

Internationally, the objective conditions for the creation of revolutionary workers' parties is being created. The world is experiencing the end of the post-war economic boom, which provided the objective basis for reformism in the workers' movement and the conservatization and bureaucratization of the trade unions. The Cold War subordinated the workers' organizations to the imperialist needs of Washington and Moscow and helped create the ideology for this period of conservatism and counterrevolution. The signposts of that period - a permanent arms economy, a monolithic Stalinism competing with a monolithic capitalist world under American auspices -- have eroded. The result has been sharper forms of struggle, between nations competing for the world market, and internally between classes. In every capitalist country, there is added pressure for capital to hold down wages, increase productivity, and cheapen goods for the competitive edge on the world market.

This new conjuncture is increasingly favorable to the revolutionary movement, opening new possibilities for revolutionary Marxists to lead immediate struggles of workers - struggles which were once led by reformist union leaders, but which they are increasingly forced to abandon because of the needs of their national capitalists. Through such struggles an alternative, militant rank and file movement and leadership can be constructed within the trade unions.

In their leadership of rank and file struggles, revolutionaries are able to relate immediate struggles to the final goal. They can help group together a vanguard of indigenous working class leaders. It is through this strategy, and this latter, that we and our comrades internationally are attempting to build revolutionary parties.

The possibilities for revolutionary Marxists to construct such parties has been further aided by the decay of Stalinism. The end of the Cold War has opened workers to political independence from both Washington and Moscow. The 20th CPSU Congress, the Hungarian Revolution, polycentrism and the Russia-China split have destroyed the monolithic character of Stalinism and its seeming invincibility. The revolts of workers throughout Eastern Europe for demands similar to those of workers in the West has diminished faith in the progressiveness, or working class character, of Stalinism. Lastly, the increasing conservatism of the Communist Parties, their unwillingness to provide a lead in struggle against the capitalist crisis, means that workers looking for a revolutionary alternative today go beyond the CPs. The western CPs are no longer primarily viewed as wrapped in the mantle of the October Revolution, but are increasingly rejected by workers who are disappointed with Stalinism in the East and the policies of the CPs in the West.

It was these conditions which produced the first wave of working class struggles in this new period. These struggles created a layer of revolutionary workers to the left of social democracy and Stalinism, numbering today in the tens of thousands. It allowed a number of revolutionary propaganda circles existing on the margins of the working class to embed themselves in the workers' struggles, and to start to create credible alternative organizations which are the embryos of revolutionary parties.

The process was slowed by the international boom of 1971-73. Nonetheless it has continued uninterrupted. Even in the boom, the critical mass that revolutionary groups have acquired, their ability to now pose a credible alternative and to take the lead in shop floor, union and local struggles,

~~MAXIMILIAN~~ has continued their growth. The new international recession, more severe than the first and with more inflation, has already produced an international wave of struggle - from the drive to trade unions by blacks in South Africa to Portugal, from Ethiopia to Indian food riots, from the miners' strike in Britain to the fall of the colonels in Greece - which in the next few years will surpass the wave of struggles in 1968-70. The embryos of parties created by the first wave, will in this new period become small revolutionary parties of from 5-10,000 in Britain, France, Italy and possibly elsewhere - the first revolutionary parties since the revolutionary communist parties of the 1920s were destroyed by Stalinism.

#### FROM SECT TO PARTY

The revolutionary movement today is in a preparatory period when it must lay the organizational basis for a revolutionary party, creating the organizational structure, press, leadership and cadres. As a result, the task of the movement is to go from isolated propaganda circles, to embryos of parties organizationally linked to the working class in the factories, offices, unions, and workers' neighborhoods, Although there is a lag in consciousness, even though militant workers have not yet fully assimilated the depth of change in the period and the potential depth of the economic crisis, this preparatory period is just as decisive as the greater, revolutionary struggles of the future. It was the failure of the revolutionary movement to create strong parties organizationally linked to the working class prior to the outbreak of the revolutionary period, in all countries except Russia, that led to the catastrophic defeat of the ~~MAXIMILIAN~~ world revolution of the 1920s and 30s, and to ~~the destruction of the~~ its destruction by the Stalinist counterrevolution.

#### THE AMERICAN SCENE

In the US the development since 1968 has not been the same as in Europe. The left in the US went down to defeat at the end of the 1960s. And since then it has gone through a period, from 1969-70 until the end of 1973, that was not characterized by the same development as in Europe. On a broader scale of years, however, the same projected direction will occur in the US, even if at different speeds. But the fact remains that in the US, the vanguard of the most revolutionary-minded and devoted militants have not been successfully organized in the embryo of a revolutionary party. This was due not to the absence of crisis and struggle in the US, but to the subjective factor: the weakness of the movement and its defeat in 1969-70.

The radicalization of the 1960s was stronger in the US than elsewhere. The black liberation movement was the most significant and most sustained struggle in any of the advanced industrial countries. In the ghettos it took semi-insurrectionary forms, the first to occur in the advanced capitalist world since WW2. It created revolutionary consciousness among a section of the black masses, which radiated outward to the student, anti-war and women's movements. In addition, ~~the~~ the women's liberation, student and anti-war movements were all strongest in the US.

