

LABOR PERSPECTIVES

for the

International Socialists

Adopted at the National

Convention September, 1973

THE STATE OF LABOR

The New Economic Policy brought to an end a four year, unbroken wave of rank and file resistance characterized, above all, by a high level of strike activity. Wildcats, even nationwide wildcats, and contract rejections had forced the labor bureaucracy themselves to call and "lead" many long and at times even militant strikes by 1970. The last actions of this four year strike wave actually occurred under NEP. The miners and longshoremen on both coasts struck and won considerable wage increases under NEP. Yet, these strikes were the end of the old strike wave and not the start of new resistance to NEP.

As the 1972 *Labor Perspectives* pointed out, the long-standing strike wave and the growth of organized rank and file opposition put enormous pressure on the bureaucracy. The top level bureaucracy was under direct pressure from the employers and the government. Between these two layers, the ranks and the top international bureaucracy, the secondary leaders were caught in a squeeze. Less insulated from the ranks, i.e. able to be ousted by elections in many cases, the secondary leaders began to appear in the leaderships of opposition movements. This fact broke the monolith that had been the labor bureaucracy and opened the door for even greater rank and file struggle. This process was, in part, interrupted by Phase II of NEP. That is, the disorientation of the ranks and of their rank and file leaders in the face of a decisive government intervention led to a drop in direct action and a temporary loss of self-confidence. Thus, the pressure was off, for a while, and the secondary leaders relaxed their opposition to the top bureaucrats. This is one reason why the leaders of the big international unions were able to capitulate under Phases II and III. For the moment, power seemed to flow back to the bureaucracy, just as it did to the ruling class for that period. The result of all of this was that some national rank and file oppositions that had existed collapsed, while others failed to grow. None of these opposition organizations (TURF, UNC, UAC; RTV, etc.,) had been organizationally or politically strong enough to weather even a short term closing of ranks by the bureaucracy and a demoralization among the ranks of the workers. The collapse or limiting of these organized rank and file oppositions was also a victory for the ruling class.

The major exception to this pattern was, of course, the Miners for Democracy. MFD managed to keep the loyalty of many secondary leaders and of the ranks. In the coal fields there was no slackening of the struggle. That is, the strike of fall 1971 was not ended until the Pay Board OKed the agreement. The fight against black lung and rotten working conditions did not decline in the mines to the degree it did elsewhere; though, of course, it did not cease altogether anywhere. Thus, while not a rank and file organization, MFD maintained an active mass base up to and through the election. Additional organizational stability came from the liberal outsiders who "helped" MFD, notably Joe Rauh. Both the campaign of the MFD and its victory, as mixed a blessing as that is, are important because they helped to maintain the continuity of rank and file opposition. The negative side is that the Miller leadership has so rapidly adapted to the methods of the industrial union bureaucracy.

Reflecting the general temporary decline in rank and file activity and organization, black rank and file worker organization has also declined. The origins of this decline, however, are additionally connected to the dispersion of the organized black liberation movement in the US. The political *cul de sacs* into which both the moderates and the ultra-lefts led that movement, played themselves out in industry as well. What once promised to be a movement of radical black caucuses of the DRUM sort is today a sprinkling of Maoist sects. The leadership of black workers in the unions has fallen largely to secondary bureaucrats, in so far as it takes an organized form. Black caucuses led by black union officials, usually at the secondary level, are quite wide-spread. As the rank and file struggle re-emerges, these secondary leaders will come under the same pressure from below as their white counterparts. As a result, some of these black caucuses may become membership organizations with a rank and file base. One form or another of black workers' organization is almost certain as the struggle intensifies.

Women in the labor movement had no previous tradition of self-organization in the unions. Yet, a generalized "Women's Rights" consciousness continues to exist. As with blacks, the bulk of organized, or even semi-organized, activity around women's issues has come from women secondary leaders. Rather than women's caucuses, however, it has tended to take even more "official" forms; for example, conferences on women's problems sponsored by the union. Most generally, struggles around women's issues are little more than resolutions at conventions. The major intervention of working class women in the crisis of the system has been the meat boycott. There is no doubt that countless working class women, housewives and workers, turned that very "managed" proposal into a movement for a brief period of time. While the tactic was utterly wrong, the meat boycott showed that working class women can intervene on a mass scale. We have tended to rule out such mass action in the past. The nature of the crisis and the growth of general working class resentment, however, make sporadic mass action of this sort a possibility for the future. In many cases the leadership of the meat boycott was women union bureaucrats. In the future, movements of similar proportions could be led by rank and file militants.

In general, the pressure on the labor bureaucracy from below was at a low for the past year and a half to two years. The leaders of those unions involved in the 1973-74 bargaining round were free to act on their own perspectives. Thus, as the bargaining round opened in early 1973, the leaders of every major industrial union stood for a program of complete capitulation. The most extreme version of this was I.W. Abel's no strike pledge, made a year in advance of the expiration of the steel contract. While not formalized, this was by and large the program of the labor bureaucracy as a whole. Of course, in auto there might have to be a token strike, but it was common knowledge that there would be no serious confrontation by labor in 1973-74 if things were left up to the top leaders. Phase III, with its rampant inflation, as well as a couple of years experience with productivity drives in many industries, upset this plan.

As soon as the bargaining round opened in the spring of 1973, wildcats began to reappear as a part of the collective bargaining process. The first outbreak was in rubber, with the wildcat of the Firestone workers in three cities. This was followed by the Goodrick strike — clearly forced by rank and file pressure — and by a wave of wildcats in auto in early June. In short, the ranks began to assert their power once again. As yet, this power has been too disorganized to have a major effect on the outcome of bargaining. It has, however, won certain small concessions and, most importantly, helped to revive the self-confidence of the militants.

Past Tasks and Perspectives and *Labor Perspectives* documents have tended to emphasize the continuous growth of the rank and file movement from 1968 onward. Clearly, the defeats under NEP caused a serious setback in the development of that movement, including its level of organization. While semi-organized opposition continued at the local level in many unions, the embryo national organizations that began to appear before NEP have collapsed or remained isolated. The disorientation in the face of decisive state intervention caught many rank and file leaders unprepared, as well as their followers. In any case, few of these organizations rested on a solid base, an efficient organization, or very much of a shared program. The semi-hiatus created by NEP has set back the process of development of a *self-conscious* layer of rank and file leaders: i.e., a layer aware of itself on a national scale, as the leadership of a rank and file movement. This kind of self-conscious layer of militants can only be created by an intensified and growing struggle. Until this layer emerges as a self-conscious section of the labor movement, rank and file organization, especially national ones, will be inherently unstable.

Such leaders already exist in small numbers. Nat Mosley, Jordan Sims, Curly Best, are all of this type — to name a few. Their commitment to a rank and file movement is a result of their participation in the period of struggle with conscious socialists, including ourselves. As individuals they were able to survive the disorientation of the past year and a half because of the long range views they had adopted. Our estimate, however, is that militants of this training and calibre are few indeed. That vast majority of pre-NEP militants are most likely only beginning to feel any confidence. A large number have probably made their peace with the bureaucracy or simply become inactive. The beginnings of an upturn in the struggle indicate that the militants who survived NEP as militants are slowly coming to life again and new militants are arising. To the degree that these militants become aggressive and the struggle continues to escalate, the secondary levels of the bureaucracy are certain to resume their increasingly opportunist stance.

