

ON THE RECENT EXPULSIONS AND RESIGNATIONS IN THE BAY AREA I.S.

(Written in March-April 1976 by Jan A, for Manja A, Barry G., Paul M., and Mike R.)

(PRIMARYLY DIRECTED TO PRESENT AND FORMER MEMBERS OF I.S.)
(an address for correspondence will be found at the end of this paper)

"No witch-hunt ever ended with the first witch. Even if I were to resign now, the exec would find new targets in the people who have supported me. If I can be forced out of the IS on charges of a vague, subjective nature, then any member of IS can be disposed of for displeasing the current leadership. I am fighting for the rights of every IS member. The action taken against me is unprecedented. But if I fail, it will not stay unprecedented long."

--"In Reply to the Charges," Barry G, 2/1/76

In the course of "Branch Restructuring" in the Bay Area this February, Barry G, and then Mike R, Jan A, and Paul M were expelled. Leslye, John B, and Manja resigned from membership. Leo, Tom C, and Winnie were placed on probation by the Exec (Winnie's was reversed by the Branch). In addition, four applicants (Dave C, Mirra, John D, and Mark M) withdrew their applications for membership.

From a branch of 36 members and 8 public applicants as of the December 7 Recruitment Rally, the Bay Area Branch had 30 members by the end of February. (the numbers don't match because several members moved to other branches.) We believe that the membership has not grown in the intervening eight weeks.

Because these expulsions and forced resignations represent a departure from IS norms of internal democracy, we feel they are significant beyond the Bay Area. Because there is a material loss to the human resources of IS, we feel members should know the circumstances. Because of the top-down structure of communications within IS at present, we are distributing this statement to as many present and recent former members as we can. Because the "unexpurgated" set of relevant documents and counter-documents totals 60 pages, we are presenting this all-in-one special "Readers Digest" condensed version. Copies of the documents, letters etc. referred to in this paper may be requested from us. (Please send some stamps.)

Most of the ex-members and probationers were associated loosely, socially and/or politically. Barry, Jan, Winnie, John D., Paul, and Mark all live in San Francisco, and had begun to organize for the re-building of a branch in San Francisco. Mike and John B had previously lived in San Francisco and supported this idea, as did Tom C and Manja. In the course of the internal struggle of January and February, somewhat more "political" differences emerged.

Eventually some of us came to feel we differed with the IS majority (as expressed by the leadership) over methods of decision-making, norms of internal democracy, attitude of leaders toward members and contacts, and communications flow within IS. By the time of the second expulsion meeting (Feb. 22), Mike, Jan, Paul and Manja, in particular, criticized the IS as tending toward a bureaucratic, monolithic, "Cannonite" direction. Although Sam F is not responsible in any way for our opinions, we came to solidarize ourselves with the fears

expressed in his 1975 convention document, in which he predicted:

"Our current healthy moves toward greater discipline and organizational centralism must be accompanied by a conscious effort to preserve democratic structures which will promote political development through political debate. Unless we do this, our correct turn will degenerate toward the Cannonism we were originally organized to reject."

--"On Democratic Centralism," Sam F

BACKGROUND: THE BRANCH "RESTRUCTURING" DISCUSSION

After the Worker Recruitment Rally had ~~had~~ turned up eight recruits, the Exec began "Branch Restructuring" discussions. The Exec had first proposed breaking into two smaller branches in September, but the membership had voted down their plan. Several San Francisco members considered December a favorable time to take steps toward setting up a San Francisco branch, partly in response to the pressure from applicants. We supported the continuation of joint (East Bay/San Francisco) fractions, but we felt strongly that separate branch meetings and public events would help in recruiting and integrating new members. A San Francisco branch had existed between 1969 and 1973, with a maximum of 16 members just before the 1973 split. Since the split we had been small and had worked closely with the East Bay. In the fall of 1974 the members in San Francisco (Barry, Jan, Paul, Winnie, and two others who soon resigned) temporarily gave up a separate existence.

By the fall of 1975, however, the number of San Francisco members and close contacts was increasing. Both the "old" San Francisco members and the Exec had become convinced of the approaching viability of a San Francisco branch with IBT recruits. It now appears to us that the East Bay leadership decided they did want a branch in San Francisco, but they did not want the "old" San Francisco members, particularly Barry, in its leadership. This was not directly stated to us until January. So the chain of events as it unfolded was muddled. Only gradually did we understand the depth of Exec hostility to us.