The revolutionary potential ~~was~~ nowhere stronger than in the US, but nowhere was it more lost. Notwithstanding all the repression which the movement had to withstand from a government which did not hesitate to murder militants and even students, the fundamental basis of the defeat must be looked for in the abiding weakness of the American left itself. The left of the 60s was middle class, proved incapable of overcoming its limitations and creating

a bridge to the working class. As a result it also lacked organization and the ability to withstand setbacks and continue the struggle. Originally hostile to the working class, due to the defeat of the preceding "Old Left", it started out by seeking a new "agency for social change." The original New Left defined itself only in distinction from the traditional left organizations - social democratic, stalinist, trotskyist, revolutionary socialist - which it tended to lump all together as one "old left", given the fact that they all had a working class perspective. Under the banner of C. Wright Mills, the student left of the early 60s went off to seek its new agency. Its rapid gyrations and repeated failures led it to essentially substitutionist conclusions either through variants on terrorism, or more repeatedly to reliance on liberal reform politicians. The New Left was politically incapable of overcoming its own social background, striking roots in the working class and developing a working class strategy and organization. As a result it repeated the middle classes' incapacity for self-organization and sustained struggle.

The defeat of first the black left and then of the student left, in 1969-70, produced a period of four to five years marked by the collapse of mass movements, organization and struggles. The surviving left fragmented, sects proliferated, new forms of organization such as collectives and study groups developed. This collapse, on the surface at least, overshadowed the enormous political changes which have gone through all the left and have fundamentally transformed left wing politics in the US.

Most of the important groups of the late 60s have been transformed, no longer play the important role they once did, or have disappeared. The Black Panther Part Newton wing has become a black capitalist, Democratic Party ripoff operation to advance the careers of a handful of opportunistic leaders. The Cleaver terrorist wing has for all practical purposes disappeared.

In general, all the black radical organizations have declined precipitously, whether integrationist, nationalist, or revolutionary. It is, however, separatist nationalism which is being judged as the basis for the black defeat, and this is forcing even previously separatist tendencies to begin defining themselves in quasi-socialistic and working class ~~left~~ terms. Witness Imamu Baraka's chameleon-like change to verbal calls for scientific socialism. Similarly Jesse Jackson, SCLC's ministerial survivor in the North, tries to define his Operation Push in terms of struggle for jobs and working class demands.

It is more than the last defeat ~~left~~ which is behind these molecular changes in consciousness. There also stands the greater class differentiation of the black community. For the black worker in a Detroit auto plant, both the foreman and the lower level bureaucrats he deals with are today, unlike the early 60s, blacks whose repeated use of nationalist rhetoric has proven to be a new mask for old forms of exploitation and oppression. Within the community the rise of the middle classes, often under governmental reform ~~measures~~ auspices, has also continued this differentiation. As a result a deep ferment is going on in the black left, with revolutionary and socialist elements slowly sifting themselves out and differentiating themselves from the nationalists. One of the first places where this is occurring is among some of the previously nationalist students, who while still not breaking fully from nationalism are defining themselves as Marxists. This was most evident at the African Liberation Support Committee convention at Howard this last May. Even Baraka has started to call for

"relating" to whites. These phenomena all indicate the future direction of a revived black liberation movement, in a working class struggle against capitalism and racism.

The major tendencies of the white left of the 60s, of the SDS and PFP, have also changed or disappeared. The PFP and Peoples Party are now marginal sect phenomena, remnants not of the political left but of its life-style fringe. Of the major tendencies of the SDS, the Weatherpeople vanished shortly after they fully crystallized. The PL wing, based on the politics of moralism, declined along with the radical social stratum whose politics could be based on moralism. No amount of furious activity can overcome its political contradictions, a Stalinist sect in opposition to all varieties of Stalinist countries. It is a group without a future, and will survive only as exotica. The RYM tendency turned itself into a series of Maoist groups which are attempting to sink roots in the working class, but which find in the Maoist concept of the United Front against Imperialism a bridge to, and continuation of, much of their previous (classless) New Left politics.

The disappearance of many of these groups from the 60s has been progressive in helping to clear the ground for a new movement. The political parameters of the new movement are beginning to appear. The years of the ~~absence of~~ struggle have overlaid the molecular changes which transformed the left. One of the most important changes both in left wing and working class politics is the fact that the surviving cadres of the radical movement of the 60s are no longer campus-based but have seeded themselves inside the working class. While on the one hand their politics have been altered substantially, on the other the new form of working class upsurge will be partly determined by the presence of probably 2-3 thousands of radicals organized radicals with politics, organizational training and skills, who come to the fore as a leadership when struggles break out, who have the capacity to organize workers for more sustained forms of struggle in the series of struggles in auto in the past year - Jefferson, Forge, Mack, Ford contract, St. Louis GMAD, Londstow, Detroit Truck etc. - a majority have been led by organized radicals who either initiated the action or whose political training, organization and discipline brought them to the fore. We believe that this will be true in other industries as well in the coming period. Whichever groups are successful in organizing this layer of industrialized radicals will play a major role in the new wave of working class upsurge. The new-found need among these radicals for national organization is itself a reflection of what is occurring inside the working class - the slow recognition that problems like inflation, speedup and unemployment require nationally organized struggles.

The centrality of the working class, which the entire New Left rejected in the 1960s, has now become the common coin and property of all tendencies on the surviving left. Theories of students or the lumpen making the revolution, of separatism as the road to women's liberation, are discredited by the defeats they led to.