The experience of NEP, however, makes it unlikely that any new organized opposition movement in the unions will arise on the same basis as before. That is, there is likely to be a recognition that the question of state intervention must be dealt with. Clearly the "typical" rank and file group before NEP shunned such considerations as "politics." Even groups that had formal positions on NEP did not organize on that basis. While rank and file organizations are more likely to deal with these political questions, however, they will, in most cases, probably turn to old solutions. That is, the militants' first response under present conditions is likely to be a new willingness to strike against the government. The way to break wage controls will be direct action on one's economic demands. Additionally, as we noted in last year's *Labor Perspectives*, the secondary leaders and even sections of the militants are likely to turn to increased activity in the Democratic Party. The latter will be put in terms of the need to become more political. In that sense, but only in that sense, it is a healthy response. One of our major educational tasks is to show the militants how to turn these two impulses, direct action and political action, into a winning strategy. Before dealing with the tasks of the IS in the labor movement, it is necessary to examine two problems that were present in various past IS labor documents.

THE PACE OF THE CRISIS

One of our most consistent and major problems with past IS perspectives documents has been the overestimation of the pace of destabilization. Our analysis has, correctly, pointed to the narrowing options for maneuver by the ruling class. All too often, however, this has led to formulations or assumptions that this meant the termination of ruling class options. Clearly, NEP demonstrated that for all their problems they can buy time.

While their ability to create “recoveries” continues to be in fundamental contradiction to their ability to provide a decent, let alone expanded, standard of living for the working class, it should be understood that they can concede elements of a rising living standard — even if not the substance. In any case, the international capitalist class can certainly keep the system going at acceptable levels for some time. Most predictions of cataclysmic crisis have proved shallow.

While the IS has avoided that extreme, it has, to a degree, made the concomitant methodological mistake: the mistake of basing political perspectives on economic forecasts. As rotten and overripe as the decay of capitalism is, the system still exists and is still able to grow. The emergence of a pre-revolutionary period will not be the result of an economic catastrophe, but of a higher level of struggle, organization and political consciousness of the working class. That depends on a great deal more than the economy — as important as that is.

Partly because of this, we have constantly overestimated the pace at which the workers’ movement would grow and the class struggle sharpen in the US. Additionally, we overestimated the proximity of a pre-revolutionary period, both internationally and in the US. We said, vaguely, we were “entering” such a period. Some took this to mean we were, for all practical purposes, already there. For all of us, this indicated a more or less continuous growth of struggle. In reality, of course, we now know the struggle may develop fairly slowly and very unevenly. We must now accept the corollary of that fact: that rank and file organization will be unstable for some time to come.

Our overestimation of the pace of events was in part responsible for the development and tenacity of the “struggle group” concept. While most versions of struggle groups postulated tactical intervention in the unions, the basic idea was directed at by-passing a stage of prolonged political struggle within the unions. The theory saw the growing shop floor struggle, in particular the fight against inhuman working conditions, as the key to a rapidly developing growth in the class struggle. The analysis overestimated the strength of the labor bureaucracy and essentially sought to by-pass a head-on fight *in the unions* with the bureaucracy. We assumed state intervention would be dramatic, and we were right. But we also assumed that this would simply politicize, rapidly, a continuously growing movement. It is not that we ruled out temporary set-backs, but that we did not understand the impact such temporary set-backs could have, and how they would effect the level of *organization*. Thus, in the view held by most ISers, the struggle groups, rooted in the shop floor struggle, would become politicized — though not necessarily revolutionary. A national movement of such organizations would be sustained by this political consciousness. In this way, the whole idea of drawn out struggle in the unions appeared as little more than a roadblock.

Such a conception can rest only on the assumption that the struggle would develop rapidly and consciousness almost as rapidly. In fact, the struggle developed more slowly, and far more unevenly than we predicted; while the consciousness of the workers developed even more slowly. Specifically, no *layer* of politically conscious militants developed at all — only a sprinkling of individuals. Our overestimation of the pace of events was matched by an over-estimation of the speed at which the consciousness of US workers, in particular the militants, developed. This misperception was not so much a failing in the theoretical understanding of how class consciousness develops, as in the fact that the organization had no actual experience in seeing the process as it occurs in life.

In other words, as an organization still based in the petty-bourgeoisie, our knowledge of the advanced workers was purely theoretical. Our ability to understand the reality of class consciousness and of how working class struggle, organization and politics develop has increased and become more accurate precisely to the degree that we have become rooted in the class.

This does not mean that either our turn to the class or our more recent perspectives for intervention in the class are empiricism. Such a view is simply a misunderstanding of the relationship of theory to objective reality. Rather, we have been able to concretize our theory by contact with reality, not static facts, and bring our perspectives in line with that concretization.

The first step away from the “struggle group” perspective occurred in the 1970 Band document’s labor section, which was passed with some amendments by the 1970 Convention. This section accepted the struggle group concept, but noted that the international unions were playing a bigger role and insisted that the struggle groups – which never existed in reality in the US – play a more direct oppositionist role in the unions. This position was, in effect, a half-way house between rank and file opposition caucuses and struggle groups. The limited but important experience of the IS in auto and telephone particularly that followed that convention led to a general *de facto* rejection of struggle groups. At the 1972 Convention, the concept was explicitly rejected in the *Labor Perspectives*. That document dealt only briefly, however, with why the struggle group perspective was not valid.

Our future work in the working class must now be guided by the dual understanding that events may move slowly and unevenly – even though the destabilization of capitalism proceeds in one form or another – and that long-term work in the unions must be the central focus of our work in the organized working class. What distinguishes a revolutionary organization from other radical groupings is its ability to adapt its tactics to uneven developments— that is, to leaps or upheavals and to drawn out periods of the most minimal level of struggle, or even periods of retreat.

SOCIALISTS IN INDUSTRY

The development of motion, consciousness, and organization in the working class is central to the tasks and perspectives of a socialist organization. Indeed, such developments determine the possibilities for the growth of socialist organization on a working class basis. For us, the developing rank and file rebellion in the labor movement is not only a means of transforming the trade unions into militant workers' organizations, but a step toward the formation, still distant in time, of a revolutionary party in the United States. The socialist movement is in a shambles throughout the world. And, just as each major step forward in revolutionary organization in the twentieth century has been born on a wave of mass upheaval by the ranks of labor, so the resurrection of the socialist movement today is dependent on the rank and file rebellion occurring throughout the industrialized world.

The process of rebuilding the socialist movement is further advanced in Europe, Japan, and a few other countries than in the US. That is due to the long-standing, though badly deformed, socialist consciousness among the working classes of other countries; the process of linking the intellectual cadres that survived the long era of Stalinist and reformist dominance with the new working class militancy is more developed elsewhere. Nonetheless, the task is the same here: to link socialist cadres with the growing militancy of the ranks of the unions.

In spite of the differences in the American situation, there are important similarities in labor militancy throughout Western capitalism. Virtually everywhere the ranks of organized labor have fought against and organized independently of the labor bureaucracy — regardless of the politics of their national labor bureaucracy. The particular forms of organization and the phases the struggle go through differ from nation to nation, but all countries have in common rank and file initiative and direct action. It was the ability of the Communists to latch onto such a rank and file upheaval following World War I, even where it expressed itself as syndicalism, that made the Third International a success.