We tried to participate in the Exec's restructuring discussions in December. We were invited to submit written or oral suggestions, but no two-way discussion was possible. Around December 23 we were told the Exec was still forming its own proposal, and wanted to have its proposal together before discussing it with the branch. This was a departure from previous IS practice of including known minorities in discussions.

We held a meeting on December 26, six people including Mike and Manja from the East Bay. We began working out a proposal for restructuring that would meet what we felt the needs of the branch to be, including setting up a San Francisco branch. We again attempted to attend the next Exec meeting, about January 6, to see whether we could reach agreement. We were told the Exec discussion had shifted to a consideration of Personnel and would be in Executive Session.

On January 9 we held the second San Francisco meeting, again with six people. The Exec asked to send a representative and sent David D., David told us the Exec could not see any sensible way to set up two East Bay branches, and were generally favorable to a San Francisco branch. The membership was being "reviewed,"

to determine; (1) who should be asked to move to the Midwest--the National Office was suggesting that five people would be a suitable quota--and to Sacramento and San Francisco, and (2) who should be asked to resign. Although this "who should be asked to resign" line was a bit of a jolt, since last summer we had learned to accept a certain number of jolts...Tom C's name was the only one that was mentioned to us at this point.

Overall, we felt it was a fruitful meeting. We felt the Exec was finally taking the recruitment possibilities in San Francisco seriously, so we arranged no further meetings, but waited for the results of the membership review. National Secretary Glenn was expected late in January, and we expected the "restructuring" would definitely get settled at that time.

(The behavior of the Exec at this point, the keeping information away from certain members, organizing internally around their proposal before making it known publicly, is an example of what we mean by bureaucratic functioning. Union activists will recognize the tactic of not handing out the leadership's proposal until it's too late for the members to do a thorough job of replying, and of calling "Executive Sessions" whenever a rank-and-filer they don't care for threatens to put in an appearance.)

FEWER MEMBERS, BUT BETTER ONES

At the Branch meeting January 11, organizer Sheila announced that Leslye had resigned from the Exec and from the IS. Sheila said Leslye had decided to devote more time to her business and to her children. But Sheila's tone was peculiar. The notion of Leslye suddenly resigning, after nearly twenty years in our tendency, and without coming to a meeting to announce it herself, came as a shock. It was particularly disturbing to Dave C and Mirra. They were then nearing the end of their three months' joint work and discussions with IS (of which more later). Leslye had been trying to recruit them to IS and had been their main political contact with the IS mainstream.

It now appears that in order for the Exec to feel confident they could convince the members of the new, super-serious, tough-Bolshevik, steely-hard, active-all-year-round, no-vacations-for-revolutionaries, "Workers' combat" membership standards, then being prepared for unveiling, that they would have to drop Leslye. Leslye has a reputation for cyclic alternations between brilliantly competent, highly active leadership for months, followed by months of barely fulfilling membership requirements. Leslye would especially have to go if the excuse for asking Tom to resign was to be his chronically minimal approach to membership responsibilities, and if the excuse for asking Barry to resign was that his once-leadership activity level had slumped for several months the previous spring and summer following his separation from Jan. (Leslye seems to have been pressured to resign under threat of being brought up on charges. Her opinions on this whole sequence of events has never been made known publicly.)

On January 20, Tom C and Barry were asked to resign from IS. Barry (and Mike) went to the Exec that night. Barry refused to resign, as he wanted to stay in the IS and felt he was, and could continue to be, reasonably active. Barry was informed he would be brought up on charges. None of the "charges" mentioned to Barry resembled the IS constitution's version of expulsion charges. And the Exec wanted to hold the vote on February 1, while Glenn would be in town, although they

didn't have the charges written up yet, and members are supposed to be allowed two weeks for defense.

Tom C. refused to resign but didn't stay around to hear or discuss any possible consequences of his refusal.

That week, and in fact for several weeks previously, the Exec members conducted a phone-call and home-visit campaign to line the members up for the expulsions. This campaign extended to close contacts, which nobody questioned at the time. Mark M, Dave C, and Mirra all received calls or visits from Exec members during this phase.

The anti-expulsion forces also conducted an extensive campaign, and organized an anti-expulsion meeting for January 24. This meeting later formed part of the charges against Mike, Paul, and Jan, because of the presence of a non-member, Dave C.

THE NOTORIOUS EX-SPARTACISTS IN OUR MIDST

Dave and Mirra resigned from the Spartacist League in 1972. The IS had contacted them at times in the past. For example, National Chairman Joel G met with them in 1974. Tom C had been their main link to IS for about the next year. Dave and Mirra occasionally attended IS events.