The recognition of the role of the working class is one several critical developments in the left in the last few years. A second is that there has developed the recognition of the necessity of revolution, so that radicals now generally define themselves in revolutionary terms. Community reform-type "organizing" is now the province of governmental agencies, not the radical left. Thirdly, the divorce which existed between black and white revolutionaries in the 1960s is slowly starting to be overcome. Fourthly, there has developed in the years of defeat a recognition of the necessity of a revolutionary party in order to carry through a successful revolution.

The stage that the left is now going through is precisely the initial stage of party building. This reflects a recognition that the struggles in which radicals are now embedded, which are primarily workingclass struggles, require a unified national focus and cannot any longer be fought solely on a local level. It is also the political consciousness of the necessity for a party which is opening up black and white revolutionaries to the conception of a unified revolutionary party. The changes which have occurred in these last four-five years of defeat will now begin to have their impact in altering and realigning the organizational forms that the revolutionary left has taken in these years. From the period of local struggles and organizations which led to the proliferation of sects on the one hand, and collectives and study groups on the other, a few major poles will emerge.

Thousands of activists of the movements of the 1960s have continued to respond to the same conditions which led them on the road to revolution, ~~but~~ Some, most of them, have become once again interlarded into bourgeois society. But rather than finding a stable niche for themselves, many will return to radical activity when there is a new upsurge of the mass movement. Those whose politics have taken organizational form have produced a left whose configuration is historically unprecedented and will soon be altered.

While there have always been sects, the peculiarity of the last period has been the wholly unprecedented number of them - at least a dozen Trotskyist sects, whose number is equalled on the Maoist Stalinist left, and a half dozen social democratic sects thrown in for good measure. Virtually every nuance in politics is now organized into a competing group. The newly radicalized are mystified by the enormous proliferation of groups. At broad meetings it is not unusual to find half a dozen groups participating, each with its newspaper sales, leaflets, interventions. ~~Thousands of~~ Large numbers of people - to overcome their isolation from mass struggle on the one hand, and the fact that the continued instability did not allow them to integrate into capitalist society on the other - entered on sect or another. Many of the sects have not been put to the test, given the absence of mass struggle.

Given the absence of revolutionary parties, all countries have witnessed the proliferation of sects. However, in Britain one group, the IS, dominates the revolutionary left. In France there are 3-4 groups which could be the axis for the development of a revolutionary party - none have yet established their hegemony. In the US, there are 20 and more groups which do not have qualitatively much greater social weight than one another, and which are all competitors for the development of a party. In the next period we expect to see that a number of these groups, three or four, will develop as the poles of attraction for the development of a party or parties. While the other sects will not all formally disappear, they will fall into their proper place as irrelevant groups who will not make much contribution.

As a result there will be a thorough realignment of the left, from 20 competing groups down to less than half a dozen. In the next 2-3 years, we and other groups will be judged on our ability to become one of the strong poles of attraction for the development of a revolutionary workers party. Increasingly the different tendencies will be judged on their ability to put into practice their strategies for party building. In this we have enormous advantages.

The starting point for our strategy is a Marxist analysis of the contradictions of imperialism and the permanent arms economy, and the current destabilization of world capitalism. The resulting social relations among national capital, the state, the union bureaucracy and the working class define the starting point for our strategy - a rank and file movement to defend wages, conditions, jobs and trade union rights against the employer-state offensive and the aid given it by the class collaborationist bureaucracy. It is through such a rank and file movement that a revolutionary party will be organized out of the emerging layer of worker leaders.

Coupled to this is our conception of the relation between party and class. We eschew all elitist or sectarian ideas of counterposing the party to the self-activity of the class, without in any way idealizing the current level of struggle and consciousness or dissolving the party's revolutionary consciousness in the mass movement. We are for both a revolutionary party and broad workers' organizations, whether these be rank and file caucuses today, or the soviets of the future, and all of the intermediate stages between. The IS understands that the struggle for working class emancipation proceeds from the independent action of the working class itself, and we therefore have no reason to subordinate the needs of the ranks to the union bureaucracy, liberal politicians, or the foreign policy needs of Washington, Moscow or Peking.

This heritage of the revolutionary Marxist movement is our greatest capital as we enter this period of party building. Our immediate task in this period is to take these theories from the realm of propaganda to the level of concrete practice in the working class.

In the next two to three years we wish to lay the basis for one axis upon which the revolutionary party will be constructed. In so doing we will have to struggle against a large number of competing tendencies, until a few emerge as strong organizations. Already we see on the left the start of this process, and we have some indication of how the next period of consolidating national organizations will affect the other radical tendencies.

(PLEASE NOTE: The next page is labelled page 8. There is no page 7).

## SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

On the social democratic left there are two possible contenders for the development of strong organizations. One is the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee, led by Michael Harrington. A wing of the former Socialist Party, it represents the Reuther-Selden type bureaucrats as opposed to the Meany-Shanker wing of the bureaucracy.

Even by social democratic standards, DSOC is quite right wing. It is for entry into the Democratic Party in support of the liberal McGovern wing, in opposition to the Henry Jackson wing whom the Meanyites support. It is for détente and may flirt with popular frontism, so long as it remains in the safe corrals of American imperialism. It is a left-liberal variant on social democracy, in keeping with the new image of American imperialism, and opposed to the Cold War liberalism of the latter day SP and Meany.