On the other hand, it was the failure of the Trotskyists, our forebearers, to link up with another such rank and file upsurge in the 1930's that made the Fourth International a stillbirth. Clearly, it will be the ability of the revolutionary socialists around the world to link up with rank and file rebellion that has been underway since the late 1960's that will determine the success or even the possibility of future revolutionary parties.

Despite the enormous differences in consciousness, and the longer and more complicated process of development that this implies for the US, the task is essentially the same. The separation of socialist ideas and organization from the working class in this country requires that socialist intellectuals and cadre enter the working class directly and literally. Our program of industrialization is central to this, or any other, labor perspective. We do not, however, enter industry for the purpose of an intellectual leadership, or of substituting transplanted intellectuals for indigenous working class cadre. The primary long range task of socialists in industry is to bring socialist ideas, politics and theory to the working class leadership that is now forming as part of the rank and file upsurge.

Socialist politics, above all those of the IS, cannot be learned and fully internalized outside of struggle. Sectarian propagandizing will never effect either the linking of today's socialist cadre with the most militant workers, or the spreading of socialist ideas in the working class. This is true whether the intellectuals involved hold working class jobs or not.

In our view, the sectarian "propagandizing" of the Spartacist League, Workers League, Class Struggle League, like all of the now defunct sects that preceded them to the graveyard, is only a roadblock. This is not because we oppose socialist propaganda directed to the workers, we do not. Rather we oppose the confusion of the task of socialist propaganda with building a rank and file movement. For us these two tasks are interrelated, but they are not the same. Thus, the Spartacists end up opposing the MFD and Morrissey, where they even run their own candidate because these opposition leaders do not have what amounts to a socialist propaganda program. This sectarian mode of behavior is based

on a misunderstanding of the role of Marxists in working class movements and our relationship to reformist opposition leaders in the ranks.

Since, as already stated, we can expect to see a number of oppositionists of the Miller-Morrisey type, and others even worse, it is crucial that we understand where they fit into the development of a real left-wing rank and file movement in the labor movement.

We see the development of an organized rank and file opposition movement in the unions as the central feature of our strategy for building a revolutionary socialist party in the US. Such an opposition is necessary because of the refusal of the class collaborationist union leadership to wage any kind of a real fight in the interests of the working class. We begin by attempting to organize to wage that fight. In the process it becomes evident that the existing union leadership and structure is an obstacle to that fight, and thus our battle is a dual one: the bosses and the union leadership. We must not give the impression that we are primarily interested in changing the leadership, as are many opportunists, but in fighting the class struggle. Basically, what we are attempting to do is to develop a tendency and a leadership in the labor movement which stands for class struggle unionism as opposed to class collaborationist leadership which currently exists. In general terms, class struggle unionism is characterized by the following:

1. The working class defends and advances itself best on the basis of its own self-conscious self-activity. The significance of every struggle, every policy, is evaluated first and foremost from the vantage of its effects on working class self-confidence, combativity and consciousness.
2. The workers and the capitalists have different, conflicting and irreconcilable interests. Any labor policy which attempts to reconcile this conflict, in the final analysis, serves to subordinate the interests of the working class to the interests of the capitalists. Thus, the starting point in determining any policy must be the needs and interests of the working class and not the effect of such a policy upon the capitalists. We strive for a self-conscious adoption of this policy on the part of those with whom we are collaborating.
3. The most basic interests of workers are their class interests which supersede all narrow, sectional, and parochial interests. Every real victory in the class struggle is a victory for the class; every defeat is a defeat for the class. Thus, solidarity with all the struggles of the class is necessary: an injury to one is an injury to all. A victory for one is a victory for all.
4. The special oppression of any sector of the working class, or for that matter, any group in society, divides, weakens and harms the working class as a whole. In order to achieve a strong and unified working class, all class conscious workers must become the champions of every struggle against all forms of racial and sexual oppression and discrimination.
5. Politics is a class question. Every question of political and social policy has a different meaning to the working class than it does to other groups in society, particularly the capitalists. It is the task of a responsible labor movement effectively to defend the interests of the working class in the political as well as economic sphere. Since the working class and its interests represent the vast majority of the population, a party of the working class is needed which can politically represent the interests of the working class and can strive to establish a workers' government to put the interests of the majority into power.
6. At present, class collaborationism represents the only politically organized viewpoint within the working class. Its organization is the present trade union bureaucracy which maintains itself on its ability to serve as an intermediary and broker between the workers and capitalists. Class collaborationism can only be effectively combatted on the basis of an organized alternative movement within the working class which strives to challenge the political and ideological influence and leadership of the bureaucracy on every level. While this organized movement projects itself as an alternative leadership and contests for union office on the basis of its program, this is only one part of its struggle for leadership and influence. From within or without union office it seized on every opportunity to provide leadership to the broadest masses in the struggle, against the employer or capitalist class and seizes every opportunity to spread the influence of its ideas. Capturing union offices is not an end but merely a means of strengthening the class struggle wing of the labor movement, enhancing its ability to lead the struggle forward.

This, of course, is nothing more than the contemporary form of the Marxist notion, developed most insistently by Lenin, that the revolutionaries work in the unions, the real mass organizations of the workers. In Lenin's day, in particular in the early days of the Comintern, this meant forming organizations, under communist hegemony, with a broad program that other progressives and radicals could adhere to. The purpose of these organizations was to win the advanced workers to the Communist Party.

In the US the Trade Union Education League was this sort of organization. In Britain a similar role was played by the Minority Movement. During their healthy, and pre-Stalinist periods, these organizations included many non-CP members. This kind of organization in the labor movement was necessary in the US and Britain because of the weakness of the CP. At the same time, the revolutionary nature of that period – the early 1920's – meant that the program of TUEL and the MM was quite political from the start, though much broader than the program of the CP or the Comintern. In the process of building a revolutionary workers' movement here, *one of our major goals* must be the establishment of a national organization in the unions, crossing individual union lines, such as the TUEL or MM. At the same time, such an organization cannot be willed into existence.

In an article on the Minority Movement, Jim Higgins noted:

"An understanding of the Minority Movement and its early comparative success is impossible without setting the movement within its own historical context. Both CP members involved and their non-CP co-workers were, in the main, people with an experience of rank and file movements going back to the pre-1914 period. Without these contacts, even the limited success of the MM would have been impossible." (Higgins, "The Minority Movement," *International Socialism*, No. 45, p. 13)

The same can be said of the TUEL, where Foster was the main, though not the only, link with past movements in the unions. In effect, we in the US today are still in the period of the rank and file movements that preceded TUEL or MM or for that matter the Comintern. It is now, in our labor work, that we are making contacts with those militants who will be the base, socialist and non-socialist, of the TUEL of the future. More generally, this is also the period during which those militants are gaining the experience required to be revolutionary leaders in the future.

For the IS, the rank and file movements of today are the process in which militants can be forged into leaders and rank and file leaders into revolutionaries. It is in these transitional organizations and struggles that today's militants can digest and systematize, through an *organized* response to the crisis of the system. It is here, in this process, that the intervention of socialists, even in relatively small numbers, can have a serious impact, if we understand our tasks and whom we are speaking to.

Aside from historic figures such as Lenin or Trotsky, the most valuable members of a revolutionary party in the process of revolution are those workers who are actual leaders of the class at its base. That is, those rank and file leaders who over the years have won the respect and confidence of their fellow workers. It is these comrades who at crucial times can wield the tactics, slogans and ideas that mobilize masses of workers.

