

# International Socialists **BULLETIN**

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\*\*Note: The "Layoffs & Unemployment" section of this document appears in the March National Report.



## I.S. Auto Perspectives

Bill Hastings  
Feb, 1974

(Note: This document is a perspective for our work in auto. It specifically attempts not to repeat material in our general labor perspective, but tries to apply it to our auto work. This document should be read together with: Tamarre on consciousness, Trautman on changes in the union, Mark on the UNC, Weber on IS functioning, and Stacy on the UNC newspaper. The proposal by Mackenzie for a Dump Woodcock campaign is one aspect of this perspective. John Weber's 1972 document should be reread, particularly the first 9 pages which cover material not gone into here. Finally, the section from this on unemployment has been run off separately.)

### General Overview

This perspective covers the next period in the industry and the UAW, up to the pre-contract period in 1976, or the next 2 or 2½ years. In this time our perspective must be to lay the roots for establishing ourselves as a distinct political tendency within the auto workers' movement, to lay the basis for a successful intervention in the next contract fight with the Big Three corporations, to establish ourselves and our collaborators as respected militants and political activists on and off the shop floor and to educate the growing number of militants in socialist ideas, recruiting to the IS.

The single economic factor which will be dominant during this period is the recession. Both unemployment and further cut-backs in production, and the maintenance of overtime and speed-up will be sharp in the auto industry. Following a series of defeats for the rank and file in the contract fight, it is not likely the recession will produce a strong immediate reaction. A lull in the struggle has occurred which will take some time to overcome. The cynicism and pessimism caused by the defeats in the contract negotiations and at Mack can only be changed in the course of waging a new battle, which in turn will be held back until cynicism begins to break.

For the general economy this recession is going to be quite sharp and overall unemployment will be increasing. The auto industry as a large consumer goods industry, will be even harder hit. The talk that it is the "energy crisis" that is the main problem must be taken on. The recession was coming already. At the same time the president is thoroughly discredited, the economy is going downhill and there is an almost general acceptance that the next scandal is also probably true. This general political climate puts the struggle of auto workers in a higher, more political context. The actions that the auto companies take to maintain their profits will set a pattern for much of American industry. The fight of auto workers against them will similarly set a pattern. The Watergate scandals, the energy crisis and the recession open things up politically for us, allowing us to raise more political issues and allowing greater acceptance of our ideas.

In 1973 the auto companies were all able to continue to have record sales and profits. Even Chrysler, close to collapse a few years ago, was doing well enough until the third quarter to plan to go ahead with expansion of production facilities. Just as the whole economy was expanding in the boom, the auto industry was doing very well. For GM and Ford, the loss of sales will hurt, but not be crippling. For Chrysler, on the other hand, that is not as clear. The work stoppages around the time of the contract were enough to cause them to operate at a loss for the third quarter. Particularly important was their stupid decision to remodel their top of the line models just before discovering that

no one would buy them. Even if given some aid by GM and Ford, they will still need to institute some form of productivity increases in order to stay alive.

All of the Big Three have quite a bit of foreign investment. We are extremely unknowledgeable about this, something we should correct as soon as possible. The "energy crisis" has meant a shift to buying smaller new cars. Because of the superiority of foreign small cars, competition will no doubt increase. There is even talk of some foreign companies opening plants in the U.S.

The recession's main impact on the corporations will be in the rate car sales decline and the corporations' response to maintain profits. The current predications by GM's top management is for an 8-13% cut from 1973's record sales. If the recession is of any great length, total sales will go down even farther. To make up for this, the Big Three have already announced sizeable layoffs, many permanent. At the same time other production methods to increase productivity continue. Auto workers can expect new job assignments, speed-up, forced overtime, and increased harassment and quality checks from management. Particularly in the GMAD plants, which have in the past been a testing ground for productivity drives by U.S. industry, speed-up to increase productivity by those not laid off will be quite hard.

For the rank and file, unemployment or threat of it will probably curtail spontaneous actions like those directed against the companies last fall. Both the demoralization from the defeats suffered and the recession will be factors in this. However, for those still working, the pressure from the companies to maintain their super profits will mean that some sort of fight will be made. This could take several forms. There will probably be an increase in individual acts against the companies. There could just be general acquiescence or some low level forms of collective action on the shop floor. Or there could be a turn toward the union to defend people. The latter is the direction we seek -- a fight to make the union a vehicle of the class struggle.

The UAW bureaucracy comes out of the 1973 negotiations with a lot of problems. They are faced with dissatisfaction from production and skilled workers. But because there is no organized opposition of any size, because of the ranks' cynicism, and because of the ability of the bureaucracy to remain relatively monolithic, they still have time to come out of this mess. However the path they have chosen is the least imaginative.

Beginning with the Mack strike it was apparent that they have set a course to consolidate their base among older, white workers, largely in the skilled trades. This is evident enough from the composition of the goon squad at Mack. Invading a predominantly black plant with an overwhelmingly white goon squad and then recalling the "good old days" of the UAW organizing drives was a good indication of their intent.

Even from this group they now face strong opposition. The best elements in the skilled trades, although not fond of the Mack strike, detested more the actions of Fraser and the rest. Others, notably Ford skilled tradesmen, rebelled following the sell-out. Nonetheless, the Woodcock bureaucracy will attempt to continue this process of consolidating their base among older, white workers. It is this group that will suffer the least from the recession's effects. The union leadership will attempt to continue this in the upcoming convention and in local elections where they occur this year. While attempting

to reinforce their base, they still understand the need to deal in some way with the changing composition of the union.

The black secondary leadership of the UAW by and large came to power following the black upsurge of the 1960's. They have in general followed completely the policies set by Woodcock with one notable exception. In the 1973 Detroit mayoral primary, the black secondary leaders in Detroit were for supporting black moderate Coleman Young in the six-way race. The UAW International refused to go along, throwing the union's support to white liberal Mel Ravitz. The black leaders, of course, were unwilling to take even this fight to the black rank and file, acting instead as only a pressure group within the union bureaucracy.

Their course has been one of always settling for crumbs after demanding a bigger piece of the action. This will probably occur again, demanding more because of the effect of unemployment on blacks, then settling for small gains. Although some of them may move to the left under pressure, it is unlikely that there will be any significant break between them as a group and the Woodcock bureaucracy.

The black secondary leaders and their white counterparts will feel increasing pressure in this period as the ranks still employed begin demanding the union fight. Local elections will become more important as individual plant issues -- speed-up, grievance handling, overtime, harassment and unemployment -- become increasingly more important. The secondary leaders will face pressure from the companies and higher bureaucrats to keep their members in line on the one hand, and pressure from the ranks for more on the other. Our general attitude towards secondary leaders should be one of demanding that they fight the companies and the policies of the International, exposing those that don't and pushing further left those that do. However, since a good many of the secondary leaders in Michigan and surrounding areas were in the good squad, they should be regarded at that: strike breaking thugs.

A major split in the union bureaucracy is not likely. Old differences between types like Fraser and Woodcock have healed. Paul Schrade, hanging around the fringes of the bureaucracy looking for others like himself has not come up with much. For us the Mack strike drew a line in the UAW -- for struggle or collaboration with the companies. For the UAW leaders it drew them together, bringing unity once again to their ranks. Even among the leaders in GMAD locals there was no opposition. In fact, it was quite disappointing that none of the GMAD local leaders spoke out against the contract at the GM council meeting. Besides a few "maverick" leaders around the country, the only significant break in the bureaucracy came as a result of the sell-out of the Ford skilled workers. While the number of local leaders involved was small, it was still significant that they regarded it necessary to completely break from Woodcock -- best demonstrated by their joining the UNC.

Above and beyond the problems that the black rank and file face in common with their white brothers and sisters in the plants, the recession and high unemployment will signal an increase in racism in general and increased problems in the black communities. This intensification of racism outside the plants could be reflected in the plants and would be quite destructive. Although unemployment will hit black workers disproportionately, there will still be a sizeable number of black workers in the plants.

Women workers, other than those working since the 40's and 50's, face the danger of being virtually purged from the plants. Because of the generally more conservative consciousness of women workers, they have played a smaller role in the struggles that have occurred recently. However, because so many young women workers in the plants are black, the potential for breaking through the conservative consciousness of most women does exist.

#### Key Questions Facing Us

The key question facing us is breaking out of our isolation. Isolation from the black movement and blacks in the auto industry is our most crippling problem. It is crucial to any perspective for building a class struggle force in the UAW that blacks play a leading role. The concentration of blacks at certain points in the industry makes their role far more important.

Black consciousness plays various roles in how most black auto workers would view our perspective. On the one hand, many black auto workers have experienced some sort of contact with the black movement. As a result they are often the most politically advanced workers in the plants. This political consciousness takes the form of cynicism about what can be done, but includes a healthy hatred, by and large, for the company.

On the other hand, while mistrust for union officials is well grounded in reality, most black workers today do not share many of the same assumptions held by white workers coming from a long tradition of unionism. This is, of course, further strengthened by the union's actions. While the struggling UAW-CIO did succeed in winning the leadership of the black community away from reactionary religious figures during the course of the organizing drives, their consistent failure after that to deal with the problems of black workers is by far the overriding feature of the union understood by most blacks. In fact, despite liberal claims otherwise, the UAW leadership under Reuther and Woodcock have followed a consistent pattern of ignoring or fighting against the needs of blacks in the plants. The most important recent examples are Reuther's letter to the membership denouncing DRUM and the union's failure to do anything to follow up on the Jefferson strike.

Both of these events demonstrate the militancy that does exist among black workers. In fact among black workers as well as the rest of the work force, the problem we face very often is overcoming cynicism and pessimism about their ability to affect the events and the institutions that dominate their lives.

The role of the black secondary leadership of the UAW, much of which rode to power on the wave of black activity has also held back the struggle. In fact, the current established and official black leadership has many parallels with past black leadership. By and large, all UAW black officials have been consistently held back by the reactionary nature of the Reuther forces in the union. It has only been as a result of organized and unorganized activity on the part of the black rank-and-file against strong opposition that has forced some breakthroughs. However, what has happened time after time is the blacks that are placed into office as the result of black activity accept the least little thing offered. Black leadership abstractly

is a step forward in terms of potentially encouraging black participation in the union. But the role of the current set of black leaders in the locals and higher up in the union structure is not to provide leadership when needed, capitulating to the policies of the International leadership, further holding back the struggle. The current set of black leaders may well lead small struggles in the future and should be forced to do so. But the struggles of auto workers will reach a limit unless they politically defeat these elements and their capitulation to the International, the Democratic Party and the corporations.

We must seek to develop a cadre of black militants in the plants and in the struggles of auto workers who share much of our strategy for the labor movement today-----our class struggle unionism. This is crucial to our overall strategy of developing such a layer in industry in general. Without such a cadre of black militants the struggles of the UAW rank-and-file will face severe limitations due to lack of leadership.

A real perspective for building a movement larger than ourselves requires that we break through our isolation from those plants we ourselves are not in. One of the lessons that we seek to teach people about the struggles at Mack was that the International was easily able to smash that struggle because it was isolated and lacked any alternative to them. Coming out of this summer and fall's struggles against the corporations and the union bureaucracy must be the lesson that the union bureaucracy is not something that can just be ignored, but must be taken head on.

In our general labor perspectives we call for national rank-and-file oppositions as the organized form of such a struggle. In the UAW it is both possible and necessary to be more concrete. In the next two years the development of a real national rank-and-file group is not too likely. What is possible though is the development of a network of contacts in as many different plants as possible nationally. One of our main objectives must be to educate militants in the general direction we believe the struggle should go.

In the plants where we are and where there are militants we can influence, we must continue our past efforts to build organized vehicles for advancing the struggle. Presently, as a result of our presence in the industry for the past several years, many of our members are well established as militants on the shop floor and in the union. We must now build on this and on the lessons we have learned from the groups we have been involved in. There can be no blueprint for the development of local groups.

The labor perspective discusses our general attitude towards the formation of local groups. Specific perspectives for each plant should be drawn up, but in general the struggles caused by the recession -- unemployment and speed-up --- and the fight against the Woodcock bureaucracy should be issues in developing local caucuses. At this point the education of other militants around the direction the struggle should progress---around ideas of class struggle unionism and this perspective---is crucial to our work. Right now we are politically isolated from most militants, let alone most workers, on both labor questions and socialism. We must seek to overcome both. But until we break out of this political isolation in terms of our labor work, our ability

to develop organizations on the local level will be severely limited. This does not mean we wait until we have educated a lot of people about our ideas before starting anything. However, one of the main objectives of our attempts to build movement around issues like dumping Woodcock is to develop a "cadre" of class conscious militants.

Finally, the IS must recruit workers, particularly black workers, to the IS. The absence of consistently organized contact work with black workers who briefly came around is our most severe failure. We must be more aggressive towards these brief contacts and we must demonstrate confidence that the IS has much to offer.

#### What Is Going To Happen

The direction we want the struggle to go in is a fight by the workers to regain control over their own institutions. But many young workers, particularly young blacks, do not view the union as a vehicle for fighting. As a result they do not look to it or to changing it as a way out of the present crisis. We must seek to change that attitude both through education around the nature of class struggle unionism and through demonstrating where possible what a real union could do.

Today, however, the process towards changing the unions and at the same time peoples' consciousness is through the development of a rank-and-file movement. But as the results of the IS's four years in industry indicates, right now we are not going to see large-scale stable rank-and-file groups of a highly political nature. Instead we will see many and various different types of groups.

Much of what will develop around political activists will be small, relatively stable, fairly political, rather homogeneous groups. Such groups in the plants, while small, can be extremely important in the development and formation of larger groups that are more wide ranged politically. Such larger groups will very often be formed around a bureaucrat or aspiring bureaucrat, who, in the course of the class struggle, is forced into the position of leading. Such groups will vary according to individual situations, but we are, of course, for anything that advances the struggle through the workers' own activity. We will probably continue to be in numerous groups that come up and fall apart.

We are for what puts us in the best position to work with other militants on an ongoing basis. This means that where possible we seek to build caucuses and publications out of real struggles. We would prefer a situation of putting out a paper less frequently and with less sharp formulations that other militants work on, than putting one out ourselves.

Our criteria for dropping one of our small groups and publications for something larger are the questions of the degree a larger group is real, openness of publications to our point of view, and questions of program and action. In general it is not very easy or fruitful to maintain an independent group and participate fully in a larger one.

Being in more than one group in a local may result in problems as we have already encountered with the UNC and our independent local groups. Often our members are viewed right from the start as communists and are therefore shunned. In working in a large group we warn that we will probably still be red-baited regardless of the name of any group we are in. We must continue to be careful about who we collaborate with.

One of the developments that we can expect in the period ahead is a re-emergence of more activity among the GMAD plants, replacing in many ways the Detroit plants as a center of activity in the industry. The Detroit (Chrysler) plants will continue to be central to the industry from our point of view. Things often happen in them first due to the heavy concentration of blacks, lack of capital for Chrysler, their location, and the age of the plants. However, the industry needs to maintain its profits despite reduced sales. GMAD, which has been the focal point and the vanguard in productivity drives, will once again become the center for the fight against these drives by the corporations. New activity has already begun since the big strikes at Lordstown and Norwood and the "Apache" strikes that Woodcock used to kill off any movement.

In early September, 1973, the New York Times had a large spread about Lordstown in which they interviewed 11 workers---6 committeemen. When asked "what's the yelling about?"--answer was: "the working conditions. GM's attitude is no damn good".... we're not getting any backing from the International union in Detroit. No backing whatsoever. They came down to the strike in '72 and sold us out and they're selling us out this year too!" The men called the 5,000 grievances outstanding at the time as the "calm before the storm" if nothing was resolved in the new contract. And naturally the letter of understanding on GMAD doesn't resolve anything, but merely says both parties will attempt to resolve things faster.

One of the committeemen went on to say that if the new contract didn't resolve anything, "right now there's no tension, no pressure compared to what it'll be if that settlement doesn't come through. Within three months, the lid's going to blow off." While the timing may be somewhat off, it is fairly clear that there is mounting pressure in the GMAD locals. Why this didn't surface anywhere in the GM Council is worth investigating. However, things will blow up there at some point. We should be keeping better track of developments at Lordstown, Norwood, St. Louis, and Linden, at least.

We can also expect to see a shift back to the union as more of a future focus of activity. While this requires the overcoming of people's cynicism (particularly among black workers) about the union, there are already some signs of this. The skilled trades development, following on the sell-out of certain of their rights at Ford, has led to a sharp increase in interest in the UNC. In fact even among skilled tradesmen before the contract it was clear that they could not tolerate the actions of the Woodcock leadership.

This was probably best demonstrated by the actions of the UNC leadership. Responding first to their base they were reluctant to take action supporting the Mack strike until their base (and themselves) responded sharply to the union goon squad. The UNC's interest in the Dump Woodcock campaign



following its recent growth is an important indication that among the most left-wing skilled tradesmen there is growing interest in waging a war against the bureaucracy. It is also fairly clear that a movement among production workers will be far more volatile than one among skilled workers. Hence the development of an anti-Woodcock attitude among skilled workers is a positive indicator for us. Another indicator is the movement among secondary leaders. There has not been the movement that there is the potential for, but the movement that did take place among Ford secondary leaders is important. It represents a real break, small as it might be. Pressure is still building up at both the GMAD locals and in the Chrysler inner-city plants.

#### The U.N.C.

Up until now much of our perspective has revolved around the UNC which provided us with a vehicle for meeting some workers not in plants where we were, and the potential for an organization if things were to break in the auto industry. Now as a result of the various events of the past summer, it is both possible and necessary to re-evaluate the UNC. The UNC at its best politically represents the left-wing of the skilled trades in auto. This is extremely important for several reasons. The skilled trades have very often been the first to demonstrate organization. A body which represents their left-wing is politically important. It potentially can lead an opposition movement during periods of lull and collaborate with other elements among production workers during other periods. Additionally, it is important and valuable to us to have a group of skilled tradesmen in favor of many of the points of the UNC's program--including entry into the skilled trades for black and women workers.

At present, however, it is fairly evident that the UNC is incapable of becoming the entity of the opposition movement in the UAW. The leadership, composition, and political direction of the UNC are that of the left-wing of the skilled trades. In fact, if our past perspective of changing the UNC into a black-production-worker-led, direct-action, shop-floor-based organization had succeeded, then the UNC would no longer have been the UNC. Everything except part of their program on paper would have been changed. We expect a real national movement to come out of various things such as the skilled trades activity, black workers, perhaps a women's caucus, etc. It will most likely not be a linear development from any one of these.

In large part the UNC will continue to have periods of growth (as at present) and decline paralleling and being part of the general mood and movement of auto workers, particularly the skilled trades. Already we have witnessed vacillations by UNC leaders based on the attitudes of their base. And we have seen that as skilled tradesmen at Ford went into motion, they were attracted to the UNC. The recent growth of the caucus may well be temporary if it cannot provide a direction for the movement. Judging by past work they may well not be able to lead it very far. If however, the UNC can tie together the struggle against Woodcock and unemployment and the shop floor struggle, it will be an important part of the auto workers movement.

The IS cannot just pull out of the UNC as though today it has no progressive role to play while yesterday it did. Instead we must recognize that the above analysis of the caucus necessitates a different relationship to it than we have had in the past. We should continue to main-

tain a regular presence in the group, with one person regularly attending meetings. This should include editorial board meetings. We should continue to distribute the paper both in the places where we have people, where we and other auto workers can distribute the paper at other plants, and at plants where we do not as yet have auto workers. It is important that we begin to press much more for the UNC to take seriously the questions of women workers.

Distributing the paper means, of course, taking it seriously and that means changing much of our contribution to the writing of the paper. We should no longer take the responsibility for putting the paper out. Instead we should be writing political coverage for the paper. This would include both shop reports and more important political articles. Both of these should be written to get across our points and therefore should be addressed to the audience we most want to speak to--production workers, particularly black workers. When possible we should encourage black workers close to us politically to write for the paper. This may necessitate a fight with some in the UNC over writing articles specifically to black workers. A paper written to all auto workers is written to the most backward. We believe that at this point a paper by an opposition group must have a somewhat narrower audience. At this point this type of intervention in the UNC paper is the most viable work in the group.

Where possible we should still urge groups to affiliate with the UNC. This may be more important outside of Detroit than it is in the city. But it strengthens our position with workers and groups outside of the city to say that there is a national group which, despite its problems, is the best thing going now, work with us to change it. This should still be our attitude towards the caucus in most places.