What is significant about DSOC has been its ability to organize a fairly large number of staffers and secondary trade union officials. It provides organization and ideology to left-liberal union officials, to band together as their positions become narrowed by the rightward thrust of the Meanyites. With all their differences, however, they are committed to essentially similar trade union policies and practices. They will inevitably have some attraction for radical intellectuals as a career entry into apprentice flunkiedom for the union bureaucracy. While they will not be an immediate competitor in the rank and file movement, they represent a potential danger. They may in the future be used to provide a radical cover for the union bureaucracy and its left wing when a rank and file movement develops. House socialists for the bureaucracy, they may also develop into its fingerman.

For left social democratic politics, the major pole is NAM. NAM is ostensibly more radical and contains a gamut of new left politics, from crypto-Harringtonites to some good revolutionary elements. Its right wing is electoralist with a penchant for "progressive" union bureaucrats of the UE, UMW, OCAW variety. Its mainstream is new working class in orientation. Its left includes syndicalist elements as well as revolutionaries.

Politically diffuse and amorphous, NAM lacks political definition, leadership and perspectives or organizational common thrust. Its strategy is that of its right wing, towards a regroupment with other electoral combinations of the Kinoy and People's Party-PPP variety. Politically the day for such politics is over, and as it attempts to repeat either or both the SDS and PPP (this time with a socialist gloss) it is a failure.

In the absence of a strong national organization with a working class orientation and practice, some excellent young revolutionaries have entered NAM. Their difficulty is that they lack working class experience and so fall prey to the abstractism of a petty bourgeois group like NAM. NAM's inability to engage in working class practice, or to develop strategies for party-building beyond electoralism, is moving them further to the left.

While NAM may experience some growth as a first way station for newly radicalizing students and intellectual workers, it is a group without a future. Its constituent elements cannot agree on politics or activity. They will go in different directions, --towards DSOC, the October League, and the IS. Already there are a number of NAM chapters who are interested in our politics and trade union work. Their hesitancy in joining us is leaving the safer confines of a politically amorphous group where everything goes and you don't have to defend anything, for serious revolutionary politics and organization which pits you into struggle with other revolutionary groups.

This bridge will be crossed by some on the basis of theoretical agreement. But for most it will depend on our ability to prove in the next year our seriousness as a contender for building a revolutionary party. Already our trade union work, our newspaper and educated cadres are viewed by revolutionaries in NAM to be superior to that of their own organization and are winning the first of them to the IS. The growth of the IS in numbers and qualitatively as compared to NAM's stagnation, will win others. We should not view revolutionaries in NAM as an opposing tendency but should attempt to convince them that they have more in common with the IS than with the right wing of their organization, and that we should wherever possible collaborate in joint work, with the confidence that we represent the future direction of the revolutionary wing in NAM.

Our industrial perspectives, and strategy for party building must be fought for to become the platform for the revolutionary elements in NAM, or they will seep out in the direction of the October League. Since the NAM revolutionaries are not in industry or the unions, we must go out of our way to find opportunities to engage in joint work, to be able to prove our perspectives in practice to these comrades. While maintaining a fraternal attitude, we should make clear to them that no revolutionary wing in NAM will fully solidify, since those who develop revolutionary politics will leave NAM for ~~xxxx~~ the serious working class and revolutionary organization.

#### THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The CP remains the largest group on the left. Its approximately 5000 members include experienced cadres in the working class and black movements. At times it can be an effective competitor. At new conjunctures, when new militants are entering the movement, it can recruit on the basis of its history, connections, organization and cadres until time reveals its conservative nature, and its willingness to betray struggles and movements ~~in~~ in subordination to Moscow's policy and the CP's ambitions in influencing the union bureaucracy or the liberal wing of the Democratic Party.

We do not expect the CP to be our major competitor. With one foot in the bureaucracy and another foot in the ranks, it is normally unprepared to give itself wholeheartedly to rank and file struggle. It plays a much smaller role in trade union struggles than its numbers would seem to represent. Neither the mass movements of the 60's, or the absence of strong organizational alternatives in the last 5 years have enabled the CP to recoup even a fraction of its losses of the 50's. The advanced age of its membership and the existence of a more dynamic Maoist milieu means that young people who would normally be attracted to the CP now choose one of the Maoist sects. While the CP will always be around as a competitor, it will not in the next period be able to renew itself with vigorous, youthful recruitment, nor will its appeal be to the same strata we are attempting to group together toward a party.



## THE SECTS

In the Trotskyist left we do not find much competition. Such groups as the Workers League, the RSL, CSL have proven themselves to be such peculiar sects, that no one outside their milieu is concerned with their policies and perspectives. None has given much indication of a strategy, nor are they recognized or act as competitors in the broad radical movement, not to speak of the working class. Our attitude should be to ignore them.

So far as Trotskyism is concerned, there are, in addition to ourselves, generally only 2 groups which the broad left is familiar with. Unfortunately for us, they are identified with Trotskyism, which acts as a means of forever closing off this milieu to Trotskyist politics. Those are the SWP and the Sp Spartacist League (SL). The SWP has, unlike during the 60's, no attraction for the broad left. It presents no clear strategy for party building. The strategic elements which it does present are a social-democratic like electoralism, and unending series of uninspired candidates and campaigns, and an emerging orientation towards the leftwing of the union bureaucracy. Already evident in its anti-war work, it now formally excludes oppositional caucus work in most unions, and in such things as the CLUW convention it was indistinguishable from liberal, and not so liberal, bureaucrats. Its unfortunate activity in the anti-war movement transformed it into a petty bourgeois group whose direction and proclivity is towards filling the vacuum of the absence of a mass reformist party in the US. Its current disorientation due to its inability to wield influence outside its ranks, and its falling back to the status of a large sect, after its heyday in the antiwar movement, has led to its missing the boat on the current wave of radicalization.

