was to fight to make it a democratic body and to broaden its base. Although rampant male chauvinism and some race baiting prevented a substantial victory in this respect, there were minor victories within the committee. That is, groups of women were won to a democratic conception of organizing and union building. It was possible for our comrade to bring out, effectively, the issues of racism and sexism and how they worked for the company and the International bureaucrats. In addition, by being able to travel around the city as part of a part-time organizing crew, we were able to increase our contacts, which opened up at least one important intervention later in the strike. In this respect, we believe it was correct to participate on the official CWA committee, as an opposition to the bureaucracy and their conception of organizing. That is, it would have been a mistake to attempt to set up an independent (and rival) organizing committee.

At the same time, however, we did intervene independently in the drive. UA conducted an energetic leafleting and propaganda campaign among operators, critically supporting CWA. In addition, leaflets were put out by our operator comrade and her contacts, without the UA name, i.e., as a group of operators. Furthermore, even while doing "official" CWA organizing, our comrade pushed our line. As might be expected, the CWA International was planning on setting up a series of small borough based traffic locals separate from plant and from each other (Divide and Isolate). UA and various traffic militants opposed to this the slogan of "one union, one local, one contract, one fight". We made it clear that we expected this fight to include a fight with the CWA leadership, a fight for a militant, democratic, industrial union. Simultaneously, UA fought within 1101 for this position -- getting a resolution to this effect passed at the May 1971 1101 meeting.

The CWA organizing drive failed because of the male chauvinism and elitism of the CWA Reps and because of the sell-out by Deirne in July 1971. ETU held its traditional base, and by the forceful use of pro-ETU SAs perhaps more, but CWA's base simply didn't vote. Having no organized infrastructure among the workers generally, CWA could not combat the disillusionment brought on by the sell out with organization. After July 21, CWA told the operators to return to work -- a majority recognized CWA picket lines in the beginning -- adding to the demoralization. In short, the CWA defeat was not inevitable, but was engineered by the bureaucracy. Had the election been won, even in the wake of demoralization, the outcome of our work in traffic and around the traffic question would have netted a very different, and more advanced, political situation than is now the case.

Involvement in the "inplant" committee made possible contact with a group of traffic militants at the 108th St. building in Dec. 1971, which resulted in a wildcat in Feb. The action could not spread, nor could it gain more than token support from 1101. UA and Telrum maintained picket lined along with the operators themselves, but the action collapsed after a few days. Out of this, however, an attempt was made to form a city-wide traffic group around a paper similar to UA. Traffic Jan, as the group was called, did not last more than two months. While the likelihood of a long life was never great, a fact we were fully aware of at the time, Traffic Jan was prematurely killed by Maoist-sectarianism.

In the aftermath of the CWA defeat in traffic and the defeat of the N.Y. plant strike, there is little left among the militants in traffic. Many who had been active in the drive and the strike have left, been transferred to new buildings, or simply worn out and discouraged. The work force although stabilizing is shrinking through attrition, on the basis mostly of the older workers, many of whom are loyal to TCU, even if they have few illusions about it. Indeed, traffic is being automated, sped-up and reorganized to such a degree that buildings which once had strikes, or CWA militants, no longer have a Traffic Dep't, while others are in transition. With organization defeated, there is no effective way for operators to resist this process. The result is likely to be one of hopelessness for a couple of years until things settle down and new work groups, perhaps a new generation of CAs, and a feeling for the new working conditions emerge. It should be borne in mind, however, that had CWA won, even on a bureaucratic basis, it would be possible now to mount a realistic, if not predictably victorious, campaign around the speed-up and reorganization. Had a CWA traffic local been formed, which was the most likely outcome of a CWA victory, it would have been possible also to intervene on a higher level in the DEOC-FCA hearings on sexism and racism. As it was, our traffic comrade intervened largely as an individual, after the attempt to organize around that issue had proven futile. The traffic experience is, for us, a negative illustration of the importance of a union and as political arena. It also showed that active intervention in an official organizing drive can be important and useful. While the objective limits of this particular drive were large, it nonetheless offered an opportunity to engage in a number of important struggles and to raise crucial political issues such as racism and sexism. It should be realized, too, that our work was additionally limited by the fact that we had only one comrade in traffic. Additional comrades might not have changed history, but they certainly would have enhanced our ability to build a city-wide network and to shore up the opposition within the "in-plant" committee.

Our traffic experience showed that it is possible for a white militant to work with considerable effect among black workers. It also showed, however, that there are limits to this. Well-reasoned or strong arguments were, at times, not enough to overcome the social pressure of the opportunist black leaders around the organizing drive -- all of whom were men. Lacking an organized group of black militants in 1101, who could have been a counter-pressure, the influence of UA and our traffic comrade was limited. Telrum, by virtue of its sectarian approach, was unable to play this role consistently. In fact, at crucial points like the 108th St. wildcat, Telrum was unable to clearly define its relationship with those black men working for the International. The lack of independent black organization in 1101, in short, weakened the possibility of moving the organizing drive in a more democratic and aggressive direction.

## UA AND THE 7 MONTH STRIKE

UA was formed as a group concerned with the up-coming contract and the strike to win it. From the first issue (February 1971) of UA to the end of the strike, the concentration of UA activity and propaganda was around strike strategy and tactics and around the issues and demands of the strike. Boiled down to its essentials the line on the strike, from the start, was a unified national strike for a national master contract, organization of operators (also commercial and accounting, with less emphasis) and their participation in the strike (i.e., a unified local strike), 1101 leadership in fighting in the International for these things, and, if necessary, for a contract rejection movement. Most of our activity was directed toward implementing one or another of these major points. UA additionally propagandized about the war, and organized small contingents for various anti-war marches that occurred in this period -- before UA, ISers did it on their own. Racism and sexism were also discussed in UA, but mostly in relation to telephone workers and the coming contract struggle. In short, UA was not a general radical propaganda group, like Strike Back (RYM and RU) or Telrum. For this reason, in the pre-strike era, UA, though small in membership, had a considerable grapevine and a good deal of influence among the ranks.

The bulk of UA's work in the pre-strike era was spent in extending its network and in propagandizing our line on the strike and contract. Beginning in April, we conducted a fight for a union meeting, to be held in May, at which strike strategy, operator organizing, and contract demands could be discussed. The new, Carnivale, leadership of 1101 was not anxious for such a meeting, and openly flaunted the By-laws by not calling a May meeting. The push for a meeting, however, picked up strength when some officials, notably Dempsey began calling for it -- our first, and quite accidental, cooperation with him. When the June meeting was held, UA was completely prepared. Strike Back agreed to follow our lead, and clearly, hundreds of militants were in sympathy with our proposals for the meeting. When Carnivale attempted to fill the meeting with endless reports, we intervened and moved the agenda to New Business (bargaining) to the cheers of nearly 4,000 1101 members. Most of our notions passed and it was clearly a victory for UA. Our perspective seemed to have been vindicated.

Just before the strike date, we published a short strike "manual" which outlined our overall strategy and how to carry it out. Some of its predictions were frighteningly accurate: that Birne would sell out, in which case NY must reject the contract and lead a national rejection and strike movement, that a sell-out would undermine the traffic drive. In any case, UA entered the strike in high spirits. The course of the strike, however, presented three major problems for which UA -- as opposed to the ISers, per se -- was not wholly prepared. These were: what to do when there are no picket lines, meetings, or other places to reach the ranks; how to relate to growing groups of militants under the domination of militant bureaucrats (Dempsey and Schaefer); what level of political agitation, education, etc. to adopt in the face of a ruling class gang-up and the wage freeze.

When the July strike began, there were mass pickets and huge numbers of operators recognized the lines. Spirits were high. With the sell-out,

However, the picket lines disappeared and operators, under orders from the International, with the complicity of the local, returned to work. Here and there small groups staid out, but it was our assessment that since 99% were back at work, and the organizing drive reaching its climax, that traffic militants should not make the gesture of staying out at the risk of isolating themselves from their base and losing the election. We hoped, that if the strike continued until the bargaining election, pressure could be exerted to bring the operators out again and the strike could end on a united note. In any case, by the end of the second week picket lines were minimal or non-existent. Most of us simply walked our own picket lines, which grew in August somewhat when the union began paying \$10 a week for picketing. We leafleted the small lines and unemployment centers - were telephone workers became numerous - but effective intervention was impossible. Our own base and the network dried up with everything else. Another of our predictions about the union came true, i.e., if there were no preparations to organize for the strike mass picketing would collapse, and so it did. Unfortunately, the same was true of UA. Our failure to tie together a solid cohesive city-wide chain of militant before the strike left us even smaller than before the strike. Lacking a solid enough, and large enough group ourselves we could not initiate any serious actions - either against the company or the International or local leaders on our own. A demonstration at the International a couple of days after the sell-out netted only about 70 people - and that was before the picketlines completely disappeared. Until Sept., UA was held to a very low level of activity and intervention. When the freeze hit, UA did not have sufficient forces to mount a campaign to get an appropriate response from the local. We called an independent demonstration, along with other groups from other unions, at the Central Labor Council, and though telephone workers were the largest group, the demonstration was small - about 200 including UAW's 100 or so people.

When the strike picked up momentum in the Fall, the main bodies of activists were the stewards' organizations under Dempsey and Schaefer. Attempts to get the chief stewards, generally, to take the lead of the strike had failed, and the leadership, in fact, fell to Dempsey and Schaefer. As described earlier, our main orientation became toward this group of militants. We consciously attempted to break them by proposing programs in advance of what Dempsey or Schaefer were willing to carry out. We won considerable respect and influence on the basis of our tactical proposals, but were unable to break the militants from their bureaucratic leaders. The main reason was that stated earlier, our lack of "social weight." This, however, leads to the next major question raised by UA work in the strike, the level of political propaganda. That is, might we not have broken a small but important group of stewards on a political basis?

UA, in leaflets and other ways, of course, talked about the freeze, the politicians, etc. but only somewhat tangentially. Our line, then as in the Jan. 1971 strike, toward government intervention was to fight it by continuing the strike, that is to say our line was purely agitational. During the strike we did not print any significant educational articles on state intervention and unions. We didn't call generally for a labor party during the strike. (After the strike we changed our attack and raised the political level of UA's line) We did call for a national, and city-wide work stoppage against the freeze, and constantly



pushed the demand for general labor support to the telephone strike. That is, our line was never "economist" in the real sense of that term. But it seems likely, in retrospect that a slightly higher level of political propaganda and, certainly, a greater emphasis on this educational work would have been appropriate. This should not have been a substitute for our on-going tactical intervention, but a supplement to it. Given the intense needs of the strike activity after October, this political propaganda would have still been clearly subordinate to our agitational work. Nonetheless, we went too far toward the near-exclusion of political educational work. This might have helped us "single jack" at least a few militants into US during the strike.

