

ATTENTION ALL I.S. MEMBERS

Documents of the January National Committee Meeting.

Enclosed are the documents from last week-ends NC meeting. These four documents on the '76 Election, IS's Next Step, Building New Branches and the International Revolution were passed overwhelmingly by the NC and composed more than two-thirds of the whole debate.

The other items discussed were a political report on our work in the Teamster union and the prospects for the next few months around the two major contracts. Also a report on the successful recruitment campaign was presented and analysed in the first session. The details of both these debates will appear in the article on the NC meeting in the January National Report.

From now on the national office will be sending out reports and announcements to the branches as they are necessary. They will be sent with that week's copy of Workers Power. Each month there will be a new style National Report for every member which covers, in easily digestible form, the major initiatives of the organisation for the previous month. All members should also be aware that although the practise of printing EC minutes in these reports has been discontinued because of security. Fuller minutes are now sent out every week to NC members and organisers and they will be able to answer members questions about the developments of the organisation.

Glenn Wolfe,  
National Secretary.

## THE NEXT STEP FOR THE IS

1. 1975 was an extremely successful year for IS. We almost doubled in size and the quality of our work in the working class improved immensely. This development was reflected in the fact that the proportion of worker and black members in the organization now is much much larger than at the beginning of last year or even at the mid-summer convention.
2. Our job now is to continue the growth in size of IS while making sure that the new members get sufficient training and experience to become effective revolutionary militants as the older members. From top to bottom, IS must be an organization of leaders, leaders in the real struggles of the outside world. At every stage in our growth we have a duty to ensure that our new members get the political training they need to be effective revolutionary leaders in the working class. At every stage we have to also push our new members into the leadership of the different sections of the IS.
3. In terms of continued growth of IS, our job right now is firstly to follow up the successful Worker Membership Campaign by concentrating on the contacts who were brought closer to us over the last three months but have not yet joined. Secondly, we must organize the activity of our branches and fractions in such a way as to help our new members to bring their friends, work-mates, etc., into the IS.
4. This process is part of the drive we are having to fully involve our newer members in all aspects of the work of the organization. But only a part. It must be remembered that we are a different organization than we were even six months ago. That means we have to make all elements of our organization respond to the needs of our new members. They have a major contribution to make about how we run our meetings, at what level we can best intervene in struggles and their demands that more branch resources be channelled into political education and training have to be met.
5. Most important of all, the next period must see a thorough focussing of our work into the areas of greatest promise. All branch members must be active in a functional and well-defined fraction that has a clear political perspective and concrete activity. All too often we spread ourselves too thin and thus waste our precious resources in doing many things incompetently, rather than a few things well. Increasingly, national political initiatives, such as solidarity work on Portugal or a drive to increase Workers' Power circulation, will have to be carried out within the framework of our local fractions, rather than as separate activities involving only a minority of the branch. From the start, the new worker members must be in the leadership of our strengthened fractions as the first step in building a strong worker leadership at every level of the organization.

6. Serious use of the Basic Education Programme, organized one-to-one discussions around the basic pamphlets, well-prepared branch meetings on major national documents or political reports, concrete education inside the fractions and collective fraction discussion on important WP articles will all be necessary in the next period. Any branch that fails to organize this will lose a high proportion of its new members and will have no mechanism for holding further recruits. A branch that doesn't organize this in a professional manner will finish up with more useless meetings rather than less, and will also run the risk of sacrificing its outside activity. A workers' organization is an activist organization that doesn't waste its members' time and energy with useless meetings.

7. In a period in which the slogan of the branches must be serious consolidation, it falls to the national industrial fractions to spearhead the next major step forward. This step can be summed up as the creation of large and on-going rank and file movements in our priority industries around a solid core of committed IS industrial militants. In the teamsters, the TDC/UPS initiative and the IBT recruitment campaign are clearly in advance of any work we have done at any time in our history. In the period up till April, the successful completion of these initiatives will take priority over all other areas of work and will necessarily involve many more members than just the comrades holding IBT cards. The later auto contract campaign, the United Action organizing drive in telephone, the creation of strong steel fractions in Pittsburgh and Chicago, the national PO paper, and the start of new branches (which is dealt with in a separate document), will focus around these priorities. These will be the main areas of progress and the national office is committed to ensuring that on this level too the organization isn't spread too thin by having to chase dozens of different initiatives, as has happened in the past.