To switch gears will prove difficult for the SWP given its political assumptions, and its expulsion of practically any cadres who could make such a turn. Given its social composition any attempt to move towards an active involvement in the working class would lead to a large split. Meantime, it remains a convenient target for the Maoists to prove that however "left in form", this brand of Trotskyism is "right in content".

The SWP has no appeal for the milieu which we now work in. For 7 years we have not shared contacts with it. We no longer get people who want to know how we differ. They know. While not finding it a competition in the rank and file movement we will continue to find it an opponent ~~xxxx~~ in groups like CLUW and in the future as possible runksies for the union officialdom.

Of the sectarian Trotskyist tendencies the only one to show much vigor is the Spartacists. Although despised by the broad left, and transformed into a group which makes in a principle to desire isolation, the Spartacists have survived. Unable to grow during periods of mass struggle, they have grown in the downturn.

Their strategy inside the labor movement is primarily for outside consumption--that is to create 1 or 2 "exemplary" communist caucuses which can then be paraded among the pettybourgeoisie. They are, however, incapable of leading any struggle or broad organization. We very rarely come across them in the rank and file movement, but do in the broad left. The sectarianism and inward polemics of the Maoists allows them to maintain a parasitical existence. When that dries up, they will go back to being irrelevant. Fundamentally, they lack proletarian revolutionary perspectives and could only mature in a period

of defeat. The first real tests will pass them by and destroy their "exemplary caucus" approach. Until then they will continue to be a problem in that their sectarian behavior and almost open avowal of wrecking tactics plays into the hands of the Stalinist attempt to slander Trotskyism.

#### The BLACK AND LATIN LEFT

The decline of the left was even more total in the black community than in the white, particularly given the greater options towards reformist solutions of black capitalism, career advancement, government programs, and Democratic Party types, needed to isolate and crush the revolutionary black left. The surviving organizations are very weak. The Panthers have been thoroughly changed and the remnants of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers went off to the Communist League, or to the Black Workers Congress which is now an empty shell ~~which~~ which will merge with one of the Maoist groups.

As a result of the absence of revolutionary organization, the current revival is finding its first expression in those nationalist and even separatist groups which survived the defeat organizationally stronger than the more revolutionary groups who had had a greater potential for socialism and the working class. The contradiction is that the very movement which is now flowing through this channel, views separatism and go-it-alone-type strategies as the basis for the defeat.

Given the economic crisis and its impact on the black community, the paltry solutions of black capitalism and poverty-program-type bandaids, so common in the 60's, hold little attraction to the newly radicalizing black movement. The result is a tendency towards socialist revolution, and with it a working class perspective. The first indications of this are in the African Liberation Support Committee, YOBU, and some of the student organizations. Whether these groups will grow and develop in the direction of working class revolution and the need for a unified party, or whether it will take the form of new and different organizations, it is still too early to tell. The development is uneven, and slow, precisely because it takes such unusual channels of first arising in those separatist groups which were most hostile to these perspectives. They are both an historic instrument, and also a testament to how powerful this direction towards the working class and revolution will be in a revived black ~~movement~~ liberation movement.

The I.S. is isolated from this development, but has an important contribution to make in this discussion on how to achieve black and white working class unity for revolution. We can contribute the result of our trade union practice and theory to this discussion if we are not put off by its abstract and at times, ultimatic, character--no different from what we ourselves went through a few years ago.

The Chicano and Puerto Rican left has had a somewhat different development than the general radical ~~left~~ movement. Groups which reflected the currents of new left radicalism, or of the black revolutionary movement, declined with the general left, or disappeared. These were groups like the Young Lords, El Comite, the Brown Berets, etc. Two organizations, have, however, grown and developed in the last period: La Raza Unida, and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. While it is difficult to predict how they will respond to changes of

the coming period ~~in~~ in the working class, black and left movements. we expect that in the next few years they will continue to develop independent organizations, while they will also be affected by the intellectual currents which win out in the broader left. This may lead to attempts at unity when strong revolutionary organizations have developed, and the current sects sort themselves out into party-like formations.

In the next few years our orientation should be to engage with black and Latin groups in joint activity or united front work where possible--whether that be in activity for Puerto Rican independence, or against racism, or in joint activity inside unions--with the perspective that in the future, when we have a stronger organization and claim to a party development we will then have to explore greater collaboration in the direction of a unified revolutionary workers' party.

### U.S. MAOISM

The main competition that we will encounter in party building are the three Maoist groups and their subsidiaries, who are today competing to become the Maoist Party, or more likely one of the Maoist parties in the next period. It is Maoism which is still hegemonic in the left. To become a radical ~~left~~ means to be socialized to accept Maoist accounts of China, and Maoist conception of revolution.

This is due to the theoretical primitiveness of the American left which is prepared to swallow uncritically such concepts as the countryside surrounding the city or the superpower theory which rejects a class analysis and places the US and Russia on one world, France and Czechoslovakia in a second, and Iran and China in the "third world". In most European countries with stronger Marxist traditions, Maoism had not been able to gain a following for such theories. Secondly has been the social composition of the American radical left, petty bourgeois and usually isolated from the working class. Therefore the elitist notions of party substitutionsim for the self rule and activity of the masses has a ready appeal to petty bourgeois intellectuals.