Inside US, we did conduct this political discussion, and most US members now hold our positions on these questions - labor party, etc. Had this sort of discussion gone on in US in the month or so preceding the strike, we might have entered the strike with a larger core of activists.

#### SOME GENERAL LESSONS OF OUR NY TELEPHONE EXPERIENCE

All of our activity in NY Telephone must be seen in the political context of the re-strike situation in NY 1911, and particularly in 1101. 1101 was scarcely 10 years old, and traffic still unorganized, when the strike began. The leadership of 1101 was in no way politically prepared to deal with Reirne's roll-out or with the freeze. Yet, events, rank and file dissatisfaction (but not organization), and pressure from the gut-level militant leaders of various smaller "area locals, forced 1101 into a fight for which it was not prepared. The leadership of 1101 did not know how to organize the ranks for a strike - and most did not even see any desirability in that, nor did it know how to respond to the freeze, except to ignore it. It is not simply that they, as well as the ranks, didn't know how to respond militantly to these problems, it is that they didn't even know how to capitulate in that sophisticated style so well known to most labor leaders. They simply didn't know what to do. Consequently, they drifted from week to week. This is extremely true of Carnivale, but also largely true of Temosey and Schaefer. Leaders socialized in the traditions of the large industrial unions or the stronger craft unions generally have available to them a set of responses from which to choose. The CIO does not have these traditions - beyond the universal tradition of the first unions to fight the freeze. In addition, it was faced by a united front of ruling class forces - the press, business, local and state politicians, etc. Far from making political demands on the rest of the labor movement, or even on the CIO International, the local leaders attempted to ignore all of this and limit their response to grumbling. In short, the level of political response was so low, that US, as an interventionist group, felt called upon to make the most basic points, rather than educational ones. In building USF groups, socialists must take into consideration the political traditions and current level of the given union. Furthermore, in so far as US is committed to building interventionist groups, which may be a matter of controversy, the program must correspond in the main to actual events, i.e. by largely agitational. At the same time, it is, and in telephone was, a mistake to exclude educational points, demands, etc. that bore on the situation today. Above all, this means advance education of the question of state intervention and the labor party question - including the question of

how union militants and leaders are to relate to politicians when there is no labor party and you are in the midst of a struggle. This education can begin, should begin, within the group so that the militants you work with can defend these ideas when the group takes them public. One of our shortcomings in MI was that we did each of these things a little late. We should have done the more advanced education within MI before the strike instead of during it, and the public propaganda on the labor party and labor politics during the strike instead of after it. In general, this is the political lesson to be drawn from the NY Tel. experience. This is seen, by the author, as a practical application of the majority's approach to the program and labor work.

In the traffic situation, this question must be applied differently, as the pace of events was different. Traffic militants, of course, lack even union experience, let alone any political variation of that experience. Furthermore, in the context of an organizing drive the emphasis must, of necessity, be even more minimal. The first priority of socialists is to win that drive. That does not mean we are uncritical of the bureaucracy or of the conduct of the drive, quite the contrary. It does, however, mean that more complicated political issues must take a back seat at the right to win people to the basic conception of democratic industrial unionism. That was the emphasis of our director work in the drive and seems to this writer to have been correct. At the same time, it was our line that the drive would culminate in a joint strike, which would have meant that the operators would have faced the same issues as the craftsmen. Our orientation, therefore, in the pre-strike period was to direct our strike strategy material to the operators as well. Most of the articles were written for plant workers, and had to be, but they were distributed to operators as well. The strike manual addressed itself to both plant and traffic, even discussing the same problems from those two vantage points. In short we tried to maintain a background of strategic and tactical education for operators - material that was agitational for plant workers, as they could and did fight for it in their local - and, simultaneously an agitational program toward the organizing drive. Because the more advanced material was, in fact, written for plant workers and unionists, it did not really make such an impression on the operators, whereas the agitational leaflets did. Although, objectively, one advanced political question would have been just as relevant to operators as to craftsmen, had the bargaining election been won in August, questions such as a labor party would have appeared even more remote to the operators, who would have been more preoccupied with actually building a local - which would have meant numerous fights with the international, etc. Educational work in such a situation would be restricted to the small group of militants (traffic) around us, rather than carried out by general propaganda, at that time. Our first task in traffic would have been, in short, the crystallization of a group to fight for a democratic local. Education would begin within the group in this period. This is to say that the pace of events in traffic was different than in plant due to a whole complex of conditions. (This is not a theory of stages concerning the application of program. There will be organizing drives where political educational work will be immediately possible. There will be similar situations where many of our more advanced slogans are even agitational. For example, it was our assessment that the labor party slogan, which we generally consider propagandistic, could not be successfully or usefully raised in any of the meetings during the strike. In some locals, or even some national conventions, however, that slogan can be raised, fought for, and occasionally even won. The fact that significant numbers can be led in a fight for a resolution favoring a labor party

a labor party given that slogan an agitational character within that immediate context - even though it is still propagandistic generally. In assessing the value of a slogan in the context of an interventionist approach this type of consideration must be taken into account. In the case of UA, by the way, we have not raised this slogan educationally, in the convention delegates election last March, and in UA's and UA's upcoming pamphlet on the strike. That is, even though the slogan is in no way agitational, its educational value is, in this case, determinate.)

A year and nine months experience with the UA newsletter has allowed us to draw certain conclusions about the relationship of newsletters or bulletins to organizing and to a group such as UA. When we first published UA we distributed clandestinely for the most part. We found that in terms of organizing a group or even building respect for ourselves as militants, this approach was self-defeating. After a couple of months of that, we moved to distribute openly at our buildings and garages. This helped give us and UA more legitimacy. Probably the only people who had been "fooled" during the "clandestine" period were the workers. Once we emerged into the light it became possible in many places to get people to help us distribute, and to expand distribution to buildings where there were no previous UA members. Our assumption was always that UA was an interventionist-agitational group and that the newsletter was a reflection and organizing tool of that group. This being the case it makes no sense to vitiate its effectiveness by dissociating it from UA members who, naturally, are the groups organizers.

The notion of the bulletin as an extension of the group or organization - a means of expanding its network and influence - leads to another conclusion. Since far more workers are reached by a bulletin than by the individuals in the group, the group will be defined in the minds of the vast majority, by the bulletin and not the other way around. There is a tendency among left industrialized people to assume the opposite; i.e. if the group is militant and has a good reputation you can say things in the bulletin, as educational articles, without turning people off or affecting their view of the group. It is also true that advanced educational articles will not necessarily change the view of relatively close contacts or sympathizers of the group. In general, however, it is a fact that the group is defined by its publications. This happened in Y Fel, and it has made it difficult to expand, or even rebuild, our network as we are defined as left-wing and often equated with Strike Back. Of course, before the strike people knew we were left-wing too, i.e., defined as such on the basis of UA, but in a positive atmosphere, on the eve of a strike about which we made good sense, their attitude toward that impression was different. Almost any bulletin we start, of course, is going to be seen as left-wing, since that is just what it will be. The point, here, is that one must accept the organizational consequences of that fact. In some cases, for example, where we participate in groups that begin around a specific issue or incident and we can foresee a definite struggle, within a more or less finite period of time, it would be a mistake for the public literature of the group to include advanced educational material in most cases. Our perspective here would be to personally educate the most advanced militants in the larger group with an eye to a permanent formation after the immediate struggle ended or died down. But it is important to bear in mind that once you have defined your group by its publications, you cannot easily change or govern out of that definition. For this reason

it would be a mistake for comrades going into new shops or industries simply to copy the pattern of UA or Roll Bringer or Yellow Pages, etc.

Related to the level and type of propaganda that the DAF groups we start or participate in can publish at various times is the whole question of socialist propaganda work, as we all know, socialist recruiting is, right now, a slow, "singlejack" process in most shops and unions. It is by no means impossible. Indeed, given a long working relationship with honest, dedicated militants it is more than likely that some of these militants will be won to socialist politics - even if the matter of organizational recruitment is a little trickier. Consistent IS presence, in the form of regular newspaper (or) distribution can accelerate this process. It can also attract to us individuals who may not be attracted to a DAF group. IS distribution is consistent enough it will usually be possible to build up at least a small regular readership. We have had difficulty in UA in this regard. First it has been difficult to get regular distribution over a long period of time. Secondly, in the atmosphere of defection since the strike there has simply been less "openness". One worker even put it this way to a UA salesperson: "For that the strike is over and we got smashed, we're not interested in that stuff anymore." The atmosphere will change as it did before. During the Jan. 1971 strike paper salesmen from various radical groups were hounded, threatened, and even assaulted by local pickets. During the ups and downs, though, it is crucial to maintain a consistent long-term presence for the paper, UA. In this respect, it must be said that we, the IS as a whole, has yet to adjust the paper successfully to consistent use among advanced militants.

#### UA IN THE POST-STRIKE SITUATION

In the face of the failures and difficulties we experienced during the strike, as well as its successes, we recast our view of UA and the possibilities in a period of post-strike defeat. At the end of the strike we redefined UA as a "spearhead" group, i.e., a more political group with a greater emphasis on educational work than in the past. UA was to become a more open left-wing within the strata of militants. This meant, of course, an acceptance of a limited size for UA. The need for broader formations was to be filled by more ad hoc alliances with other militants. Our first attempt in this regard was to form a broad Defense Committee to defend those the company tried to fire for strike activity - as allowed by the amnesty agreement. After one rather large meeting, it turned out that generalization was so great that no one was willing to do anything and the Committee eventually collapsed. The period following the strike has been such a deep "dough" that action possibilities were nonexistent. Since that time our intervention has been a propagandistic one, though the Delegates election, publications, and now in the officer elections via critical support to Campsey and Schaefer.

The more educational, and openly political orientation of UA is appropriate in this situation both because the hectic intervention of the past is now impossible and because our constituency is well defined. That is, we know who we are speaking to, understand it to be a limited audience, and feel that this constituency will accept UA as a legitimate left-wing among the militants. That is, we will not be isolating ourselves from our essential constituency, although our general influence will probably decline even more. Though we can hardly claim to have planned

it exactly that way, the development and change of UA has been organic-linked to its milieu. The organic link has been maintained by staying slightly ahead of developments and of our constituency - to fall behind, or refuse to change with situations is to loose that relationship. Thus, while pre-strike UA and post-strike UA are very different organizations, particularly in terms of program, they are appropriate, in general, to those situations.