Inside the city the question is more complex. What is central for us, though, is the fact that the one of the things the UNC is known for is opposition to the International and its policies. And that is what is important for us as well. We want local groups we participate in to be hard on the question of the International's policies. In some cases this can best be handled by raising the question of affiliation to the UNC. In others, the political question of the International can be raised successfully in other ways. What is important to us is the political question of one's attitude toward the International, and not organizational affiliation. Where we don't concentrate on the UNC affiliation, we want an openness to joint activity with other oppositionists, including the UNC.

We should attempt to use the caucus more as a vehicle to meet other auto workers interested in making a fight, even if it is a small number. We must follow up more fully in contact work with UNCers we meet. In Detroit there has been much mistrust and at times hostility to the UNC. But we have found out that at least some of this comes from people who fear the UNC from the right--opportunists unwilling to make a real break with the International. We must argue against right wing critics of the UNC (even when their attacks are garbed in left rhetoric).

So, our attitude towards the UNC then is that we believe it to be

one part but not the entire rank and file movement in the UAW today. As a result, while we will continue to work in it, attempt to provide a certain degree of leadership and take a certain degree of responsibility for it, we do not have illusions that it will be the sole or even necessarily the major vehicle for future struggles in the auto industry.

We no longer see as our perspective transforming the UNC into a black production-workers' group.

#### WHAT TO DO: EDUCATION

Central to our work in this period is the development and crystallization of a layer of militants in the UAW who share our general perspectives on work in the auto industry--sharing with us to some degree positions on the need to defeat the policies of the whole Woodcock team, the need to aggressively fight racism on the job and in the union as well as outside the industry, the need to fight sexism, and the other points that we have called 'class struggle unionism.' The development of such a layer of militants who are class conscious will be crucial to our ability to carry out any perspective in the UAW.

In all of our activity we see as an important aspect winning over some workers to these conceptions. This process will take time, but is the only way to build the sort of base that an opposition movement will need. The development of a group much larger than ourselves which shares these ideas will enable us to intervene much more effectively. We seek to convince people of agreement with our overall strategy and not just this or that tactic, leaflet, or maneuver.

Education about the ideas of class struggle unionism is one aspect of the reintroduction of socialist ideas into the working class. And it must be seen as such. We must begin to become much more conscious of this task.

This reintroduction is a task that will not be accomplished through any easy means. It will first take the most patient education of individuals and small groups into what socialism is, how it is not an abstract theory but directly affects everyone fighting to improve their position in society, how to fight for it, and how our ideas of socialism are different from those of the social-democrats and Stalinists and Maoists with whom many of our own contacts will also be familiar. Where possible the IS should attempt to establish study-groups among auto-worker contacts. These should be coordinated through the branch in Detroit or elsewhere and should be quite specific about who is to attend. This, of course, need not necessarily be only auto workers (both contacts and members). Whether this is initially done through informal get-togethers with individuals or through a more formal class, educating some of our contacts-- and recruiting them-- is essential.

In this education, of course, it is important to take into account the needs of different groups of our contacts. Much of what should be covered in such a study group will be the most basic questions, although

past experience with study groups indicates that the groups itself will determine much of what is gone into. Another way of accomplishing part of this is by encouraging contacts to read material-- IS stuff as well as other, more general material. This should be followed up with discussion of the material. Some books-- by and large old ones-- have provided people with the introduction for raising all sorts of political ideas.

The point of all this, of course, is recruitment to the IS. Much of the goal of all our work in auto will be to establish a periphery and recruit auto workers to the IS.

Internally, there is much education that needs to be done. There should be classes in the Detroit branch for members and close contacts on the political history of the UAW. They should be recorded and sent out to other auto fractions. This should be followed with regular information on the auto industry and the UAW. This can be handled in the same way through the Detroit branch- or through the industrial secretary. Finally, our knowledge of much of the industry and union is limited. There are various aspects of auto which deserve research. Some of these include Canada and the Women's department.

#### WHAT TO DO: LOCAL WORK

As in the past, much of what we want to do is limited by our ability to establish an organized group at the local level which shares enough of our labor perspectives that we can effectively function with this group and begin to reach outward. There is no blueprint possible for the establishment of local caucuses. However, there are some observations that can be made about them. Depending on individual cases, it usually takes a while to become established in a local and its political life. Our members shouldn't put themselves forward too quickly, although it is true enough that we can not be calling for something that we ourselves would not do-- be it leafletting or wildcatting. But it is necessary that we be around long enough to establish some credibility for ourselves.

How long this takes depends on the level of struggle in a particular plant, section or local. The greater the level of struggle, the shorter it should take for us to operate politically. As the labor perspectives say, we are for forming a group as soon as possible, with as many people as possible, on as high a level as possible. The sorts of issues that groups in the plants will be initiated on are infinite. We seek to initiate such groups, even on a local level, keeping in mind that for us the criteria are generally what creates the most class confidence. Our attitude in such groups is to push a general direction for them. We have both the program and the strategy for fighting for that program which we believe to be correct and therefore should be adopted.

Because of the importance of black workers in the auto industry almost any group in a plant with a large number of blacks will be largely or overwhelmingly black in composition. This is due to a number of factors--

but most because of the level of consciousness of black workers. We must be the champions in such groups of the ideas we have to combat white racism (as well as black mistrust for whites). We must push for black leadership of these groups as an indication of the direction we think the struggle must go in if it is to succeed. We must push for a hard position on racism as necessary in the long run to the existence of the group. This may have to be done despite insistence otherwise of black workers in the group.

Our general attitude toward integrated local caucuses is that it depends on the individual situation. In many locals in the Detroit area, blacks are both a numerical majority and control the local bureaucracy. Usually this is due to the presence in the past in the Detroit area of a black movement-- the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. As a result of militant blacks leading struggles, other blacks, (more moderate) were later elected to office. In most of these cases, the point of a black caucus -- self-organization, fighting for specifically black demands, not waiting for white consciousness to catch up-- can be dealt with in an integrated caucus with a militant political program. But this is based on the criterion that such a group will not hold back the struggle of black workers, but rather push it forward.

One of the most serious problems we have faced so far has been the relationship of white ISers and black militants. In the four Detroit caucuses we were involved in, each experience was different. By and large we have not succeeded in overcoming the participation in groups with black leadership. For various reasons, black workers who could have played a leading role have stayed out of working with us. Others, in the caucus with us, have failed to take leadership, or be developed into leaders. Part of the solution to this is recognizing that at this point educating even a small number of militants in our general labor perspective and providing them with a general direction for the struggle will begin to overcome this.

Despite the relatively large number of IS women active in the UAW, we have not as yet succeeded in bringing a significant number of women into political activity with us. Women auto workers, have been active in the past, including objecting to Reuther's attitude toward them. Today, of course, the UAW's Women's department and the local womens committees are little more than bureaucratic shells which support the administration. They are sometimes responsive to pressure from the ranks but this appears quite small compared with their responsiveness to the middle class womens movement.

We should begin to experiment at locals where women comrades are active with constructing a small womens group-- either in or out of the official committee. This right now will largely deal with unemployment, both the general effects of it and how it specifically affects women workers. If we are all successful then we will begin this sort of activity in all locals we can, regardless of the presence of IS women. We should attend regional and local conferences of the

womens department with the fraction discussing before hand our intervention in them.

One of our strongest points as we continue to build local groups is the relation we see between that activity and a national opposition. Because one's attitude toward the UAW International bureaucracy is often a dividing line-- one we seek, in fact-- two points we must push for are the need for a national opposition and that local activity will be limited without it. This is once again one of the main lessons that we and others have to get out of the Mack strike.

Groups that we do set up on the local level will optimally have as their purpose the taking on of the company and the union bureaucracy which stands in the way. This is based largely on the principles of class struggle unionism. To take on the bureaucracy means attempting to defeat its policies as they deal both with the conduct of the class struggle and with other issues. We should continue to use union meetings as forums for our ideas. We should attempt to build these meetings as at some point interest will grow. We will also continue to use union elections for building the groups we want to build. Local elections should deal with the struggle against the company as it should and could be conducted and with the bureaucracy.

We run to win and do not put ourselves forward as losers. Particularly at this point we wish to win positions of steward and shop committee. We should also be running for higher office given the clear line drawn by the Woodcock bureaucracy. In general we do not use the elections solely for their educational value, but rather see them as a means of building our local work. Delegates elections should be taken seriously. Depending on the type of convention, various issues can be raised in the course of campaigning. But in general, delegate elections offer us the chance to put forward our conceptions of how the union should be run as well as broader political ideas.

By and large the slates in local elections are nothing more than cliques. There is usually little difference between them. However, at times the class struggle intervenes in this process and one or the other slate may take a position reflecting this. This of course doesn't mean that we jump on it since it is most likely done for opportunistic reasons. However, it is important for us to tell when this is happening since it can open things up for us. In general we seek to expose the local leadership for their role. The Mack stuff, in the Michigan area, is a cutting edge. So are many local issues. We seek to expose opportunists and point out that it is not new names and faces but new policies that are needed to successfully fight the big three.

UNEMPLOYMENT (This section was typed separately)

NATIONAL WORK

In the long run, because of the importance of the auto industry

to the economy in general and because of the role played by the union leadership, a national opposition movement will be built. This is our perspective -- a national opposition movement and eventually a broader movement within the labor movement as a whole. There isn't a national movement, nor is there likely to be one in this period. The UNC, as discussed earlier, is not a movement and is hardly a national group. Nonetheless it is significant as being part of the direction we want to go.

In the next two years or so the level of struggle will not be strong enough to sustain a national movement, although that could change depending on factors outside the industry. We can, however, take steps now to begin to move in that direction and also attempt to establish a periphery around us. Currently there is the possibility for some sort of national network in the UAW to be set up. Many, including union militants and independent industrialized radicals, are looking for information about what others in the union and industry are doing. A national network for the purposes of information, communication and education could put us in touch with elements we haven't yet met -- those interested in a broader fight than their own local. We should be clear about two things. This is not a substitute for the long, day-to-day process of building local and national rank and file groups. And this is not a membership group with local groups associated with it in any way, but rather is exactly what it says -- a network. As such its purpose is to spread information between militants and ourselves about what is going on, and help us to establish a periphery for ourselves.

Such a network at this point would probably consist of little more than the names of people we have met over the years. We do not project a linear process -- first a network of militants, then a national group, then a movement, then taking over the union. While it is part of that process, we also seek at this time particularly to build our organization. Therefore part of what we would want to get out of such a network would be a periphery for the I.S.

Such a network, putting us in touch with many more people than we are currently in touch with and putting those people in touch with each other, would be a healthy thing. We should be attempting to spread experiences from one plant to another. Many of the best union militants are still probably unaware of the union goon squad's role at Mack. We must develop a system of communication to spread information.

It is crucial to our work that we have contact not solely in the plants that our members are. The UAW is far too big for us to be fully effective as long as we are small. In the past, such as during the organizing drives and in the struggles of the 40's, there were various councils -- by department, by region, etc. -- which provided a forum for militants in one local to be able to catalyze developments in other locals. Paralleling the destruction of the stewards' movement by the Reuther leadership was the destruction of all viable means of inner-union communication. The ability of union militants to know what was happening elsewhere was as crucial then as it is today.

We should put out a few issues of a newsletter addressed to UAW members who already share certain minimal things in common. For example,

it should take up the question of how to dump Woodcock and deal with why in terms of how to explain that to others. If there is sufficient interest on the part of contacts we have met, particularly outside of the Detroit area, then we should continue. By putting out such a newsletter and working with militants in various campaigns we will be laying the basis for both a national movement in the future and recruitment to the IS. In order for this to pay off, though, it will mean that contacts will have to be followed up aggressively, with assignments made when necessary.

Such a network of militants must have an orientation towards the black workers in the union. We must be quite explicit about this from the start. One of the things that such a network should discuss and perhaps be pushing in different locals is the question of a national black caucus in the UAW. Long overdue, it is certainly needed in the union nationally even if not at all locals. We should be calling for such a formation in our local publications as well -- in terms of the need to fight the racist nature of the UAW bureaucracy. While the relationship between a black caucus nationally and an integrated one in the future is not clear at all now, we are not for black workers waiting for whites to act.

The IS should also make a much more consistent effort to follow developments in the GMAD locals nationally. If possible auto workers from Detroit should be sent to talk with GMAD workers that we know in a systematic way.

The key question in our national and local work in this period is the fight against the bureaucracy. This is simply because this fight brings up almost every issue -- politics, economics, discrimination, how to fight the Big Three -- and therefore focuses things for us. We seek to build in this period the basis for a movement which understands why it needs to Dump the Woodcock Team and their policies even though we do not believe there will be a successful effort to oust them in the next couple of years.

#### AG-IMP

Outside of our Detroit concentration and previously our work in LA and NJ our presence is in Ag-imp. Because of the unique situation in the local we are in, we will probably be able to play a more political role and be more active in union politics than elsewhere. Our initial activities here have been quite successful. To follow this up we should have reports for the organization and a perspective for future work in that local. The comrades involved should begin writing for Workers' Power as well.

While not suffering the same effects from the recession, Ag-imp has gotten its share of Woodcock's actions. Pattern bargaining has led to one set-back after another for Ag-imp, including on such things as stewards, voluntary overtime, etc. Each contract is worse than the last. Much of the material here on auto will apply in somewhat the same manner. The fraction should discuss the relation between Ag-imp and auto in the fight against the bureaucracy. We seek as broadly based movement as possible, and Ag-imp will be integral to our political work nationally in the union. Where it is possible due to the political nature of the local to initiate actions and resolutions there we should seek to follow them up in the auto



locals. The entire fraction must become more familiar with Ag-imp both in terms of the industry and the inner-union political relations of the two.

#### PROGRAM

The program for our work in auto is that put forward in the labor perspectives and therefore is not repeated here. However there are certain aspects of it that should be made more concrete for the auto industry. In the 1973 contract fight we put forward the following program:

- Minimum UAW wage of \$12,500 per year; no auto price increases.
- 100% COL to cover wages and fringes and pensions.
- Guarantee protection of SUB and pension funds against total corporate assets
- SUB for the duration of all lay-offs.
- 30 hours work for 40 hours pay.
- No forced overtime.
- Right of any local or bargaining unit to strike by majority vote on any issue without need for prior authorization
- Innocent until proven guilty
- Right to a steward for every foreman
- Workers control over production standards -- standards negotiated on the shop floor at beginning of each model run, set in writing only with approval of workers involved and frozen for model year.
- Elected union safety committee, representatives on each shift with authority to shut down unsafe or unhealthy jobs without penalty and authority to enforce any federal, state or local health and safety code.
- Fire foremen for racist acts, sexist acts, or knowingly instructing a worker to perform an unsafe or unhealthy operation.
- Set period after which skilled trades and other desirable jobs must have the same racial and sexual proportions as corporate workforce as a whole.
- Full insurance benefits and seniority protection for all pre-natal, post natal or other maternity connected leaves
- Company paid, parent controlled 24 hour child care.

We also put forward certain areas which, without certain changes in the new contract, would necessitate a rejection automatically. These were the questions of inflation, working conditions, job security, and discrimination. In doing this we said that the struggle as it progressed would narrow the demands, but it was important for us to raise certain issues which did not seem immediately important to the rank and file, like job security. Our programmatic intervention in the contract fight was correct and the struggle did narrow the issues involved.

It is also necessary to raise certain organizational questions in the course of a fight over political and economic issues. Most of these come up in the course of other activity. Certain ones are clearly important. Election of all International Reps. No secret negotiations. All local agreements to be settled before the national agreement can be signed.

Because of the size and relative political nature of the UAW the structure of the union is quite important. To the leadership they have

succeeded in making it a bureaucracy to ensure the success of their policies -- usually of class collaboration. To the ranks, however, the present structure is a drag rather than a boost to organization. We seek a union structure which is capable of leading a fight against the Big Three. As such we are for such bodies as production workers council, regional meetings of stewards and shop committees, real bargaining unit councils, etc. We are, in general, for anything that allows actionable ideas to spread from one local to another thereby allowing militants in one local to have an impact on other, more conservative locals. We should be pointing out these needs in the course of discussing how to fight over certain issues.

At present we are most concentrated in regions 1 and 1B. We should be attempting to develop ways of making fights on the regional level as well as locally and nationally. For example, tying the Dump the Woodcock team campaign to the regional level -- dumping Morris and Morelli. We should push where possible for rank and file committees on the regional level to deal with issues like unemployment.

#### IS AUTO FRACTION

Due to various problems, both external and internal, there has not been a functioning auto fraction. Until the NAC established a steering committee for it following the split in 1973, it largely functioned haphazardly or not at all. National functioning was even worse than in Detroit. The steering committee did succeed in beginning to turn things around and our functioning has improved somewhat. Still, however, we have faced a situation in which the fraction has not had a clear conception of how the various different things that our members do relate to our general work. This is the next task to overcome in establishing a real fraction -- that is a working body which integrates and carries out the line established by the organization for our auto work.

There are some administrative things that can be done to improve our functioning. Reports should come from each plant every couple of months so that the fraction is kept abreast of all our work. These can be sent out in the fraction mailings that come out of Detroit. Bulletins we put out in places outside of Detroit should be sent there to be distributed to the fraction. Correspondents should be set up between the Detroit auto fraction and those in other cities. Finally all members should get in the habit of forwarding information about auto and the UAW to the Detroit branch. While these are administrative, they will help improve things for us. The political problems that we face will not be cleared up without discussion internally and active work externally.

In the past we have not adopted an auto perspective. Instead our comrades have had to function on the basis of the general labor perspective, a commitment to the UNC and the general idea of building a black led, production worker based, direct action, shop floor organization. Our successes have been small. We have been involved in five caucuses besides the UNC. Of these, one was destroyed by the sell-out actions of one of the leading members. Another which involved a large number of workers in distribution has had to temporarily cease publication. Another had virtually every member of the caucus fired. The other two have continued to come out

for a period of time, but have not succeeded as much as we would have liked in involving indigenous workers in them. Recruitment from the plants has been very minimal.

There have been numerous reasons for these problems. Internal problems and lack of leadership from the organization was one of them. But since we have had similar problems in building stable rank and file groups in all industries we have been involved in, our problems in auto do not stem as much from our own failures as from the level of struggle and consciousness that currently exists. Finally, we have not been as conscious about the need to educate individual workers in many of the basic ideas of class struggle unionism. We have succeeded in establishing many of our members as respected militants in their locals. We have made some important contacts and won their respect. We need now to follow this up. Organizationally and individually we have much more experience in the struggle than before. Establishing a periphery for ourselves in this period will be central to playing a role in the future.

The lack of popularly written material putting forward our general politics is slowly being overcome. There are certain areas of literature which are specific to the UAW. Besides the forthcoming pamphlet by JW assessing the upsurge of this past fall, we need at least two other pamphlets. One is a comprehensible political history of the UAW and the struggles of auto workers. The other is our program and perspective for auto -- concentrating at this point on the political questions of unemployment, the bureaucracy and how to fight it. This latter pamphlet should not be seen as our auto pamphlet forever, but instead should relate to the issues of this period, being as concrete as possible.

Workers' Power is also a valuable tool for us. The main point of auto coverage at this time is to get across the main political ideas that we think are crucial to furthering the struggle. We should establish a group of people in Detroit and outside who write for the paper so that there is a variety of coverage.

Although entry into the auto industry is going to be almost impossible until there is another upswing in the economy, we must understand that it is still important for us to get more people industrialized into the industry. The priority for us nationally is to get into GMAD, to fill out some of our industrial priorities in Detroit and if possible get into another concentration in Ag-imp. Where these are not possible it is preferable to be in a plant than not be in a plant. The NAC and the industrial secretary should attempt to make sure that there are members ready to actively seek jobs when things open up. As much as possible we want to make our presence in auto a national one since that is one of the ways that it will be strongest.

#### OTHER GROUPS IN THE UAW

The UAW is almost unique in that virtually every left group has members in the union. These include the CP, CL, PLP, RU, SL, WL, RSL, Spark and small collectives. Their influence ranges from none to small. The sectarianism of groups like the SL and RSL will prevent them from building anything real in the industry, although it will not prevent them from attacking or even destroying the work of other groups. The RU has a rather consistent right-wing line in auto. They attempt to play up to what they consider the

best bureaucrats. The CP has many different lines in auto. Some of their members are in the UNC, others are quite conspicuous by their absence from it. Their attitude is to attempt to get a piece of the action, no matter what it is. Inside Detroit their influence is hard to gauge. Outside they have had more success -- particularly in attracting young black workers from the plants. Their ability to do so in the Detroit area seems limited, probably due to the more radical politics of the League when it existed. PL's role is well known since its adventurist days at Mack although they were not destroyed by that. CL, of the organized groups, has probably the largest influence among young black workers in the Detroit area. However, their politics at present are not to attempt to lead mass struggles and therefore many of their members remain underground. Some CLers don't and face a conflict between their organization's line and the need for them to provide leadership in the plants.