Third and more difficult, is that China has an appeal as a country which successfully revolted against American imperialism. Hence it has an attraction for oppressed national groups in the US who admire its ability to do what they wish to do. It is among oppressed national groups in the US that at times Maoism gains a hearing within the working class, particularly when its strategy can not be put to the test. In the absence of working class struggle even many workers are open to elitist ideas since they still lack confidence in the working class' ability to achieve revolutionary consciousness. As a result in large sections of the radical movement ~~there~~ there is an attachment to China, and joining an anti-Stalinist group is breaking not just with Maoist politics but with friends, associates, etc.

In this sense, Maoism is similar to the CP milieu which existed up until the New Left--and which was an obstacle to our recruiting in this milieu. No sooner did you meet someone, than they would come under heavy attack from associating with Trotskyists. Or they would be forced to have immediate answers on questions they had never previously heard of. The weak would break ties with us. Those that had the courage to maintain an independent and criti-

cal attitude, would often become our best cadres.

Until the hegemonic role of Maoism is overcome, it will not be possible to create a revolutionary socialist party. In building the party we will have to defeat Maoism ideologically. Until we have succeeded in doing so, our cadres must be fully ~~be~~ educated on Maoism, and trained to be able to both defeat Maoists politically as well as having a sympathetic attitude in patiently politically winning people from the Maoist milieu. When we have succeeded in breaking the hegemony of Maoism, people will join us without first having to answer questions on the class nature of China and Trotsky versus Stalin, etc before taking part in revolutionary activity in the factories. Such today is the case in both Britain and France. Until that occurs in the US we will ~~have~~ continue to have to continuously ideologically combat Maoist ideas.

The Maoists are generally also our only competition in industry and the unions. This is a testament to their greater revolutionary mettle than most of the petty bourgeois left, the Trotskyist groups included, which can never break out of their closed intellectual milieu. In the struggles that take place in the shops and unions, if revolutionaries are involved, it is usually Maoists, independents, or ourselves.

Often, when they are not engaged in internal Maoist sectarianism, we can cooperate in factory and union work. We should have a non-sectarian, collaborative attitude toward any revolutionaries who are industrialized, and look for ways to joint work to build a movement inside the working class. Yet, we should never forget that all of the Maoist groups have attempted to expel us from broader movements, and will continue to use rule-or-ruin tactics against us or other Trotskyists. They will subordinate workers' struggles and movements to achieve these ends.

All of the Maoist groups are now going through the struggle over party building. As a result this milieu is distorted by internal polemics, and an inward sectarianism. In general, while this phase continues it should afford us some opportunities to work with independent groups who are repulsed by the sectarianism of the contenders and their havey handed attempts to demand that these groups recognize their claims to leadership. It is of course to the advantage of the revolutionary movement that none of the Maoist groups gain clear hegemony over this milieu. If one does, it will probably grow rapidly and produce another period in which most of the left is led down to a dead end defeat.

Moreover in this period of internal polemics, the groups have systematically exposed themselves to each others periphery and have produced a strata of Maoists who are hostile to all of them, and still potentially winnable to revolutionary Marxism. If one group, or more should emerge, they will turn their backs on this internal polemic period and move toward mass work of a different character. Our ~~next~~ discussion therefore must be limited to this stage of their development.

The strategies of the 3 major Maoist groups on party building, industrial perspectives and the national question are all more primitive than our own. The Communist League, with a membership of 200 has the most sectarian perspectives and is experiencing the greatest difficulty of the 3 in becoming a national organization. This despite the fact that it is composed of proletarian, predominantly black, educated in a cadre style that has not been found in the Stalinist movement since the 3rd period, and containing mass leaders of talent from the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. While its attraction for revolutionaries is undeniable, its incredible sectarianism makes it difficult to take what should be these outstanding advantages and translate them

into organizational gains. Instead it continually repulses practically every new group which gravitates towards it.

CL's inability to cooperate with other Maoist groups, while not absolute --witness its successful ingestion of the League and now the Motor City Labor League--gives it a grim perspective. If it doesn't make serious breakthroughs in the near future it may become an isolated sect cut off from the rest of the Maoist milieu, which in turn would lead to internal fissures. Already the other Maoist groups are attempting to isolate it, and to create a sordid sanitaire around it, by labelling it Trotskyist.

CL's strategy for party building is a strict study group perspective. If it attempts to change and move towards mass work it threatens to create a split with its old cadres in California and its newly sectarianized recruits. If it doesn't turn towards mass work, as that opens up, it threatens to lose its greatest capital, its potential working class leaders, who were in DRUM. Its union perspectives are now a mixture of clandestine study groups, and the distribution of bulleting under the Revolutionary Union Movement label.

It seems as if CL may attempt to revive that perspective. While the title will be the same, the content will be so altered as to make comparison impossible. Nonetheless they may attempt to organize revolutionary caucuses under the leadership of CL. While this will have limited potential, it may be able regroup a handful from what was the significant membership of the League. While the rhetoric of the bulletins are revolutionary, the content is predominantly over immediate issues, opening the possibility of a new orientation on their part. It is also possible that CL may, after declaring the Party, attempt to enter broader rank and file coalitions. While they have so hinted, it is unlikely that they would last long in them for long.