From the start, we in NY Tel. always assumed that the pre-strike focus would give way, after the strike to a more political group. But we saw more continuity than was in fact possible. That is, to some degree we all expected UA to grow before the strike, fight hard during it, and, larger than ever, get more political after the strike. That conception was more or less written into the first perspective document, written by comrade Godwin and agreed to, on that score, by all of us. While we never fell behind the consciousness of our constituency or the possibilities of direct intervention, we probably slowed down our response to the need to change by clinging in some ways to the original conception. In any case, the major lesson to be drawn here is that the fetishism or organizational forms or abstract political definitions can undermine successful intervention. The course of events in UA's development cannot be reproduced elsewhere, even though UA at any given point might be a useful model and even though the types of intervention in different situations should be useful to other worker comrades. We are all generally agreed that we want to build an organized left-wing within the unions. But the way to get that in each situation cannot be the same. Comrades should not latch onto "spearhead groups" as the new formula for IS labor work. Strike orientated groups, ad-hoc formations, even single issue committees can all be used in different situations to lead to our goal. The lesson to be drawn from the NY Tel. experience is precisely that you must be willing to change your immediate organizational notions if you are to stay on the same path, i.e., the path toward a coherent, organized left-wing. The same is true of the level and content of political propaganda of a R&F group, as opposed to IS itself which has a different propaganda task. It cannot even be assumed, yet, that the general course will be from less political groups to more political groups. A group that turns out to be a still birth, that in fact limits our access to the very militants we are trying to reach, should be abandoned or scuttled in spite of its high level of educational content. After all, we are not interested in educating the wind or various industrial trash barrels. In this respect the Bay area telephone comrades were totally correct to leave the R&F caucus. It will take even more courage for comrades, should that situation arise, to abandon groups that they initiated if these groups fall into dead ends. This is no way a call for random experimentalism. Rather it is a suggestion, based on our experience in NY Tel. to avoid abstract formalizing about the nature of R&F groups.

The future of UA and the particular form and direction of IS intervention in NY Tel. will depend considerably on the results of the officers election. If Dempsey wins in 1101, which is likely, and Schaefer in 1100 (Brooklyn), which is less likely, new opportunities are likely to open up. If John Smith, Deirne's reactionary puppet, and Ruggiero (1100) win the lid is likely to be clamped on. Such an outcome might impede our work for some time and force us into a propagandistic holding action. The roots we have dug, the lessons we have drawn, and the overall guide of IS labor perspectives, however, provide us with the basis for rebuilding.

and building a stable left-wing presence in NY-2el. If there is one lesson that is broad enough to be applied in any industry, it is that without an overall perspective and programmatic approach to intervention experience alone provides no particular direction and can end in hopeless flipflops, as we have seen happen to other radicals in telephone. At the same time, only experience in real struggle can teach us the proper application of program, i.e., timing, intensity, political level, etc.

DRAFT AUTO PERSPECTIVE

by Ron T.

April 1973

This is a draft perspective for our work in the automobile industry. As such, it is meant to lay out the key points for this work in light of our overall tasks. Since it is only a draft, it will no doubt be sketchy, although the basic approach and where it differs from the perspective put forward by Weber should be clear. There are, however, practical suggestions which can and should be agreed upon by all.

Overview

At the present moment, the U.S. economy is experiencing an "upturn." The "leading economic indicators" are positive; output, sales, and profits are way up, and after two years of upward movement (the trough of the past recession is considered to be Oct.-Nov. 1970), the ruling class felt confident enough to talk about a "boom." Nevertheless, all is not rosy for the capitalists; the economy is not very healthy. Unemployment, for example, is still high, about 5.0% officially (for blacks and brown, at least twice that). If this is the case during a "boom", what will the next downturn bring? And if the society has not managed to even approach the tackling of its problems, during this "unprecedented upturn," it should be clear that the society remains in crisis.

Inflation is still another example, and one which may have a deep impact on the overall situation. Although it had been somewhat slowed up until recently, it has now begun to accelerate rapidly. Given the growth in the monetary supply, the huge budget deficit and the junking of the Phase II price controls, as haphazard as they were. Coupled with a record trade deficit, this will not bode well for the efforts to establish international monetary arrangement.

This "upturn" then represents no return to organic expansion, but is based instead on various monetary and fiscal manipulations, and most importantly, the success of the wage controls, through the agency of the labor bureaucracy, in keeping down wages, raising productivity, and generally attacking the working and living conditions of the workers. If this arrangement can be maintained, that is, if there is no significant breakthrough by the rank and file, stability may continue for a while. But this can only be a temporary affair, since no fundamental problems of the economy will be solved. Given the present stagnating character of world capitalism and of U.S. capitalism in particular, the ruling class will be forced to intensify the pressure on the working class, laying

the basis for a possible explosion in the future.

The key to the working-class response to the capitalist offensive is the labor movement. If the labor bureaucracy can continue to maintain its hold over the rank and file and to tie the labor movement to the state apparatus, the way forward for the whole class will be blocked. On the other hand, a breakthrough in the labor movement will show the way forward for the entire class, increasing morale and confidence and spurring a wave of struggle in other sectors.

The United Automobile Workers for a variety of reasons will be a central arena in the rank-and-file struggle in the labor movement. In the first place, the auto industry is central to the economy; it stimulates production in numerous other industries, such as steel, rubber, and glass. Auto production paced the post-war expansion, has been central to the present "upturn" and is in general sensitive to the ups and downs in the economy. More specifically, the industry is a major testing ground for the productivity drive. It is no accident that the Wall Street Journal\* ran a three-part series in Dec. on the struggle between the General Motors Assembly Division (GMAD) and the UAW rank and file, hinting that it was more than the desire to eliminate redundant operations in the twin Fisher Body - General Motors Assembly plants (the official rationale) that was behind the whole GMAD drive. The whole operation, from the restructuring of managerial functions, its new "labor relations" approach, to the specific moves on the factory floor, is the spearhead of the capitalist offensive.

The autoworkers themselves play a similarly central role in the labor movement. The nature of the work, the large concentration of workers in a more or less continuous-operations process in general, as well as the concentration in Southeastern Michigan in particular, have made the auto workers a relatively cohesive group with a fairly deeply ingrained sense of solidarity. The militant origin of the UAW, its tradition of militancy and relatively political internal life, the specific impact of the Reuther tendency, and the long-standing presence of radicals and revolutionaries have had their impact on the consciousness of auto workers as well, while the relatively recent concentration of blacks on the production lines has added another militant ingredient. It is in part a reflection of these factors that the UAW is, as far as U.S. standards go, a relatively democratic union with at least the pretense of social concern.

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\* WSJ, Dec. 6,7,8, 1973.



To be sure, the bureaucracy is powerful and does not hesitate to handle oppositionists with demagogic and bureaucratic methods. But its hold has been based largely on its ability to produce tangible monetary gains over the years (the role of the conservative retirees as a solid base for the bureaucracy should be noted here) and to coopt militant and militant-sounding elements into the bureaucracy (Detroit inner-city UAW locals are black-led) on the one hand, and its ability to keep locals isolated, facing huge monoliths singlehandedly, reinforcing the cynicism of the average rank and filer and thus isolating the militant elements, on the other. At the same time, the UAW bureaucrats have a reputation for being "progressive" and even "socially conscious" in distinction to the Neanderthal types such as George Meany. Although this "progressiveness" is a shuck, the UAW's particular brand of labor statesmanship represents orientations toward different employer groups and politicians that they deal with, and on different tactical approaches toward the rank and file. The UAW's expressed (i.e. demagogic) concern for the situation of blacks and oppressed groups certainly aids its ability to control its rank and file, while the presence of a sizeable number of ex-radicals in the bureaucracy and on staff gives it an added capability in foreseeing and handling rank and file frustration and potential upsurges.

The UAW bureaucracy has responded in a predictable fashion to the productivity drive. It has conscientiously avoided a fight, e.g. in GM, allowing isolated locals to take the brunt of the GMAD drive and then offering its Apache strategy (the mini-strikes of last fall) whose results have been equally demoralizing. It should be obvious that they are not the least bit interested in offering resistance, but are rather quite willing to let the companies rearrange work, layoff workers, and generally increase "efficiency" as it pleases, as long as this does not infringe on the general prerogatives and concerns of the bureaucracy. The key to its attitude is its belief that present losses are temporary, and that if the industry can effectively modernize and increase productivity, a new period of prosperity will ensue, allowing for a return to the relatively calm cosy management-labor relations of the '50's and early '60's. Accepting capitalism, they are willing to go to fair lengths to make it work.

The rank and file has responded to the auto producers' offensive in an unorganized, uneven fashion, which reflects the low level of rank-and-file organization and the lack of a developed rank-and-file leadership. Fundamentally, the ranks see no way out. They are extremely angry, but cannot move because there is no alternative strategy, leadership, and program that they consider realistic or proven to be trustworthy. As a result the International leadership has only felt the heat in terms of a boiling

frustration (taking the form of individual actions, such as sabotage, the shooting of foremen); and the emergence of a few dissident locals and small heterogeneous rank-and-file grouplets. If this situation continues, the union may become open to increased conflict between the secondary leadership (presently in the International's hip-pocket) and the International, as the lower levels feel the heat of the rank-and-file anger and frustration. The fact that some local cliques may be sacrificed as they prove incapable of controlling wildcats and job actions will tend to further this. Whether consciously reacting to this possibility or not, the International leadership has moved to consolidate itself. One indication of this was Woodcock's dumping of Paul Schrade (left-talking type, now being ineffectively courted by the UNC) as Director of Region 6 for a more "reliable" or at least less-outspoken person, Jerry Whipple. Woodcock is also pursuing discussions with the International Association of Machinists toward the possible merger of the two organizations. The official rationale for this merger, aside from the generalities about "unity," has been the need to cut "administration costs," but the result will be to increase the power of the bureaucracy over the rank and file.

At the present time, the auto producers are doing quite well. Profits and sales are at record levels (see Table 1 in Appendix), and this year has seen record production as well (see Table 2), and this without significant new hiring. As we know, the major factor behind this health has been the productivity drive, which has worsened working conditions, weakened the already weak power of the locals on the shopfloor, and has so far served to demoralize much of the rank and file. As the economy has at least eased some of the unemployment, while rank-and-file frustration has continued to mount, we have seen an increase in rank-and-file activity, mostly of an unorganized kind, after a lull of some months. If this continues at least through the spring and over the summer, the result can be an increase in confidence and combativity over the coming months.

#### General Approach.

Today, the only program that offers a solution to the fundamental needs of the international working class, and therefore of U.S. workers, is a revolutionary program. With world capitalism entering a period of intensifying crisis, the ruling class seeks to pass the costs of this crisis onto the backs of the workers, attacking their living standards, etc. In this situation, every program that accepts the limits of capitalism will betray the workers, will lead them into a cul de sac.

However, it is not sufficient for us to know this and merely proclaim it to the workers. If we limit ourselves to the passive propagation of the need for a socialist revolution, we will only condemn ourselves to isolation. Instead, we must utilize the experiences of the workers themselves to convince them of the validity of our program. We do not demand, in an ultimatic manner, that the workers either give up all their illusions about capitalism and accept our full program or go home. We seek to show, in the course of struggle, that it is only our program that offers a real solution to their fundamental needs and aspirations.