Of these groups, CL and the CP are the one's we should watch most closely. Although it will be impossible to work continuously on a local level with either judging from past experiences, we should follow them closely enough so that our members can deal with their politics. Although they both have presently more influence in the union than we do, it is quantitative, not qualitative.

"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." "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."

from "LABOR PERSPECTIVES"

In many ways, our IS labor work, in general, and our auto work in particular seem to have reached an impasse. In our work, we have advanced to a point that, so far, we seem unable to get beyond. Our members have succeeded, by and large, in establishing themselves as respected militants in their shops. We have been reasonably successful in initiating and maintaining several publications which have a clear class struggle line, which are well received by the workers to whom they are addressed and which are accepted as genuine worker publications, not outside things. And most important, our industrial work has enabled the IS to begin moving in the direction of becoming a working class organization, to begin viewing the working class from within the class and not outsiders. Given where we started only a few years ago, these are no small accomplishments. But they will not sustain us.

Politically, the IS is still very isolated inside the plants. The number of workers who we have met in the plants and who have become revolutionary socialist contacts of the IS is tiny, almost to the point of not existing. More significant, there are very few workers we have won to even a general understanding and acceptance of our approach to labor questions. There are individuals who may follow our lead on this or that issue, but few that we have been able to win to a coherent understanding of these activities. Our members have engaged in a large number of significant activities and struggles in the plants and union. At times we have helped effect the consciousness and activity of large numbers. But our purpose is not "substituting transplanted intellectuals for indigenous working class cadre." While our members have often helped to lead developments, we have so far fundamentally failed in helping to encourage the development of a cadre of class conscious, class struggle militants, who can themselves lead, let alone make progress toward developing a working class revolutionary socialist cadre.

It would be easy to attribute these failures to organizational sloppiness, lack of try-hardism and so forth. To be sure, we are often sloppy and lazy. But motions that call on us to put more effort into recruiting workers and blacks, that attempt to wish away the problem with the phrase "serious contact work" miss the mark. Fundamentally, the root of this failure is in our political approach and method. What is needed now, is not a revision of our perspectives, but a refinement. The perspectives on which we have been operating have

helped bring us to the point where we now are. They lay the basis for going beyond.

"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 industrialization; 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." (L.P.)

The IS has been 100 times right for insisting against all sectarians on the need to intervene in existing rank and file movements, on the need to attempt to provide immediate and tactical leadership to the struggles and developments that actually exist. Despite our attempts, however, we have failed in practice to embed the often excellent work of IS comrades into an effective strategic framework. This failure had led both to a general disorientation, and more particularly, to an inability to see a path out of our political isolation in the shops and in the union. This is not to say we had no strategic framework. We had one which in practice proved to be not thoroughly thought through and which included within itself a misunderstanding of the consciousness of auto workers.

## II

We correctly recognized the need for local caucuses in the UAW which had a perspective of becoming part of a national opposition caucus. We concluded that we should try to set out to build them. Our goal in practice was to build, or in other ways help crystalize, caucuses won to:

1. Intransigent opposition to the Woodcock regime and an understanding of the need for a national opposition throughout the UAW;
2. Rejection of the notion that what is needed is the replacement of bad bureaucrats with better bureaucrats -- on the local as well as national level. Emphasis rather on the self-activity and self-consciousness of the ranks and the need for a leadership in the union that builds and encourages this rather than suppressed it;
3. Acceptance of the notion that the caucus should see itself as a leadership group in the day-to-day shop struggle against the boss as well as in the fight over union policy;
4. Acceptance of the view that the caucus does not exist primarily in order to get people elected, but rather, the caucus has a program, and it attempts to get members elected in order to advance the program. Therefore, those caucus members who hold union office

are still responsible to the caucus.

5. The caucus is an unhesitant champion of all struggles against racism and sexism.

Besides these, we also strive for these caucuses to be won to numerous programmatic points on shop issues, contract and economic, political and social issues.

We weren't ultimatists. We were quite prepared to be a minority within caucuses which could be moved in our direction. In fact, our desire was to be a left wing within a broader caucus led by others. We were prepared to do slow patient work to move toward our goals.

This approach was tested in several different plants under very different concrete conditions.

Plant #1. We were involved, though in no way were the leaders of a group of youngish black workers who formed a caucus. We were its activist left wing. We made some headway among the group. After two years of good work when one of the group's leaders sold out to the administration, the caucus fell apart with little to show. We took responsibility for putting out a publication that was the official organ of the caucus. Severe tensions were generated over the line of the publication on such questions as opposition to Woodcock and co. In general the paper was well received but lacked sharp definition because of the editorial conflicts. When the caucus degenerated there was no way politically to continue the publication which died.

Plant #2. We functioned in a pre-existing broad caucus that was amorphous and unprincipled. with no democratic internal life to speak of. We established a newsletter, formally a publication of the caucus, but in fact largely independent. Our goal was to group around the publication the best elements of the caucus and try to educate them to our approach. After building them into a new leadership group, we planned to launch a serious struggle within the caucus. Wholesale firings shortcircuited the full testing of the perspective. What success was achieved was in attracting people around ourselves and the newsletter-- not in significantly moving the broad caucus. In fact, perspectives notwithstanding, our members were consistently ambivalent and embarrassed about our relationship to the broader group.

Good militants were often disgusted by the broad caucus. Although the publication has ceased coming out, we politically still retain the option of reviving it, either as an independent sheet, or in its earlier format, as a semi-independent publication associated with the broader group.

(There are practical security problems that must be considered because of the firings.)

Plant #3. We in conjunction with an older leftist initiated a regular plant publication. We have never been fully clear ourselves whether we see this publication as the organ of a caucus, the organ of a caucus to be, or an independent publication. So far, this publication has not been a barrier to collaboration in broader activities with others in the local, but broader collaboration in a demonstration, in election campaigns, and so forth have neither moved toward changing the publication group into a broader caucus, nor laid the basis for an independent broader caucus. A number of individuals have been brought around the publication.

Plant #4. A regular publication comes out that is clearly the political responsibility of a single IS member. We have some unclarity here as in plant 3. It has supporters and contributors, but no real group around it.

There is some discussion about the development of a broader opposition caucus in the local independent of the publication. The key person in these discussions, while he does not want to be overly identified with the publication, considers it a good thing, wants to see it keep on coming out, and as of yet, sees no conflict between the IS member continuing the publication and participating in helping him form the broader independent group.

We also functioned inside the United National Caucus. We argued for a perspective that the UNC should view itself as a group encouraging the development of the kind of local caucuses we were trying to build locally and as a national group to which such local caucuses could affiliate. We stressed the need for a special orientation toward black workers and toward production workers. There was tension between us and the UNC leaders on many questions of program and on all the above listed points except #1. We made headway toward their verbal acceptance of almost all the programmatic proposals we fought for. For a while, the UNC took a wait and see approach on whether we would be able to build the kind of local caucuses we were projecting in the plants where our members worked.

There was no plant where we were active, however, where we were able to bring significant new people into the UNC let alone bring new groups in. For a time, the UNC gave us the opportunity to demonstrate that our approach could be used to build the organization. When we proved unable to deliver, and when other opportunities presented themselves, the UNC retreated in practice if not in theory. For a short time, we took over major responsibility for production of the UNC paper. We dropped it as a result of lacking the resources to continue. But, we probably would have been forced to drop it anyway due to the serious tensions that were developing over editorial policy. We always had a policy of trying to avoid causing these tensions, but never seemed to be able to do it.

If we judge our work by the extent it has measurably moved us toward creating the type of local caucuses we desire, we can show no evidence of success. The only ongoing stable formations we have been able to generate have been small publications groups, dependent almost totally on the IS comrades although attracting a much wider sympathetic following and enlisting the cooperation of a handful of co-workers at various levels (information, writing, distribution, finances, etc.) The IS has been internally confused about just what the character of these publications groups are, but they are clearly neither the caucuses we have projected, nor is there any demonstration that they have a dynamic toward becoming such.

We were still correct in politically stressing the need for rank and file caucuses of the type we projected and the need for a national opposition in the UAW based on such local groups. In our minds, we telescoped the process of their development. In viewing how these caucuses would actually come about, we were at one and the same time naively spontaneist (believing that the logic of the objective necessity for such caucuses in itself lays the basis for bringing them into being) and mechanically organizational and substitutionist (believing we could use our organizational talents and our ability to project the appearance that such caucuses exist to actually bring them into existence).



## III

The UAW groups in which we have actually operated can be divided into two categories: Narrow groups (those that were basically creatures of the I.S., i.e. those that would immediately cease to exist if the I.S. were to pull out) and Broad groups (those with an independent existence, i.e. those with indigenous worker leadership elements who would and could to some extent keep the group in existence without the I.S.)

In our work inside the UAW over the past two years, we see little evidence of spontaneous developments among UAW production workers in the direction of the formation of broad caucuses with even very generally the kind of characteristics and program we think necessary. And what are the prospects on the local union level of our working inside the actual broad groups, patiently, loyally, to win them in the direction of our program and approach? To be sure, we must utilize every opportunity to do this. But there is no evidence that in the immediate future, we can expect even partial successes with this line of activity on a stable basis.

In plant number 1, we made headway toward winning the broad caucus toward our program. We did generally excellent work pressing the group in our direction. But we had no way to stop its disintegration. And when the group disintegrated, we were able to salvage virtually nothing from the long hard work put in. With the exception of knowing a few more people and knowing our way around the local a bit better, we were thrown back to day one.

In plant number 2, we quickly decided that winning the broad group as such in the direction we desired was hopeless, given its nature. That is why we built a narrow group within the broad group. It was clear that before the broad group could be moved in the direction we wanted, a new leadership for that group would have to be constructed. Its existing leadership was hopelessly bankrupt. Its internal life was sterile and provided no opportunity for a natural development of a new leadership.

In plant number 2 our decision to build the narrow group was tactical. At the time the decision was made, the comrades there would have preferred to have been working under conditions more like those in plant number 1. We built the narrow group only because we saw no more direct way to work in the broad group and move it in our direction. In our view, the purpose of the narrow group was either to be used in an attempt to take over the existing broad group, or to lay the basis for building a new broad group. We never fully admitted to ourselves that this narrow group even after it had become quite successful, remained basically a creature of the IS. We often, unconvincingly tried to pretend to ourselves and to those we worked with that it was, in fact, broader--that it existed as a group independent of our holding it together.

At first it appeared that our need to build the narrow group was a liability, that we would have been much better off if we could have made the total focus of our work direct intervention in a broader group. But the opposite turned out to be true.

In both plants 1 and 2, our comrades participated in several struggles, activities, campaigns, etc. In plant 1, this was done, almost exclusively

through the vehicle of the broad group. As a result, the broad group and its publications developed a reputation and a following in the ranks. Often this reputation and following flowed from the good work and the strategic and tactical activities that had been proposed and fought for by the IS members. Often it flowed from activities the group as a whole undertook only very half-heartedly and only at our strong insistence. When the group fell apart, its reputation and following were totally dissipated. This experience was demoralizing, not only to the ISers, but to the best people who had been attracted to the group as well. The fact that the group had disintegrated with nothing enduring to show for all the work put into it reinforced the cynicism that nothing can be done.

In plant number 2, the reputation of the broad group was enhanced by the activities of the ISers. But the narrow group developed a reputation of its own. The best elements in the broad group identified with the narrow group. There were also workers who were quite turned off to the broad group (for good reasons) that respected the narrow group, its activities and publications. As the level of struggle and activity in the plant increased, the large group became increasingly paralyzed--unable to relate and give leadership to often finding itself on the wrong side. At that point, an attempt to carry out a fight in the broad group to force it to respond properly would have been unsuccessful, would have been a diversion, would have meant to miss the opportunities of the actual struggles. But we were able to use the narrow group, its built up reputation, and the people around it to relate to those in struggle. This gave us a vehicle for us and our contacts to continue pressing forward in the struggle rather than getting paralyzed with the broad group.

At both plants 3 & 4, we never did have the opportunity to build or participate in broad groups. There is a basic difference between the situation in the two plants however. At plant 4, the group is very narrow. Its major recognized public leader is an ISer. At plant 3, the ISers are viewed as followers of an older leftist in the plant who has a long reputation and history there. The group is viewed as the older militant's group, not ours. While there have been tensions over editorial policy, they have not been insurmountable. If for some reason a split were to occur between us and the older militant, it is unclear whether or not we would be able to maintain the group independently--particularly unclear if we met this individual's active opposition.

The development of this group into a genuine broad caucus representing some strength in the local is a possibility. This could happen quickly. But it would probably result in a severe change in the group's political character, watering down its political definition and opening it to the possibility (in fact likelihood) of a fairly rapid complete disintegration.

The narrow groups in plants 2, 3, and 4 have functioned basically as publication groups, based on rank and file bulletins. The IS has proven we have the ability to develop plant publications based on our line, that are well respected and received in the plants. We have shown that we can use these publications to group workers around us. We have not yet shown we can develop broad groups of the type we want. We have not even demonstrated

that what we do, actually contributes toward developing stable broad caucus of the type we desire. While politically, we retain the goal of broad caucuses of the type we have been trying to build we must change how we view the task. We must recognize that before such caucuses come into existence, a leadership for them, broader than the IS, which accepts at least the rudiments of this perspective must be developed. And given today's consciousness, the development of even a small, self-conscious, self-activating leadership group of this type, prepared to take responsibility for actually leading such caucuses on a stable basis, will be hard to come by--particularly among production workers. To blunder ahead ignoring this is to try and jump over ones head.

To try to substitute ourselves for such a leadership is tempting but harmful. In some industries, we might be able to get away with it--in industries where the big majority of the workforce is white. Even there it would be an error. But in auto, and particularly Detroit auto, the majority of the leadership must be black for any serious broad caucus development among production workers. This will face us so long as the IS has no black auto comrades.

It is our goal and desire, to participate in every progressive struggle in every progressive campaign, in progressive groupings and caucuses no matter how minimal or ephemeral. We should take every opportunity to launch, encourage, provide political and/or tactical leadership for all such. We have shown in practice that we can effectively do this kind of work. Examples can be given from each of the plants we are in; But we have not shown that we can effectively build on, and take political advantage of our successes in these areas.

We project lines on the major developments in auto such as the GMAD speedup, the contract, the convention, the lay-offs, etc. But we have not shown that we can achieve durable tangible results, however correct the line.

Looking back, it seems to have been our unstated assumption that it would be in the framework of broad militant caucuses and a network of such caucuses, that a layer of class-conscious worker leaders would emerge. It would be in the framework of the political life of such formations that workers would be exposed to the meaning of our politics in practice, would be won to our immediate actionable perspectives in labor, and finally won to our organization. Discounting bureaucratic distortions and differences in political approach, the caucuses tended to be seen playing the same role in relation to the IS that things like NPAC played in relation to the SWP. (Analogies to things like CORE, FSM, SDS, PFP could be made as well.)

To the extent this unstated assumption pervaded our work, it caused errors and confusion. The situation today is fundamentally different. At the same time the SWP entered the anti-war movement in force, there already existed broad layers of anti-war activists who were looking for an organizational expression of the anti-war movement to which to commit themselves and who were shopping around for anti-war strategies and tactics. The notions were already prominent that an anti-war movement was possible, could exist,

might make a difference, was worth the trouble, etc.

Our experience in auto, at least among production workers in Detroit, reveals another reality. There is no widespread acceptance of the notion that an independent fighting workers movement is possible: that can take on the bureaucracy, and the bureaucratic notions of how unions should run; that can achieve victories; that can avoid being thoroughly smashed or completely bought off. It is true that out of a movement of militant rank and file caucuses, a class conscious layer of worker leaders will emerge. But it will take the existence of at least a substantial, though small layer of self-conscious rank and file leaders with this perspective before the stable basis is laid for the kind of movement we are talking about. And the I.S. can not substitute for this.

I.S. experience in the petty-bourgeois movement of the '60's taught us that recruitment to our actionable perspectives, to our politics and to our organization was basically a by-product of having good work, a good line, good politics, and a good organization. At the current state of our labor work, at least among auto production workers in Detroit, this approach is not sufficient. The explicit task of winning workers toward our policies and politics, the task of helping create self-conscious, self-activating class conscious working class leaders can not be viewed as a by-product but has to be central to our perspectives. And it is this that we have failed to accomplish however often our documents stress the need to recruit and to do contact work.

V

Although we found that we could establish excellent shop publications based on a clear class struggle line, there has been systematic confusion about just what these publications are and what role they play in our work. We have often acted as if we thought these publications were in fact real caucuses or the organs of real caucuses. In fact, we have found that the workers we have been able to group around these publications don't actually constitute a caucus. At best they constitute an activist publication group.

No matter how often a political sect tries to pretend it is a political party, it is not a party until it can project itself, at least in potential, as a contender for state power or at least as a contender for a share of state power. Similarly, a group in the union is not really a caucus until it can project itself, at least in potential, as a contender for power in the union or at least a contender for a share of power in the union. And this, none of our publication groups can do.

We have found that the biggest obstacle we have come up against in the shops is pessimism and cynicism. The I.S. must self-consciously avoid feeding these destructive moods. In posing concrete agitational tasks, we must be very realistic and not generate false expectations which can lead only to demoralization.

For example, the Labor Perspectives says: "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." The tendency has been to interpret this to mean that building a local caucus (presumably representing a real force even if small, and presumably at least open to our program and approach)

is step one. When our members fail to build such groups, on a stable basis, they become discouraged. But for our contacts its worse. Unable to achieve in any substantial and stable way what we project to be the minimal task, the experience merely reinforces in them the notion that nothing can be done. And while we keep plugging away, they tend to disappear.

Similarly we can easily discourage co-workers by falsely projecting inflated evaluations of the real influence of our publication groups or falsely projecting unreal expectations for them. Rather, we must convince our co-workers of the value of these publications despite the small numbers now committed to them and committed to what they represent. At present, a precondition to winning workers to our approach to labor questions, is to show them that even a small number of workers won and dedicated to these ideas can, under the right circumstances, have a major impact. It is from this vantage that we motivate the significance of our shop publications and publications groups. We should project the following approach:

"The publications we build are the expressions of a political program -- of a current and a tendency in labor. In a word, it is the tendency of class struggle unionism. Although this tendency has deep historical roots, its organizational expressions in the United States today are very weak. Today's unions are completely dominated by a different historic tendency in the labor movement: class collaborationist unionism."

"The strangle-hold the class collaborationists have on the union will not be easily broken. While most workers are unhappy about the way the union is, they are discouraged, don't believe anything can be done, don't know where to start or who to trust. Today, they read our class struggle publications and consider what we have to say. On this or that issue, they may be willing to follow our lead. They are glad the publication comes out, but are not yet willing to follow us."

The class struggle publication exists for two purposes. It tries to raise the overall level of understanding and struggle of the workers giving what concrete leadership it actually can. And it serves as a center to attract the best militants in the plant, a center around which they can be grouped and educated, a center for coordinating their activities.

We project our shop publications as organs of class struggle unionism, written for the mass of workers in the shop and concretely applying class struggle unionism to the problems of the shop, the local union, the international, the labor movement, and society as a whole. At the same time, we try to educate those attracted to the publication to the program of class struggle unionism itself -- try to win them to a self-conscious, self-identity as class struggle unionists.

We should in no way view building such publications and publication groups as an alternative or as a substitute for building or participating in rank and file caucuses or to participating in the campaigns and struggles that actually exist, or to trying to launch broad campaigns and struggles. Rather this should be viewed as both a way of strengthening our ability to do these things and as a way of utilizing each of these experiences in working to develop a broad cadre of class struggle militants.

## VI

The I.S. should adopt the following specific proposals for our auto work:

1. We should draft and adopt for use a brief statement of principles to be entitled: "The Principles of Class Struggle Unionism". They should be written in clear, simple, sloganistic form and should embody the six points listed on page 7 of our Labor Perspectives document. (A first draft of this is almost ready.) These principles represent in the most concise and general form, our labor program: the principles which most clearly differentiate our labor policy from that of the class collaborationist bureaucrats.