Hidden from the view of history, it is these leaders (organized as a vanguard) who give any program, manifesto, or declaration of action its power. Without this strata no party has ever been able to lead a revolutionary upsurge. When the social-democrats have controlled a majority of these leaders, the revolution has failed, as in Germany in 1918. When the revolutionaries have had sufficient members in this strata the revolution has won, as in Russia. While this is, of course, not the only factor in the success or failure of a revolution, it is a central one, and virtually overlooked by most organizations that claim to be revolutionary. Militants, who have won the respect of their fellow workers become revolutionaries both because of their experience in the class struggle and their interaction with organized socialists. That interaction, however, must be in more than a propagandistic relationship.

The key to all our other tasks, as a small socialist propaganda organization working to build a mass socialist movement, is intervention in the rank and file movement. The first step is industrial-

zation; the next step is implanting our cadres in that militant strata that today forms the actual rank and file leadership at the most basic level.

To a very large degree our implantation in that strata will involve the willingness and ability to provide tactical leadership for struggles over minimal and partial demands. For us, however, even the tactics we pose are part of, and are subordinate to, the larger strategy that sees the rank and file movement as a part of the process by which the revolutionary party can be built here.

We are for direct action, as opposed to those sectarians who insist that it only breeds illusions, because it builds the self-confidence and combativity of the class and the militants. (This is not to say that we are for every action, but that we are for direct action as a method of struggle).

We are for opposition campaigns in union elections because they allow us to raise programmatic ideas in a situation that gives them focus and because such campaigns can give militants experience in organizing and fighting for their ideas. We do not judge opposition campaigns solely by their written program, but by their direction and where they fit in the over-all process and development of the rank and file struggle.

Above all, we are for organization. Direct action is more effective when organized. Campaigns are better and more instructive when wielded by permanently conceived rank and file caucuses. Programs cease to be simply ideas on paper when they are organized for.

Thus our central, agitational, immediate tactical proposal is the construction of rank and file caucuses in the international unions. We will play a role in building such organizations. At the same time, we will propose and fight for our programmatic, analytical and tactical ideas in these organizations, movements, struggles, etc., in line with the guidelines set down in the section on program for labor. For us, the question of organization and program are inseparable.

In general we project our class struggle perspective in contrast to the collaborationists. As conditions change, as working class self-confidence rises and as forces are won to this perspective, the general level of combativity and expectations in the ranks rise. This tends to create tensions even between the class collaborationists and the bosses. To maintain themselves they are forced to try and produce more and more concessions. They are more and more themselves forced to resort to struggle — to mobilization of the ranks. This opens up real opportunities for pushing the struggle even farther forward, particularly as the collaborationists show their hesitancy and inconsistency.

Of course, it also creates illusions. In these circumstances we must insist that we and the others with whom we are cooperating not act like sectarians. To the extent that even the most rotten bureaucrat pushes the struggle forward, we and the caucuses in which we function should be the most dedicated activists in the struggle. On the one hand, we should make it clear that our long-standing hostility to the bureaucrats does not impede our ability to join with them when they are willing to lead the struggle against the bosses. At the same time, we do not hide the fact that sharp differences still exist. In particular, to the extent that the bureaucrats fight inconsistently, bureaucratically and so forth, we fight against them and attempt to assert an alternative leadership.

It is in this over-all context that we approach the question of bureaucratic oppositionists. The primary question is if a position of critical support to a figure such as Miller or Morrissey or Dempsey will open up the struggle or head it off. This is a concrete problem of analysis than can only be settled case by case. In general, however, if we feel that critical support to a particular oppositionist will open things up or better allow us to separate the militants and the ranks from this bureaucrat by a tactic of exposure, then we should give critical support. Depending on the issues, forces and individuals involved, of course, there are different degrees of critical support.

In the case of the Miners For Democracy, for example, the leaders of this opposition organization were not, by and large, bureaucrats. Furthermore, MFD represented, imperfectly, a number of actual rank and file movements. MFD as an organization represented a *potential* step forward — a potential it did not fulfill because neither we nor anyone else attempted to carry through our agitational proposal for

filling that potential. That is, MFD represented an organized embodiment of several direct action movements directed at overthrowing the bureaucracy. Its program was limited and its leaders absorbed with the liberal anti-struggle politics of their "friends."

Even in this condition, the victory of the MFD in the union elections was a step forward, because it opened up the struggle by removing the Boyle bureaucracy. That the MFD leaders had their own policy of dampening struggle does not change the fact at all. Our criticisms were precisely those directed at the non-struggle policy and programmatic limitations of MFD. We wished to expose their failures and push the struggle past them.

In the case of Morrissey, there is scarcely even an organized base of any proportions. It is an exaggeration to say that he has no following, however; he was able to field a ticket with candidates, many black and Latin from all the relevant ports. His paper has a wide readership and there is little doubt that he has support. Although it is possible, his program is even more limited and less and less struggle-oriented than that of the MFD. Furthermore, Morrissey was a long-time bureaucrat himself — which Miller, Trobovich and Patrick were not. Like MFD, he has gone to court many times, both out of weakness and simply bad politics. Clearly, we would not support him because we thought he was hot stuff. We would give him critical support both to open up the struggle by defeating Wall, and as a means of getting out our ideas on how to fight Wall, unemployment among seamen, etc.

The Herson campaign is a good example of how not to do this. It simply demonstrates that the socialists are unwilling to play a part in any broader movement that does not accept all their ideas. It re-enforces all the worst notions people have about the left, many of which are firmly based in reality, and it leaves the socialists isolated. Instead of battling within the Morrissey campaign for his ideas, or even for the right program to build a rank and file movement, Herson and his supporters in the Spartacist League have shown that their idea of a political fight is slogan mongering.

There will also be cases in which we will not support a bureaucratic oppositionist. For example, in a union where the victory of one bureaucrat over another will not open up things by, for example, instituting minimal democratic norms, or where democracy per se is not at question, we may well be for running an independent slate or candidates. Similarly, where someone like Paul Schrade may be heading off an existing rank and file movement or organization, we would oppose him. But these tactics must be assessed concretely.

The running of independent candidates is not a matter of principle for us, but of tactics. In the first place, we are not for running IS campaigns. Any independent, independent of other oppositionists, campaign we supported or advocated would not be explicitly socialist, so there is no question of socialist educational campaigns. (Even the Spartacist League, pretensions notwithstanding, do not run *socialist* educational campaigns). For us, the use of a campaign is guided by the task of building the organized rank and file movement. If we or the organized militants have the forces to run independently, we should do so. If our activity and our opposition to bureaucratic oppositionists can be more effectively pursued in the context of a broader campaign, we do that. When we do critically support a bureaucratic oppositionist, we are guided by our task to expose the limitations and misleadership (real or potential) of that bureaucratic oppositionist.

Our relationship to rank and file militant oppositionists is different. Although they too accept capitalism or have illusions about many things, even when they regard themselves as radicals or revolutionaries, their position in the class struggle is fundamentally different. As *de facto* leaders in a struggle that is directed against the labor bureaucracy as well as the employers and the government, the militants, as a strata, do not have the options open to secondary leaders. Even during a relative lull in the struggle these leaders were forced to maintain at least minimal resistance to speed-up, productivity, etc. The secondary union leaders can make their peace with the top levels of the bureaucracy simply by changing their ideas. The rank and file militant leaders must change their social position as well as their ideas. Of course, individuals can sell-out or become burned out; but it is virtually a law of the class struggle that new leaders will come to the fore eventually.