8. It is first of all in the IBT and then in the other industrial areas that our new members will be trained, and our old members retrained, the fastest. The experience in leading concrete agitational struggles will produce a new generation of working class leaders. The pressing necessity to create more and more revolutionary leaders to carry out the real work of the movement will force a heavy emphasis on recruitment on the IS. It is through this mechanism that the present division between trade union work and politics will be broken down, rather than thru abstract debates within the organization. We have always known that a serious rank and file movement couldn't be created without a core of revolutionary organizers and that rank and file activism that didn't also have the effect of building a revolutionary socialist party can only end in defeat at the end of the day. But that has been an abstract political view that was often countered by the real difficulties our members experienced in raising revolutionary politics in the plants when the level of struggle was low. Successful agitation and large-scale recruitment in the priority industries is now possible, that is clear, and the impact of that potential on the political development of the organization will be extremely beneficial.

9. The teamster recruitment campaign that is now going on parallel to the TDC work is the logical consequence of this strategy for the next period. There will be both regional and local IS/IBT functions, an IS/IBT pamphlet, and recruitment targets in the main areas. At a later date this pattern will be followed by the other major fractions. The industrial department, in line with the general emphasis of the whole organization on the major fractions, will be organizing schools in the branches (separately for industrial workers and non-workers) on the role of revolutionaries in the trade unions. It is also intended to produce a handbook for members on the same practical questions.

10. While focussing our work on the fractions and ensuring that here, as well as in the branches, we devote sufficient resources to serious training, we will also have to step up our outgoing work in these areas too. The energy we put into the organizing drives and contract campaigns on the level of general agitation will clearly be complemented by the recruitment and training drives we have outlined. But these must also be a third strand that links our mass trade union work with our general revolutionary politics. This strand will be provided by the extension of our publications such as auto Network, teamster Network and Long Distance, all vehicles for projecting IS politics in the limited arena of a single industry. In other words, a method for bringing people to revolutionary politics by starting from the level that their own real experience dictates.

11. Finally, we cannot complete the outline of our tasks for the next six months without fitting Workers' Power into the picture. In many ways the paper has been our biggest weapon in the successful fight we have waged in the last year to transform IS into a workers' combat organization. If used correctly, in terms of consistent sales, industrial and political coverage, it can be even more useful now that it has become a weekly paper. Both in terms of national and local resources there can be no reduction in the emphasis we place on the paper. Indeed this perspective will not be fulfilled unless the paper continues to be used as a political organizer and leader of both our members and sympathizers in the industrial struggle.

12. To sum up, we can say that the watch words of the next period are the consolidation and focussing of our branches and work units, the development of a tested worker leadership in the organization, and the extension of IS presence and influence in the major unions and industries. Failure to develop a revolutionary leadership while continuing large-scale recruitment will bring inevitable disaster. Failure to recruit will be no less of a disaster. It is also the case that we cannot ignore the politically over-stretched and organizationally sloppy situation that has arisen in the last few months, for any continuation of this weakness will inevitably result in losing old members to exhaustion and new ones to non-involvement. In short, leadership at every level of the organization must now dedicate itself to developing new cadres, further worker recruitment in priority areas, and the tightening-up and focussing of our whole organization.

### 1976 Elections - First Perspective

I. THE CONTEXT: The 1976 election year opens with both parties in disarray. The RP faces a repeat of '64 and an openly right wing candidate and the DP nomination is being fought over by nine faceless candidates, the racist George Wallace and the non-candidacy of Hubert Humphrey.

The problem both parties face, however is not the specific candidate, but the program. The country is only just beginning to "recover" from the worst depression since the 1930's. The "recovery" is a business recovery only, however. For the working class the depression continues.

Official unemployment figures are still over 8% and will decline only slightly in 1976.

The problem of inflation has not been solved either. Inflation is now over 7% and moving upward. In fact, as the business recovery moves forward, as shallow as it is, inflation moves upward. By the end of the year it will have returned to double digit.

In short, capitalism is in crisis and neither party has a program to solve the twin problems of stagnation and inflation.

At the same time respect for "American political institutions" is at an all time low. The 1976 election takes place in the shadow of Watergate and the continuing revelations of the deceit, treachery, and murder commonly practiced by the CIA and the FBI.

II. THE REPUBLICAN PARTY: Gerald Ford's presidency has been marked by ineptness and confusion since he took office. His domestic programs have zig-zagged wildly. First he pushed his own conservative politics - cutbacks on federal spending to fight inflation. The depression forced him to reverse himself - with too little, too late. He then flipped back to economic old time religion with the NYC crisis. The net result has been that Ford responded to whatever pressures were brought to bear and provided no leadership from anyone's point of view. His inability to develop a consistent program has left him with no achievements to run on. He may, thus, become the first incumbent to fail to win renomination.

Ford's running scared. His campaign is a series of reactions. Mainly to the right-wing ex-Governor of California - Ronald Reagan.