2. The following popular mass literature, probably in brief pamphlet form should be written:

a. A more detailed explanation and discussion of each of the Principles of Class Struggle Unionism.

b. A popular presentation of I.S. Labor Perspectives (auto perspective) framed as a concrete labor program that flows from the Principles of Class Struggle Unionism.

c. A brief pamphlet that includes the following: historical roots of Class Struggle Unionism; Economic and political reasons why this historical tendency in American labor has, over the past 20 years, has almost disappeared organizationally; the reasons why, despite its organizational disappearance, a class struggle current has always existed; why, the changing world and domestic economic and political conditions point to the likelihood and possibilities of the massive reemergence of an organized Class Struggle Tendency within American labor; and finally exhortation to dedicate oneself to building a movement within American labor dedicated to the Principles of Class Struggle Unionism.

3. In plants where we put out rank and file auto bulletins, I.S. members show our closest contacts who work with us on these publications The Principles of Class Struggle Unionism, explain to them that we believe these bulletins represent a practical, day to day, agitational implicit expression of these principles. While making it clear that one does not have to accept The Principles to continue working with us on the bulletins, put heavy emphasis on winning contacts to an understanding of these principles, and where possible to a self-identity as loyal Class Struggle Unionists grouped around the publication. In plants where we now have shop publications try where feasible and possible to build them. In any case, try to win individual workers to the Principles of Class Struggle Unionism to the extent possible.

4. Popularize among our contacts that to further the influence of Class Struggle Unionism, we must participate in all genuine progressive caucuses, campaigns, struggles, etc. even where these are not as consistently committed to Class Struggle Principles as we. Where possibilities to build broader rank and file caucuses exist, we should seize them. But wherever we can, we should attempt to maintain our independent class struggle publications. We take every advantage of every activity, every campaign, every struggle, to win workers to class struggle principles. We view this goal as equal and complimentary to our goal of doing all possible to raise the general level of class struggle.

5. Win our class struggle contacts to the view that at decisive moments, even a small trained group of class struggle militants can give mass leadership and can have a tremendous influence. We can expect that at just such moments, broader groupings in the union of progressive character, but with bureaucratic or collaborationist tendencies will usually become paralyzed and unable to act. It is at these points that the existence of consistent class struggle militants becomes critical -- they can lead the struggle forward while others vacillate. Project the need for winning masses of workers to a dedication to Class Struggle Principles. But take care to generate no illusions as to how easily or quickly, or stably this can be done.

6. Attempt to build up a citywide milieu of class struggle militants. To begin with, this means attempting to bring I.S. contacts from various plants who have been won to class struggle principles into contact with one another. As a concrete first step toward developing this milieu, and as a means of systematizing our contact work, we should launch a modest publication. It should not be explicitly published by the I.S. At the same time, we should in no way try to hide or cover up the fact that it is put out by I.S. members. (It should include a regular ad for W.P.) This publication should be aimed at autoworkers, but not to the mass of auto workers and not for mass sales or distribution. It should be aimed at workers either already won to, or at least open to the Principles of Class Struggle Unionism. We should attempt to get all of our auto contacts to subscribe, and we should treat its list of subscribers as our active auto contact list. Its contents should include: educational pieces on class struggle unionism; popular and brief explanation and argumentation for the I.S. current auto line argued as the line of class struggle unionism; facts and information of interest to auto class struggle unionists; what's going on -- demos, meetings, etc. ideas for action; letters.

We should organize basic contact work around systematic follow-up discussions of articles in publication. Our goal is to have contacts in different plants who have been convinced of the same basic principles, and who go through discussion of same questions. At the point where this has been established, we may be ready to use the publication to call meetings or forums of auto workers. Workers from different plants will have a common basis of reference to one another. These will be meetings of class struggle unionists. We also leave open the possibility of this publication developing mass literature aimed at the general autoworker population on a citywide or industrywide basis. The possibility exists when the publication has a network of supporters who would help to pay for and distribute such lit which could be seen as a compliment to our local bulletins.

Our goal is to develop a milieu of auto workers who: 1) We can convince to work with us in trying to carry out the broader tasks suggested by our labor perspective; and 2) We can view as a recruiting ground for the I.S. More specifically, our emphasis should be in establishing this as a milieu which has a largely black character. Black workers, who we have so far not learned how to recruit to the I.S. should be much more easily won to becoming part of such a milieu. This in turn lays the basis for closer and more systematic political contact between I.S. members and black workers -- a precondition for our ability to recruit blacks. Even black intellectuals

who are attracted to our politics will be more open to joining our organization if we have a black worker milieu around it.

This approach is not suggested as something that can be fully implemented overnight. Nor is it a substitute for or a replacement for the range of tasks laid out in the auto document under discussion. But acceptance or rejection of this approach seriously colors the actual content of what it means to accept or reject various specifics in the auto document under discussion.

As a word of caution in carrying this out. Care must be taken to avoid drawing sharp organizational lines. Our rank and file publications should not be projected to be organizationally affiliated to The Publication nor even explicitly committed, in organizational terms, to The Principles of Class Struggle Unionism. This may develop down the road -- but that's still a long way off. Enough to say that the I.S. members, as leading individuals in these publications are supporters of The Principles of Class Struggle Unionism and are supporters of The Publication. Similarly, care should be taken to avoid premature attempts to crystalize a loose milieu around the publication into a formal organization, or even to project this as a desired goal.

This proposal elevates the role we ascribe to our shop publications. To the extent possible, we should see them as vehicles to bring stability and continuity to our work in the shops. Over a period of years, several caucuses, slates, campaigns, etc. will come and go. The publications can survive the ups and downs of the changing situation in the plants. They can provide for us, a stable political identity in the shop, and a stable framework from which to relate to contacts. Over the long haul, they can enhance the reputation of our comrades as people who always stick with it.

More important, this approach makes it easier to take political advantage of the actual work we do. In the past, we have tended to approach each project, each campaign as a thing in itself. We might round up people to work on a project, to hand out a leaflet, to take part in an election campaign, etc,etc. It was difficult to show how this fragment of activity fit into the larger whole. In fact, though unintentionally, we tended to relate to plant contacts as if they were little more than means toward carrying out our projects, which tended to seem as the real goals. Each time the fight, the project, the campaign ended we were back to start. We rarely were effective in using the opportunities created by these activities to carry out more general political educational work. For instance, while we might have effectively convinced a contact of this or that project, we found it difficult to convince them of a broader perspective out of which these projects flowed. The result was a failure to help our contacts become politically self-conscious and self-sufficient.

One could ascribe this to political inexperience or incompetence or lazyness. Certainly, nothing prevented our members from doing better political education work with contacts. But we have in the past failed to develop systematic work methods in which our comrades could be trained in carrying out this work.

The Principles of Class Struggle Unionism and the approach described



provide a tool to overcome this. It enables us to motivate each activity campaign etc as more than a good thing in itself but also as contributing to a greater goal, as part of a long term continuing perspective. This gives us much easier opportunities to lay out much more of our politics and helps generate a much greater self-conscious self-awareness of the significance of each fragmented activity. The approach described helps take much of the burden off individual comrades to figure out for themselves effective means of functioning in the shops. It provides a basic format for I.S. activity and gives comrades more guidance on how to function, on what is expected of them, and most important gives them guidance about what kind of things they should focus on in talking to contacts.

A bridge to revolutionary politics is provided. T.P.O.C.S.U. represents a limited set of ideas that aren't overwhelming to someone new to them, as is the total range of revolutionary Marxism. They are ideas that militants can be convinced of on the basis of their own experiences. They are ideas that can easily be learned and mastered. Hopefully individuals can be won to a self-confident commitment to these principles as something they believe in.

Militants committed to these principles can be developed into a milieu the I.S. should be able to recruit out of in a way we now have been unable. I.S. is a revolutionary Marxist organization. Class Struggle Unionism is one of the things we stand for, but we stand for more as well. We hold that anyone who really believes in class struggle unionism, have ideas if whose logic will take them to revolutionary conclusions. To make a revolution, a party trained in the science of Marxism is needed. We must convince our class struggle contacts of this, convince them to become Marxist and to join the I.S. as the most consistent extension of their class struggle politics. For us, class struggle unionism is the bridge from trade union politics to Revolutionary Marxism and the I.S.

But, at the same time, what is involved is much more than just a better method of contact work. It is a method of projecting our labor vision our long term perspective in our day to day work. It will be necessary for our comrades to take and reel, to maneuver, to enter into all kinds of alliances, and questionable company in the course of our practical labor work. Our class struggle publications and approach will help us maintain our moorings and our distinctive identity throughout. Our comrades will come to have a political identity greater than the sum of their day to day trade union activities. This will be even more important for the cadre we recruit in the shops than it is now for those we have sent in. People who join the I.S. will expect us to provide them with a way of functioning that puts what is unique about our politics into practice.

Critique of John Weber's "Preliminary Draft" Document  
Bill H.

John Weber performs a valuable service by providing for the first time the beginnings of a serious evaluation of our auto work in Detroit and attempting to come to grips with some of the problems we have encountered. In general there are two, related, points which John raises in his document. One is on the question of the need to educate militants and our contacts in the politics of class struggle unionism and in our overall labor perspective. Secondly that we should be for the development and existence of 'publication groups' which can put forward in bulletins the politics of class struggle unionism and survive all the ups and downs of the class struggle, even if these groups represent little more than ourselves.

The first part -- that of educating our contacts and militants on class struggle unionism -- is correct. It was a major emphasis in the labor perspectives adopted at the 1973 Convention which talked about the need to renew the process of developing a self-conscious layer of rank and file leaders who understand the struggle as being broader than an individual shop or union local. John is correct in emphasizing it again since in many ways it has been one of our largest failings. Currently in Detroit the number of militants who could honestly be judged to share with us the basics of our labor perspectives could be counted on one hand. So I share John's concern about this question.

But it is in the second point that John raises -- that of having as a strategy publication groups which may represent little more than ourselves -- where I believe he is wrong and may lead to some disastrous outcomes. John's argument and conclusions are based on his analysis of what has happened in the years we have been active in the UAW and on where he feels we have had some success and failure.

The main problem is that John discusses all the plants in a vacuum; that is abstractly. Of course, he will say that a lot of that discussion is taken up elsewhere. But he bases his conclusions on his analysis of what happened and not that put forward anywhere else. By omitting such factors as the general level of the class struggle, his analysis is one sided and his conclusions, therefore, are wrong.

What John doesn't examine is the general level of class struggle and the state of the economy and their impact on the consciousness of the workers we want to reach -- particularly auto workers. In the 1973 labor perspectives we drew certain different conclusions than we had before precisely because we took into account the affect of the NEP, of the defeat of the unions in the previous bargaining round, the national decline of working class activity, the collapse of almost every group from DRUM to TURF, etc. We stated then that we did not think there would be as rapid a growth of the rank and file movement nor the stability to its organizations that we had previously thought possible. The effect of this in auto, is the need to understand the volatile nature of rank and file activity on the part of production workers, particularly black workers, and to procede from there. In arguing that the only things we have been successful in is the organizing of propoganda groups even though we thought we were doing something else, one must take into account the condition of the rank and file movement in industry in general and their relationship to the class struggle.

What is the importance of this question? The last few years in auto has been by and large a period of defeat for the ranks. John argues that what we should be doing is what he thinks we were able to do in such a period. If he thinks this is going to continue, that is one thing. If he doesn't then he is laying the basis for us to miss a rank and file upsurge. But he has to base his perspectives on some idea of what is going to happen.

John says that his proposal elevates the role we ascribe to our shop publications. But in fact it does not do that at all. In arguing for his perspective because that is what we have been able to do and to then say that we should use these publications as being much more the center of what we do is to take a step backward. It is important that this be clearly understood. John's proposal coming after 2½ years in auto virtually all of which was a period of defeat for the ranks, is a step backward, a retreat from the perspective of building rank and file groups. Although John motivates this by saying that we haven't been able to do it so far and there are no signs that we can in the future, he does not state whether he thinks we are in the same sort of period we have been in. Are things going to remain the same in the auto industry? I don't think so. It seems to me that the recession will have the effect of both cutting down on spontaneous activity directed towards the corporations and at the same time lay the basis for opening up political possibilities for us. The watergate stuff will also have its effect. This doesn't mean that we will recruit dozens of workers, but it means that educating workers on our labor perspectives is both possible and necessary now. And this means we will use a variety of tactics, including publications.

Shop bulletins are important to us primarily because they are a way to work with militants around us and secondarily as a means of being our voice. That is why, where possible, we should be attempting to build publications and caucuses out of actual struggles. That is what our general perspective should be. For various reasons, there may be times when we want to put out a publication that only represents us. However, our strategy still must remain laying the basis for and the building of rank and file groups which involve us and others in the plants.

The main problems I see in John's discussion of each local situation, and in very brief form what I am for doing is as follows:

-- Plant #1: What John says about this plant is alright but it is not complete. This was the caucus that for a long time was held up to the organization as a model and as the best group we were in. It had a long and fairly complete program, faithfully put forward in each issue of its paper. We had fought within it several times for an attitude of opposition to the International Leadership. We made progress in this direction. One of the leaders then went and participated in the goon squad used to break the actions of the fired workers at Mack. Despite having a program and principles, the real question was what happened when push came to shove; when there was some real activity in another plant that the group had to relate to.

John implies that our position was weakened there as a result of not having a bulletin we could speak through. But I believe that it was far more significant that we were not able to pull together a large portion of the broader group around us against and despite the actions of the one leader

in the goon squad. Without any of the others in the group agreeing with us on this, a bulletin would have been of little value at the time. Because of the specific problems at this plant, I am for putting out with some of our contacts another bulletin which must take up the question of what happened to the old group. But I am for this largely because the left wing (us) of the old group never issued anything after the scab action took place. I completely disagree with John that we are basically back to the beginning there.

-- Plant #2: Again the discussion is okay for what it says but what it doesn't say is really the crucial question. At plant #2 we participated in a whole series of struggles this summer involving anywhere from a few to 50 or more workers including a large (though disastrous) event at the end of the summer. Yet in some of those events, we did not feel that the publication we were putting out would be seen as an authentic voice of the struggle and therefore did not put it out. (The publication was definitely seen as an authentic voice of some workers in the plant.) This happened more than once.

Why was this? The bulletin at this plant was initiated by us and put out largely by ourselves because of our plans to move people in the broader group. Yet time after time we had to convince militants there of this or that tactic, leaflet, or maneuver. As we took part in one event after another (which was correct for us to do) few of our friends went through all the same struggles with us. What we should be doing at plant #2 is putting out the publication again because of the significance of what it not coming out means. However, I am for it on a different basis. That is, it should be put out by more than just ourselves, even if that means it will not be as sharp politically, that it comes out late, or not as often.

-- Plant #3: I am for continuing the publication we began here. However, if we are able to work with another in-plant group as part of the delegate elections and can get something ongoing from it, then it would be sectarian to continue our publication. We should drop it at that point if there is something real, and not maintain it as a separate publication, apart from the broader group. In general, I think it is more important to be working with other militants on a publication that doesn't express only our point of view than it is to have a "class struggle unionism" organ in the plant that virtually only ourselves is putting out.

-- Plant #4: Again it is what is missing from John's discussion that is really the crucial point. In this case it is that the key individual who is interested in taking responsibility for organizing a somewhat broader group in part wants to do this because he believes our publication is too radical to sustain a real group around it. He feels it would be very difficult if not impossible to break through the isolation that causes due to things like red baiting, etc. So the relationship between our publication here and a potentially broader group is nowhere near as clear as John makes it out to be. There are far more problems involved. If we can get a real, ongoing group out of the slate then we should be willing to drop our paper provided our point of view will have a place in a broader publication. We still insist on our right, at some point in the future, to put out something with more of our political approach in it. I don't believe it is as easy to maintain narrow and broad publications at the same time as John seems to think it is.

--Plant 5: We are relatively weak and there is a broader group of mixed character here. John is for our moving towards initiating a publication group at this plant. I believe that instead this would serve to isolate us at worse and to do nothing for us at best. Instead, we and our contacts should pursue an aggressive policy of attempting to push the broader group on political and action questions and force at some point a break between the best and worst elements in it. To do this we should with our contacts run independently for things like steward or delegate, and solicit the backing of the broader grouping. In this way we are able to both speak directly with the people in the broader group and be free of the bureaucratic restraints of their program. At the same time what is important is to use the campaigns as not just an electoral campaign (which is what the broader group will want to do) but to use it for activity against the corporation and union bureaucracy as well. By doing this we are in the best position to influence the broader group in this direction--that is taking action. And it is here that the test will come. Any group that forms in that plant now, be it a publication group or otherwise, would be seen as organized opposition to the broader group. Before we do that, we better know damn well what we are doing. I do not believe that is what we want to do nor do I believe that we have the basis yet for any ongoing group.

John goes on to say that there are basically two kinds of groups we have been involved in: 1) those dependent on the IS and 2) those with indigenous worker leadership. But this is hardly a useful distinction for us to make. In fact, if we were analyzing some other political group, this is not the distinction we would make about them. After all, most organized movements are initiated and/or led by political types whether Revolutionaries, liberals, Social Democrats, or something else; they are generally led by someone with a broader view of things. As Marxists, what is important for us is: What movement/section/force/ layer of the working class does that organization represent? And, of course, that is not an easy question since it involves such things as composition, size, program, etc., etc. In general, the bulletins at plants # 2,3, and 4, while they have many people around them and have often done very good work, do not represent much more than ourselves.

John says, "We have not yet shown we can develop broad groups of the type we want. We have not even demonstrated that what we do actually contributes toward developing stable broad caucuses of the type we desire." He then goes on to say that we need to develop a cadre of class conscious elements capable of leading the class struggle. But do publications groups enable us to do this? In some cases they may, in general though the answer is no. So the question really remains, I believe, of what is the most effective way to develop a cadre of class conscious militants?

We are concerned primarily at this point in time (not necessarily forever) with being in an ongoing relationship with militants in the process of moving leftward. It is on the basis of this work -- patient educational work, joint activity, etc. -- that we lay the basis for establishing these

people and many of our own members as the future leaders of the class struggle. Hence in general we reject things that tend to isolate us for reasons other than principle. Therefore, in my eyes, the use of publications groups -- that is, groups which put out bulletins even if that group represents no more than ourselves -- may or may not be correct. But it is a tactic and not a strategy for our intervention in the class struggle. It may be in some cases that we have to be in a given situation for some time -- one year, two years or more -- before we have achieved a situation in which we have the legitimacy and co-thinkers necessary to sustain a group which could, potentially, represent more than ourselves. This doesn't mean that we hide for two years or that we never put out a leaflet or bulletin without a mass group behind us. Instead it means to understand that if we agree on the centrality of educating people in our broader view of labor work, then we use many tactics which do not isolate us.

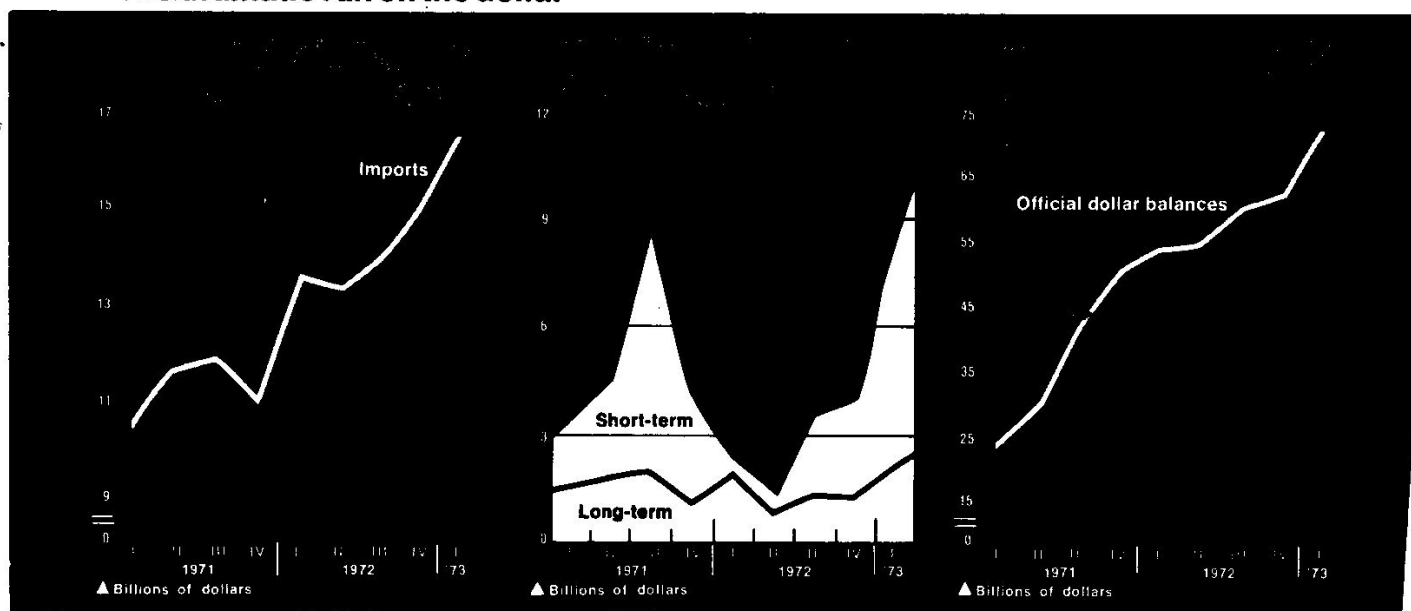
John says, "There are individuals who may follow our lead on this or that issue, but few that we have been able to win to a coherent understanding of these activities." To overcome this problem requires not having the best program on paper (as in plant #1) nor a large group of people distributing what was essentially an IS publication (as in plant #2) but the ongoing working relationship between ourselves and other militants.