CL perspectives on the black question. Independence for the Negro Nation of the Black Belt, is of use only with those who wish to be consistent in their stalinism. For everyone else its an obstacle. Its obscure and tortured logic is another indication that CL as presently constituted will find it difficult to gain a mass following.

The Revolutionary Union is the largest of the Maoist groups and until recently seemed the group with the greatest chances to move toward a party. Of the Maoist groups it has the greatest sophistication, the most developed leadership and cadres and the largest organization. Nonetheless, it is now in serious crisis, has lost a third of its membership, and is now down to 600 members. It is our surmise that the RU crisis is due to its failure in the regroupment efforts of last fall, and its loss of the Guardian to the October League.

The loss of the Guardian has meant that in general the RU has lost the broad Maoist, and independent radical periphery which it once had. It has now been brought down to the level of a sect, and is experiencing all the problems of isolation, including splits towards the CL. The RU has also gone through some rapid changes which cannot but disorient its cadres. It has rapidly shifted its perspective from "United front against imperialism" to party building. It never had a correct perspective between party and mass movement. In the former phase it was tailist and submerged its independent role in the mass movement. In the latter it has come down in a heavy-handed sectarian fashion on those groups who are independent or have not made up their minds among the Maoistsects. counterposing the party to the movement. As a result they have only succeeded in increasing their isolation.

In reality the RU may not have become a national organization, but may still be a confederation of collectives. The reputation that they generally have in the left, for being incompetents, and their eclectic perspectives is perhaps due to their inability to assimilate the collectives which affiliated with them. Although having hundreds of industrialized members they have never been able to translate that into an effective force. Most of the people they have industrialized are in jobs, industries and unions which are marginal to irrelevant.

They have only a handful of union caucuses, and generally are not in national opposition groups in the unions, and have not attempted to unify on a national basis the caucuses they are in. They pretty much function as a confederation of collectives. Most put out local newspapers which report city-wide workers' struggles. It is a strategy which does not organize people in their factories or unions--no matter what may be written on paper,--but takes them out of their factories and unions, and organizes them around a city-wide organization, the newspaper collective. This has been singularly unsuccessful for the collectives, and the RU. It organizes no one on a sustained basis. The papers generally don't have a clear function--neither as a political tendency paper or a broader workers paper. Thus the RU's major work, can at best attract student friends of the working class, but as a strategy for industrial work its a dead end.

Recently in its ~~is~~ "left" turn, the RU has been flirting with adventurer strategies (sparking prairie fires, a variant on the electrification theory) and had indicated that it thought trade union work might be ~~an~~ economist, whereas the main job of revolutionaries was to organize workers outside the daily struggle in the factories, this through a political struggle for the united front against imperialism. Although believing the party will come through mass struggles, the RU is seemingly starting to turn its back on those struggles which could now exist. Instead it is now projecting the idea that the new communist party will be built by regrouping the left around its program--which it promises but still has not unveiled. The RU has moved from a tail-ending of the "progressive" bureaucrats to a sectarian counterposition of itself to existing trade union struggle. Perhaps this is due to the heavy need it feels to distinguish itself from the opportunism of the October League. However it can only increase the isolation, and internal crisis the RU is now experiencing. A firm judgement on RU perspectives is difficult given their now rapidly ~~is~~ changing character. It is not impossible that if the RU does not overcome its internal crisis soon, it may be split by wings going in the opposite directions of the CL and the OL. If it overcomes its crisis, it will be an important force in the radical movement.

The October League is the newest of the Maoist groups with the least developed industrial work. Nonetheless it has the ~~is~~ oldest strategy. In many ways it is a pro-Peking CP, not entirely different than the pro-Moscow CPs. It attempts to turn one face to the bureaucracy, and another to the ranks. It is tailist, and opportunist--its shifts are about whom to tail, whom to opportune. While in CLUW, it was quiet, did not fight the bureaucracy, and successfully wormed its way into positions of leadership by remaining silent about its politics, in CP style. It has also verbally projected a strategy of union opposition caucuses.

The October League is the most new left of the Maoist groups, and has the reputation in the broad left of being the least sectarian, easiest to get

on with, ~~xxxx~~ etc. The OL has been capable of moving from positions almost identical to CL's, to those not incompatible with a left CPers. Their opportunist appetites are greater they might make a lunge toward a left bureaucratic development. But given the pressures of their competition with the RU and CL they may also project sectarian perspectives or move toward various get rich quick schemes in attempting to prove better ~~xxxx~~ than their competitors.

The OL probably has about 250 members. It will however grow substantially in the next period and becoming one of the poles of party building. In many respects it is already our most serious competitor. The projected growth of the OL is not so much due to its own virtues--or to those of its leadership, which are something of a joke to those who went through the SDS--but due to the fact that at the present time the Guardian is a thinly disguised OL creature. Week in and week out the Guardian runs interminable polemics by Davidson and Mx Silber which have attack the CL and RU from the perspectives of the OL, and have systematically moved the broad Maoist milieu, and many independent radicals towards the camp of the OL. They give this milieu OL politics without ~~any~~ in any way the OL taking responsibility for the Guardian, its transmission belt.