Reagan's candidacy for the RP nomination has pushed Ford to the right. To head Reagan off, Ford almost let NYC go down the tubes against the outcry of a large section of the international capitalist class, 2: dropped Nelson Rockefeller - the man whose role it was to give Ford's administration an air of competency and prestige, and 3: vetoed the construction bill pushed by Ford's Secretary of Labor, thus losing whatever support Ford might have expected from labor.

By all indications Ford's maneuvers have in no way hurt Reagan and have lost support for Ford.

There is a strong possibility that Ford's rightward path will essentially put the RP out of the running as Goldwater's candidacy did in 1964. The antiquated right wing policies pushed by Reagon and mimicked by Ford are not in the interests of the capitalist class. They would further intensify the crisis, not solve it. Therefore, much of the traditional big business support for the RP will probably shift to the DP - as happened in 1964.

Nelson Rockefeller's break with Ford is part of that process. Ford needed to dump Rockefeller in order to appeal to the RP right wing.

Rockefeller was just as eager to leave, however. Rockefeller is first a capitalist. Ford's policies no longer represented his interests. NYC became the telling question. If a suitable candidate is not found within the RP (as is likely) the Rockefeller family resources will probably be used, behind the scenes, to back the DP candidate.

Henry Kissinger and detente are the only prestigious area left the Ford administration. That too is crumbling. The revelations about US involvement in Angola and the subsequent Senate vote to halt further US aid to Angola has been the first major defeat for Kissinger's policies. At the same time Kissinger himself is rapidly losing favor. Charges of lying to Congress on the SALT agreement, the US role in Chile and the activities of the CIA have tied him firmly to the stench of Watergate - something he had previously eluded.

III. THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY: If the DP only had a candidate it would be smooth sailing for them. They too, however, are in disarray.

1975 began with the DP holding the overwhelming majority of seats in both the House and the Senate. They promised a great deal and delivered nothing. In fact, their huge Congressional majority only served to expose their political bankruptcy. Other than reforming congressional procedure, the DP showed itself to be as programless and backluster as Ford.

In fact, Ford's ineptness exposed the DP further. Even in a vacuum the DP could provide no alternative. Programs promised by the DP, like national health insurance, never happened. The DP proved itself no more capable of dealing with the crisis than was Ford.

The only dynamism in the race for the DP nomination comes from Wallace. This is Wallace's fourth attempt and he is better organized and has more money behind him than ever before, or than any of the other DP hopefuls.

Wallace began cleaning up his image two years ago - in preparation for this race. He dropped his racist rhetoric and began wooing blacks. Wallace would like the VP slot.

Wallace has a considerable following across the country and is the front runner of the official candidates. Only Kennedy and Humphrey beat him in the polls. Much of Wallace's support is racism - even without the rhetoric. There is however, a good-sized segment of Wallace's support that is attracted by his anti-big bovern-

ment/pro the little people line.

The current "positive" situation the DP finds itself in lessens Wallace's chances for the VP or for even playing a very big role in a brokered convention. Before Watergate, Nixon seemed unbeatable, and all sorts of DP regulars were eager to play footsies with Wallace in the hopes of putting together a show of strength that could take Nixon on. Now Wallace is not needed. The DP will have to work very hard to lose.

At this point it appears that none of the DP hopefuls will jump far enough ahead to win the nomination in the primaries and the decision will be made at the DP convention.

This fact bides well for the non-candidate Humphrey. Even though he is not running, Humphrey is the current front runner in the polls. Humphrey has a lot going for him. He is nationally known, acceptable to party regulars, the current favorite of the trade union bureaucracy and acceptable to big business. Whether or not Humphrey actually wins the nomination - the politics he represents will.

IV. THE ISSUES: The main issue of this election will be the economy. Specifically programs for dealing with inflation, unemployment, the crisis of the cities and cuts in social services.

The Republicans will blame the crisis on welfare recipients and federal spending. They will continue to call for cuts in social spending and more unemployment to fight inflation.

Ford's handling of the NYC crisis, which resulted in the immediate loss of 40,000 jobs (30,000 more over the next two years), a freeze in city wages, massive cuts in services and union busting is a model of his approach. Reagon would have done the same. In fact, Ford's program comes from his attempt to out Reagon.

The democrats were no better. Although they used all sorts of rhetoric that demanded the banks pay for the crisis, Beame and Carey (both Democrats) conceived of and executed the "solution" to the crisis.

Labors "friends" in the House and Senate were no better. DP Congressmen came up with programs even more right-wing than Beame and Carey.