In the real world, every program reflects and represents a leadership. The rank and file, as such, does not formulate a program; its consciousness is an uneven phenomenon which includes contradictory elements such as needs and aspirations which cannot be met under capitalism, along with reformist illusions (i.e. the acceptance of capitalism). This ambiguity is reflected materially in the relationship between the rank and file and reformist leadership. Although the rank and file as a whole (i.e. the "average rank-and-filer") accepts the ideology of the leadership, the fulfillment of the workers' needs requires a struggle against that leadership. Since the reformist leadership accepts capitalism and must face the logic of this position every day, it must by its very nature and position seek to mediate between the needs of capital on the one hand and the needs of the rank and file on the other, fundamentally siding with and defending capital. During periods of relative stability in which capital can afford to make certain concessions to the workers, this arrangement may appear to be fairly stable. As capitalism enters periods of crisis, the bureaucracy (facing the intensifying pressure of the rank and file, on one side, and of increasingly obstinate employers on the other) seeks the "aid" and "protection" of the state, "aid" in winning some concessions and "protection" from its own rank and file. In other words, it is forced to come out increasingly openly as an agent of capitalism and the state within the labor movement. Utilizing the ambiguity discussed above (that is, the contradiction between the real needs of the rank and file and their acceptance of capitalism) we seek to mobilize the workers in struggle for their real needs and thereby against their reformist leaders and the state, openly criticizing the bureaucrats and exposing the need for a revolutionary program and leadership as an alternative. We seek to expose the reformist leaders, to expose their program and to win the rank and file to a revolutionary program and leadership.

This development does not occur all at once; it is a process occurring over time, in which successive layers of the working class (first ones and twos, later larger numbers, eventually whole layers) are won to our point of view and our leadership. Initially, when our forces are small, our alternative, that is,

a revolutionary leadership and program, can only be posed propagandistically; we "call for" a revolutionary program as the necessary one and pose the need for a revolutionary leadership to carry out the struggle for the program. This call is one which the workers will fill with their own content, interpret in their own way. And while we point out that what is fundamentally needed is a revolutionary leadership, we may support and campaign for, on a critical basis, non-revolutionary but relatively militant, democratic candidates. Our political attitude toward the more militant reformist leaders, even the ones we critically support, is in principal the same as our attitude toward reformist leaders in general; we seek to expose them and their program in the eyes of their rank and file. We call on them to fulfill their promises, never hiding our criticisms, never ceasing our propaganda that a revolutionary leadership is needed -- although the manner in which we raise these criticisms (how hostilely we pose them, for example) is a tactical question which can vary enormously from situation to situation. \*

Later, as our strength grows, as we win sizeable numbers of workers to our program, we can begin to pose ourselves, concretely, as the needed revolutionary leadership, contesting for control of the unions on the basis of our program.

All of our basic tactics, critical support, the united front, the labor party, for example, flow from and take their place in this basic struggle to expose the reformists and reformism in general and to struggle for and build a revolutionary leadership in the unions and in the working class in general. The labor party slogan is merely an application of this approach on the political level. We say what is necessary is a revolutionary workers' party, a party based on a program that really meets the needs of the workers. However, since we are not big enough to pose the I.S. as such a party, even potentially, to more than a few exceptionally advanced workers, we pose the need for such a party based on a working-class institution that has real power, one that is an actually viable vehicle, the union movement. Since we believe that none but a revolutionary program offers any solution, we propose a revolutionary program for this party. Although most workers will generally not agree on the need for a revolutionary program, many may agree to struggle with us for an independent party of labor, while we argue and debate what its program ought to be. The struggle for (and most likely, within) such a party will prove our program right, and in the process build a leadership constantly attempting to draw out the lessons of the struggle. If such a party forms on less than a revolutionary basis, we fight for revolutionary leadership within it, applying the tactic of critical support as necessary.

In essence, all our work in the labor movement is an application of this general approach. Our struggle against the

union leadership is not a sociological, organizational one, that is, against only those leaders who are lining their pockets and are particularly undemocratic in their manner of controlling the unions. It is a political struggle. It is a struggle against reformism, as materialized in the labor bureaucracy, and for the construction of a revolutionary leadership in the unions. Within any given union, our perspective flows from this general orientation concretized in light of the specific situation in the given union and industry at any given time. Seen this way, our perspectives must not be conceived primarily in terms of building this or that kind of caucus, national opposition group, etc., but in terms of our basic political purpose and task. The formation of caucuses is a tactic in the implementation of our overall strategy.

Building a socialist presence in the auto industry.

In the context of the above, our overriding task in the UAW is the building of a socialist presence based upon our program, through Workers' Power and solid IS fractions. The major function of these fractions, at this point, will be propagandistic, that is, the propagation of our program for the auto industry in the context of the developing crisis of capitalism and the role of the labor bureaucracy. While stating clearly that socialism is the answer, we should emphasize transitional demands (formulated concretely for the situation in the auto industry) and show how struggles for immediate, partial, and democratic demands must lead toward struggles around the transitional demands in order to ensure their gains. In addition, we must stress the central role of the auto workers in forwarding the struggles of the working class and other oppressed sectors in general and in particular the struggle for a rank and file labor party based on a transitional program.

The nature of the ruling class offensive determines the central thrust of our propaganda. There are consequently four areas we should concentrate our fire:

1. Wages. We should point out the significance of the wage controls for the success of the capitalist strategy. Using statistical information where necessary, we should attempt to show the workers what will be happening to their wages if the present inflation continues. We should emphasize the need for a hefty wage increase and a full Cost of Living Protection as the only defense against declining real wages.

2. Layoffs. The impact of the productivity drive will appear in increasing layoffs, especially as the "upturn" slackens

and we should warn the workers of this. We should emphasize the centrality of 30 for 40, no forced overtime, and begin to raise the demand for full severance pay and retraining programs paid for by the capitalists.

3. The productivity drive raises the question of a fight against the "management's rights" clause, for union control of production standards, and for "innocent until proven guilty" in the grievance procedure. Further, it is in this context that we call for rank and file caucuses to take the struggle into the locals and onto the shop floor.

4. We should emphasize the centrality of the auto industry for the capitalist offensive and therefore of the responsibility of the auto workers in spearheading the working class response. In particular we point out the central role of Woodcock on the wage control machinery and in general tying the labor movement to the capitalist state. We point to the necessity of a national opposition caucus and a national strategy to dump Woodcock and organize a national fight against the auto companies.

Through this propaganda and through our role in organizing and participating in struggle, our central aim is the gathering and education of the most advanced workers. We seek to win them to our full point of view, our program and the method behind it. Moreover, we seek to show them how they can reach the less-advanced workers, through mobilizing them around their more immediate concerns, through the organization of interventionist caucuses in the locals and the shop-floor, while teaching them to seek to broaden their struggles and search out allies in other factories and in other sectors of the class.

On the basis of solid fractions with a clear socialist presence (through NE, leaflets, articles in rank-and-file bulletins written from an explicitly socialist point of view), we can initiate and participate in united fronts, broader caucuses, etc., with other revolutionaries and advanced militants. We must also be willing to participate even in the most minimal formations on a critical basis, i.e., making clear our program, strategy, and our view of where we think the struggle will lead and the relation between our goal and the immediate struggle.

In general, our work in organizing broader caucuses, agitational campaigns, etc., continues to reflect the centrality of our propaganda work around our analysis and program. The tasks are inextricably linked. It is only on the basis of a solid socialist presence that our broader work of an agitational or organizational nature does not result in the downplaying of our program and an adaptation to the present level of consciousness

of the workers. This propaganda is the necessary backdrop to the important agitational and organizational tasks.

Concrete tasks:

1. We must continue and intensify our efforts to get comrades into the auto industry. Our priorities are
  - (a) to establish a presence in GM, especially the GMAD plants; outside Detroit this is the highest priority.
  - (b) In Detroit, we should concentrate on the Chrysler plants as well as GM.

2. We must make Workers' Power more useful in the auto work. The auto fraction should commission articles that discuss the situation in auto, in general, and in specific plants, in more detail. We should attempt to substantiate our claims about the productivity drive with facts and figures, such as comparing production with hiring, etc. We should try to give the workers ammunition to argue for their point of view.

3. We should consider establishing a Detroit-wide or national IS publication aimed at auto workers, to give the workers a general picture of what's going on, and to broaden their outlook beyond the factory by factory level. (When we can put out such a publication will depend on our success in building fractions, our financial and other resources, the development of the UNC, etc.)

The following should be the IS program for work in the auto industry in the context of our overall program. The demands should be raised individually, ordered and linked to speak to specific issues, etc. depending upon time, place, possibilities for action, etc.

1. Wages.

- a. For \$1.50/hr increase for each year of the contract.
- b. For a full cost of living allowance (1 cent for every 0.1% increase in the Consumer Price Index).

2. Layoffs.

- a. 30-hours' work for 40-hours pay, no forced overtime, double time for all overtime.
- b. Jobs and a decent income for all.

- c. For full severance pay and retraining programs for all fired or laid off workers, at company expense.
- d. For 30 and out at a decent pension.
- e. For a starting vacation of one month per year.

### 3. Working conditions.

- a. Union control of production standards.
- b. End the no-strike clause - for the right to strike over all questions.
- c. Innocent until proven guilty.
- d. Eliminate the management's rights clause - for an end to all shop rules not necessary to the health and safety of the workers.
- e. For a three-day probationary period.
- f. For a steward for every foreman - for departmental meetings on company time called at the discretion of the stewards.
- g. For rank and file caucuses in the locals and on the shop floor.

### 4. Racism and Sexism.

- a. An end to all forms of discrimination - preferential upgrading of blacks, browns and women into the skilled trades.
- b. For the right to strike over discrimination and racist and sexist harassment on the part of management.
- c. For 24-hour, company-financed child-care centers.
- d. For full paid maternity leave with no loss in seniority.
- e. Fire all racist and sexist foremen.

### 5. Plants closures.

- a. Open the books.
- b. Nationalization of the auto industry under workers' control.
- c. Organize the unorganized.
- d. Fight protectionism - for international union cooperation, for international contracts, uniform expiration dates, U.S. union wages to follow U.S. investment.

### 6. Democratize the UAW.

- a. For a national opposition caucus.
- b. End abuse of retiree voting - for separate retiree representative bodies.
- c. International Representatives to be elected by the members they serve.
- d. Eliminate all anti-communist clauses in the Constitution.



7. Fight all forms of government intervention in the affairs of the labor movement.
  - a. Against compulsory arbitration.
  - b. Repeal reactionary labor laws.
  - c. Smash the wage controls - Woodcock off the Cost-of-Living Council.
8. The UAW take the lead in fighting for a labor party based on the above demands and a workers' government.

#### The National Opposition Caucus.

The struggle against the UAW bureaucracy poses the question of a national opposition caucus within it to organize and lead the struggle. We do not call for a reformist caucus, however, but one based on our program, a caucus that takes as its starting point not the immediately apparent situation in the UAW and the automobile industry, but an analysis of international capitalism and the tasks before the working class.