John says near the end of his document that one of the two reasons for the existence of class struggle publications is that "...it serves as a center to attract the best militants in the plant, a center around which they can be grouped and educated, a center for coordinating their activities." But we were not able to do this even when we considered that what we were building were rank and file caucuses in which people who didn't agree with everything we said could feel that they could influence the direction of the publication. We were not able to bring the workers in struggle at plant #1 around the publication even though that one was a broad group. We never succeeded in bringing the workers involved in the different events at plant #2 around -- at least to the point of believing that it could legitimately speak for the workers in motion. We didn't succeed in bringing the workers in motion at plant #3 around either. Things could change rapidly here but the best situation could well be a larger, real group and the dumping of our bulletin. At plant #4 somewhat of a case can be made for what John is saying. But one out of four is not a good basis for making conclusions like this. It shows instead precisely what I am saying: that the use of a publication group may or may not be the correct tactic to use.

Finally, John says that we are of course for the continued efforts to build rank and file groups. He has made it clear to me that he believes that we should be pushing these groups towards also adopting the principles of class struggle unionism. But John never deals with the potential of a publication group isolating us as it might.

I believe that John's document should be defeated. By the time there are any votes I will have some specific motions to clarify the meaning of some questions one way or another. A fuller discussion of what I believe we should be doing is put forward in the labor perspectives from 1973 and my auto document taken together.

## The dramatic run on the dollar



▲ Billions of dollars  
Data: Commerce Dept.

### ECONOMICS

# Why the dollar falls

If the U.S. dollar were a corporate stock, Wall Street analysts would have no trouble explaining its continuing drop in value this year. They would note that:

- Too many dollars have been created, and there is a huge, undigested balance hanging over world markets.
- Holders of dollars have been bruised by two devaluations that cut the "par" value of their holdings by 18%. The steady slide of the dollar under the system of floating rates adopted last March has added to their disillusionment.
- The economic prospects of the issuer (the U.S.) are clouded by inflation and the possibility of a runaway boom that could turn into recession. The management (the Administration) appears to have lost control of the economy.
- Representatives of the management have made too many conflicting statements. By talking too much, they have raised serious doubts about the earnestness of their efforts to stop inflation.
- Top management has become involved in a scandal that distracts its attention from economic affairs and may impair its ability to govern.

Any one of these complaints would justify putting a stock on an analyst's "sell" list. Taken collectively, they have

put the dollar on the sell list of banks, corporations, and wealthy individuals all over the world. The result has been a steady decline of the dollar in terms of the amount of other currencies it can buy. For the dollar has no fixed exchange rate today. It is floating, and when currencies float, their values behave very much like stock prices.

The dollar, however, is not a stock. It is a currency—the official medium of exchange used by the biggest economy in the world, the currency in which most of the world's trade is conducted, and the currency most widely held in the reserves of other nations.

The postwar economic boom was built on the dollar. When its value changes drastically in relation to other currencies, competitive relations change. New markets open to some producers, and old markets close to others. And when the dollar is pushed down to a level far below anything justified by comparative price levels—as it is now in relation to the West German mark—trade relations are violently disrupted.

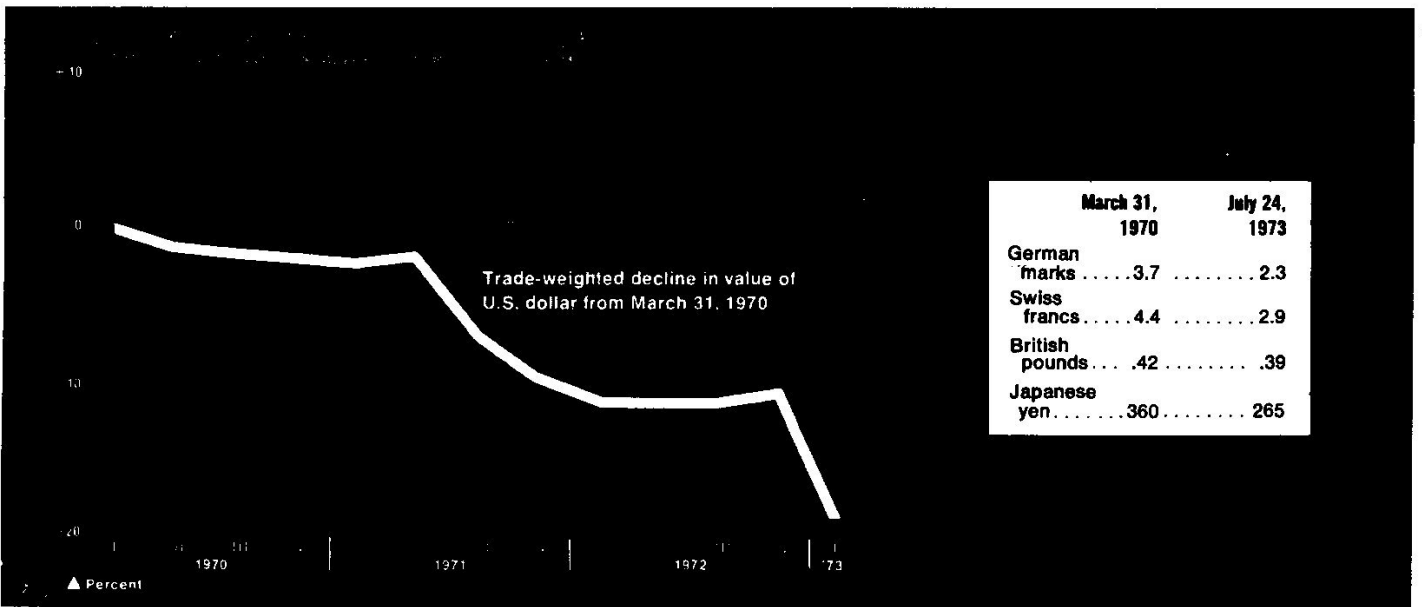
The longer the undervaluation of the dollar continues, the more the strain on the U.S. economy will build up. Foreign buyers already have bid up the prices of U.S. agricultural products, lumber, and other raw materials. This

will help the U.S. balance of payments, but it will add to inflation in the U.S. economy. So will the higher prices on essential imports, particularly oil. For the near future, the U.S. must depend heavily on petroleum imports. Under-valued dollars add to the cost.

The bargain-counter dollar, moreover, has appeared at a time when U.S. exporters are least able to take advantage of it. Gustaf Coontz, director of the U.S. Trade Center at Frankfurt, says: "We've experienced a major increase in the number of inquiries from German companies wanting to buy from American suppliers. But the problem is getting American companies to take up the interest. There is such a boom in the U.S. at present that most American companies we contact have their hands full dealing with domestic orders."

To add insult to injury, American companies may find foreign capital taking them over. At today's dollar prices, many stocks of U.S. companies are bargains to the investor who has marks or yen.

This is not a problem that can be solved by a quick international agreement to reestablish fixed exchange rates. If the rates set up by the Smithsonian agreement in December, 1971, could have been held, the central bank-



ers of the world would have held them. They bought \$20-billion trying to make those rates stick. But too many dollars came into the market. The banks had to give up and let the dollar sink. If they tried to establish a new fixed-rate structure now, they would be swamped again.

In a real sense, it is not just the dollar that is in trouble. It is all the currencies in the non-Communist world. The modern network of world banking and modern methods of transfer make it possible to mobilize attacks against a currency on a scale never imagined in the old days of boat mail and cable. So long as a currency is fully convertible into other currencies, it is theoretically possible to throw the credit-creating powers of all the banks in the world up against it, because all their deposits are convertible into that currency. This, in effect, is what happened to the dollar in 1971, 1972, and the first half of 1973. But the pendulum could swing the other way. Next time, the mark, or the franc, or the yen could be the target, with people dumping these currencies to buy undervalued dollars.

Some of the selling that has driven the dollar down has been pure speculation. Sharpshooters all over the world have seen an opportunity to borrow dollars and convert them into something else—marks have been the favorite. When the dollar hits what they think is its low, they will switch back, pay off the loan, and pocket the difference.

But that is only part of the story. Multinational corporations shifted huge balances to their foreign subsidi-

aries. Banks moved more money to overseas branches. U. S. importers with bills to pay in foreign currencies rushed to settle them before the dollar sank any more. And overseas buyers of U. S. goods dragged their feet on payment, hoping to get the dollars they needed at a still lower rate. It is hard to call this speculation. From the standpoint of the people involved, it looks like plain, common sense. The housewife who waits for the January white sales to buy her sheets is doing essentially the same thing.

Next week, the finance ministers of 20 nations will meet in Washington to draw the outlines of a new international monetary system, one in which the cumulation of thousands of common sense decisions will not turn into a run on the dollar or any other currency. Their target is to have something to present to the September meeting of the International Monetary Fund in Nairobi, but that probably is an unrealistic timetable. World currency markets are too upset, and confidence in the dollar is too shaky for agreement on any system now. The float will have to continue until the future of the U. S. economy is clearer and a realistic value can be put on the dollar. The most that the central bankers can do now is intervene from time to time to keep the currency markets from coming apart.

#### The soaring eagle

Weakness in the dollar was one thing that did not worry the financial experts who met in the rambling sum-

mer hotel at Bretton Woods, N. H., toward the end of World War II to design an international monetary system for the postwar world. Nor did it occur to anyone to worry about the dollar in the late 1940s, when the International Monetary Fund set up shop under the Bretton Woods agreement. The problem then was the dollar gap. The U. S. was the source of all good things—nylons, cigarettes, food, tools, machinery, autos. The problem was for war-wrecked Europe and Japan to find ways of scratching up dollars to pay for their imports. It took the Marshall Plan and an enormous, continuing program of U. S. aid to get the rest of the world running again.

The dollar, quite naturally, was the foundation of the international monetary system as well as its benchmark. Other countries stated the value of their currencies in terms of dollars, and then struggled—sometimes vainly—to avoid devaluation, which would raise the price of desperately needed imports. The dollar was the *numeraire*, the basic reserve currency of the system and the unit of account in its transactions. It also became the intervention currency, the one that was bought or sold when a central bank intervened to keep its currency from drifting away from its stated rate.

In addition to giving direct aid, the U. S. officially encouraged imports to build dollar earnings for foreign producers. U. S. negotiators on tariffs took it for granted that they would give more concessions than they got. The Commerce Dept. put the welcome mat out for retailers who wanted help in



## Money men with international money problems



Richard Knapp, Grant Combler—BW

**United States:** Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns (left) and Treasury Secretary George Shultz still push the U. S. plan for combining international monetary reform with major trade concessions for the U. S. Neither seems to be worried about undervaluation. Burns is cautious about support operations; Shultz thinks the market will set the right rate eventually.



MM—MB—nop/S. UBER

**Germany:** Karl Klasen (left), president of the Deutsche Bundesbank, and Helmut Schmidt, Minister of Economic Affairs & Finance, manage the world's most wanted currency, but the job holds little satisfaction. Germany's tight-money policy and high interest rates have sucked money from all over the world into the mark. The Bundesbank's efforts to stop the rise of the mark by buying dollars has fed inflation.

lining up a list of foreign suppliers.

The U. S. also encouraged overseas investment by American corporations and banks. It offered tax breaks and consular assistance to companies that wanted to set up overseas operations, and it welcomed foreign borrowers to the U. S. capital markets. National policy was to push the dollars out, never mind how.

The policy succeeded so well that it eventually destroyed the Bretton Woods system. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, net capital outflows from the U. S. ran about \$1.5-billion a year—small potatoes by today's inflated standards but big money in those days.

By 1960, when the net liquidity balance of U. S. accounts showed a deficit of \$3.7-billion, foreign bankers began to complain. Central bankers and economists read stern lectures to the U. S. on the dangers of a chronic deficit in the balance of payments. The lectures, however, were not backed up by any real pressure for change. U. S. deficits were providing the liquidity that financed the continuing expansion of world trade. Foreigners grumbled, but they banked the dollars all the same.

Protecting the dollar was an issue—though not a major one—in the 1962 election. At that time, the level of U. S. interest rates was considerably lower than rates overseas. The U. S., so the theory went, was offering the world bargain money, and this was why dollars were going out. Acting on this theory, President Kennedy imposed an interest equalization tax in 1963. Later, President Johnson imposed voluntary

limits on bank lending abroad, and corporations were first asked and then ordered to hold down the expansion of overseas investment.

These restrictions slowed the visible outflow of investment dollars, but the world monetary system has a way of frustrating attempts to manipulate it. The restraints on capital exports fostered a sudden expansion of the Eurodollar market, a curious institution that still defies attempts to analyze and measure its effects.

The Eurodollar market deals in dollar balances held by banks outside the U. S. including foreign branches of U. S. banks. These balances originate in the ordinary way—by payments for U. S. imports or long-term lending of U. S. funds overseas for investment. At the beginning of the process, each Eurodollar represents a dollar on deposit somewhere in the U. S., but the European holder does not turn it in for collection. He lends it, and the borrower redeposits it elsewhere.

Economists have argued vigorously about the extent to which Eurodollar balances are expanded by the chain of transactions that involve them, but the point is really academic. So long as dollars can be obtained—and there has been no problem about that since the 1950s—any bank overseas can make a loan denominated in dollars, confident that it can buy the dollars in the open market if any subsequent borrower asks for transfer. In effect, the theoretical limit on the size of the Eurodollar market is no less than the total lending power of all banks participating in the market.

With access to U. S. markets limited by the interest equalization tax and bank-lending restrictions, foreign borrowers and affiliates of U. S. corporations turned to the Eurodollar market. And as rates went up, the market drew more and more capital from all around the world, including transfers from the U. S. For the holder of a dollar balance overseas, the Eurodollar market offered an alluring alternative to investing in U. S. securities and thereby returning the money to its origin.

### The trade winds change

Through the early 1960s, the merchandise trade balance of the U. S.—the difference between export earnings and import costs—comforted anyone who was worried about the dollar. It climbed to a healthy surplus of \$6.8-billion in 1964, offsetting a substantial part of the continuing capital outflows. But toward the end of the 1960s, the balance began to wobble. The Vietnam War inflation chopped into overseas markets for U. S. goods at the same time that it stimulated a surge in imports. By 1967, the merchandise surplus had shrunk to \$3.8-billion. And in 1968, it was a scant \$635-million. It rallied in 1970, and then—to the horror of Americans and Europeans alike—it swung into deficit in 1971, the first U. S. deficit in modern times.

Europeans pointed to the U. S. inflation rate and blamed the U. S. for irresponsible fiscal and monetary management. But inflation was only part of the story. The rebuilding of industry in Europe and Japan had increased



Joan Sydlow—BW

**France:** Finance Minister Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (left) and Olivier Wormser, governor of the Banque de France, would like to give gold a bigger role in any future international monetary system. France has been the sharpest critic of what it calls U. S. "exported inflation." The French economy would benefit from the decline of the franc in relation to the mark, since Germany is its biggest trading partner within the EEC.



Joan Sydlow—BW; Pictorial Parade

**Britain:** Chancellor of the Exchequer Anthony Barber (left) and Lord O'Brien, governor of the Bank of England, have problems with the pound. A new member of the Common Market, Britain elected to stay out of the joint float, fearing that revaluation of the pound would wipe out its export markets. Since March, the pound has stayed closer to the dollar than to the "snake."

their ability to compete with the U. S. in world markets, but the exchange rates of their currencies had not been shifted to reflect this change. West Germany and Japan, in particular, dragged their feet on revaluing the mark and the yen. They wanted undervalued currencies because this gave them a trading advantage.

The Bretton Woods system almost went to pieces in 1968. As central banks built up more dollar balances than they wanted, they kept turning them in for gold. U. S. gold reserves slipped from \$23-billion in 1950 to \$12-billion at the end of 1967. Private buyers in London and Zurich began to push the dollar price of gold well above the official price of \$35 an oz. In early 1968, the move into gold began to look like a panic. And in mid-March, the U. S. and its leading trading partners agreed to cut official gold loose from private gold. Central banks promised they would neither buy nor sell gold in the private market. And major creditors of the U. S. quietly agreed that they would not ask for gold.

This shaky system lasted until August, 1971. Then it came apart. The continuing U. S. inflation and demand for imports drove the merchandise balance to a deficit of \$917-million in the second quarter. Capital flows, both short-term and long-term, picked up speed (chart). Private holders no longer wanted dollars, and to keep their currencies at the agreed rates foreign central banks had to soak up huge dollar balances that were dumped on the market. On Aug. 15, President Nixon declared that official dollar holdings were

no longer convertible into gold. At that point, other nations stopped buying dollars to maintain official rates. This left the dollar floating.

The period of floating currencies was a time of turmoil, but one in which the trading nations of the world learned some important lessons. John Connally, then Secretary of the Treasury, toured the world arguing that U. S. trading partners—especially West Germany and Japan—would have to revalue their currencies to make U. S. goods more attractive and U. S. imports more expensive. The U. S., he said, had to have a better break on tariffs and nontariff trade restrictions. And countries running a chronic balance-of-payments surplus had to take responsibility for bringing their trade into balance.

Just at the end of 1971, central bankers and finance ministers of the major trading nations met at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington and put a temporary system together. The U. S. devalued the dollar 8%. Germany revalued the mark another 5%, and Japan revalued the yen 8%. Other nations found their places somewhere in between.

#### The pact collapses

The Smithsonian agreement lasted for just a year. Then it foundered on the same rocks that had wrecked Bretton Woods. Though the U. S. got what it wanted in the way of rate readjustments, the results were slow to appear in the balance of trade. The first response of money flows to a devaluation is always likely to be perverse. De-

valuation of the dollar meant that U. S. importers had to pay more dollars for the marks, yen, and francs they needed to pay their bills. And U. S. exporters got fewer dollars for the currencies they earned overseas. This pattern changes gradually as bargain prices attract foreign buyers and the higher prices discourage imports. But it takes time.

In 1972, the U. S. merchandise trade deficit jumped to almost \$7-billion. Capital flows eased up in the first half of the year and then began to climb in the second half. The Smithsonian machinery obviously was in no condition to take a bad jolt.

At the opening of 1973 it got not just a jolt but a sledgehammer blow. The announcement of Phase III, with Administration officials talking loosely of "voluntarism," persuaded overseas dollar-watchers that the U. S. did not seriously intend to bring the dollar under control. And the dizzy price jumps that followed confirmed their worst fears. On top of that, the Watergate scandal raised serious questions about the stability of the U. S. government and the capacity of the Nixon Administration to run the country. That was the end of the Smithsonian agreement.

Figures on international balances and money flows are among the most unsatisfactory of all statistics. They are fragmentary, overlapping, and confusing. They put some of the most important data in the column headed "errors and omissions," which usually contains all unrecorded short-term capital flows.

Nevertheless, a look at the figures

for first-quarter 1973 shows the force of the storm that hit the dollar. Short-term capital flows leaped to \$7.5-billion, higher even than the crucial third quarter of 1971. And long-term flows stepped up to \$2.5-billion, suggesting that a substantial amount of money in this account was not really an investment but a bet against the dollar.

Meanwhile, the price of gold in London and Zurich was soaring. The gold market is thin, and it exaggerates investors' reactions. Nevertheless, it mirrors the moods of people with money to hold for the long term. When the gold price shot to successive records, the market was saying that not only the dollar but all currencies were bad risks for the future.

The central banks bought frantically in an effort to hold the Smithsonian exchange rates. Official holdings of dollar balances climbed \$10-billion in the quarter. But the central bankers were the only buyers. Everyone else wanted out. The Federal Reserve's tally of claims held by foreigners against American banks—by no means a complete measure of dollar balances—declined \$1.8-billion. German bankers reported that \$1-billion hit their market in a single hour in February.