The real program of the RP to fight the crisis is to make the workers pay through unemployment and cuts in social services. The real program of the DP is also to make the working class pay. They will do this through wage controls.

The other major issue of this election will be bussing. For the RP the question will pose few problems. Both Ford and Reagon are against it. Neither will lose support for an anti-bussing position.

For the Democrats the question is far more complicated. The issue of bussing has clearly become a question of racism. To oppose bussing is to openly stand with the racists.

The DP pretends to be the champions of black people. To aggressively support bussing at this time is politically dangerous - and at the same time to oppose it is to stand with racism and lose liberal and black support.

Most of the DP candidates would like to bury the issue and fudge their position. They would concede the difficulties of bussing, call for other avenues, such as magnet schools first, and support bussing as a last resort.

They will not have that luxury. Henry Jackson plans to run on the bussing issue. He is opposed. As Jackson is still within the mainstream of the DP (unlike Wallace) His strong anti-bussing position forces all the candidates to take a position on the question.

Bussing may be the key issue at the DP convention and a spring board to prominence for DP blacks, such as Coleman Young, opposed to bussing.

V. THE TRADE UNION BUREAUCRACY: The elections will become the strategy for the TU bureaucracy. They will blame the abysmal failure of the Democratic Congress on Ford. "Get a Democrat in the White House" will be their slogan.

In the face of the crisis and the attack on the working class, the TU bureaucracy has offered no resistance. In fact, as they too believe in capitalism and the need for profitability, the TU bureaucracy has collaborated with the bosses and the government to force the working class to bail out the system.

They will claim their cowardice is tactically wise and that the fight must be political. About the need for a political fight they will be right - their politics will be wrong.

VI. THIRD PARTIES: The role of the two-party system has been to make the same set of politics palatable to different social forces. Beneath the rhetoric, the politics of both the DP and the RP have been essentially the same. When differences arose they have risen with the parties rather than between them.

As they have been alike in times of prosperity, they are alike in times of crisis. The disarray in both parties is their mirror response to the decay of capitalism.

As the function of these twin parties to hold disparate forces in line breaks down, the parties themselves have become increasingly unstable. Both parties are threatened with relatively serious break-aways which could shake up political alignments. Reagan and Wallace to the right, McCarthy to the left.

VII. THE ELECTIONS: The elections themselves will highlight a general shift to the right. The RP has already shown where it is going. Responsibility for carrying out the needs of capitalism falls heavily on the DP. The ruling class cannot afford foaling around with McGovern-type liberalism. To win the DP nomination, no matter what his political posture, a candidate must have the support of big business.

VIII. WHAT WE DO: For the election poses certain political problems. The system is in crisis and we too believe a political fight must be waged



However, there is no working class alternative. The so-called "socialist" candidates are totally irrelevant. To the militants we work with a vote for the SWP, the SLP or the CP is meaningless. They are right.

In this election, we must call for abstention. We must point out that this is not a strength, but a weakness. It must be changed. The strategy to change this is through the unions. Part of taking back the unions must be building a working class political alternative. This means raising the need for an independent labor party in our general political propaganda - not led by today's bureaucrats but by the same rank and file leadership that becomes the class struggle union leadership of tomorrow. The industrial struggle cannot provide the working class with an alternative in '76 - but that fight now combined with educational work around independent labor political action can make a big difference in 1980. Our work around the '76 election will be mainly propagandistic. WP will be our main tool.

A possible area of direct work around the election might be activity, demonstrations, etc., against racism as pushed by people like Wallace.

As the election draws nearer our line will become increasingly difficult to argue convincingly - especially if there is a break-away, i.e., McCarthy to the left. At the last moment, the lesser evil will look increasingly attractive.

We must be prepared to argue against ruling class break-aways, black democrats, Wallace, the strategy of the TU bureaucracy and lesser evilism.

In the spring we should put a pamphlet out on the elections and run a national speaking tour in the early fall.

### BUILDING NEW BRANCHES.

The drive to build new branches will be another key step in the process of building a revolutionary party in the USA. The most striking features will be the creation of new branches in several key Mid-Western cities and establishing our first branch in the South. This branch, Atlanta, will be allocated sufficient resources to enable it to undertake the first serious regional work in this area and thus become a bridgehead for further branch developments in the near future.

To successfully carry out this perspective we will need to move at least 36 people in the next few months. This is almost 9% of the organisations present strength. When you consider that more than a dozen of these comrades will have to be experienced branch leaders it becomes clear that this proposition will inevitably put some strain on the organisation. Particularly it means that there will have to be people moved from the Mid-West industrial branches as well as from the student, west coast and eastern branches.