As is the case for the trade unions in general, only a program around the need for a revolutionary transformation of society can actually address the needs of the auto workers; only an opposition caucus built around such a program will be able to wage a consistent battle against the UAW bureaucrats. A caucus built on a reformist program, that accepts many of the same assumptions as the bureaucrats (the reformability of the system, the neutrality of the state, etc.) will most likely be a vacillating formation, or if it does manage to get elected, will, more likely than not, wind up as a new set of bureaucratic leaders, only a little more "left."

Our call for such a caucus, then, is like our call for a labor party; we call for one based on our program, expecting that at least for the foreseeable future, most workers will disagree with us, while we participate in critically, in broader formations, and initiate them on a united-front-type basis. Within these groups we fight for our full point of view, while at the same time, we propose concrete strategies and tactics to move the struggle forward and help build the particular organization.

\* NOTE: When we refer to united-front-type basis, we mean that we participate in these groupings, seeking to lead them forward, while fighting for our full program. In other words, we seek to win people to our full point of view in the course of struggle.

In regard to the national opposition caucus, we can propose 4 strategic ideas here:

A. The advanced workers in the auto industry are largely composed of a section of the black workers. The capitalist offensive falls most heavily on the specially oppressed layers of the class. Due to the black struggle and pivotal position in the production process, black UAW workers are forced to struggle for all the fundamental class demands we have raised. In addition, a fighting opposition caucus will actively champion the special needs of the black workers (in fact, it will undoubtedly have a leadership composed mostly of blacks); for an end to racist harassment, for an end to all forms of discrimination on the job, for preferential hiring into the skilled trades, etc., and for a production workers council to fight for these. But it will not be sufficient to raise just demands that relate to the auto industry of the UAW proper. A real insurgent movement will be based upon blacks' general anger over the totality of their oppression under capitalism. To focus and organize this discontent, an opposition caucus must champion the needs of black people generally, by fighting for a program addressed to their oppression, the deterioration of the cities, police terror, etc.

In addition to appropriate demands listed above, the following demands are also pertinent:

1. For an end to discrimination in all walks of life.
  2. Tax the corporations and the banks to rebuild the cities.
    - a. For free 24-hour child care.
    - b. Free medical care.
    - c. Free mass public transportation.
    - d. Rebuild the school system - for free universal higher education.
  3. For an end to police terror - for the right of armed self-defense, for workers' defense guards.
- (Fundamentally, our whole program meets the needs of the most oppressed sectors of the class the most. All the demands, consequently, are appropriate here.)

The opposition caucus would take these slogans into the UAW itself, demanding that the union take up the struggle through the mass mobilization of the rank and file.

B. The nature of the auto industry, the concentration of workers in large factories, the assembly-line nature of much of the production process means that a real opposition movement in the UAW has the advantage of being able to base itself in organizations in the

individual factories. These groups, capable of drawing relatively broad layers of workers into struggle and of giving leadership to the presently spontaneous outbursts, can provide a substantial base and periphery for the national opposition caucus. Although, as noted above, we wish whatever group we organize to have our program, we are prepared to work in and to initiate local caucuses on a less advanced program. Although we have no blueprint for this type of group, we do have a conception of the basic minimal program we wish these groups to organized around. We propose a program that deals with the following issues:

1. General trade union issues: wages, working conditions, layoffs, discrimination, grievances, etc.
2. Union democracy - for opposition to the local in international bureaucrats.
3. Against state intervention in the labor movement - opposition to the wage controls, against anti-strike legislation, expose the role of the courts, for a labor party.

Although we do not insist that every broad formation we might initiate on a united-front-type basis be on the above program, we are in general not in favor of taking the lead in organizing more permanent caucuses around any but a class program, that is, a program that at least includes the call for a struggle against the International, for opposition to the wage controls, for a labor party. Although this is not a blanket rule, we should be aware of the fact that local caucuses that are not built on a class program, that are not aware of the class line, will most likely not be able to weather serious struggles, but will probably vacillate and disintegrate at the first sign of a serious fight, degenerate into another local clique-type slate, etc.

C. Depending upon the specific circumstances, we may call for and initiate ad hoc formations to deal with specific situations or issues. We should, for example, work with the UNC in initiating a Detroit-area Coalition for a Decent Contract, with local affiliated committees if this is feasible. Another example would be a mass campaign to rehire Jordan Sims and other militants fired for fighting speed-up. Such a campaign, based in local committees could serve to dramatize and focus attention on the productivity drive and the need for a mass movement to fight the capitalist offensive. Although the initiation of these campaigns and formations must be considered carefully, since we do not have the forces to play such a mass role at this time, we should seek opportunities to gather forces that could built the kind of campaign we are talking about.

D. Campaigns around select transitional demands, such as sliding scale of wages and hours (concretized as 30 for 40, with no forced overtime, etc.) demands for full severance pay and retraining programs paid for by the capitalists, demand for the right of

black self-defense, and for workers defense guards, which would be appropriate in regard to the present anti-STRESS campaign. Here too, we should seek out opportunities to initiate this kind of activity, bearing in mind our limited resources.

Our work in all these formations must not lead us to subordinate our general program and analysis. In general, agitational and organizational work, proceeds from the fight for our program. Although we take on organizational tasks and leadership in a rank and file caucus, for example, help put out the newspaper, help people write articles, etc.; - this cannot be at the expense of the propagation of our basic point of view.

This, as noted above, will largely be accomplished through IS materials where this is not a security problem. In addition, we wish to introduce our more advanced ideas and demands into the bulletin, newsletter, etc., of the rank and file caucus, even if the group whose organ it is has not adopted them. We can do this through letters to the editor, debates, opinion columns, signed articles, and whatever other means present themselves. We fight for our right to do this in all the broad groups we enter, although we can work within groups without insisting upon this condition. In general, we initiate groups on the basis that this right will not be violated.

#### The Contract Expiration.

The central role of the auto industry in the ruling class' offensive is apparent in the GMAD drive. Under the cover of a reorganization to eliminate redundant operations in the 18 twin Fisher Body - General Motors Assembly plants, GM launched a full-scale assault on its production workers, laying off thousands (over 18,000 as of last Oct.), speeding up the lines, worsening working conditions, and weakening the already limited power of the locals through the junking of the better of the local supplements and the substitution of one shop committee where previously there had been two. Although the specifics are different, the other companies are taking the same road. Through all this the International has not just capitulated completely but has actively sought to isolate and demoralize the most militant locals and thus head-off a fight.

Despite this behavior, the UAW bureaucracy retains its hold on the union, and not purely on the basis of force, thuggery, etc. (although there is enough of this). Consequently, the exposure of the International and its flunkies at the local and regional level remains a central task for socialists.

Some of this work can be accomplished at the local level. In our propaganda and through organizing in the locals and on the shopfloor, we can pose tactics that can begin to curb, at least somewhat, management's virtually unlimited ability to harass, discipline and speedup. We can begin actually to demonstrate that the International's flunkies (this connection should always be made) on the local level have no intention of fighting management, but on the contrary are quite pleased with their cosy relationship.

Fundamentally, however, these tactics, applied on a plant-by-plant basis, are extremely limited in the auto industry. Unlike some other industries, notably freight, in which a powerful union faces relatively small companies thus giving the union substantial leverage, the UAW faces some of the world's largest corporations. The latter's vast power and resources make it extremely difficult for even the most militant locals to curb management and protect its members. Especially now, with the additional resources of the state, combined with the active intervention of the International, bearing down, it is virtually impossible for an isolated local even with the best leadership and an organized rank and file, to wage a consistent battle without being seriously defeated. In this situation, most rank and filers tend to be cynical about anybody's ideas and promises about what to do on the local level. As a result, the local bureaucrats, while generally distrusted by most rank and filers, are not exposed in the sense that the workers conceive of an alternative and are ready to fight for it.

The fundamental task of exposing the present International leadership must be accomplished by posing a national strategy for waging a serious fight against the auto producers. We must put forward a strategy that can actually bring a victory for the rank and file and demand that the International carry it out. At the same time, we make it clear that we think the International leadership will not carry out such a strategy, that even if it is forced to make motions in the right direction because of the pressure of the rank and file, it will actively seek to sabotage the struggle. We point out that the reason for this is because the International is tied to capitalism, therefore accepts it and is committed to try to make it work. Consequently, it is not enough to pose simply a militant leadership, but to pose a leadership that is prepared to organize a real fight against the companies, that is prepared to break with the capitalist state and take the fight for a labor party into the labor movement.

The upcoming contract expiration (in Sept.) and possible strike will provide us with an opportunity to pose our strategy in a concrete way and to intervene actively in an agitational and organizational manner. In 1970, the International led the GM workers in a 67-day strike whose basic purpose was to convince the workers to accept a contract that they would not otherwise have accepted. This time around, although the companies and the

International are hoping otherwise, pressure for a real battle may build up within the ranks, especially if the present trend in prices continues. If this is the case, a well-conceived, clearly articulated and aggressively raised strategy coupled with sharp criticism of the International leadership may have a large impact on the consciousness of the rank and file and on the future course of struggle.

There is evidence that management has its own strategy for the coming months and has been implementing it. It appears to be seeking to demoralize the rank and file before the fall, before the expiration date, stepping up its offensive and provoking job actions. (This is not certain, but seems to be behind the recent wildcats at Chrysler plants and is consistent with the GMAD approach). With the help of the bureaucrats, management is hoping to dissipate the built-up energy of the workers by provoking actions that can be easily defeated. It wants to break up the most militant sections on the production lines, fire and discipline the most militant elements and isolate them from the mass of the rank and file. It wants to teach the workers that they should not try to do anything for themselves, but should instead rely on their "leaders" and the "established procedures" to solve their problems.

For its part, the International would like to come up with an issue that can convince the workers that they have won something, but something that won't hurt management. Short work-week schemes (in which the workers can accumulate a few hours of paid time off, if they are good, that is, if they maintain good attendance records), talk about voluntary overtime, more holidays, etc., are some of the ideas that have been thrown around. The International is angling to make a deal with the producers that will give them something to sell the contract to the ranks with and thus avoid a strike.

1. We must warn the workers that the worst is yet to come. Accelerating prices will eat away at their wages unless they win a fat substantial wage increase; layoffs are almost inevitable since the industry cannot maintain its boom pace indefinitely, especially in the context of a stagnant economy. The workers must make a real fight this time, if they are not to wind up in serious trouble over the next period.

2. We should point out the nature of the collusion between management and the International. We must tell the workers what management's strategy is; we must say to them: "you must learn when to strike and when not to strike. Management will try to provoke you, to pick off the most militant, to demoralize everybody, and they will get the cooperation of the housebroken local leaderships. Sometimes it is necessary to move, but you

must pick your spots carefully."

3. We must point out the need for a fight within the union, to utilize the local elections between now and the fall to mobilize and awaken the ranks. The old rotten cliques should be thrown out, elected to all union posts and especially the shop committees. The workers should only vote for those who will mobilize the ranks not only to fight management, but also to fight within the union for a winning strategy and a decent settlement in the fall.