In mid-February, President Nixon devalued the dollar an additional 10%. After three tumultuous weeks, European markets closed and did not reopen until mid-March. When trading resumed, the world found itself with something new: a "floating snake."

After the Smithsonian agreement, the six members of the Common Market—Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Italy—agreed to limit the variations of their currencies to 2¼% against one another. Since the Smithsonian permitted variations within a band of 4½%, the currencies of the six nations became "a snake in a tunnel." After the March crisis, the snake was turned into a joint float against the dollar. Italy dropped out, and the three Scandinavian countries joined up.

The snake is an important part of any explanation of the curious behavior of the dollar this summer. Since May, the dollar has been losing steadily in relation to the currencies of the joint float. And this is in spite of the fact that the combination of devaluation and float has driven the dollar well below levels that can be explained by comparative-price theories.

The dollar has remained relatively



George A. Tompkins

**Japan:** Minister of Finance Kiichi Aichi (right) and President Tadashi Sasaki of the Bank of Japan are trying to move the nation toward more balanced trade after years in which the yen was the world's most undervalued currency. Japan has launched a program to invest some of its dollar balances overseas. This could have the perverse effect of putting new selling pressure on the dollar. From March to May this year, the Bank of Japan sold some \$2.5-billion.

stable with respect to the yen, the Canadian dollar, sterling, and the Latin American currencies. Since these account for over 40% of U.S. trade, the decline since May has had only a small effect on the trade-weighted value of the dollar.

Nevertheless, the fall of the dollar suggests that something is still seriously wrong in the money markets. And until the steady deterioration of the dollar is ended, it will be hard to set up any new international arrangements.

Part of the explanation, of course, is the extraordinary strength of the German economy and the high interest rates its money managers have imposed in an effort to damp inflation. West Germany's balance of trade is still running a hefty surplus, despite successive revaluations. And since the U.S. is only one of its customers—and not the most important—devaluation of the dollar will not automatically scale down the German surplus. In a real sense, money flows this summer have been a run into the mark, and the pressure has not been confined to the dollar. The Bundesbank has been forced to buy over 4-billion DM worth of the currencies of other members of the joint float. And the mark has moved from the bottom of the snake to the top, pulling the rest of the float with it.

#### Points of pressure

Everyone agrees that markets have been thin this summer. There is no deluge of dollars or any other currency looking for customers. As the London *Economist* tartly remarks, too much importance should not be attached to a

market in which "deals of over \$10-million have had to be negotiated in several bites, each at a different rate."

The fact remains that there is steady selling pressure on the dollar. Where is it coming from?

Extensive reporting in the money markets suggests that it is coming from a lot of places.

One source clearly is the leads and lags available to ordinary businessmen in paying their bills. When the dollar is sinking, U.S. importers pay promptly to get the best rate possible. Buyers of U.S. goods pay slowly, hoping to get more dollars for their marks or francs. Walter Wriston, chairman of First National City Bank, notes that there is \$1-billion a day in world trade. "If businessmen delay or prepay for seven days, that is \$7-billion that can shift," he says.

Louis Camu, chairman of Banque de Bruxelles, Belgium's second-largest commercial bank, points out that the impact of leads and lags can be multiplied by selling dollar receivables in the forward market. Potentially, he estimates a three-month lead and lag on German trade alone could reach about \$10-billion.

Multinational companies are particularly well fixed to play the leads-and-lags game. German bankers report that multinationals with subsidiaries in Germany postponed payment of dividends to the U.S. parents late last year and early in 1973. In May, 1973, some multinationals prepaid debt due by their subsidiaries in Germany.

There are other sources: British bankers think the Arab oil sheiks have been selling dollars heavily. A Belgian banker reports some oil countries are selling their royalty receipts in the forward market. With the growing dependence of the U.S. on imported oil, this drain could prove to be chronic.

Some central banks that were not parties to the Smithsonian agreement also have been selling dollars. And although the figures are not available yet, there probably is a steady trickle from U.S. banks. In the first quarter of 1973, banks made massive transfers overseas. Loans to foreigners by U.S. banks increased \$1.5-billion, and liquid claims on foreigners (largely deposits) increased \$1.1-billion. But since March, the banks do not seem to have made big movements of dollars.

Some U.S. businessmen say that Nixon Administration officials have encouraged selling by their "mad-

## Playing the game of leads and lags

denyingly passive" attitude toward the under-valued dollar. Both Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns and Treasury Secretary Shultz think the dollar has sunk much too far since the February devaluation, but they differ in their appraisals of the consequences. Burns, the central banker, stresses the problems the falling dollar creates for members of the money-manager fraternity overseas, and he worries about the effect on U. S. inflation. He told a Congressional committee last month: "For the longer run, thinking of a reformed international monetary system, I remain skeptical about the desirability of a general system of floating exchange rates."

Shultz tells visitors that the market is the best mechanism for setting rates in both the short term and the long term. He is not worried by the possibility that foreign buyers will take over U. S. companies, and he seems to think that if the current situation attracts foreign investment, direct or indirect, so much the better.

In any case, the U. S. made no attempt to check the fall of the dollar by intervening in the money markets until early this summer, and then the intervention was on a modest scale. To one multinational executive, this amounts to a policy of "giving the country away."

It will take months to comb out the statistics and determine just where all the selling originates. But one thing already is clear: The dollar has lost its standing as a safe investment. There is still a need for big dollar balances—to finance trade and investment all over the world. But the holders of big dollar balances—whether private individuals, corporations, or banks—no longer feel secure. Where they can, they tend to diversify, moving their assets into currencies, such as the mark and the Swiss franc, that seem more likely to appreciate than to drop. Later, if these currencies falter, the balances will go somewhere else.

### A look at the options

Against this backdrop, finance ministers and central bankers must now try to reach agreement on what sort of system they should set up next. What they will settle on is by no means clear, but it is possible to take a look at some of the major proposals for reform of the international money system and quote some odds on them.

**Continue the float but intervene from time to time to keep the dollar in a reasonable range.** This is the strategy that central bankers have agreed to follow in the period immediately ahead. The Europe-

ans are making their currencies available to the U. S. through an expanded line of "swap" agreements. And the Federal Reserve has begun to intervene somewhat reluctantly to give the dollar occasional support. In the short-term, this can make life more difficult for the speculators, but it is not a long-term solution.

**Return to an old-fashioned gold standard with gold at about \$125 an oz.** The French have been pushing for something like this, but it does not have a chance. Valuing gold at the free market price would enormously inflate the international monetary base. Almost certainly, it would intensify the inflationary trend that now threatens stability in the industrial countries. And when the inflation ran its course, no nation would be willing to go through the wringer of deflation, which is what the gold standard would require.

**Reestablish official exchange rates with broad bands for fluctuations and provision for frequent adjustment.** This almost surely will be part of the eventual answer. The float leaves too much room for speculative swings and short-term variations. A realistic set of rates could be supported by central bank intervention in the short-term. In cases of long-term overvaluation or undervaluation, the currency would keep moving toward a balance point. The Committee for Economic Development, a group of U. S. businessmen, strongly endorsed the principle of controlled flexibility of rates in a policy statement this week. The IMF's group of 20 is expected to come up with some variation of this plan.

**Establish well-defined standards for determining when a change in official rate is necessary.** Logically, this should be part and parcel of any system of official rates. One of the big troubles with Bretton Woods was the failure to provide any mechanism for precipitating an overdue change in rate—either up or down. Politicians were always unable to do what economists agreed should be done. Nations with undervalued currencies tended to resist revaluation for fear of hurting their trade. Nations with overvalued currencies often tried to tough it out instead of devaluing. Logic, however, is not the only consideration in international negotiations. There will be strong resistance from countries—France, for instance—that balk at letting any international agency make economic decisions.

**Fund the dollar balances now held by central banks with long-term U. S. securities.** This would be one way to solve the overhang problem, but until confidence in the dollar is rebuilt, foreign central banks are unlikely to show

much enthusiasm for it. They would rather stay liquid and keep their options open. A substantial part of central-bank dollars already is invested in short-term notes. The central bankers will continue to hold these balances but they will not make a long-term commitment.

**Turn the IMF into a sort of Federal Reserve System of the world.** The fund's credit would become the basis of all national currencies. International balances would be settled in IMF credits. Like the Federal Reserve, the IMF would try to expand credit to provide necessary liquidity without inflation. Scholars like the idea, but the time is not yet. Each nation wants a free hand in dealing with its own economic problems. And the record of the Federal Reserve in the U. S. does not support much confidence in the ability of the IMF to achieve the ideal of growth without inflation. It is probable, however, that the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) already issued by the IMF will be expanded and used to settle international balances. Eventually, the SDRs could become the principal reserve assets of the system.

**Strengthen the ability of the U. S. financial institutions to attract overseas dollars.** This would involve at least two major changes. One would be to remove all controls on capital exports from the U. S. and thereby diminish the importance of the Eurodollar market. The other would be to allow U. S. commercial banks to pay interest on demand deposits. The combination would encourage foreign dollar holders to move their balances to the U. S. Much of the activity that now takes place in the Eurodollar market then would shift to New York. U. S. bankers are strong for the idea. President Nixon already has promised to phase out the capital controls, but the ban on paying interest on demand deposits is likely to stay. It was imposed as part of the bank reform legislation after the 1933 collapse, and it is intended to prevent the pyramiding of deposits that took place in the 1929 boom. Congress will be wary of lifting it regardless of what the banking experts recommend.

If the U. S. in 1973 and 1974 brings its inflation under control and slows its business expansion to a sustainable pace, many of the toughest problems will solve themselves. The great problems in the international money markets today all stem from loss of confidence in the dollar. If that confidence can be restored by a strong economic performance in the U. S. the dollar will come back fast. As Otmar Emminger, deputy chairman of the Bundesbank says, "As soon as traders have something real to grasp, such as a positive balance of payments, the dollar will begin to recover." ■

NOTE:

The following document was solicited by the women's commission to revise our position on the ERA. Will comrades please read it and send suggestions, amendments and etcetera as soon as possible to Barbara W. in Cleveland. The NAC will be having a discussion on the ERA sometime before March 23-25 (date of the Coalition of Labor Union Women Conference) . by BW

THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT ---- Carolyn Greene

The original IS position on the Equal Rights Amendment was decided on in 1970, some time before the amendment passed Congress and went to the states for ratification (Spring of 1972) At that time, we opposed the ERA on the grounds that it would threaten state protective laws which provided women with at least a minimal shield against super exploitation on the job. We called for a "new" ERA, which would guarantee the retention of protective laws through their extension to men.

By now, the amendment has been ratified by all but a few of the necessary thirty-eight states, and will go into effect two years after ratification is completed. Not surprisingly, in the absence of an effective movement of working people to extend protective legislation, Congress never added such a rider to the ERA, and the state-by-state ratification procedure makes a national campaign for such a rider extremely difficult. This situation has placed the I.S. in a quandary, which has been resolved in an ad hoc way of non-support of the ERA. This is an untenable position, I think, for reasons I will discuss below.

First of all, protective legislation has been under devastating attack through application of title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The laws have sometimes been wiped out piecemeal: the Ohio Supreme Court recently (1970) struck down state protective legislation after employers had brought suit against officers of various state agencies on the grounds that the laws were inconsistent with Title VII. In other cases, individual laws have been invalidated. Weight lifting and hours restrictions have been especially under strong attack,

On the other hand, I have found only one case (POTLATCH FORESTS v. HAYS) in which an Arkansas court instructed an employer to extend overtime pay to men as well as women. Even in California, where working women have waged the most effective battle to preserve protective legislation, the courts have simply authorized the management dominated Industrial Welfare Commission to extend laws to men if it sees fit. We can be pretty sure it won't, unless forced to. Even though a few protective laws remain on the books, they simply seem to remain there because they haven't yet been challenged directly. The trend in the courts is overwhelmingly toward abolition of the laws. So, though the employers had intended to use the ERA as a tool to step up the exploitation of women workers; in the absence of a working class defense, sufficient legal means have been found in Title VII.

We shouldn't overlook the fact either, that many of the suits under Title VII and the EEOC Guidelines have been brought by working rather than women in management.\* This strategy, we must point out, is wrong, and the equality offered by the bourgeois courts is a fraud. In some cases, bosses may even manoeuvre women into bringing suits, by placing arbitrary hour and weight limitations on certain job categories, so that the state laws can be struck down. Nevertheless, the suits

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are also the result of an increased women's liberation consciousness on the part of working women. This makes a position of simple non-support of the ERA increasingly untenable among working women (not to mention the remnants of the women's movement). If protective laws still were viable, we would be opportunist to support the ERA as it stands. Since Title VII has already effectively destroyed them, however, our earlier position needs to be changed.

Therefore, the IS should change its position to support the ERA, first, as an affirmation of basic democratic rights. (The ERA's working is: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any state on account of sex.") Second, as a method of raising women's consciousness and combatting sexist ideology.

But, this support must naturally be extremely critical. We must point out continually that the ERA will not end the oppression and super-exploitation of women, and that capitalism is completely unable to grant real equality for women, just as it can't do for Blacks --- despite the Fourteenth amendment and the Civil Rights Act. We must also be relentless in exposing the disastrous effects of Title VII on the lives of working women, with the purpose of showing capitalism's frauds for what they are, and encouraging the development of further struggle. (We can, of course, utilize the ERA in similar ways once it is passed).

In 1970, we were correct in refusing to take the position of supporting the ERA and telling working women to start building up protective legislation again from scratch after the ERA had wiped it out. We underestimated, however, the ability of the bosses to use Title VII for that purpose, because of the working class's failure to mount a strong defense against the employers' offensive in general. Now we are, unfortunately, in the position of starting from scratch, and any campaign against the effects of Title VII must thus be linked with a campaign against the general ruling class offensive against wages and working conditions itself.

The union bureaucrats, however, while giving lip service to the need of protective laws, have made no move toward mounting a campaign for reinstating them or extending them to men. We must continue to call for a militant working women's movement to force the unions to commit their vast resources to such a campaign, and to organize the millions of women unprotected now even by the inadequate and haphazardly enforced protective laws of the past. Linked with this is the call for rank and file activity by both women and men trade unionists to force their unions to fight back against deteriorating wages and conditions in general.

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\* One of the best places to find accounts of individual cases is Vol. I, no. 3 and Vol. I, no. 5 of the Women's Rights Law Reporter, published at 180 University Avenue, Newark, N.J. 07102

On Super-seniority  
by Jack Trautman

In recent months there has arisen a controversy within the IS concerning the raising of the demand for super-seniority. It is no surprise that this demand should become an object of controversy and concern at this time. The increasingly serious recession, with its attendant lay-offs and our need to respond to them with a political line takes the demand out of the archives and makes it a matter to act upon immediately.

The issue was first raised in concrete form by John Weber at the November, 1973 NC. His motion was counterposed to the relevant section of my document on black liberation which was passed at the NC and which is currently the position of the organization. Both motions are reprinted below:

Black liberation perspectives:

Organize the unorganized is a demand which has special significance for blacks who have been left in the worst jobs and often frozen out of the unions. It should be motivated as such in addition to developing its more general class meaning.

Jobs for all is one of the most fundamental of the programmatic points we raise. We wish to develop consciousness in the direction of united class solidarity that this demand implies. In most cases we cannot raise this demand as one for struggle today, especially among white workers. But the direction affects our propaganda.

No lay-offs also expresses the united class solidarity. Thirty/ for forty is one means of implementing this demand. We demand and must attempt to win the workers to an understanding of the necessity for a shorter work week for all before any lay-offs.

While we are resolutely for jobs for all and no lay-offs, recognizing that the fulfillment of these demands is what is necessary to fulfill the need of black people for jobs, we do not limit ourselves to these but raise specific demands for black equality. We demand preferential hiring for blacks to attain equality in industries, occupations, plants, etc., from which they have been systematically excluded. There are many blacks who are in occupations and industries that they have only recently entered (or will only shortly be entering). When setbacks come to the economy they are the first to be laid-off, and are thus subject to the greatest likelihood of continuing disproportionately high unemployment. We demand super-seniority for blacks to redress this situation.

Weber ammendment:

Delete: We demand super-seniority for blacks to redress this situation.

Replace with: Where lay-offs hit blacks disproportionately, we emphasize in the struggles against the lay-off its racist character. We point out that the disproportionality stems from the company's traditional racist hiring policies and therefore insist that it be the company that bear the burden and price of the lay-offs -- not the discrimination against blacks, nor higher seniority white workers. This can be concretized through rotation lay-offs, special and extended SUB payments. It can be concretized through demands for over-manning of positions. We always insist on permanent recall rights. We refuse to take responsibility for specific workers, black or white, being forced to pay the price for the corporations past discriminatory

hiring policies, although the demand for super-seniority is not excluded under some circumstances.

A straw poll of NC members produced the results of 7-6 in favor of the John Weber substitution. This, vote, however, was something of a fluke, since a couple of NC members who were not seated would have voted the other way. In any case, the issue was tabled to the NAC where, by a vote of 4-2 (JW, MD) the original motion was adopted as the position of the organization.

Nonetheless, the issue continues to bubble up. Unfortunately, the proponents of the John Weber point of view have not written their arguments for their point of view. But because of the importance of the issue I will attempt to answer them as I understand them.

The basic motivation for the demand for super-seniority is the same as that for any of the other demands that deal with the special oppression of black people: to create equality where there is subordination. There is nothing wrong with the proposed ammendment as an addition to the text. In that case it could be quite valuable. What is wrong with it is that it is counterposed to the demand for superseniority. Because, like the other demands raised in the section cited above, those raised in the admnentment are desirable, no preferable. But there still remains the problem of what to do when we win none of them and the lay-offs are taking place and it is the blacks who are being layed-off. It is for that situation, which is intolerable to us, that the demand for super-seniority is framed.

Weber states that under certain circumstances the demand for super-seniority is not excluded. Either that is a platitudinous statement or it means something. If it is the latter, then he gives away the case and acknowledges the importance of the demand. Under what circumstances does he feel it is not excludud?

Super-seniority is not a blanket demand. It does not mean super-seniority for all purposes, such as pension rights, etc., but for a specific purpose: the right to maintain a job in a period of increasing ~~highly~~ unemployment. It is not even to be used in all cases, although in most it is applicable. Its specific purpose is to overcome institutionalized racism. That is, blacks have been systematically excluded from industry for decades. Recently (since World War II) they have moved en masse into basic industrial jobs. Now comes a serious recession and the blacks are thrown out because they had, for racist reasons, been kept out before. Black unemployment has gone zooming up in recent months while unemployment among white workers has actually dropped! The actual figures are as follows:

	Unemployment Rate	1973		
		1st quarter	2nd	3rd
Whites				
All	4.5	4.4	4.2	
Men, 20 and over	3.1	3.0	2.8	
Women, 20 and over	4.5	4.3	4.3	
Both, 16-19	12.9	12.9	12.2	



Blacks			
All	9.0	9.0	9.1
Men, 20 and over	5.5	6.1	5.8
Women, 20 and over	6.6	7.6	8.1
Both, 16-19	30.1	30.4	31.7

These figures are compiled before the effects of the recession really begin to show. The inevitable impact will be to increase white unemployment and to greatly increase black unemployment thereby creating greater inequities. There can be no other evaluation of this phenomenon than that it is a defeat for the black movement, a defeat for the movement for black equality, and therefore a defeat for revolutionary socialists.

Special demands for blacks is not the way we prefer to deal with the problem of special oppression. They are divisive; in a certain sense they set whites against blacks. For example, there have been fights over preferential hiring and many of these have been won. In many cases the idea has been legitimated in this society. But the result has unquestionably been the creation of resentment on the part of white workers (what is called "white backlash" by bourgeois commentators). This reaction has gone so far that in many cases white workers blame blacks for their failure to get jobs (or promotions) even when preferential hiring (or promotion) has nothing to do with it.

Of course, our response is that the working class is already divided, with blacks subordinated to whites. It is no surprise ~~that~~ to us ~~that~~ (but neither is it a prime consideration to us) that the whites resent losing some of the subsidies blacks provide for them in terms of job security, status, income, etc.

I say it is not a prime consideration because our concern is attaining equality for blacks. But it is a consideration. Our preference is to avoid such situations. We would much rather win the demand for jobs for all, which would obviate the need in most cases (not all) for preferential hiring, and which would certainly make super-seniority with respect to lay-offs unnecessary. (Preferential hiring would still be needed because there is still the need to get blacks equally distributed in the more desirable jobs). But when we don't win jobs for all, what are we for? Clearly, we are not for accepting the consequences of leaving things as they are. That would mean blacks would continue to be kept out of jobs and the racist system would continue to grind on.