#### Atlanta-Our Bridgehead in the South

We can no longer remain primarily a regional organisation, though of course we will continue to be strongest in the Mid-West. Our problem, however, is that right now we can truthfully say that we know virtually nothing about the South. In fact even our own members from the South know next to nothing because they had no experience of being revolutionaries in the South.

What we do know is that the South will be important, despite the fact that it is not nearly as industrial as the east or Mid-West. In particular the South will be important in our efforts to build a unified, multi-national organisation. For no revolutionary party can be built which does not challenge racism in the South, as well as the north, and does not deal with the millions of blacks who still face the worst extremes of racist oppression in the South. Essentially Atlanta will be our first step and our method of planning and implementing our succeeding steps.

To set up a branch and create a serious regional office will require that we send at least one national leader, two or three other comrades with considerable experience and around a dozen people in all, including black and worker members.

Atlanta will be our first base because in a very real sense it is the centre of the deep South. Its population is 1.7 million and a quarter of those are black. Atlanta is the centre of southern trucking, there are two major auto plants (Ford & GM) and it is a nationally important communications centre. We already have two, admittedly untested, comrades there but there is no reason to believe they will not be a great help in starting a branch.

#### Four Major Cities-Four New Branches

Buffalo, Baltimore, Cincinnati and Indianapolis are the other major cities where we want to establish branches by the summer. These cities almost pick themselves as areas of expansion, they are key industrial cities and it is no accident that with the exception of Baltimore we already have worker contacts in all these branches. Baltimore has a special importance because of its size and central importance to the east coast industrial region where we are already committed to growth and have made some real progress for the first time in the last few months.

Cincinnati is the key city in southern Ohio. It has 1.4 million people, 11% black. It is the hub of a region that also includes Hamilton, Dayton, Middletown and Springfield, in which is found trucking steel and auto. Cincinnati itself has the Norwood GMAD plant, Ford and 105 trucking companies. Already there has been a successful TDC meeting and UPSurge has contacts here.

Buffalo is a concentration of heavy industry, in particular auto and steel. There are 25,000 members in both the USW and UAW. The city has 1.3 million people of which 10% are black. Most of the auto is Ford and Chevy while the steel is concentrated in Lawkawana at the Bethlehem plant.

Indianapolis is again the centre of a significant manufacturing region. A city of well over a million, 14% of the population is black. It is an important teamster centre and we already have a member in the key local and in the TDC chapter. There are 22,000 auto workers (Chrysler and GM) and we have another member in Chrysler. We have several other worker contacts in other industries.

Baltimore has over 2 million people and a black population of half a million. The communications industry is large and the city has an important GM plant. 25,000 people work at the huge Sparrows Point steel concentration. We have no contacts to speak of in the city but we do have one Member at Large who is in a particularly useful job from the point of view of us getting a real feel for the city and its labor movement.

#### Other Geographical Consolidation

Short of building new branches there are other areas in which we intend to strengthen and consolidate ourselves during the next few months. All the members in West Virginia will be moved into the Charleston branch to give us a better prospect of consolidating a real working class base there. We will be moving another couple of people into the South Chicago steel fraction so that the perspective of also building in Gary can be carried thru. In Pittsburg, the other centre for steel work, the local fraction also needs to be strengthened by the addition of another male comrade. In California, despite the need to move some comrades east, we will be building an industrial based branch in Sacramento.

Finally, in the process of developing this plan, we have investigated other important areas for expansion. We have decided that restricted resources mean that we cannot take any action on them now, but by the end of the year we will have to start moving in these kind of areas as well. It is certainly the case that we cannot ignore the New Jersey industrial area indefinitely. And branches in Milwaukee, Akron and Toledo will have to be built in the next period, probably from the Chicago, Cleveland and Detroit branches respectively. These observations are not firm plans for a new drive but these places, and perhaps many, many more will provide us with major opportunities in the not too distant future.

We aim to start this drive to build new branches immediately after the January NC meeting. There are already many comrades ready and willing to move and it will be the job of the EC to ensure that these comrades are used effectively and others, where necessary, are convinced to join the move to the new branches. The other major responsibility of the national office will be to ensure that the new branches get the physical support they require to build themselves as fast as possible. For while there will

be comrades unable to move until the summer, these must be the exceptions. The time-table forced upon us by the economic crisis, the development of working class consciousness, the opening of an international revolutionary period and our own immediate tasks in terms of our strategy for the rank & file in the contract round mean that we must push forward ever faster.