Thus, it is the dynamic of the class struggle and the relative social positioning of the different kinds of oppositionists that define the direction of the various strata today, more than their subjective ideas or verbal-written program. The secondary bureaucrats are quite likely to have "more advanced" programs than many rank and file militants for some time to come. We cannot judge an oppositionist by his or her program alone. It is, above all, to the rank and file militant leaders, the real "advanced workers" of today, that we direct our activity, agitation, and propaganda.

It is among this strata of workers that we believe the first socialists can be recruited. It is this strata that can become the self-conscious layer of the class that makes a national rank and file movement, and later a TUEL or MM, possible. We, therefore, do not wish to "expose" their reformist consciousness to the rest of the class, which is even more backward in any case, but to change it by interaction and collaboration in the course of the real struggle.

A PROGRAM FOR LABOR AND THE RANK AND FILE MOVEMENT

The central concept, at this time, for today's rank and file movement is the building of national opposition caucuses in the unions. While this is not in contradiction to merely local caucuses, it is the context in which we place our call for and work in local caucuses. The importance of national opposition caucuses is both that they represent an organizational step toward a single, politically defined organization such as the TUEL in the entire labor movement; and they are necessary to fight the bureaucracy which is itself organized on a national level. In organizing or participating in local caucuses formed around "local" issues, or to fight the bureaucracy of a specific union local, we will raise the importance of building national opposition caucuses if any victories are to be won. As in the past, our conception of a caucus, local or national, is one that is an extension of the actual fights and struggles in industry, not a substitute for them. At the same time, our conception is a political one.

While caucuses usually arise out of specific situations (an election, after a lost strike, around a specific concern) our role is to generalize the program and concerns of the caucus or rank and file organization. To do this we draw on our program, including our general analysis and strategy for the period. In fighting for our program, however, we recognize a distinction between immediate, intermediate, and long range tasks and ideas, as well as the distinction between agitation and propaganda. Our long range task, e.g., the building of a revolutionary party and international, the mobilizing of the masses for state power, etc., determine what our more immediate tasks are. Nevertheless, these different tasks are different. Rank and file caucuses are for us a way of raising the level of organization and political consciousness of the class. They are an immediate task to be agitated and propagandized for. The revolutionary party is what determines our attitude toward today's caucuses, but it is not the same thing. The revolutionary party cannot be agitated for today and cannot be seen as an immediate task — regardless of how urgent the need for such a party is, and it is urgent. Thus we do not raise or fight for, in the labor movement, every principle, tactic, strategy, demand or idea in our overall program today or in the coming years. We will, of course, raise many of the more advanced ideas and tasks in IS publications in an educational and propagandistic way. Similarly, certain tasks which are immediate, but cannot be fully carried out in practice (e.g., a national opposition caucus) in each and every case or at our bidding in almost any case, will be raised educationally by us in the labor movement, local groups, rank and file publications, etc. That is, our immediate task includes an educational and propagandistic aspect.

IMMEDIATE TASKS IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Our overall immediate task is our own intervention in today's rank and file movement. The political task we pose for ourselves and for the militants is the building of organized *rank and file caucuses* in the unions. Initially, in most unions, this concept must be posed educationally at this moment. Nevertheless, we pose it as a task that *can* be carried out today. The basic motivation for such national caucuses is, of course, the obvious need to combat the international union bureaucracy in order to win even the most minimal or partial demands, even to hold the line against inflation and speed-up. In addition to the specific demands for each industry we pose that the national rank and file caucuses be built on the following crucial demands:

1. *End Wage Controls in all forms* — control prices and profits.
2. *30 hours work for 40 hours pay* — Jobs for All
3. *Automatic C.O.L. for all workers and people on fixed incomes*
4. *No freeze on the Fight for Equality* — Jobs for blacks, latins and women. Preferential hiring where necessary. Equal work for all, equal pay for equal work.
5. *Full Democratic Rights for all in the labor movement* — establish democratic procedure in all unions. The right of oppressed groups to organize independently within the unions. End the special privileges of the bureaucracy.
6. *No restrictions on the Right to Strike or the Right to Ratify Contracts.*
7. *Organize the Unorganized* — priority to black, latin and women workers.

8. *International cooperation among unions* – fight protectionism. No trade or tariff wars. US wages to workers in US firms overseas.
9. *Tax the corporations and banks to pay for needed public and social services.*
10. *Build a Labor Party to fight for the needs of all working class people* – for a Congress of Labor and its allies, the oppressed people, to launch a labor party.

This set of demands is both a political program in embryo and a program that the unions and the rank and file movement can fight for by direct action. It is, of course, not our full program in any sense. It is neither purely agitation nor purely educational in content. It is nor meant to be a minimum basis for our support to or participation in the life of or building of any specific rank and file group.

In most unions today, our *initial* agitational work will be in building local groups or caucuses, as a means of organizing the day-to-day struggle. Both the idea of a national caucus and the programmatic demands linked to it should be discussed, written about, and become a part of the actual program of the local group. Wherever there is an existing national caucus that we are able to support, no matter how critically, we concretize our national orientation by an orientation to and, where possible, affiliation with the existing national caucus. This should be our orientation toward the UNC in the UAW. In the IBT, we can point to the previous existence of TURF and to the fact that many of the local groups that gave TURF its reality still exist. We are for the reconstruction of TURF. Where no national grouping exists, such as CWA, we seek to concretize the idea of such a caucus as best as possible. In the CWA the notion of the “Big City Alliance,” given our rank and file content, has a realistic character because of the political history and current situation in that union. In short, even where we are limited, agitationally, to local caucus work we push the idea of a national rank and file opposition.

The demands, organizational proposals and political ideas in the ten point program above are meant to deal with the particular nature and the effects of destabilization. The use of these demands is determined by the tasks facing the rank and file of labor: the fight against *inflation, productivity drives* (speedup and layoffs), *unemployment, and government intervention in the unions and bargaining*. While our program, particularly as presented in IS publications, is class-wide, the building of an organized rank and file movement in the different unions means that different aspects of the program will receive different emphasis and timing in each case. *We* put our programmatic ideas in a manner that is meant to *convince*, not just inform, the militants of our ideas.

For us, these demands are but the slogan form of strategic ideas with both immediate possibilities and long-range implications. We have the immediate task of educating advanced militants to a long-range, class struggle view of the rank and file movement. These demands and slogans are shorthand for explaining in concrete terms why we believe the rank and file movement must be a *political* movement and not just a reform movement or one directed at throwing our specific union leaders out. We have a different concept of what unions should be and how they should fight (our concept of rank and file democracy and militancy embodies this) and a different conception of what being political means than either today’s labor leaders or even most militants. Our specific demands should be used in such a way as to help us illustrate these more complex conceptions.

Our tactical judgment is guided by the general notion of expanding each and every struggle to the broadest layers of the class. Thus, in calling for the defeat of wage controls, we not only call on each union at bargaining time to *break the guidelines*, but we call for direct action by the entire labor movement, including a general strike, to defeat Phase 4 and all anti-labor legislation and policy. In fighting productivity drives or deals, we not only call on the ranks to reject any contract embodying such a deal and for direct shop floor action to control production or work speed and load, but we call for company-wide or union-wide action. Thus, we counterpose to Leonard Woodcock’s “Apache Strikes” the idea of a GMAD-wide strike. Similarly, in steel, we call for a union-wide rejection of Abel’s no-strike plan both in the June local elections and by direct action at the time of the contract expiration.