It is the same with regard to lay-offs. Our preference is not to have to struggle for super-seniority. We would rather fight for and win no lay-offs, thirty for forty, a shorter work week for all before any are layed-off. We raise those first. Nonetheless, when lay-offs take place it is the blacks who get systematically layed-off because they have been systematically kept out of getting the jobs in the first place. It is a perfect example of institutional racism. The blacks should not be layed-off first, which would only increase the inequalities between blacks and whites.

One argument I have heard from those who support the Weber position is that the issue of super-seniority is different from all the other questions, that super-

seniority is not the same question as, for example, preferential hiring. The argument goes something like the following: in applying the demand for preferential hiring the people who are involved are drawn from a large pool of unemployed, who don't necessarily see blacks being hired for a job as meaning a job is being directly taken away from them. But in the fight for super-seniority it is clear that a black is being traded for a white, that a specific black is being traded for a specific white. The implication is that in the latter case racism is more likely to develop.

More important than the above argument is that workers who are unemployed are generally less likely to get organized than are employed workers. Work naturally organizes people and the implications of workers organized around racist resentment are ominous. Unemployed workers are not organized -- they tend to be atomized and isolated and thus not as easily mobilized as organized workers.

There is also a third argument: to press for super-seniority is to tamper with the seniority system, the system which workers fought bitterly to establish as a protection from the capriciousness and favoritism of the capitalists.

As to the first argument, the fact is that white workers are and have been for quite some time aware that in some cases (if anything they tend to exaggerate their significance) blacks are chosen over whites for jobs, which means that their chances are directly affected. They know this and it often increases their racist hostility. Opponent of the super-seniority demand do not oppose preferential hiring (there are a few exceptions in the IS but it is not them I am speaking about) even if whites know about it. But from the argument one wonders why not?

We have always rejected the position of urging blacks to greater moderation because of the danger of white backlash. We have always said that white "backlash" is simply hostility to blacks attaining equality, that if blacks simply waited for whites to offer it they would never get it, that the only way they could get it would be to fight for it, even against white hostility, while at the same time attempting to win white workers to a class battle. Why does this situation change when it becomes a matter of super-seniority?

Certainly not because white workers are more easily organized than the unemployed. While this is true, the unemployed are certainly not unorganizable, particularly in times of high unemployment which is when the demand for super-seniority has particular relevancy. Even if they are not organizable the above argument remains: it just makes our task more difficult.

The fact remains that without the demand for super-seniority when economic crisis hits this country, as it has already begun to do, blacks will be hardest hit, the inequities between blacks and whites will increase, whites will continue to enjoy the benefits of being cushioned by blacks. The battle against racist oppression will have suffered a defeat. That is why the demand for super-seniority is a necessity. Those who oppose it must have an answer to this problem. Either they are willing to accept these consequences or they have another answer. Which is it?

There is one way in which the demand for preferential hiring and that for super-seniority are different. That is that preferential hiring is a demand to be raised in times when hiring is going on -- that is, a time when conditions are relatively good and when resentment of whites is likely to be relatively mild. Super-seniority, on the other hand, is a demand to be raised when lay-offs are taking place -- that is, a time when the economy is going down and everything is getting worse for everyone. Under those conditions whites will naturally be more hostile. But all that is to say is that as the cushion of black oppression is removed from under the whites they resent it and they resent it most when times are hard.

We are and should be for the removal of black inequality . . . period. Divisions exist within the working class and will continue to be a source of tension and intra-class hostility, available to be exploited by the capitalists until a way is found to create equality. Until then blacks will correctly resent their termination of their relatively privileged position. The only way is to create equality and that is the purpose of the demand for super-seniority.

As to the seniority system, it is not being proposed that it be scrapped or that the power that was taken by the capitalists be restored to them. Every institution, every mechanism which is based on the status quo and does not explicitly oppose the racist functioning of this system ends up being racist -- no matter what the intentions of its inventors or proponents are. What is proposed here is a modification to rectify the historic racist exclusion of blacks from industry.

We are for the seniority system as a vehicle for defending workers against the capitalists. We are not for it as a mechanism for advancing racism. In general the seniority system is of great value, for white workers and for blacks and we support and defend it from all critics, left and right. In fact, the seniority system has been in many ways a mechanism for ending Jim Crow. The seniority system meant employers couldn't simply fire or lay off blacks because they were black. In that sense it was a great advance. But when it functions as a means of keeping blacks from staying in industry it is being used in a racist, exclusionary manner to help white workers maintain their jobs because black workers are there and can forego theirs.

Those who raise the problem of the injustice perpetrated on the white worker who is being laid off after he has accumulated seniority point to a real problem. But what of the excluded black worker, who has always been kept out -- including by those very same white workers? Is he or she to bear the burden because of the previous exclusion?

The last time this issue came up in a significant way was after World War II. During the war blacks had made some significant inroads into industry due to the pressing labor shortage at that time. When the war ended and the troops came home many blacks were forced out. Much of this had to do with the seniority system; the whites who had left their jobs to join (or be drafted into) the army now came back to reclaim them. It was nothing personal, certainly nothing racist, you understand, but blacks got the shaft again.

We often point that women suffered the same problem after the war, that they were literally thrown out of industry when they were no longer needed. Part of the reason was the seniority system. We oppose that wholesale ejection of women. Doesn't that mean that we are saying by implication that they should have had super-seniority, that socialists should have fought for it?

I believe that this issue gets raised this way today because of the current weakness of the black movement. Today comrades feel the pressure of white workers. And black workers, no longer feeling the strength provided by the black movement of the sixties, are reticent about raising their demands.

It is our task to begin the fight. Today we will not lead mass battles over unemployment. The consciousness for such battles does not yet exist. Today we are waging a propaganda battle and we are attempting to create a core of leadership that will understand our point of view and will fight for it as a movement does develop.

We must win these people to a consistent working class point of view on all questions. A consistent class point of view includes the end to all forms of racist oppression. The medium for accomplishing this end is special demands for blacks, of which super-seniority is one, not particularly different from the rest. The question is not simply one of morality, although it is that. It is that in order to build a united working class movement we must build a consciousness of the need for full equality.

Concretely, how do we function today? We attempt to win workers to a class position. We concretely pose the class demands: let the capitalists pay for their own mess, no lay-offs, jobs for all, thirty for forty, shorter work week before anyone is laid-off. At the same time, we state quite clearly and unequivocally that it is blacks who are and have been systematically excluded -- predominately though not exclusively by the ruling class -- that the inequities which have existed have enabled the bosses to divide workers and pit blacks against whites. We oppose and reject this racist oppression because it is a blow to all workers. We therefore state that if the lay-offs take place despite our efforts to stop them we are opposed to their increasing racial inequities in employment.

We state from the very beginning that we will support and fight for the demand for super-seniority in that case, and we attempt to win white workers to that position. Given what is happening today, that immediately becomes an actionable demand in many cases. It is an actionable demand for the IS (WP should run some articles on unemployment and a working class response to it, including perhaps an historical piece on how the working class fought unemployment before, especially in the Depression. There should be a separate article devoted to the demand for super-seniority.) We attempt to win broader groups with which we are associated to this demand today. We want them to raise the demand in the same way as we do, indicating its necessity from the class point of view and indicating that it is less of a necessity if a real movement can be built to fight for and win the more general demands indicated above.

AMENDMENT TO TRAUTMAN BLACK LIBERATION DOCUMENT ON SUPER SENIORITY

John Weber

This is a new paragraph to replace the last sentence in the earlier Weber amendment on this topic:

Super seniority is not our ~~grix~~ general slogan or demand in dealing with layoffs. Nor, however, do we consider the strict maintenance of seniority for purposes of layoffs an inviolable principle under all circumstances. In particular, we consider supporting ~~xxx~~ specific proposals which violate strict seniority under conditions where layoffs threaten to qualitatively reverse a trend in the direction of equality for blacks in employment in a particular industry. In doing so, we take the following approach:

- 1) We advocate and fight for: no layoffs, full work or full pay, make the bosses pay.
- 2) In so far as we are unable to win No. 1, we continue advocating it and in that context advocate and fight for preference of proposals such as rotating layoffs, over discriminatory layoffs.
- 3) Insofar as we are unable to win No. 2, we continue advocating 1 & 2 and in that context advocate and fight for specific alterations in the strict seniority to prevent ~~x~~ reversing the trend toward employment equity. We continue projecting fights for No. 1 & 2 and continue arguing that they constitute preferable solutions to the problem. (No. 1 politically means the bosses pay, and No. 2 politically means the workers share the cost equally).

## AMENDMENT TO TRAUTMAN BLACK LIBERATION DOCUMENT ON SUPER SENIORITY

Marilyn Danton

### AMENDMENT:

Where layoffs hit blacks disproportionately, we emphasize in the struggles against the layoff its racist character. We point out that the disproportionality stems from the company's traditional racist hiring policies and therefore insist that it be the company that bear the burden and price of layoffs--not the discriminated against blacks nor higher seniority white workers. This can be concretized through ~~rotation layoffs, special and extended SUB payments.~~ rotation layoffs, special and extended SUB payments. It can be concretized through demands for over-manning of positions. We always insist on permanent recall rights. We refuse to take responsibility for specific workers, black or white, being forced to pay the price for the corporations past discriminatory hiring policies. ~~rotation layoffs.~~ If the layoffs mean qualitatively changing the black/white ration in the work force in the plant in question, some form of modified super-seniority such as percentage layoffs (if there are 10% blacks in a plant, then after the layoffs, there will still be 10%), is applicable after all of the above means to prevent and/or share the burden of layoffs has been tried and have failed.

### BACKGROUND TO THE DISPUTE

This has been a question inside the IS for some time, but it is now of much more importance, because it is no longer an abstract question, but a concrete one as we enter the current recession. Secondly, I would like to go on record as staging that it was of equal if not more importance for the majority of the NAC to organize this discussion and thus convince a majority of the broad national leadership, the NC, of its position given the last straw poll vote at the November NC. It may be that if all the regular delegates had been seated then it would have gone the other way, but it would have still been quite close, and given the importance of the issue, and the need to concretize it for specific situations (presumably we do not just say "super seniority") means that it was incumbent on the majority equally to put forward their point of view on this question.

### MOTIVATION

The arguments below are directed against any general blanket demand for super seniority as the Trautman documents put it forward. As the amendment clearly states, under specific circumstances and situations, I would support some modified form of super-seniority, and thus risk some of the consequences discussed below to doing that. However, I believe that the way the amendment instructs that this be done reduces the likelihood of possible reactionary consequences to the demand.

The major argument put forward by those who support raising the demand for super seniority in fighting layoffs is that it is the same as the demand for preferential hiring which most of the comrades who are not for raising super-seniority in a general way, are for. This is not the case.

In preferential hiring we are talking about redressing the racist inequality blacks face in the job market. The argument is made by the proponents of super seniority that that is all such a demand does during layoffs. But to make these analogous is to miss crucial differences in the objective conditions of the two groups of workers and the consciousness surrounding the two situations.

With preferential hiring we are talking about hiring blacks proportionately over whites from a large pool of unorganized, atomized workers. While it is true that whites don't get jobs because blacks do, it is also true that even if it is recognized by those whites as the reason they were not hired, because of the unorganized nature of their situation, and because they have other possible options open (apply elsewhere) it does not become the basis for creating an anti-black sentiment the way ~~a demand for super seniority~~ the general demand for super seniority does.

With super seniority, the situation is different. Here we are speaking of a group of workers organized in a specific place and time, who are at minimum aware of themselves collectively. It was Marx who first pointed out that capitalism organizes the working class around the means of production. And we have always noted this difference between workers who are ~~not~~ working and the unemployed, a difference in the objective conditions of the two groups of workers. So in the case of super seniority we are saying to workers who have worked longer and earned seniority that they must give it up to blacks because of the racist nature of the system. Individual white workers are ~~not~~ thus made to give up their jobs to redress the system of racial inequality perpetrated by the system of capitalist exploitation. By effectively making it appear to white workers that they are the problem and not the system, it will make it much more difficult to win them to a united struggle with blacks, and could lead to precisely the opposite. The difference is, bluntly, that in one case you are demanding something for blacks, and while theoretically taking away jobs from whites, in many cases, they unlike blacks will still be able to find employment because they are white; while in the other you are actually deamndning that whites give up something they already have, and have earned in an organized situations so that blacks may have it and not them.

Two years ago, I argued against a formulation in the Trautman black liberation document presented at the 1972 Convention, on busing for some of the same reasons. That we support busing because in addition to raising the standard of education for blacks, it also lowers it for whites, and thus will force them to fight for better education for all. This is the wrong methodology whether in education or in employment. Putting people in a worse situation will ~~not~~ make them fight harder, more often than not it will have the opposite effect, and in the case of blacks and whites, it is most likely to make those whites fight harder all right, but against blacks as the enemy.

Secondly, though of less importance, is the issue of the seniority system itself. Seniority was something the working class movement fought for and won as a means of protection against the possibility of arbitrary firing by the boss, or merit systems, etc. It was an important victory for the labor movement. We are not for any and all time against any changes in the seniority system, but because raising ~~any~~ changes such as reverse seniority opens the door to others such as the bosses to do the same, we must be quite careful about when and how it is done. Any blanket demand for super seniority for blacks makes that a clear possibility, and the proponents of that demand in this fashion must find a means for dealing with that problem which to date they have not.

A number of more general questions have arisen in the context of this discussion. First, it has been pointed out that we as socialists consider the unemployed workers as part of the working class. Quite true,

but there is still a difference between workers organized on the job and those not organized because they have no jobs, just as there is a difference that we recognize between those who are organized on the job (unionized) and those who are not. The difference is primarily one of consciousness and objective conditions, which we must take into ~~xxxx~~ consideration when discussing when, how and what demands to raise to achieve our objectives. In periods of high consciousness with a strong working class movement, unemployed, organized and unorganized do have similar levels of consciousness - that is what it means to speak of a working class conscious of itself as a class. This is not the case today, as we are all only too aware of.

And if it were, which would tend to make the demands of preferential hiring and super seniority more analogous, such consciousness would probably obviate the need for either because such consciousness would make possible real fights around class wide demands such as full employment, 30/40, no layoffs, etc.

So, what we're talking about is a problem in a specific period, with very low consciousness, and not one of any and all times, and thus, weighing the positive aspects of a general demand for super seniority against the negative - to what extent does it lay the basis for equality inside the working class, and to what extent does it work against this by laying the basis for an anti-black movement inside the working class.

Now while it is true that the unemployed do organize particularly in times of a severe recession (depression) such movements historically have been strongest when the depression was deepest, and began to fall apart as jobs open up. So the likelihood that there would be a strong unemployed movement that was not significantly black to begin with, as jobs open up and the economy switches gears is pretty unlikely.

Lastly, it is being said that those who don't support the general blanket demand for super seniority are essentially not for fighting racist oppression during bad times, but only during good. Let's be clear - what is being said here is that super seniority is a principle which if one does not support it generally and for all time, they are only for blacks when times are good.

But in reality, it is a tactic, or a strategy depending upon how it is ~~xxx~~ used, in order to obtain an objective (equality), not a principle itself. We do have principles: fullest democracy inside the working class movement, the working class organized as a class for itself, workers control of production and the state, real equality inside the working class movement between races and sexes, the ~~right~~ right of self determination for the specially oppressed, including the right to self organization, not accepting the limits of capitalism in a workers' fight against the bosses, revolutionary socialism, etc. We always try to represent the true class interests in the working class against any and all other forces. Demands like preferential hiring and super seniority are strategies or tactics for achieving a unified working class movement - on the basis of the highest possible consciousness, on the basis of real equality for the specially oppressed inside the working class. Thus, one could be against a specific strategy or tactic if by using it he/she or an organization thought that by doing so, it would not achieve the stated aim or end - ~~x~~ a working class unified on the highest level. Raising the general blanket demand for super seniority during layoffs in the way proposed by Trautman will not help, but on the contrary will hinder the building of such a movement thus it must be opposed.



Once Again on Super-Seniority  
By Jack Trautman

Danton's amendment regarding super-seniority which substitutes for Weber's states: "We support percentage lay-offs (i.e., if there are 10% blacks in a plant, then after the lay-offs there will still be 10%), if the lay-offs mean wiping out a majority of the black positions". This is a formula, though not a good one, for super-seniority. She too is calling for a form of super-seniority. So now the debate shifts. It is no longer for or against the demand, but what formula to use in applying it. Except, not quite. Because Danton's whole argument is directed against the demand for super-seniority, and any of the arguments she ~~uses~~ uses against me are also arguments against herself, as well. It is necessary to discuss her arguments.

She presents a number of them against super-seniority. Her first is that the super-seniority demand differs greatly from that of preferential hiring. Why? Partly, she says, because the demand of preferential hiring will not have much of an effect on white workers, whereas that of super-seniority will. She says: "even if (preferential hiring) is recognized by those whites as the reason they were not hired, because of the unorganized nature of their situation and because they have other options open (apply elsewhere) it does not become the basis for creating an anti-black racist movement." (emphasis added) This statement assumes that hiring is generally good and that blacks are not winning preferential hiring in substantial enough numbers to have a very great impact on white consciousness. Otherwise their options would be diminishing. One wonders what she would say if the demand were effective and white workers did hurt as a result of it. Would she then drop her support of preferential hiring, seeing its similarity to super-seniority? Of course she wouldn't. But the inconsistency is plain.

Reading on, she goes even further: "The difference is, bluntly, that in one case (preferential hiring) you are demanding something for blacks and which theoretically (theoretically!) taking jobs from whites, in many cases they, unlike blacks will still be able to find employment because they are white." (emphasis hers) Again, the same assumption as above. What Danton means when she says the demand only theoretically takes jobs from whites is that in actuality it does not. Why does it not? In addition to the reasons given in the above paragraph they do not because white workers are cushioned (by blacks) in other ways so that "because they are white" they will get jobs. It is that situation precisely to which we are opposed. We don't want white workers to get jobs because they are white because that can only mean that black workers will not get jobs because they are black. Once again, insofar as preferential hiring is successful the implication is to back away from it. That is not Danton's intention, but reflects her inconsistency in attempting to create a difference between the demand for super-seniority and that for preferential hiring.

It is true as I pointed out in my first article, that there is a difference between preferential hiring and super-seniority: super-seniority applies in bad times and is more likely to raise hostility among whites. That, in and of itself cannot be an argument for dropping the demand. It differs in no way from any of the ~~the~~ other "white backlash" arguments that tell blacks to "cool it" because they will offend whites. The fundamental reason why they will offend whites is always that the whites feel threatened by the





AT&T is not a corporation in crisis - not yet. In 1973 its mass of profits grew by 12% and it maintained its 12.4% profit margin. For the time, its monopoly position has insulated it from some of the problems facing other large US corporations.

The Bell System faces only marginal competition and has reaped most of the benefits of the enormous expansion in tele-communications since WWII. Output in the telephone industry grew from an index of 29.3 in 1951 to 146.9 in 1972, an annual average of over 8%. In that period employment rose less than 30%, actually dropping between 1957 and 1963. Productivity increases were substantial and continuous. Output-per-man-hour rose from an index of 36.8 in 1951 to 123.2 in 1972. In 1950 it required 143 workers to service 10,000 phones, by 1971 it took only 77.

The value of plant equipment quadrupled from 1951 to 1970, at an average annual rate of 6.7%. This points toward a rising organic composition of capital and, potentially, pressure on profits margins. In relation to output, however, the expansion of plant equipment has been capital saving.

For the moment, the health of Bell would indicate a relatively lax attitude toward bargaining. Long range trend, however, ~~xxxx~~ may be giving Bell something to worry about. For one thing, the potential for expanding phone use is severely limited. More than 9/10 of all U.S. households already have phones and the growth in calls is slowing down. Business is turning to new forms of communications, e.g., telex, in which Bell faces competition. In satellite communications Bell faces state and foreign competition.

Furthermore, productivity gains, while still substantial, have tended to slow down. The average annual gain in output-per-man-hour was 6.5% from 1951-72, but dropped to 5.2% from 1960-72. Further, an increasing proportion of jobs are in work less susceptible to automation - the plant crafts.