There is one other key aspect to this whole drive for geographical expansion which all members must bear in mind. We are immeasurably stronger today than we were when we last started new branches from the outside. We have a weekly Workers Power, which by any standard applied is one of the best workers papers in the world. We have our connection, nationally, to UPSurge and the TDC and we have campaigns already organised in auto and communications which will be immediately applicable in the new areas. We are now a workers organisation which operates in an increasingly radicalised working class. The IS itself is far harder, much more dynamic and far more successful than at any time in its history. In short we are in a position to take real advantage of this drive and build solid new working class branches in a matter of months rather than years. The impact on all our work, everywhere, of this expanded IS will be great and extremely beneficial.

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### Portugal

The 6th Provisional government was set up as a law and order government charged with restoring authority in the army, discipline in the factory, capitalist censorship over the media. To accomplish this, it must crush the organs of workers control and dual power. Yet as a government of the moderate right, of liberals and social democrats, it must at the same time draw back from the moves which would so crush the workers that the extreme right would use this to topple the government.

Until the 25th of November, the 6th government was a total failure. Every attempt to restore capitalist control was met by fierce resistance, a massive working class revolt, and the further erosion of governmental authority. Dual power spread rapidly. Workers' control and workers' commissions proliferated enormously, drawing in deeper and deeper layers of the proletariat. The commissions overcame their limitation as purely economic organizations confined to particular factories. The more advanced developed a political dimension, including concern with the questions of state power and the road to revolution. They became linked together, and unified with soldiers' and tenants' committees. They were armed during the 6th government. The formation of committees of vigilance and self-defense in the factories and neighborhoods was the beginning embryo of a workers' militia.

Within the army, revolutionaries who created the Soldiers United for Victory (SUV) were able to develop the independence of the proletariat in uniform from the radical petty bourgeois officers of the MFA, who supported the 6th government. The SUV stood on the platform of a working class insurrection.-- not a coup by soldiers, but the troops supporting an armed working class uprising. The SUV was able to win over many peasants in the army to the cause of the proletarian revolution. Government repression brought remaining units of the Lisbon area over to the working class. The collapse of government authority, the radicalization of the workers in response to repression, and the support of the soldiers spread an insurrectionary mood in the working class. The creation of popular assemblies in Setubal, Lisbon, Faro and elsewhere (whether called by that name, or as committees of struggle, intercommissions, etc.) began to lay the basis for the class rule of the proletariat. In some cities the popular assemblies established governmental dual power, controlling the municipal authorities.

Fully mature soviets did not, and do not, yet exist. As a result the political differentiation between working class parties was still not fully clarified. Nonetheless the Portuguese revolution, which began without soviets or a revolutionary party, the essential two ingredients for proletarian rule, was rapidly solving the first problem. The question that remained, and still does, is that of revolutionary leadership, of the proletariat's vanguard party.

The creation of a revolutionary party in the very crucible of revolution, is the greatest difficulty which confronts revolutionaries. At all costs it should be avoided. The party, its cadres, pro-

gram, leadership and tactics must be developed, tested and matured prior to the revolutionary situation. However, when they must be done in the course of revolution itself, the job of the revolutionaries is not to avoid the difficulties, look for a substitute, or despair. Their job is to organize the proletariat for victory, despite the difficult conditions, and to press through the formation of the vanguard party however inexperienced its cadres are.

There is only one party which has fulfilled its duty, the Proletarian Revolutionary Party. During this period, when the working class was reaching towards revolutionary consciousness, the PRP emerged as the embryo of the revolutionary workers party. It is still small, confined to a small layer of advanced workers and revolutionary soldiers. As such it bears some of the hallmarks of this weakness. It is not well-organized, has a weak press, a new cadre which is not always as vigorous as its intervention in the organs of popular power as it should be. It also made a political adaption to the apartyism of the advanced workers which at times led it to subordinate its own independent role, its party-building activities, even vigorous contention with opposing tendencies, and make it reluctant to present itself as the revolutionary party.

Nonetheless as the revolutionary situation matured, the PRP advanced as a serious, if still small, contender for power. From mid-August to mid-October the initiative was in the hands of the revolutionary left in general, but only because it was organized around the proposals of the PRP in particular. The PRP used the SUV and the United Revolutionary Front (FUR) as broad transmission belts for its politics. It broke the CP's total control over centrism (i.e., groups like MES, FSP and LCI which began to orient toward PRP initiatives rather than following the CP). The PRP polarized the non-Stalinist left around its political line. It created a political and organizational pole for the revolutionary left, which could draw in many non-party workers and even elements of the CP, broadly based around the program of the PRP, giving it a mass audience. This initiative -- generated by a situation in which the proliferation of parties had produced the apartyism of the Portuguese workers -- had its own contradiction: the continuing inability of the PRP to vigorously push the building of the PRP itself.