We recognize as part of the immediate tasks of socialists in industry an aggressive and positive attitude toward the strengthening of shop floor militancy and organization. We continue to raise those demands that would strengthen stewards' organization such as *a steward for every foreman, election of all stewards, for democratic stewards councils with control over shop floor bargaining, bring the union leadership back to the shops*, etc. It is also likely that the first forms of organization will be in response to local or shop floor (or office, or gang, or crew) issues. We do not counterpose our broader program to this level of struggle. We do, however, point out that the shop floor struggle must be reinforced by a broader struggle and that broader struggle must be, can only be based on shop floor struggle and organization. Therefore, even if the broader struggles and/or organizations develop first, we insist that they seek a shop floor organized base. Our local caucuses should not be conceived of as shop caucuses, but as caucuses within the local union—even if directed initially at getting the local to back up the shop floor struggle—with a view to building a national caucus.

The capitalist class organizes the working class in production. At present, unfortunately, this is the only organization in which masses of workers actively participate. In this lies the significance of the shop floor struggle. It is not only struggle which proceeds directly from the direct experience of workers organized at the point of production (place of work). It is the struggle of the class in which the mediating influence of the trade union bureaucracy and other bourgeois ideologists is least profound and therefore least ideologically disorienting. In the struggles that go on in the shop it is generally easy to expose the meaning and significance of the class collaborationist policy of the trade union bureaucracy. It thereby opens up a handle to expose class collaborationism in general.

Within caucuses, in relationship to the shop floor struggle we seek ways to implement the following conceptions to concretize our general approach:

1. The caucus attempts to provide political leadership, justification and defense of the shop floor struggle on every level. It attempts to win to its ranks and to its program all the genuine militant leaders of the shop struggles in the plant.
2. It fights for the establishment of a steward system with a very low ratio (if necessary, unofficial stewards), and for the active organization of the stewards into ongoing stewards' bodies. It seeks hegemony over the stewards' bodies.
3. It continually articulates the felt problems of the workers in the shop and agitates for solutions to them: harassment, discrimination, production standards, safety, overtime, environment, and so forth.
4. It propagandizes and agitates for the right of any bargaining unit by a majority vote at an open meeting, to call a strike of that unit over any issue deemed sufficient without the need for prior authorization from anyone or the need for any waiting period. It uses this agitation as a means of legitimizing the right to strike, even without sanction.
5. It generalizes from the experiences of the shop floor struggle to a greater understanding of class collaborationism and the need for a movement that can provide alternative leadership in the working class to the present bureaucrats. It also generalizes toward a broader and more comprehensive program to deal with the wider range of problems facing the workers and the class as a whole, and points to the necessity of a union-wide opposition caucus.

In projecting a program for a national or industry-wide caucus for tactical reasons we will often start with the point of connection between the struggles on the local level and the international union. In doing so we fight against all policies of the international that inhibit the development of class struggle on the local level and counterpose policies that encourage the intensification of class struggle and a class struggle approach on the local level. The specifics have to be worked out union by union. They include changes in the contract such as untrammelled local's right to strike, steward ratios, etc. which strengthen the ability to carry on the fight against the employer on the local level, and in particular, strengthen the workers in the shop floor struggle. They also include questions of union policy relating to local struggles such as the manner the international intervenes in the grievance procedure, the defense by the international of fired militants, whether mili-

tant locals are thrown in trusteeship, and so forth. For a militant fighting local caucus, these questions can often be the ones that convince its members of the need for a caucus throughout the union.

Specifics vary from industry to industry, but the kinds of ideas we raise point toward the greatest active mobilization of the rank and file: attempts to win support from workers in other industries and the attempt to mobilize general community support and to attempt to at least neutralize opposition. We raise these, not merely as demands of the bureaucrats. Where possible, rank and file movements can, on their own, begin giving leadership to more advanced levels of struggle within the context of collective bargaining—in conjunction with a fight for a better contract than the bureaucrats are ready to go after. Finally, we raise demands on the bureaucrats themselves, like: public negotiations, time for the ranks to study proposed settlements prior to ratification meetings, right to vote on the contract, etc.

Our expectation is that there will probably not be any significant national opposition caucuses formed in the next year. Certainly, there will be no genuinely rank and file opposition organization of a national scale. At the same time, however, *this is likely to be the year in which the potential rank and file leadership for such caucuses in the future gain or regain their self confidence through local struggle and less organized struggle in the international unions.* In the unions where we have a presence we can play a limited but significant role in training some of these militants in the political, organizational, and tactical ideas, presented above and elsewhere in this document, needed to build and sustain national oppositions and deal with the secondary bureaucrats who may play a crucial role in initiating many of these. In this respect, the small caucuses we are now active in and the various rank and file publications we have access to are important. *We must, in the coming year, make the fullest use of these organizations and publications to educate and agitate for the broader developments and the programmatic ideas presented above.* In this way, our current day to day work, often disconnected even from other comrades in the same industry, receives a context and direction.

Along with the political conception of national rank and file oppositions in the unions, the most important political conception for this period is the *Labor Party*. This slogan or concept gives a political focus to many demands that are otherwise thought of as simply bargaining demands or things to be won by pressure. Our basic motivation for the labor party is in terms of the pressing issues of the crisis: inflation, unemployment, speedup, and above all wage controls and government anti-labor intervention. For us, the fundamental notion embodied by the labor party slogan is that of political *class independence*. The fact of political class independence would be an historic step forward. Even the consciousness of this need on the part of militants, however, would be a great step forward. From our point of view, the political content of the labor party is a class struggle one. In such a party, we, the socialists, would fight for a socialist program. We are not calling for some bureaucratic reformist hulk like the British labor party, but for a party of action that can smash the employer-state offensive. At the same time, the call for a labor party is not some secret code for a revolutionary party, or an unknown quantity in the lower math of sectarianism. Our outline program for labor, meant as an answer to the issues of today, is the basis we propose for fighting for a labor party in the labor movement today. This does not mean that every time we raise the labor party slogan we are bound to append to it all our demands, etc. It simply means that over time, through many forms of propaganda, we make our program clear. As in the unions themselves, so in the labor party or steps leading to it, we are the irreconcilable opponents of all wings of the labor bureaucracy.

We call for a labor party based on the unions. We sometimes even demand of the unions that they convene a Congress of Labor. But the context in which we put this forward is not the goal of a labor party led by the present collaborationists. Rather, we call for a labor party as part of the fight against collaborationism. It is one more issue which we use in the attempt to project an alternative leadership for the labor movement. It is part of the program on which a class struggle wing contends for the leadership of labor. Behind it lays a political program based on class struggle and not collaborationism and so forth. This does not preclude a collaborationist leadership from launching a labor party in defense against the inroads of a class struggle left opposition. But then the struggle against collaborationism is just carried forward in the arena of the labor party. This is not a likely immediate course of events.

We project a class struggle wing that does not wait on elected officials to act, but takes leadership in its own name. The fight for a labor party based on the trade unions (and for trade unions whose policy requires them to launch a labor party) is a struggle which contributes to the development of a class struggle wing of the unions. Given sufficient strength and following, we would advocate such a movement itself engaging in independent labor political action even on the basis of it being a minority force in labor. In this way, the fight for a labor party based on the unions can lead toward working class political action based on organs of struggle.