4. We demand that the UAW Apache strategy, used to defeat the GMAD workers last fall, be used this spring and summer to prevent the companies from stockpiling. Give the locals open ended strike authorization letters, the workers should strike over production standards to prevent weekend work. The Gear and Axle and Transmission plants should be struck to prevent management from trying to catch up by working overtime during the week. The International should extend strike funds to the striking locals. (The union's net worth was \$75,433,530 as of Dec. 31, 1972, compared to \$44,464,653 as of a year earlier, a gain of \$31 million. The Strike Fund held \$33,864,315 as of Dec. 31, 1972, compared to \$21,627,791 as of a year earlier, a gain of \$17 million.) If more money is needed, solicit contributions from the rest of the labor movement, go to the rank and file and organize a broad support campaign, the auto workers' struggle is in their interests as well.

5. We demand that all negotiations be public. No sellouts, no tricks.

6. For regularly meeting councils or representatives of the locals of each particular company.

7. For a democratic production workers' council to organize the struggle.

8. If there's a strike, strike all three. For a unified strike over the supplemental agreements.

We must take this strategy into the UNC and propose that it take the lead in this work. It should seek out the various groups in the industry and try to organize a Detroit Coalition for A Decent Contract, with affiliated committees in the locals. It should prepare a special issue of its newspaper for the pre-strike period and organize a national distribution for it. It should call for regular demonstrations at Solidarity House when negotiations begin. Lastly, it should consider organizing picketing of individual plants, addressing meetings of the respective locals, attempting to involve employed and unemployed workers over the question of jobs for all, 30 for 40, with no forced overtime, and other contract demands.

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FOOTNOTE MISSING FROM PAGE SIX

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In the case of leaders of insurgent rank and file formations with reformist notions, our approach is the same, although its application is different. Where we are dealing with one such leader, recently emerged from relative apoliticism, and as yet "uncongealed" politically, we approach the task of exposing his or her reformist notions in a specific manner. We wish to help the individual dispose of his or her own illusions. We work with them, explain our difference, encourage them to come to our full point of view, and patiently criticize them insofar as they fail to provide the necessary kind of leadership. "Patience" speaks to our tone. It does not relieve us of the responsibility of explaining to this leader our view of his or her political shortcomings or of our view that unless he or she develops a revolutionary standpoint, he or she too will sell out the ranks. Nor do we keep these views and our criticisms hidden from the rank and file, both within and outside the particular rank and file group.



APPENDIXTable 11972 Sales and Profits of U.S. Auto Producers.

SALES		
<u>Co.</u>	<u>Sales in millions of \$</u>	<u>Percentage change from 1971</u>
American	\$ 1483.9	20%
Chrysler	2759.1	22%
Ford	20194.4	23%
GM	30400.0	8%

PROFITS		
<u>Co.</u>	<u>Profits in millions of \$</u>	<u>Percentage change from 1971</u>
American	\$ 19.6	451%
Chrysler	\$ 220.5	164%
Ford	870.0	32%
GM	2163.0	12%

(Source: March 10, '73 Business Week)

Table 2

Scheduled First Quarter Auto Production compared with Last Year's  
Actual First Quarter Production.

<u>Co.</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>% change</u>
American	86,000	64,000	34.4
Chrysler	396,000	309,000	28.2
Ford	685,000	603,000	13.6
GM	1,450,000	1,279,000	13.4
TOTAL	2,617,000	2,255,000	16.1

Table 3

Foreign Plants, Subsidiaries, and Affiliates of the Big Three

<u>Co.</u>	<u>Canada</u>	<u>W. Europe</u>	<u>Latin Amer.</u>	<u>Africa</u>	<u>Asia</u>	<u>Australia</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>
Chrysler	4	59	7	3	2	5	80
Ford	2	16	4	1	7	2	32
GM	1	11	5	1	2	2	22
TOTALS	7	86	16	5	11	9	134

## THESES ON THE UNC

Ron T.

1. The United National Caucus emerged out of a revolt among skilled tradesmen in 1966-67. By championing the demand of the skilled workers for wage parity with workers doing similar work in other industries, the group that is now the core of the present UNC leadership helped head off a secessionist movement oriented toward the reactionary, craft-unionist International Society of Skilled Trades. Since that time the UNC has played a continual opposition role in the UAW, has fought for the interests of the skilled tradesmen and has generally exposed the sellout policies of the UAW International leadership. Moreover, it has raised political issues, such as the war in Vietnam, and the need for a labor party, in the union.

2. The Caucus, however, never developed a consistent self-conception. Although it spoke of the need to throw out the International leadership, it has more often than not functioned as a pressure group without any real perspective; it has failed to develop a conception of where it is going and how it expects to get there. As a result, the Caucus is an ambiguous phenomenon, that is, it is made up of relatively disparate elements, pulling in different directions.

3. In the period between the 1970 strike and the present, the present UNC leadership has been shopping around for a viable perspective, or from their point of view, a means to build a base for itself. The general lull during this time gave free rein to the "shopping around" tendencies and made them relatively open to the ideas we were putting forward about the need for an orientation toward production workers, the need to build caucuses in the plants, the need for a regularly-appearing newspaper, etc.

In a period of relative quiet in the industry and the country generally, the logic of an approach toward production workers (who at least in Detroit are predominantly black) meant a political turn that resulted in the alienation of the more conservative, narrowly-unionist elements of the Caucus. The resignation of Theresa Carpenter from the Allis Chalmers local in Milwaukee, which reflected a decline in popularity of the Caucus among skilled workers generally, symbolizes this development. As long as our perspective offered possibilities for visible growth (the attraction of Lou Smith of JOB, Local 647 in Cincinnati, and Nate Mosely from Local 25 in St. Louis were hopeful developments), the UNC leadership was relatively willing to go along. The recent conference and the poor turnout of production workers, however, highlighted the present isolation of the Caucus and its stagnation. There can be little doubt that this has caused a crisis among the leadership, which is now having second thoughts about an orientation toward production workers and wants to pull back, although it is not yet prepared to oppose it openly.

4. From our point of view, this hesitation represents more than the hesitations and confusions of the individuals that make up the UNC leadership.

Given the group's origins, it still has a base among the skilled tradesmen and still largely identifies itself with them. (This obviously varies from individual to individual.) In spite of the subjective politics of the leadership (such as Art Fox, for example), the Caucus politically speaks from the vantage point of and represents the left wing of the skilled tradesmen.

5. Our perspective is to make the UNC the nucleus of an opposition movement based among the production workers. Although it is impossible at this time to determine if the Caucus will ever become this vehicle, it is the only organized group of militants that understands the need for a national oppositional fight in the UAW (actually, an international fight, including Canada) and has on paper a militant program.

6. A necessary component of this perspective is the building of caucuses based in the plants and based on a class program, the program we propose for the UNC, or where feasible, a more advanced one. While we desire the affiliation of these caucuses to the UNC, the question of how this affiliation is to be established is in general a tactical one and depends upon a number of circumstances, among others, the political level of the caucus members, the state of the UNC, etc. These caucuses have as their perspective the organization of shop-floor actions against the speed-up, harassment, etc., a struggle within the union locals, consistent propaganda (around the capitalist crisis, the productivity drive, the need for a rank and file movement to kick out the bureaucrats, to fight state intervention and for a labor party) and where feasible (e.g., Detroit) the development of a self-conscious city-wide movement among production workers.

7. Within the UNC, we continue to press for an active practical orientation toward production workers. We propose, for example, re-establishing active communication with UNC members in areas outside Detroit, consistent distribution of the UNC newspaper, both within Detroit and nationally, and if financially feasible a national (or at least Midwest) tour of a UNC spokesman for the purpose of making additional contacts, drawing together the old contacts, and generally making the Caucus known. We also advocate (and of course help organize) actions, such as demonstrations at Solidarity House, designed to popularize the UNC and its concerns.

This perspective requires writing for the UNC newspaper on a regular basis. We should provide regular coverage of developments in the factories, reports on the activities of the caucuses we are active in, as well as more political articles written from a socialist standpoint, discussing various economic, social, and political issues. We must not be hesitant to utilize the UNC newspaper as a vehicle to communicate our political ideas to a relatively broad audience of auto workers.

8. The key to making the UNC the nucleus of a movement among production workers is the attraction of the most advanced, militant, and disciplined types. These will be the cadres of the in-plant caucuses and of the UNC generally, and will constitute a core around which a mass democratic organization may be built in the future. If the UNC cannot attract these types,

if they are attracted to other groups or remain unaffiliated, the potential of the Caucus to become a principled opposition caucus will be seriously impaired; it will either find recruitment difficult if not impossible, or it will attract less advanced, less committed, and most likely opportunist elements, which will hurt the Caucus' reputation in the plants and the union as a whole. In other words, it is the recruitment of the most advanced, most political elements in the factories that will be necessary if our perspective toward the UNC is to be successful.

For the immediate future, the recruitment of these people will be quite slow. A tiny organization, even one with a crystal-clear program and an excellent reputation, will not appear to offer much of an alternative to the present International leadership. Very few workers will see the possibilities of such an organization in the absence of mass motion in the factories, for example.

9. In order to win the best elements, the UNC will have to take its program seriously, to press it forward in a consistent and aggressive manner. No serious militant, the kind that ought to be in the UNC, will respond favorably to an organization that attempts to hide what it believes, that waters-down its program (even if they disagree with it) in order to make itself more "acceptable," that vacillates from issue to issue. This means that we will have to fight the UNC's tendencies to look for organizational gimmicks (such as the retiree vote court suit) that spread illusions about the possibility of "opening up" the UAW without a political fight based on a clear class program. The UNC must develop a reputation for being a principled organization that is worth trusting, joining, and following.

Specifically, this means that the UNC must develop a reputation for uncompromising hostility toward careerists and opportunists. It means that it must be openly critical of left-sounding bureaucrats, or former bureaucrats (such as Paul Schrade, former Director of Region 6) and be warning the workers of the dangers they represent. No organization that fudges on its attitude toward and relationship to aspiring bureaucratic elements can hope to attract the type of workers that can constitute the nucleus of a principled opposition movement in the UAW.

10. Part of the process of making the UNC take its program seriously is fighting within the Caucus against a bureaucratic perspective. One short cut that the present leadership finds attractive is an orientation toward the secondary levels of the bureaucracy, primarily local leaderships. This perspective implies building a movement based on, and led by the middle and lower level union bureaucrats. This approach is perhaps best exemplified by Mike Singer of Local 588 in the Chicago area who argues for the "realism of getting elected without spouting a lot of hot air." At the local level, it involves getting into office on an opportunist basis, running on a vague program or no program at all. At a higher level, it involves seeking to build a movement whose actual goal will be the replacement of the present International leadership with a new set of bureaucrats, perhaps with a more radical posture, but playing the same role.