The development of the revolutionary left was blocked by the entry of the CP into active opposition to the 6th government in October. The rightward drift of governmental crackdown, which must be directed at the CP itself, and the leftward thrust of the working class, including its own ranks, forced the CP to overcome its paralysis of months, and gamble with a militant working class. Once taking the decision, the organizational weight of the CP allowed it to win back the initiative from the revolutionary left. The CP tried to co-opt the slogans of the revolutionary left, even its broad organizations like SUV, with some success. It took over many of the mobilizations against the government for its own limited aims, or was able in effect to impose a united front of struggle against the government with the revolutionary left. This was not always on the terms of the CP. Often, the governmental sit-ins at Faro, and the land occupations, helped strengthen the revolutionary left and the PRP.

However the entry of the CP into this opposition settled the outcome of this stage of the revolution. The CP retained its base in the working class. With its organizational weight it was able to dominate the movement, to appeal to the instinctive desires of the proletariat for unity in the face of impending revolutionary events, to channel this revolutionary upsurge into a CP diversion, and to be the obstacle to the revolutionary left's ability to win the working class.

The CP could only do this at the price of increasing the radicalization of the workers, including that of its own ranks, and encouraging the insurrectionary mood within the working class. But while the CP played with this insurrectionary mood, and was able to organizationally ride on top of it, it is not and can never be a party of working class insurrection. It attempted to use the mass mobilization to contain it in safe channels, to use it as a battering ram. The CP's goal at this stage was not even for a Stalinist coup and transformation, but only for a new coalition government with the social democrats and the Melo Antunes group - the main organizer of the counter-revolutionary 6th government.

During the course of this crisis the PRP proposed the program, strategy and technical preparation for a proletarian insurrection. It polarized around this program the revolutionary alternative. In such a revolutionary situation the road to build the revolutionary party was through the question of armed insurrection and proletarian dictatorship. Nonetheless the PRP had lost the political initiative to the CP. It was organizationally weak, and incapable of breaking decisive sections of CP militants from the CP, a necessary step towards the seizure of state power.

With an insurrectionary mood developing, but not led by the party of the insurrection, the party of the revolutionary workers, there can be nothing but defeat. The CP had no intention of opening the road to proletarian insurrection which eventually would destroy the CP. Its attempt at a half-coup only played into the hands of the right which itself had drawn up plans for civil war. The events of the 25th of November show decisively that workers' control and commissions are not enough. Without a revolutionary party to lead an insurrection to smash the state, the counter-revolution will triumph. On the 25th of November there was no decisive leadership. The CP was incapable of going all the way for fear of sending the masses of workers into revolutionary motion which could surpass the CP's aims. Nor could the revolutionary left provide leadership on the 25th. The PRP is opposed, both before and after November 25th, to a military coup of soldiers. Its line is for a proletarian insurrection. On November 25th, its line to workers who called the PRP for guidance was one of caution, telling them to prepare defense against a right-wing assault but not to risk offensive action in circumstances of isolation and total lack of coordination. Unquestionably, this line was correct -- a premature insurrection under the confused circumstances of November 25th would have been an even greater disaster. But the PRP had neither the organizational strength, political initiative or sufficient leadership of large numbers of workers to have any decisive impact one way or the other.

If the decisive lesson of November 25th is the absence of sufficient proletarian leadership, it also shows the successful leadership of the right provided by the Azevedo government. This government -- whose authority had been collapsing in the weeks before -- precisely because it had a centralized leadership, bold program and strategy for the crisis, and a disciplined following of armed men, was able to effectively control the country with a few thousand commandos and national guard.

While different in form, the 25th of November has a similar content to the July days of the Russian Revolution. Mounting revolutionary consciousness culminated in insurrectionary moods in the working class, and an aborted premature drive for state power. The consequences will also be similar to that of the July days. A mounting repression will go on for the next number of months, the extreme right will push the moderate government for even greater repression, while the government in turn will be squeezed by a new upsurge produced by the still intact organs of workers' dual power. The tempo in the next month or two will be of a mounting right-wing advance. The feel of the revolution will be run in reverse. Repression will get worse. A government which now has the sense of victory will be forced to go after one working class gain after another. The successful reimposition of government authority in the army will lead to one attempt after another to further control the troops, who are still unreliable, to be used against the working class. Meanwhile there must be an attempt to resolve the economic crisis by restoring factory discipline. The government drive will for a period of time seem to be successful. There is a drawing in of the working class, and there will be a temporary decline of the organs of dual power. Workers commissions will lose some power to the factory administration. They will be more conservative. The links between weaker commissions will be broken. The line of the CP, although responsible for the defeat, will be reinforced for a period. This line will stress defending the past conquests of the workers, not advancing to new ones. It will fit the mood of immediate working class consciousness in the next month or two. But the conquests so far achieved can only be maintained in struggle against this government which will be attacking them, and of which the CP will be a part. Moreover, while there will be a retreat of consciousness, the decisive backbone organs of dual power will remain. They will organize the struggles of defense which will eventually turn to a new offensive, and a rapid shift in consciousness back to revolutionary ideas -- this time much-strengthened by assimilating the lessons of November 25th.