The situation cannot be continued for long. While it does, however, the OL will continue to grow in numbers and influence. Their current right wing line has an attraction to a movement which is now composed of those who have known defeat and are prepared to make accommodations for any victory, however shallow, and of new militants who have not fully broken from bourgeois ideology and who do not understand the implications of the OL's politics. In this respect its growth will be similar to that of the CP's at the start of new movements, when politically inexperienced people are being radicalized. However -- the OL's recipe of Maoist orthodoxy, opportunist politics, and political primitiveness leads us to suspect that it will go through rapid political zigzags, and will not be able to carry the more independent radical periphery through these gyrations.

The three Maoist groups, while our main competitors, and having a milieu which is sympathetic to Maoism and hostile to Trotskyism, are not ~~xxxx~~ overly formidable. Their continual infighting gives us the opportunity to discuss and work with groups who are disgruntled with their antics. Our industrial perspectives, a strategy for party building, political perspectives on the national question, women's liberation, CLUW etc are all more developed than our Maoist competitors'. Our trade union activity is more advanced, and more real than theirs. Our newspaper and publications are better than theirs. None of the groups is qualitatively much larger, or has more of a national structure than we do. At the present time we are competing with groups which are more or less equivalent in size. People are now joining revolutionary organizations of a few hundred (bigger than their own local groups) and our size is not a major handicap that requires apologies.

While this conjuncture remains, we must rapidly move to organizationally growing, building our industrial fractions and trade union caucuses, and laying the basis for the embryo of a party, or else we risk an historic opportunity which would set us back for years. Recruiting from this layer is in no way a substitute for building a party of industrial workers--it is part of our road to the working class.

COLLECTIVES

The layer of people we can recruit today, the strategic next step we must take to put us on the road to building a party, is the independent radicals who are organized in local collectives. This layer of radicals, often sympathetic to Maoism though suspicious or hostile to Stalinism, is currently being influenced by the attempts of the Maoist groups to form strong national organization. This process now under way allows us to prove in practice our superior approach to trade union work and party building.

It is a ~~very~~ testament to the creativity of these revolutionary activists that they were capable of creating new organizational forms, however limited, to withstand the isolated, atomized state they found themselves in after the collapse of the mass movement. The collectives have been very diverse phenomena, ranging from pre-party tendency-like groups to politically amorphous groups of friends joined together for study or joint activity to overcome isolation. Although primarily ~~organically~~ organized by New Left, middle class radicals, the collectives also exist in the black left, and in a few cities young workers organized themselves into collectives. While some were little more than study groups, others engaged in community organizing projects, and the best moved into industrial and union activity. It is the latter to whom we must orient.

In the factories most of the collectives did not engage in union work but had vague perspectives of "alternative institutions". For the most part they were confused on the relation of party to class, of organization and spontaneity. They had no clear conception of their organization and its role. They had little idea of what they were ~~trying~~ trying to accomplish in the factories, whether it was to organize replicas of a revolutionary party or broader rank and file groups. In general they have failed to build in their workplaces and have been unable to grow.

As a result of these political limitations, the collectives have started to reach the end of their once progressive character. They will no longer be the channel through which newly radicalized people enter the revolutionary movement, nor are they becoming the locus for the formation of national organization. The crisis that the collectives are now starting to experience, which is leading to splits in some of them and to others breaking up, and which will lead to a general decline of almost all the collectives in the next few years, reflects the fact that the left is now approaching another stage of development. This new stage, creating the embryo of a revolutionary party to overcome the fragmented character of the last four years and to respond to the demands of workers for solutions to society wide questions, has been outlined ~~earlier~~ earlier.

The character of the collectives makes them incapable of providing political answers of organization for this development. The attempt of some of them to form a national organization out of the collectives has failed. Without common program, perspectives or activity they remain isolated and parochial, and are being bypassed by the current development toward national revolutionary organization. As a result some of the collectives are being split by the Maoist groups.

The best of the collectives are hostile to the sectarianism of the Maoists, their elitist substitutionist ideas of the party, their indifference and opposition to workers' democracy, and their slavish sycophancy to China's



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## CONCLUSIONS

The IS has spent the last four years in making the change, still incomplete, from student and middle class radical group to a group located in the unions and factories. We have partially succeeded in doing this most difficult task, but most important one, which destroyed most groups which attempted it. We did so painfully and with splits, as various petty bourgeois layers of our organization found it impossible to enter into and take part in the daily life and struggles of the working class. In the process we have succeeded in consolidating an organization. We now have a national organization, a respected and growing press and publications, a more cohesive strategy and perspectives, and with it a more cohesive cadre and leadership. Most important, we have succeeded in laying some roots, although still shallow, in the working class.

This process of transformation and consolidation must now be used to advantage. For the first time since 1968 we can expect to grow rapidly, and not just through individual recruitment but by recruiting small groups. We must quickly and rapidly move through this next step of recruiting from the industrialized independent collectives before they join one of the Maoist groups or disintegrate. And we must use this recruitment to go deeper into the working class, to build strong industrial fractions, rank and file groups and publications, and a workers' leadership within the IS. The dynamism provided by this stage of recruitment must be the lever to further steps of making contact with and having united front work with black ~~xxx~~ and latin groups, and of developing the organizational network to be able to recruit and group workers being radicalized by the rank and file movement. Our immediate task, the recruitment of the industrialized collectives, must be seen as winning greater numbers to our industrial and revolutionary perspectives so that together we can get on with the job of building a revolutionary party.