"Left" bureaucrats (and aspiring bureaucrats) of this type function to incorporate left rank and file upsurges and to keep them within bounds acceptable to capitalism. They may put forward very radical-sounding programs, but since they accept capitalism, they must inevitably compromise their programs and betray the rank and file. In the event of the emergence of a movement led by Schrade or a similar type, the UNC could, depending upon the balance of forces, give such a tendency critical support. They would then call on the leadership to carry out its promises and, at the same time, show how this ought to be done in practice. At the same time, vigorous criticism would be levelled at this same leadership, exposing their vacillations, warning the workers that they will betray the ranks, and pointing out the need for a leadership that does not accept the dictates of capitalism. The object of this approach would be to win the base away from the Schrades and to our program and leadership. In this sense, critical support represents a means to set the base against the top, the rank and file against the leadership. This approach will also maximize the ability of the ranks to force this leadership to deliver as much as possible.

In order to play a truly left-wing role in relation to such bureaucrat-led movements, the UNC must be absolutely clear about its hostility to Schrade, et al; its critical support represents support for the ranks' aspirations, what they think they are fighting for, and opposition to their leadership. If the UNC does not repudiate a perspective toward building a movement based upon and led by the secondary bureaucracy, it may find itself (1) leading such a movement and having itself installed as a new set of bureaucrats, or (2) it will provide such a bureaucrat-led movement with a "left cover," a radical image, that will facilitate the incorporation of the radical rank and filers into such a movement, and the eventual sellout and betrayal of the workers.

11. For the immediate future, our major programmatic fight within the UNC is around the question of a rank and file leadership vs. a bureaucratic perspective. This does not mean that we make this fight so central and intense that we split the Caucus, get ourselves thrown out, etc., etc. It is, of course, possible that such a course may be necessary in the future, but it is not required now. We must, however, begin to raise the question of the secondary leadership orientation, the dangers represented by someone like Schrade, and the need to be clear in one's approach toward him. We must make our position on these questions clear and begin to win the UNC rank and filers to our point of view. The best people in the Caucus will be sympathetic to us, and we will win them over, especially if we are putting our ideas forward in a clear and non-factional manner. We are not in favor of having Singer and the other opportunist right-wingers "thrown out;" we are for making the UNC a place where they cannot remain without breaking their ties to their opportunist colleagues and without abandoning their bureaucratic aspirations.

We expect that the present UNC leadership will drag its feet on, or actively oppose, our perspective. It is afraid of losing its base among the skilled tradesmen and has no confidence in its ability to win significant numbers of production workers. In fact, it has little confidence in the po-

tential of production workers generally. In addition, it is fearful that actually fighting for a class program will alienate rank and file UAW members. In other words it believes that by adapting to the consciousness of the less advanced workers it can grow faster, and speed up the process of ousting Woodcock, etc. The implication of this adaptation should be very clear to us: in the US today, such an adaptation will mean at least a capitulation to (1) reformist illusions and to (2) the racism of the backward white workers, which will impede the transformation of the UNC into the kind of group that is needed.

13. For the immediate future, we expect to see a bloc between the present leadership of the Caucus, Singer, and the representatives of the Communist Party active in the Caucus. Singer's aims, for the present, coincide quite nicely with the CP's perspective. The latter's opportunistic attitude toward Woodcock et. al. as "progressive" bureaucrats fits Singer just fine; they all want to keep the Caucus "broad," i.e., opportunistic, and will direct their fire against the "disrupters" and "sectarians," that is, us, who want to make the UNC a principled group and hence to "keep out the mass of rank and file auto workers." For Fox's and Kelly's part, they will play a centrist role, vacillating in the middle, trying to hold the Caucus together, but blocing with the right win on the strategic questions. Their opportunism, their distrust of production workers, and their search for short-cuts will make it very difficult for them to risk a split with Singer and the CP. The debate at the UNC conference over the question of calling upon the UAW to refuse to endorse capitalist candidates (and the recent moves on the Caucus Executive Board to declare the vote at the conference invalid) is just one example of this. It also indicates that the basis for the bloc is quite deeply rooted; they share similar conceptions of functioning. The UNC's labor party position is mere cover, it is a position for the record and an indication that there is no intention to lead a real fight for such a party. The position is a face-saver in that it prevents them, as the UNC, from endorsing capitalist politicians, but allows them the comfort of avoiding "alienating the rank and file." In fact it is scarcely distinguishable from the CP's past line. (What the real meaning of their recent "left" turn is not yet clear in their auto work. It is possible that, over time, the CP may wind up with a position to the left of the present UNC leadership.)

14. Our perspective toward the UNC is open and public. We have no desire to spread illusions about the UNC or about what we are doing in it. We want the workers we bring into the Caucus to have as clear as possible an idea of what the UNC is and what must be done to make it the nucleus of a movement that really represents and speaks to the needs of production workers. To build the UNC on the basis of illusions will only discredit us in the eyes of the best people we are trying to reach and will more likely than not mean that we are building a base for a perspective opposed to our own. Our press and our comrades directly involved in the UAW and the UNC have the duty of making our point of view known. Our perspective for the UNC, our ideas for building a mass movement among production workers and our criticism of the Caucus must be absolutely clear.

Specifically, we warn of the danger represented by the opportunist tendencies of the present leadership and of the possibility of the Caucus becoming a left cover for the efforts of opportunist elements to exploit the discontent of the rank and file and to catapult themselves into office.

15. We must be clear about the dynamic of the present situation. If the UNC leadership decides to hitch its wagon to Schrade, or at least to keep this option open, it will resist our efforts to force it to fight and organize production workers into serious rank and file caucuses, for a fight against the International bureaucrats, against the wage controls, and for a labor party, etc. In other words, there are essentially two roads for the UNC: (1) to become the real instrument of the advanced layer of production workers as the basis of a mass movement fighting for the needs of all production workers, or (2) to become the vehicle for, or left cover of, a movement of a grouping of potential bureaucrats. Any attempt to find a middle ground will result in the destruction of the Caucus as it now exists. The two perspectives have to be posed openly and a fight made. Attempts to win the Caucus to our perspective without making it clear what it means, that is, attempts to nudge the Caucus leftward, are not only guaranteed to fail, but will not even have the educational value that serious political fights often have.

16. In sum, our perspective means that the UNC cannot continue to represent that narrow section of the skilled tradesmen now willing to accommodate to picking up a black production workers base. It must become the voice of the advanced layer of production workers. However, the UNC, through its de facto vitiation of its labor party position and other actions, demonstrates that it is not attempting to really move in this direction, but instead to adapt to the more backward workers. If genuine advances are to be made and maintained in the struggles of production workers, real solutions must be posed sharply and fought for. Angry black production workers will not move over warned over pap, half-heartedly advanced. We can make no predictions about when these workers will move -- but when they do, they will seek a fighting, aggressive leadership that has not lacked the courage to put forward and fight for clear radical solutions.

17. As one step toward our perspective, we propose that the UNC become actively involved in the campaign against STRESS in the city of Detroit. By coming forward as a champion of the struggle of blacks against police repression, the Caucus can go a long way towards enhancing its reputation and building a base among black auto workers. The Caucus is also an appropriate vehicle for a strategy of taking the anti-STRESS campaign into the plants, where the working class has the power to actually win a victory against the police terror hitting the black community nationally. Its focus for its role in this campaign should be that the UAW as the major working class and potential black working class power in this city should lead the struggle. In this way the struggle can be taken into the locals and into the ranks. Additional aspects of a strategy can be elaborated as needed.



## BRIAN'S MINE DISASTER

by John Weber

1. What is Brian trying to accomplish with his recent attack on the Transformation Caucus: "The Minority's Political Mine Disaster"? Our crime, according to Brian, was to accept and support the amendment that he put forward to the Lynn J. MFD document. In a normal organization, when one puts forward a motion, an amendment, or any other political position, one attempts to convince the rest of the organization of that position. We were convinced that the substance of Brian's amendment improved and amplified the document. So that there would be no misunderstanding, a statement was inserted in the minutes by Joel and Jack explaining the basis of our support for the amendment, the area of disagreement, and the reason why we supported the amendment despite the disagreement.
2. Since Brian charges that our support for his document was dishonest, was "just another maneuver" we must first pinpoint exactly what the area of our disagreement with his document really was. It occurs in the last three sentences of the first paragraph of his amendment. In essence, Brian states here that the method used in his amendment is the application of the transitional program. We agree with the method he uses in the amendment. We just don't consider this method to be the application of the transitional program. (Ron also doesn't consider Brian's method to be the application of the Transitional Program). We support everything in this amendment but the name that Brian gives to the method he uses. From this we conclude that although Brian and we disagree on the nature and use of the transitional program, (an important and serious disagreement) he and we agree on Miners For Democracy, the question under discussion. This is why we supported his amendment; it would have been irresponsible not to.
3. Brian, of course, accuses us of being liars. He charges that the only reason we supported his amendment was to embarrass him. He charges that we don't agree with it at all. It therefore becomes necessary for us to prove that we really do support what we say we support. We will, but we consider the necessity of doing so to be one more clear indication of the degeneration of comradely relations in the IC. And anyway, if we don't have the right to support Brian's Amendment to our document, what right has he to amend our document and so forth. Enough of this childishness. First a little background is necessary to shed light on what lies behind Brian's uncalled for attack.
4. The giveaway to what lies behind Brian's attack can be found in his statement: "Some majority comrades have responded to my amending a minority document as though it were treason--or even some move toward the minority." Elsewhere, he characterizes this response as speculation that he had struck a deal with the devil." Brian is here describing a rather typical imposition of rotten bloc discipline.
5. Brian has been joined with the Tabor-Landy group in a rotten bloc since the convention. The basis of this bloc has been a tacit agreement to politically

isolate and discredit the "minority" even at the price of subordinating political differences. When Brian accuses us of supporting a document with which we actually disagree, he may be speaking from experience. There was much speculation that he was playing that role at previous N.C.'s (but no one had the cheek to rush to print with the charge). By his own admission, Brian and company are in a "voting bloc" with the Tablorites. They vote together without agreeing. This appeared to be particularly the case in the discussion on women and recruitment of Orthodox Trot's at the last N.C.

6. Ever since the convention, there has been incredible pressure on the majority leadership to maintain a united front against our caucus. Under cover of this united front, the Tabor-Landy NAC leadership have been rapidly attempting to transform the fundamental politics of the IS into a new Trotskyist "orthodoxy" minus only the degenerated workers state. Although there are hints of a trend in this direction in the Tabor R & P, in no way can it be claimed that the basic revisions in our politics now emanating from the NAC Tabor-Landy leadership, are supported by the convention documents upon which Tabor-Landy base their leadership.