But how does one make political action based on a minority of labor project itself as a serious political force in American society? For starts, we project a minority of labor in alliance with other progressive organizations and movements of struggle based on the oppressed engaging in political action, not just a minority in the unions. Furthermore, the conception of political action we project goes far beyond merely electoral action. But even in the framework of electoral action our general perspective indicates the approach. "You say we can not possibly win the election and put our excellent program into effect. You're right. We don't have that kind of strength today. We represent only a minority within labor. But we are fighting for the leadership of organized labor on the basis of our excellent program, and for a labor party to fight for that program based on the organized working class coalition with the oppressed. We are a minority today because of the collaborationists who do the bidding of the bosses hold sway in labor. If you agree with our platform we want more than your vote. We want you to help us throw out these collaborationists who are standing in the way of working class progress and struggle." In this way, political action based on working class organs of struggle point back towards a labor party based on the unions.

While the fight against NEP and the defensive struggles of the class even today require an openly political approach, many of these ideas will still find their sharpest expression in the context of the fight for better contracts. While we do not limit our program to the context of collective bargaining, we take contract fights seriously and, in fact make use of militant movements for a better contract to advance our political ideas. To do this most effectively, *our* concept of a "good" contract should lead to our broader ideas; both those about the nature of unions and our political ideas. Thus we fight for contract demands that both improve the living and working standards of the workers and place the greatest control in the hands of the workers and open the greatest possibilities for rank and file struggle. The current employers offensive requires first of all a defensive fight against speedup and related attempts to undermine whatever shop floor organization does exist. The USW and the URW, to name only two, have recently given away important aspects of stewards organization at the shop floor level. In every union *we oppose limits on or the erosion of the power of the stewards at the shop floor level. We oppose arbitration schemes meant to undermine shop level grievance bargaining or union control of grievances generally. We oppose all productivity deals or other forms of eroding working conditions. We fight for an offense against the employers attack.* As in the past we fight for the following demands and tactical ideas in the union contract or constitution:

1. *Elected shop stewards.* A steward for every foreman or supervisor. Right of the job steward to participate at all levels of the grievance procedure. Stewards' Councils.
2. *Union control over work speed, assignment, load, manning, etc.* Right to bargain and reach binding agreement on these issues before the company can change working conditions or rules.
3. *Union control over and the right to strike over health and safety conditions.* No unsafe work shall be performed.
4. *Unlimited right to strike during the life of the contract.*
5. *No compulsory overtime.*
6. *Innocent until proven guilty in all disciplinary cases.*
7. *One year contracts.*
8. *30-and-out at full pay.*
9. *30 for 40.*

As the crisis of the system grows, workers will increasingly be faced with plant closures and unemployment due to international competition and the urge of US capitalists to invest in high-profit, cheap-labor areas of the world. While the old problem of "runaway shops" that moved to the South could have been, and to a degree was, solved by organizing drives in the South, the flight of capital to Taiwan or Japan cannot. The labor bureaucracy's answer is a form of protectionism. Similarly, their answer to the competition of foreign goods on the US market is protectionism. "Buy America" and support to the Burke-Hartke Bill have been their program. In fact, protectionism will not even save jobs. More importantly even than that, it is a more or less conscious attempt to tie the workers to the employers in this country. Politically,

the national chauvinism that the labor bureaucracy is attempting to whip up around protectionism differs from any other support to imperialism, say of the Vietnam War, only in the means employed. Additionally, this chauvinism and its obverse side—fear of unemployment—are being used to gain acceptance of productivity drives. We must oppose completely and aggressively all such protectionist schemes. Not only should we point out that they are a sham; but that they deflect the movement that is needed if jobs are really to be protected. We propose the following demands as the basis for a real fight for full employment:

1. *30 for 40.*
2. *Defeat all productivity deals.*
3. *US wages for all workers in US firms, here or abroad.*
4. *International cooperation and bargaining by the unions.* Raise the wages of low paid Asian, Latin American and African workers by international solidarity.
5. *Opposition to the anti-labor governments of states such as South Korea, Taiwan, etc.*
6. *Nationalize runaway shops under workers control.*

In our immediate trade union work, we do not raise the slogan of nationalization under workers control in a general way—the way we do the labor party slogan, for example. We do raise this notion in IS propaganda, fully explaining the meaning of workers' control and our opposition to bureaucratic nationalization. In the case of sick industries, those which cannot afford to meet the workers' demands, or those closing plants because of competition, we advance the transitional demands of "open the books" and nationalization under workers' control. We do so in our agitational union work as well as in IS literature, even though this may have an educational rather than immediately agitational character today. For us, the demand of nationalization under workers' control is important because it demonstrates that the workers need not accept the limits of capitalism. At the same time, this slogan or idea cannot have this educational value today in industries that can, in fact afford to meet the current demands of the workers and those they will actually fight for. This is a question of the application of program and not of our program itself. Nationalization under workers' control is part of our program. But it is our assessment that it is not a demand that today has general agitational value, or even, in most cases, immediate educational value in our direct trade union and rank and file caucus work.

Women remain oppressed in the work force. While this oppression does not originate on the job, it is reflected in discrimination at work, in the labor market and in the unions. Women—organized as women—do not have a more or less continuous history of independent self-organization in society as a whole or in the labor movement. Yet, as noted, a generalized women's rights consciousness exists among working class women, even though the vast majority continue to believe in the inviolability of the family. This fact, itself, comes into contradiction with even minimal participation in union activity. That is, that sort of activity is thought to be "men's work." Wives and husbands alike accept the notion that if any choices on time are to be made, the woman will stay home. Both the fight against oppression and minimal rights of women to participate in the class struggle point toward the need for independent organization. As we pointed out years ago, one of the most basic reasons for supporting black self organization was the need of black people, at that time, to overcome the internalized sense of inferiority that racism had forced on them. The same is even truer with women generally. It is not that women's caucuses should make a programmatic demand on husbands; but rather that the minimum of self-confidence and re-enforcement often lacking to an individual can be gained through collective self-organization. Thus, women's caucuses in the unions may be a prerequisite to full participation in the rank and file movement as well as a mean of fighting oppression *per se*.

As we have already noted, most of the current organized activity around women's issues in the unions is coming from women bureaucrats. Many of these women labor bureaucrats are associated with NOW or the Women's Political Caucus—in any case they share the same political perspective. Our attitude toward women or black bureaucrats is the same as our attitude toward all labor bureaucrats. We are their enemy and we seek to build a movement to defeat them and abolish their social and material basis. To do this we will employ various tactics of exposure, such as demanding that these bureaucrats fight for certain goals, while pointing out that we do not believe they will or can because of their social position and political perspective. At times we will also advocate critical support in the manner already discussed *vis a vis* the bureaucracy as a whole. Similarly when conferences or specific actions are called that we *can* support critically, we will participate and propose our program for women's organization in the unions—including the need for a unified rank and file movement. The cutting edge of our propaganda, and where possible agitation, today, however, is the need for independent women's rank and file caucuses that can fight discrimination and sexism in the labor movement and provide leadership for rebuilding the women's movement in society as a whole. As with any workers' organization today, these caucuses may be discussed or initiated around a specific demand or small number of demands. We will fight in this process for our program which includes those central political ideas discussed for general rank and file movements, e.g., labor party, and the following special demands and slogans for women:

1. *Open all jobs to women* — end sexual discrimination in employment.
2. *Jobs for women* — preferential hiring, seniority and upgrading to achieve and protect full equality.
3. *Equal Pay for Equal Work*
4. *Federally Paid Neighborhood Childcare*; employer paid, worker controlled day care; union paid childcare during union meetings.
5. *Paid maternity leave*, with no loss of seniority.
6. *Complete maternity and abortion costs covered by medical plan.*
7. *Fire Sexist Foremen and Supervisors.* Recall and decertify stewards who refuse to fight on women's issues. Elect women stewards to represent women workers.
8. *Organize the Unorganized.*
9. *Abolish high school and vocational training.* On the job training for women.