Bell has become more conservative in new investment in technology. ESS was supposed to serve 11% of all dial lines by 1970, but only 2% were actually covered. The stated reason was delay in committing large capital resources when it is possible that further improvements in ESS may be more cost saving. Behind this thinking lies the fact that although Bell profits are pretty good the amount of capital involved is so massive as to inhibit "rash" decisions. Communications plant in the US was valued at \$60 billion in 1970. Bell makes about 3-4 billion in profits each year. Simple replacement is likely to eat up much of that when the stock of capital is so massive. With uncertainty about the expansion of phone use, care in investing so much is to be expected.

As a result, productivity and labor costs will be a major concern of AT&T in coming years. The matter of labor costs is partly resolved by limiting wage gains within productivity increases already made. Bell will certainly not resist wage and benefit demands of the sort currently put forth by most unions and called for by the CWA Bell System Bargaining Council (BSBC).

Future productivity is more complicated. Bell wants the stabilization of the workforce and its division into computer manning "clerks" and highly skilled technicians who service the computers. Though they will never achieve this, that direction explains the policy of attrition and hiring freeze for the past two years and the seriousness with which new hires are selected. Workers are carefully selected and many washed out of school. This is truest in Plant where the company cannot reduce the workforce at this time.

The company would resist demands to stop attrition, seek job control, limit assignments, shorten the work day, limit overtime, require skilled pay scales for operation of new equipment, limit job descriptions, etc. The company has little to fear from the CWA in these respects.

### The Union and The Structure of Bargaining

AT&T is more unified than the unions that deal with it. Of Bells 720,000 unionized employees, 500,000 are represented by CWA, 139,000 by IBEW, and the rest by various independent unions - some of which are company unions. These unions raid each other and have refused, over the years, to bargain jointly. Instead, CWA sets the "pattern" and the rest settle for the same. The IBEW's attempt to break this "pattern" in 1963 failed. The importance of coalition bargaining is obvious to anyone interested in beating AT&T. The class collaborationist bureaucracies of CWA, IBEW, etc., see no such urgency. National coalition bargaining should be one of our demands.

The CWA compounds the problem of union weakness. Rather than a militant organizing drive among poorly organized telephone workers, CWA tries to pick up dues payers in scores of irrelevant places - NY meter-maids, Methodist Hospital employees in KY, city clerks, workers in small obscure factories, etc. These workers are played against telephone workers and provide an atomized base for Beirne. We are for organizing telephone workers into CWA - for one industrial union of telephone workers.

In the past, CWA bargained separately with each unit of AT&T - NY Tel, Ill. Bell, Western Electric, AT&T Long Lines, etc. Now, CWA will bargain nationally with AT&T for wages, pensions, health and other major benefits. One national contract with CWA (and one with IBEW) will be negotiated by a 5 or 6 person CWA bargaining committee and must be ratified by all CWA members in AT&T. Recommendation for a strike will come from this committee, via the Int'l Exec. Board. Beirne does not propose a strike vote at the Convention, but rather a referendum following the committee's recommendation. Membership rejection of an offer does not automatically mean a strike. Local bargaining units will have the right to strike over local issues, but not national issues.

The intention is clearly to prevent a recurrence of the 1971-72 NY strike and other post-contract strikes (Louisville, 1971; Detroit, 1963; Chicago IBEW, 1960). While it involves no promise not to strike, its intention is similar to E.W. Abel's ENA.

We are for national bargaining. But we demand rank and file control over negotiations and strike procedures. We demand open, public negotiations, an elected negotiating committee, an advance strike ratification vote taken in the locals, and no return to work until the contract has been ratified by the membership.

### Bargaining Issues Facing Telephone Workers:

Inflation will make wages a central issue for Telephone workers. The expected lifting of formal controls will undermine the cynicism about fighting the government for wage increases. The bureaucrats, however, already have their "pattern." Left to himself, Beirne will not push for more than the 5-7% embodied in the UAW and aluminum settlements. The BSBC's demand is for a "substantial" increase that takes productivity and price increases into account, i.e. 5-7% plus COL. The company will not really resist this.

An increase of this size cannot begin to cover inflation. Furthermore, this sort of percentage formula perpetuates the inequalities within the Bell System. We should call for a large lump-sum, across the board increase that will put workers ahead of inflation past and future dollar for dollar. Perhaps \$50-75 for the first year. This would equalize the off-setting of inflation and narrow the inequalities in income between the different occupations - i.e., the current racist and sexist wage structure.

[In NY in 1971 we mistakenly argued against this sort of demand when it was put forward by other radicals. We called for a 50% increase and for the equalization of all wages - i.e. one wage scale for all telephone workers. In practice, we could not popularize the second part of the demand - we could not make people see why a clerk should be paid the same as a craftsman. Thus part of our demand was too advanced, while the rest differed from Beirne's only in size - not in concept.]

We are for a one year contract or, failing that, annual wage reopeners. Within each year, we favor a COL clause that adjusts wages to inflation each month on a dollar for dollar basis.

Productivity drives vary in form and appearance from dept. to dept. and city to city, and seldom appear as simple speed-up. They scarcely appear as a "drive" at all, but as a complex of annoying plans, programs, changes, etc. To many telephone workers the productivity drive appears as the peculiar behavior of one foreman or supervisor. We must show that ~~xx~~ there is a national policy to increase productivity, even if its form differs here and there.

In traffic productivity is being increased by the introduction of new equipment (most recently TSPS), the reduction or elimination of services (e.g., intercept, directory assistance), and by attrition. The result may not be speed-up, but it does mean that each operator produces more. As the traffic workforce dwindles, it is also being concentrated into fewer offices and isolated from the bulk of plant workers.

To fight attrition we demand shorter tours with no reduction in pay, no split tours, paid 1 hr. lunch period, 20 minute coffee breaks twice a day, right to relief when needed, etc. Equally important is the right to transfer to plant jobs, before there is any outside hiring. This demand can help off-set the racist and sexist effects of company policy as well as protect jobs.

The new bargaining set-up relegates "working conditions" to local bargaining. The reduction of the traffic workforce is a national issue. We demand that automation, productivity, and attrition be dealt with in the national contract.

Plant productivity drives are more local in appearance. The major automation issue in plant at the moment is LSV, which does much of the Deskman's work. While it is being fought locally, it is national in scope. In the long run, ESS also represents a threat to certain jobs. The only mention the BSBC makes of automation is to call for a clause "to protect workers against technological unemployment and erosion of existing jobs." This is too vague and too far down the list to be reassuring.

We want a national clause, covering traffic and plant, that denies the company the right to introduce technological changes without precise negotiations resulting in concrete job protection that precludes the downgrading of the workforce. For example, clerks doing Deskmen's work, must be paid a Deskman's scale and trained for upgrading. No lay-offs during the contract.

More important than any such particular demands, however, are the tools the workers can use themselves to fight productivity and automation on a day to day level. This too must be done nationally. We reject, therefore, the shunting of working conditions to local bargaining. We want a national clause that gives telephone workers the right to strike, slowdown, or otherwise use concerted action to resist productivity drives, harassment, etc. We want the abolition of all the "plans," programs, etc (absence, lateness) used to stretch out the day, cut into lunch periods, force overtime, and otherwise control the workers. We demand a grievance procedure in which workers are innocent until proven guilty and in which stewards can participate at all levels. From the union itself, we demand elected stewards, stewards councils, and generally the democratic organization of our first line of defense.

Racism and Sexism are important to all telephone workers. Bell has long tracked jobs by sex and race as a way of dividing the workers. Women and blacks have had the worst jobs - and still do. The union has never done much about it.

The EEOC's "Affirmative Action Program" has changed very little. This plan is supposed to integrate women and minorities into the company at all levels. So far, it seems to have done the opposite. There are some token women in the crafts. These women, mostly white, were hired off the streets. Black operators and clerks are still denied the right to transfer into these jobs - hundreds of grievances are outstanding about this. At the same time the company is hiring some men into traffic jobs. In Michigan, at least, the result of this program is that since the consent agreement the number of non-management women has declined by 755. Hence our demand for transfers into craft jobs before outside hiring.

The CWA has been given the right to bargain with AT&T on the implementation of Affirmative Action. We demand that the principle of equality for blacks, latins and women be written into the contract. The right to equal work and equal work for equal pay. (In Michigan, female frameworkeers are called "Switchman's helper" and are paid less than framemen.)

While pensions and other benefits are important, the above are the issues we should emphasize nationally. We want to use these issues and demands to get across the principles and ideas that underlie them. In particular: industrial unionism, rank and file control over bargaining and striking, worker unity, equality among workers, and worker self-activity.

#### The Current Situation in CWA.

The internal political situation in CWA is not good. Beirne and his lieutenants are in firm control. Beirne, for example, negotiated the national bargaining set-up in secret. When he announced it as a fait accompli, no one raised any real questions let alone opposition. For the first time in years, there won't even be any opposition from secondary leaders.

One of the "traditions" of CWA has been a network of bureaucratic oppositionists. Gunn from Texas; Dempsey, Keenan, and Rank from NY; Mackay from Detroit, and some leaders in the Bay area are among those who have been open, if not very aggressive, opponents of Beirne. They worked together to criticize Beirne's sell-out policies. Locally, they are not democratic, but tend to fight the company more than Beirne loyalists, or Beirne. This network was important in the 1971-72 NY strike.

This year, they have changed their strategy - to put it kindly. They say Beirne is dying and will retire in a couple of years. So, for now they will lay-low. Dempsey, in NY, has made it clear that he will not oppose any of Beirne's bargaining policies or practices. Nor will this group oppose Beirne at the Convention in June. In the past, their opposition opened up possibilities and tended to legitimize more militant forms of opposition. Things will be harder without that opening.

The other major anti-leadership tradition in CWA is the post-contract strike. As already mentioned, however, they have all failed to produce any real results. Therefore, the lesson most militants have drawn is that such strikes are fruitless. Indeed, so long as they remain localized, as they have, they are ineffective. This together with the new bargaining set-up makes post-contract wildcats unlikely this year. There is no leadership for a national wildcat since the bureaucratic opposition folded up its tents.

Our own limitations of size and experience add to all of this to determine that our national intervention in the CWA contract will be largely propagandistic. That doesn't mean abstract and pointless. What we do this year will hopefully lay the basis for broader developments in the future.

WE WANT TO CONVINCE AS MANY MILITANTS OF OUR OUTLOOK AS POSSIBLE AND PULL THEM AROUND US. WE WANT TO EDUCATE THEM IN OUR POINT OF VIEW TOWARD THE LABOR MOVEMENT (CLASS STRUGGLE UNIONISM) AND HOW TO TRANSFORM THE CWA. THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE ANTICS OF BEIRNE, THE SILENCE OF THE "BUREAUCRATIC OPPOSITION," THE COMPANY'S USE OF RACISM AND SEXISM, THE REALITY OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, THE CONTRACT, AND -IF THERE IS ONE - THE STRIKE, ALL PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR US TO DRAW LESSONS AND ARGUE FOR OUR PERSPECTIVE.

We cannot realistically build a movement around this contract, but we can attract small number of militants to us. To facilitate our national work we should prepare a short pamphlet outlining our analysis, strategy and demands. It can be published in the name of United Action in NY, signed by a few individuals, or just signed by the author. Additionally, we should be prepared to write a brochure calling for a national rejection when Beirne reaches agreement. Although it probably won't happen, we should call on Beirne to stay on strike and come back with something better.

Workers Power should cover the CWA contract events regularly. The articles should center on the broad issues and our analysis, rather than on twists and turns within the CWA. The initial article, to appear in the coming issue, will be on the new bargaining set-up. It could be followed by articles on automation and Traffic, productivity generally, wages and inflation, a history of the NY strike, Affirmative Action, etc.

#### Local Activities and Issues

On our view most of what CWA will treat as local issues are national - or at least require some treatment in a national contract. The chances are that Beirne will do nothing about automation, working conditions, racism, or sexism (beyond guaranteeing the "sanctity" of the CWA contract under Affirmative Action). Similarly, the bureaucratic opposition is not likely to do much nationally. Thus, many of these issues will be handled, probably poorly, at the local level. While arguing that they need national attention, we can also fight for decent local clauses on these issues.



While our own strength limits our actual scale of intervention, we can in some cities influence a number of workers at the local level where they may feel they have more power to affect the course of things.

To back up a local fight over working conditions; that is to put some power behind local bargaining, the local must be free to strike and must have rank and file involvement. We demand, and work for where possible, local rank and file contract committees to discuss local demands and work out strategy and tactics.

Since a local or district strike requires advance approval by the Int'l Exec. Board, we should demand that the locals take early strike votes and demand immediate IEB approval.

### Implementation

In Louisville and Cleveland we are very new to the industry and union. In these cases it would be a mistake to formalize our activities or attempt to move too fast. Comrades, here, should use the ideas in this perspective as a means of getting to know other militants, locating the prominent ~~xxxxxx~~ militants, and generally becoming known. This should be done mostly on a verbal level. It would be premature to publish a bulletin or pull together a group.

Since these locals are quite small, however, it will probably be possible to participate in conventional union activities directed toward the contract. It may then be possible to get across some of our ideas in the local paper, committees, stewards newsletter, or something of that sort. In Louisville a petition about ~~xxxxxx~~ unit meetings helped one comrade meet other people. Low key activities of this sort may prove possible as people get more interested in the contract.

In NY, of course, United Action will be - already is to some degree - the vehicle for these ideas. There, it is also possible to attempt to popularize much of our perspective within the stewards body.

The demoralization that followed the NY strike has lifted somewhat, but there is still a justified horror of going it alone, i.e. of a NY strike by itself. A NY Tel strike over local issues, however, is a different thing than a NY strike against the entire Bell System and CWA bureaucracy. To make a local strike of any sort credible, however, we must be clear that we are not for going it alone. We want advance strike sanction, but we also demand full CWA support and, most importantly, that CWA pledge that any Bell company that attempts to send scabs to a struck company, will itself be struck immediately. Without its supply of out-of-state scab foremen, NY Tel would be much weaker.

As in 1971, the traffic organizing drive should be central to our strategy. That is, we are for one local of plant and traffic, one contract, and one strike, if there is a strike. We want a rank and file controlled drive, not a repeat of the 1971 disaster.

In the West Coast local where we have a comrade, we no longer have a group or bulletin. However, our comrade is a respected militant and an influential rank and file leader. At the moment she has a column in the local paper. This column should be used to the maximum possible extent to put across our ideas and perspective. This should be done in such a way as not to make it easy for the local leadership to axe the column, however.

Although it may be possible to move people in our direction, it would be a mistake to attempt, at this point, to create a group or recreate the bulletin. The column can give our ideas legitimacy and force the local leaders to deal with them seriously.

In Chicago, we have not been in the industry long enough to organize a group or to have a city-wide reputation. At least one comrade, however, is known as a militant in her building, which provides the base for reaching out. The contract offers us an opportunity to extend our network and to begin building a city-wide network. We should aggressively demand an open contract committee. If such a committee, or even a distorted version of one in which we could function, is formed we should use this as our primary vehicle for spreading our ideas among the militants. We should propose a local contract newsletter. Assuming that we cannot get the local to do either, we should initiate, with our contacts, a contract newsletter without the sanction of the local. This newsletter should be open to all views, but should emphasize ours. The newsletter could be used to build a network and lay the basis for further work after the contract.

While women's issues will be central to all our CWA work, the existence of DARE in Chicago, may offer opportunities for actions around the contract outside of the union context per se. Perhaps, joint demonstrations between DARE people and some operators for contract clauses dealing with sexism. In any case, the Chi. DARE and CWA fractions should discuss with the Ind. Sec. and Women's Commission the possibility of actions along these lines.

In Chicago, the plant dept, is not in CWA. Just as the Traffic organizing drive is important to our overall perspective in NY, so the idea of coalition bargaining with IBEW is important to any local bargaining in Chi. - as it is important to national bargaining as well. Some issues of the contract newsletter should include material directed at IBEW members and discussing plant issues.

## ON THE OCTOBER 1973 WAR

from MIDDLE EASTERN COMrades

The root cause of the October 1973 war - as of the previous Middle East wars - is the Zionist implantation, in alliance with imperialism, which created the Palestinian problem and which engendered occupation. Peace in the Middle East is impossible as long as Zionism is not overthrown.

The denial of the national rights of the Palestinian people brought about the ~~the~~ creation of the Palestinian resistance movement. But the limitations of that movement and its failure the revolutionary forces in the entire region left the game once more to the existing state powers. The further expansion of Zionism and the occupation of large Arab territories in 1967, and the de facto annexation of these territories by Israel, enhanced the demand of the Arab masses to regain the occupied territories and to wipe-out the defeat of 1967 by a war of liberation. The Arab regimes were forced to wage the present war in order to prevent their downfall. But the interests of the masses and the aims of the ruling classes are opposed to one another.

The interests of the masses lies in a revolutionary solution of the contradictions in order to achieve social emancipation, as well as national liberation by unification of the Arab nation, and at the same time resolving the problems of non-Arab nationalities within the region \* fully respecting their rights. Here, as throughout the world, the interests of the masses of both belligerent sides are the same.

The aim of the ruling classes is to maintain their exploitive and oppressive power. They are fighting for their lives; the Arab ruling classes, especially in the countries most directly concerned (Egypt and Syria), are under immense pressure to satisfy the just, immediate, concrete popular demand - recovery of the occupied territories; the Zionist ruling class can maintain their hold only within their own dynamics of military supremacy and continued expansion. For the ruling classes the only possible compromise is through a settlement imposed by the great powers; in fact, such a settlement was the conscious aim of Sadat and Assad in waging the present war. This compromise - even if it includes the creation of a pseudo-Palestine-Jordanian state - can only mean sacrifice of the interest of the Palestinian people and the labouring masses of the region.

In the present events the masses are the big losers. The Arab masses, whose liberation is at stake, have been and are bypassed in the preparation, direction and unfolding of the war. The only rôle assigned to them by the states is to sacrifice thousands of workers and peasants and to foot the bill. The Israeli masses continue to pay the heavy toll for their own Zionist delusions and the interests of imperialism.

The only positive result of this war - which will come about ~~the~~

despite the intentions of the regimes in both belligerent camps - will be that the myth of Zionist invincibility has received a severe blow; the barrier created by this myth, inhibiting popular struggle in the Arab world and inside Israel, has been removed; it has shown that struggle is possible.

Our task, as internationalist revolutionaries, is to define the aims of the struggle and to mobilize the masses for them. Class struggle and popular war must have their own defined aims. In the Arab world - comprising the Arab national majority and other nationalities - barriers which at present divide different parts of the Arab nation, and also divide Arab and Israeli, and the establishment of the Socialist Union of the Arab world based on the rule of workers' and peasants' councils.

(--@- correction from above: "these aims are: overthrow of imperialist domination and Zionist power, dissolution of state barriers"..then as is)

It is only in this framework that the various forms of national oppression will disappear.

It is the only way out of the mire of repeated wars, out of the continual reproduction of the bloody and repulsive present reality. This is not only a long-term aim but also the guide for every step we take and every position we take.

(October 21, 1973) Israeli Socialist Organization (Matzpen),  
Councils' Power (Arab Group), Algerian Group for  
the Propagation of Marxism

(\*) R. St-Cyr: This document was sent by Moshe Machover, a founding member of Matzpen and "publisher" (i.e., legally responsible for) of its paper. ISO has ~~sought to~~ accepted the contention of Arab nationalism that Palestine/Israel cannot be separated from its integral place as part of the Arab country. Therefore they reject a bi-national (i.e., Arab Jewish) solution within the 1948 Palestine boundaries as frustrating the legitimate demands of Arab nationalism. ISO has sought to win Arab revolutionaries to the position of self-determination for, and national recognition of, the Israelis within (but only within) united Arabia. The Arab Left generally recognizes this obligation as applied to Kurds and the non-Arabs of southern Sudan, but denies it to Israeli Jews as "foreigners" and oppressors - whereas the Kurds, etc., are "indigenes" and oppressed by Arabs. (The claim for the same status is sometimes made by socialist Armenians in Lebanon-Syria.) ISO has found much common ground with Marxist sectors of the Palestinian resistance and their allies. They usually speak of a united socialist Arab East (or Masharek - rendered variously) from Egypt and Sudan eastward. Other trends of Pan-Arabism call for one state for the whole Arab-speaking world. The inclusion of an Algerian group (in Europe) in this statement would imply the latter. In that case, at least one other national minority might be considered, the Berbers of northwest Africa.

THE FOLLOWING IS FROM A PRIVATE LETTER OF M. MACHOVER to R. St-Cyr  
(December 1973 - Machover has been living in London for about three years, and has worked closely with British IS.)

"... I certainly have not joined the IMG/the British section of the same 4th to which SWP belongs/; I have not modified my political views and my dislike of the 4th Int'l. Perhaps I should explain that I wrote

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