In the last month, and in the next, there will be a period of sorting out of the left. All of the centrist groups which were in the FUR are in crisis, faction fights, splits and declines. Only the PRP on this wing is remaining firm under the defeat and repression as a coherent revolutionary party. As the dust settles it will be clear that only 3 groups remain on the left as serious forces: the CP, the UDP, and the PRP. The PRP may be able to pick up pieces of the wreckage from the centrist left, either as tendencies or individual cadres, or through turning some of these rump groups into satellites of the PRP.



This process is clearing the field of what are now obstacles to building the party. It comes at a time when the PRP is strong enough to project itself as the basis of the revolutionary workers' party. Many independents previously associated with FUR have drawn the lesson of the necessity of belonging to a revolutionary party from the events of November 25th, and are now joining the PRP. The PRP is now involved in a massive recruitment campaign to change itself from cadre party to mass party. This process will not be completed until the PRP is capable of breaking a significant section of militants from CP influence. The increased strength of the PRP, and the disintegration of the centrist groups, should allow the PRP to build its organization and press, and contend as credible alternative to the CP in providing leadership in the economic and defensive struggles which will characterize the next period.

Portugal is now approaching economic catastrophe. The government is trying to solve this through cutting the standard of living of the masses. The economic gains won since the overthrow of fascism are to be wiped out by sharply higher prices coupled to a wage freeze which runs until the end of March. This economic program, associated with the SP, satisfies no one. It is not strong enough austerity measures to solve the crisis. The SP hopes to postpone the worse consequences of the economic catastrophe through European loans until after the March elections. Until then it will not introduce severe enough measures to solve the crisis for fear of cutting deeply into the living standards of its petty bourgeois base. The austerity measures are directed against the workers, but to make them stick it out requires crushing the organs of dual power which the SP is unprepared to do. Yet with their organizations intact, the working class has the capacity and will to defend its gains. In the next months the focus of working class struggle will be against the wage freeze, the high cost of living, the attempts to lay-off workers. It is these struggles which will restore the confidence and fighting spirit of the workers in overcoming the defeat of November 25th. The CP is expected to play a vacillating role in the economic battles of the next months. Support some, not others, moderate demands, contain the struggle, prevent any confrontations with the government. It is in these struggles that the PRP must be able to prove itself as a credible, militant alternative to the CP. The leadership it provides in these struggles is decisive for its growth as a mass revolutionary party. It is this which will be key to the coming stage of the revolution.

Just as there is a clarification on the left, there is a polarization on the right. The extreme right is expected to hold itself in reserve until after the March elections which will legitimize the right much more. The SP which is held responsible for the government is expected to lose heavily to the right - to the PPD and CDS. The right-wing consolidation of the PPD has made it amenable to a government with the CDS. A PPD-CDS government with the right-wing of the army, whether supported by the SP or not, will lead to greater repression and stronger attacks on the workers. The resurgent right will be under greater pressure from its Spínolista and fascist elements for a decisive confrontation with the organs of workers' dual power. But just as the revolutionary workers are not yet unified, neither is the bourgeoisie. So it backs away from the

decisive measures it requires -- fascism.

In the late spring we can expect to see the economic struggles of the next months turning into sharp confrontations with the state apparatus. The class struggle will sharpen once again towards class war. Both sides will be preparing to topple the government and readying for civil war. Whether it comes to the decisive last battle or not is impossible to predict. The PRP if it is successful in the next period in building the party may still not have accomplished the completion of this -- the splitting of the CP. In such circumstances it may find itself forced to protract the revolutionary process while it continues the task of unifying the working class for the taking of power. At this time this is sheer speculation. What we do expect is that the Portuguese revolution will continue for at least another 5 or 6 months, and possibly quite some time longer. Difficult though the situation is now, the prospects for a working class victory in Portugal are still good. Unless, and until there is a defeat, we are against leaving the field of battle. We concentrate on the prospects and strategy for victory. It is the development of the PRP in the next period which is the key to this.

BRIEF SECTIONS ON ANGOLA AND SPAIN TO FOLLOW