As with the rank and file movement generally, we fight for the conception that women's caucuses in the unions have a political responsibility for the general movements of the oppressed, and for general social conditions. In the case of the broad movement of workers, this notion is best concretized by the labor party conception and the program we propose to fight for in the movement to build such a party. In the case of specific movements of the oppressed, this idea is additionally concretized by calling on these caucuses to take the lead in building the movements of the oppressed. This notion is part of our general propaganda on caucuses of the oppressed in the labor movement.

We repeat the assertion in the 1972 *Labor Perspectives* that the unity of the class and the building of the rank and file movement as the more immediate task in fighting for a revolutionary party is not an organizational, but a political conception. We do not fetishize any organizational form (rank and file caucus, black caucus, etc.). These tactical ideas are but concrete embodiments of a complex of political conceptions; e.g., the need to fight the bureaucracy as a privileged social strata, thus rank and file caucuses in the international unions; the need of oppressed people to struggle against their oppression, thus black, women's and latin caucuses. We raise these "organizational" slogans so that we can better argue, propagandize, and explain the social and political realities underlying them *at the same time that we propose actionable, programmatic means of fighting against those realities*, i.e., oppression, bureaucracy, inflation, unemployment etc. We reiterate what has always been essential to the political approach of the IS, that the unity of the class can arise only on the basis of mutual respect, common struggle and political ideas.

Among our immediate tasks is that of recruitment to the IS. In reality the justification for and success of our industrialization program rest entirely on our ability to recruit among the advanced militants. The current level of struggle, the size of the IS, and the tenacity of reformist ideas among even the most advanced militants makes this task difficult. Our expectation is that it should be possible to recruit worker militants in very small numbers in the coming year. The recruitment of workers will not be fast enough or large enough to achieve a sufficient growth rate for the IS. Nevertheless, it is only this sort of recruitment that can change the IS from a largely petit-bourgeois organization with working class politics, into a genuinely revolutionary workers organization. For this reason recruitment is a priority. The primary steps needed to facilitate such recruitment are of two kinds: the revamping of our propaganda and internal educational program (this includes the paper, our pamphlets, internal educational materials, etc) so as to attract, educate and hold advanced workers of the basis of our ideas; the continuation and growth of industrialization and, more importantly, the thorough organizing and cohering of our trade union work on a national scale. We believe that the key to proletarianizing the IS does not lie in any organizational scheme. It lies in our ability to win and hold people to our ideas. Workers will not change their lives because they feel comfortable here and not there, etc. They will make the change (for example from being a popular militant to a revolutionary who can no longer depend on popularity) because they believe that we are right *and* that the IS offers the hope of carrying out these ideas in spite of its small numbers. This in no way implies that some organizational forms may not be more conducive than others both to attracting and to integrating workers into the IS and in acclimatizing our members to the working class milieu. While the initial impression made by a branch is important, it will not amount to much if this or that militant does not believe our work in the unions is national in scale and effectively organized. Thus, a priority for this coming year, along with establishing literature that we can actually use to recruit and educate workers is the establishment of *effective national fractions in the priority unions that work on a common national perspective.*

LONG RANGE AND INTERMEDIATE TASKS

Our major long range task is, of course, the construction of a revolutionary workers' party that can lead the working class to state power. All of our more immediate tasks are determined by that strategic goal. As we have said, the building of an organized rank and file movement is an immediate, actionable and important step in the process of building that party. The labor party concept has been crucial for us in the US both because it is short hand for the notion of political class independence and because such a party or the movement for it may well be an arena in which the fusion of the revolutionaries and the most advanced militants takes place on a mass scale. But such a fusion must be prepared for; and that is the primary significance of the rank and file movement. Thus, our conception of a rank and file movement in the unions is a political one. Whatever the specific origins of this or that caucus, our conception and program for rank and file caucuses is not that of a "reform" caucus, but of a political caucus with a political conception of itself and the labor movement. Such caucuses are not built in a day, but that is our program and that is the direction we openly fight for. Yet, our immediate agitational and propagandistic work in the unions will continue to emphasize the call for opposition caucuses in specific unions, i.e., a caucus for the UAW, one for CWA, etc. Our intermediate goal, however, is a broader conception of an opposition in the labor movement.

As an intermediate task, we look toward the building of an organized left-wing in the labor movement as a whole. That is, a political caucus within the unions that cuts across union lines and proposes a program for the entire labor movement. As an example of what we mean we give the historical examples of the TUEL in the US and the Minority Movement in Britain. In the case of TUEL we are referring to the brief period in its existence, 1921–1922, when it conducted itself in a non-sectarian, non-Stalinist fashion. We certainly do not claim that the TUEL or the Minority Movement made no mistakes, even in their health periods. Nor do we propose that the organized left-wing we advocate have the same program as the TUEL—that would be an absurd anachronism. We do, however, point out that the early Communists were able to construct an opposition organization that dealt both with the immediate and real needs of the workers and the unions as well as with the political needs of the working class as a whole.

There can be little doubt that the notion of a political opposition that is not limited to sectarian propagandizing or phrasemongering is unheard of by most militants—indeed, by most socialists in the US. The opposition rank and file caucus is fairly traditional in the American labor movement, and for that reason we advance our notion of a political opposition in that form today. Nevertheless, the implementation of our intermediate task requires, today, an educational effort of a long range nature. That is, we must prepare material in the IS press and publications, directed to militant worker leaders that explains politically and by historical example what such an opposition would look like and how to build it, i.e., how today's rank and file opposition caucuses relate to that goal. In our immediate work, this is done largely by the example of the type of program we propose for national rank and file oppositions in the unions. Thus, the program we propagandize for today, let us say for UNC or a revived TURF, would be substantially the same as that of the future TUEL—except that today's caucuses are limited to specific unions.

The role of educating about the need for a new TUEL and the revolutionary party is primarily the job of the IS: Most of our work in rank and file caucuses will be of a more immediate character—even if often propagandistic in form. The IS, however, has as a major responsibility in the labor movement to educate the most advanced in these intermediate and long range ideas. It must be central to our labor perspective that the IS itself have a presence in the labor movement even beyond the work of its fractions in the rank and file movement. For the coming year this independent IS role will be primarily literary and propagandistic. While putting forth the full range of socialist concerns and ideas, our educational material on the labor movement should be regular and should deal thoroughly with the intermediate tasks in an educational manner. To put it another way, the strategy that we have agreed on and internalized, must be imparted in our press and publications in a thorough way. Though some of these more long range ideas will appear in rank and file publications supported and influenced by us, it is only in our own press that a systematic presentation of these ideas can occur.