7. Even though these revisions emanate from a fairly small grouping within the IS, and even though they're in fundamental contradiction with our traditions and experiences, there has been rather widespread acquiescence to them within the organization. In part, this has been accomplished by a process of gradually projecting their revisions over an extended period--a little at a time. Furthermore, while their politics, if seriously applied, have severe consequences for all our practical work, they have, for a long time, been hesitant to draw out the implications in those arenas in which their supporters are in the majority.\* But the main dynamic has been their attempt, largely successful, to create an atmosphere in which opposition to Tabor-Landy from prominent members of the majority bloc was viewed as a violation of trust. As a means of maintaining and of justifying the bloc, every attempt was made to draw a political line of blood between the minority and the majority. Majority leaders were expected to treat the minority as enemies or opponents, not as comrades with whom one had differences.

8. When Brian decided to amend the Lynn J. document and to criticize Ron all at the same time, his actions were correctly interpreted by Tabor-Landy and their supporters as a rupture in their bloc. The reaction was less to amending Lyn's document, however, and more to his criticism of Tabor. This was the first instance in which the Tabor-Landy revisions of IS politics had come under coherent attack from a member of their own majority bloc. Brian was no longer keeping his mouth shut. He now represented a danger and had to be attacked.

9. Brian's attack on the T.C. was a response to the charges by Tabor-Landy and company that he was moving towards us. He was trying to appease them and to show

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\*For instance, no one has insisted we base our New York teacher work on the Transitional Program or on an orientation to a subjectively revolutionary layer (even though teaching is one of the very few occupations in which actual groupings which consider themselves revolutionary have sprung up.) The same leaders of the majority who are so worried about soft attitudes toward MFD bureaucrats, and who have unfounded nightmares that minority comrades in auto might go runnings after Paul Schrade raised no objections when their supporters in the /FT refused to actively oppose the United Action Caucus's nomination of Meissen.

that it would be possible to maintain a bloc against the T.C. even while publicly disagreeing on important issues. But to Tabor-Landy, the bloc against the T.C. was a tactic--their central goal is fundamental revision of the basic politics of the IS. And once Brian demonstrates he is willing to open his mouth and oppose them in this venture, he becomes an enemy in their eyes little different from the T.C. To be frank, we find it hard to understand what about the T.C. is so unsavory that Brian and co. have shown consistent willingness to subordinate their politics to maintain a bloc against us. It is particularly difficult to understand this in light of the fact that Tabor-Landy, under cover of this bloc, have been rather successful in influencing broad sections of the organization towards politics which Brian and co. thoroughly dislike. But it appears that Tabor-Landy no longer want a bloc with Brian. They feel that they now have the strength to go into business for themselves. Where does this leave Brian and co.??

10. It could be that Brian thought that our support for his MFD amendments were an overture from us for the formation of a bloc with his group against Tabor-Landy. This would explain his nasty response as a rejection of the proposal, as a statement that says in essence: "How dare you even imply, etc." Let us make it clear to Brian and to others that whatever has been the past practice in this organization, we will not subordinate our politics to the expediencies of any bloc, nor do we ask anyone to subordinate their politics to us. While it may sound like a revolutionary new innovation, we will support what we agree with, oppose what we disagree with, irrespective of who puts what forward. We urge others to do the same.

11. Brian shares the responsibility with Tabor-Landy of creating an atmosphere within much of the IS which brands the T.C. political lepers, which considers motion toward us on any question worse than treasonous, a deal with the devil, etc, etc. We don't know whether this is part of a conscious decision to try and drive us out of the organization. But Brian should keep in mind that if we're driven out, he's next.

12. It now comes time to deal with specific political issues raised in Brian's "Mine Disaster". Brian characterizes his differences with the T.C. to be simple: "They denied the applicability of transitional program in this period and continue to write documents, make statements, etc. to prove their sincerity. At the same time, however, they vote for things they really don't agree with."

13. Brian does raise demands taken from Trotsky's Transitional Program in his document. Is that what makes his amendment an application of the Transitional Program? We don't believe Trotsky ever meant the T.P. to be a shopping list. The task of the T.P. according to Trotsky, "lies in the systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution." We often favor raising demands that Trotsky raises in the T.P. We reject the T.P. as a strategy for the present period. Is Brian saying that what makes his amendment an application of the T.P. the fact that he uses some demands from the T.P. in it?? If not, then we are merely forced to take Brian's word that his amendment is an application of the T.P. and that since we reject the applicability of the T.P. in this

period, our claim to support his amendment is a lie.

14. Brian claims that his amendment was counterposed to the section from the Jones document it replaces. Presumably he means that his amendment contradicts the politics of the original section it replaces. If this were true, we would have to explain why we changed our minds (something that we are capable of doing on the basis of convincing arguments.) But, in fact, we deny that Brian's amendment is politically counterposed to Jones. Again, we are under no obligation to take Brian's word that the two are counterposed. Rather, it must be demonstrated. To go further, we challenge Brian to point out what portions of the section in question he even disagrees with. We plan to reintroduce the deleted section of the Jones document as an addition to the McKenzie Amendment. We want to hear Brian's arguments against it in that context.

15. The only specific disagreement with something actually in the section in question is a remark that the quote from Engels used by Jones was relevant to an entirely different epoch than the present and therefore inapplicable. Unless this point is elaborated, its method could be used to dismiss all of Engel's writings, not to mention Marx. Is Brian joining the Liberal academicians in the claim that what Marx and Engels had to say was only relevant to the 1900's. We stand by Engel's statement. If Brian thinks it doesn't apply to the present, let him make a case.

16. More to the point--Brian criticizes the original section for what is lacking from it. In a word, he asserts that "the problem is that there is no program." We accept that the document is weak in this area; that is why we supported the amendment. In our statement for the minutes we asserted that his amendment "concretizes for the MFD the more general and abstract direction and approach embodied in the Jones section it substitutes for..."

17. In the IS, the term program has become synonymous with listings of demands and slogans. This, to be sure, is a trivialization of the Marxist conception of program. His charge of no program is a charge that Jones failed to concretize and extend her analysis through demands and slogans. Or worse, since some demands and slogans are raised, the document, by implication, rejects others.

18. Jones spends very little space discussing our program for the MFD. The document was hurriedly written (in one day) as a response to Ron's first draft--an analysis and evaluation of the MFD. Her section The Role of Revolutionaries was written primarily as an answer and critique of this draft. This is why it is so one-sided, and particularly so because Tabor backed off of some of the more gross formulations.

19. Still, the programmatic thrust of the document, at least in general terms, is clear. 1) Ultimately Miller and co. will prove incapable of moving the struggle forward and will most probably quickly evolve into a traditional left union bureaucracy betraying the program and ranks who elected them. 2) We must warn the ranks that unless they use this victory to rapidly step up the fight over the MFD program and press it to its conclusions, their new leadership will abandon the struggle and prepare new defeats for the union. 3) We call upon miners to build mass organizations in the coal fields that can elect a leadership and demand that the leader-

ship be responsible to the ranks. 4) We call upon miners to build a labor party to represent the interests of all working people.

20. We believe that Brian's amendment is an elaboration and concretization of these four points. Brian fails to see any program at all in our document. He substantiates this with a discussion of a single demand--nationalization under workers control. Brian claims that Jones argued against raising this demand, considering it ultimattistic. Where??? She states that nothing short of the dictatorship of the proletariat, not even nationalization under workers control, can insure the undisputed rule of the working class. That is her entire discussion of the demand. Brian asserts that he can't believe that we simply overlooked the demand and that its omission was therefore conscious. The reason why this demand gets so much attention is because it is from Trotsky's T.P. Infact, it plus open the books are the only two things in Brian's amendment that comes from Trotsky's T.P.

21. We support Brian in raising this demand as a central slogan in coal on the basis of Brian's specific arguments and concrete analysis. Brian says in response to the inability of small coal companies to meet the real needs of the workers: "We counterpose democratic nationalization to pit closings or threats of closings and to the notion of the government subsidizing the employers. To Brian, it's a whole concept, not merely a slogan. He says, "Its importance, in short, is not its own abstract political character, but its viability as a means of furthering the miners' struggle."

22. While we accept Brian's use of this slogan, we reject Ron's use. Brian specifically applies this demand and concept to the coal industry. If he wanted to raise nationalization as a central demand in auto, or in telephone, he would have to use different arguments. Ron, on the other hand, treats the demand as an abstraction: "The only road to achieving dignity, real safety, job security, full employment, and satisfactory pension is a struggle for the nationalization of the mines and all basic industry under workers control and for a workers government." Ron fails even to raise nationalization as a transitional demand. To him it is merely a euphemism. The content would have been no different if he had said a struggle for socialism. This is the sense in which Ron's program is maximalist. It says to the miners, in essence, the only way forward is a struggle for socialism. He doesn't say struggle for the nationalization of the mines, or for the nationalization under workers control of mines belonging to such and such companies---he says struggle for the nationalization of the mines and all basic industry...."

23. The Jones document also states that the miners must struggle for socialism. "The problems of the miner, like the problems of the working class as a whole require a revolutionary solution--the dictatorship of the proletariat...a reformist leadership in the working class, a leadership that does not understand or will not fight for the armed rule of the working class, will ultimately prove counterrevolutionary." But we don't counterpose the struggle for socialism to the actual dynamics of the class struggle---like Ron does. Nor do we confuse

raising specific demands included in Trotsky's T.P. of 1938 with application of the Transitional Program---"the task of which lies in the systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution."

24. Ron attempts to apply the T.P. That's where the propagandistic struggle for revolutionary leadership comes from--the attempt to carry out systematic propagandistic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution. Brian, on the other hand, seems confused about what it means to apply the T.P. If it means to point the movements and struggles of the working class beyond the capacities and confines of bourgeois property relations and bourgeois ideology our difference with Brian is only semantic. If it means to use Trotsky's program as a shopping list then Brian is just confused. In fact, Brian probably has some other concept of what it means to apply the T.P. in the present period. When he formulates it, we can discuss it.

25. There are two final points in Brian's Mine Disaster that must be commented on. The first is a supposed disagreement between him and us over whether the unions or the shop floor are our political arena. He charges that we don't really support his labor document because we think that shop floor and not the union are our political arena and that this has confused our UNC work. On this basis he now claims we should never have voted for his labor document. This is a new charge. It is thoroughly irresponsible for Brian to raise such a charge by allusion in a half-paragraph, giving no specifics or substantiation. If we have a disagreement, Brian, raise it. If you lay it out we can respond--we might even learn something from the interchange. But no, it is raised here as one more charge. He claims that we either consider questions of high significance to unimportant, or we can't read.

26. Finally, we want to comment on your second-last paragraph. This paragraph states: "I consider anyone who subordinates their actual politics to factional considerations to be unprincipled." This you claim is your gripe with the T.C. But on careful reading of the paragraph, this attack on us is just cover. In fact, you are in this paragraph defending yourself. You broke your pact with Ron and criticized his revisions of IS-politics. For this you were attacked. You say, "I regard correctness on labor--or any other--question as above factional loyalty." It is sad when a socialist organization degenerates to the point where members have to justify and defend themselves for behaving honestly toward the organization as a whole.