In September 1975 they attended the much-publicized Antonio Silva/Joel Geier forum on Portugal. They found the IS view of events in Portugal to be closest to their own, and Dave became an active member of the IS-initiated Portugal Solidarity Committee. In October, Leslye invited them to join IS. Dave and Mirra assumed there were political differences that should be clarified; joint work on international solidarity was one thing, joining a disciplined organization was another. So Leslye (for the Exec) and Dave and Mirra worked out a plan for a period of three months joint work and political discussions.

Dave and Mirra were assigned to fractions, sold WP as part of regular selling teams, made financial contributions as requested by the Exec, attended branch meetings, and publically declared their intention to join IS at the Worker Recruitment Rally.

However, the Exec never set up the mutually agreed-on political discussions. So when David D (of the Exec) visited Dave and Mirra, separately, to explain why Tom C and Barry had to be expelled for "irresponsibility," Dave and Mirra were not inclined to agree. By this time they considered the Exec's behavior toward them to be (politically) irresponsible.

And so, having heard the Exec's side of the Tom-and-Barry question, Dave and Mirra contacted Mike and Manja to ask about the other side. Mike invited them to the anti-expulsion meeting January 24. A stream-of-consciousness letter Dave wrote for that meeting indicates their growing disillusionment with IS. The next day, Dave and Mirra decided to break off their moving-toward-membership relations with IS.

(Mirra wrote an account of Dave and Mirra's experiences with the IS. We distributed her account and Dave's famous letter to the Branch meeting February 22. Interested persons may contact us for copies of either.)

DRIVING THE WEDGE DEEPER--GLENN'S VISIT

Planning our defense of Tom and Barry was complicated by the fact that as of January 24, we had no copies of the written Exec charges against Barry, and nothing had even been written yet concerning the charges against Tom. However, Jan contacted David (of the Exec) that afternoon, and was told the votes were both to be held on February 1, and that the Exec would also have a Restructuring document ready to discuss February 1.

Within a couple of days, two Exec documents were out, but no charges against Tom. Evidently rank-and-file pressure caused the Exec to give Barry something close to two weeks for defense, so his "trial" was rescheduled for February 8. (Later, around February 11, Tom was placed on probation by the Exec.)

Barry wrote a response to the detailed charges against him. Jan found only one concrete "Restructuring" proposal in the Exec's document, a vaguely favorable reference to a San Francisco branch. The rest of the document seemed unfocused and vague, and she wrote an alternative to the Restructuring document. (Basically, even then, we still did not realize that "Restructuring" wasn't the real topic at all.)

Then Glenn arrived, and asked to meet with us. Sheila phoned Jan on January 31 to set up a meeting that night. We welcomed the opportunity to meet with Glenn. It seemed to us that the Exec's reluctance to vote in new members, and their effort to drive away old members, was contrary to the national policy of trying to grow and recruit. Since Sheila referred to "you and your people" or some such expression, Jan cautiously asked exactly who Glenn wanted to meet with. Sheila suggested Paul, Mike, Barry and Jan, and Jan agreed.

IN addition, John B was at Barry's house that day, and wanted to come to the meeting with Glenn. John B had been the main organizer of a high-school student union in Sacramento the previous year, and had started college in San Francisco this fall. It had been hard to fit him into IS work, as he was the only "youth" in San Francisco. The Red Tide was in the process of frequently changing plans about San Francisco and Oakland work; first they wanted John to try to make contacts at San Francisco high schools, then they said he should move to Oakland and transfer to a working-class college there (he eventually did), then that he should stay in San Francisco because some other Red Tiders from Los Angeles were expected to move to San Francisco. These rapid changes are understandable, but hard to adjust to for a new member. However, John was eager to belong to a worker-oriented socialist organization. John had to be convinced a pro-Leninist group could be democratic; we had convinced him. So then when we did an about-face and warned John that he'd be in trouble with the leadership if he associated too closely with us, he didn't want to believe it. He also wanted a closer look at the national leadership.

The meeting with Glenn went badly. We still hoped Glenn would act as a mediator between two local groups, since the political differences were miniscule. However, Glenn opened the meeting by challenging, "What's the political basis for this faction?" He also assumed all the charges against Barry were true and that Barry should resign or be expelled.

Glenn said that when he had heard there was to be an expulsion in the Bay Area, without knowing who was to be expelled, he had said, "Good," because an

expulsion would be a good experience for the Bay Area, a "trauma" that would harder people up. (To favor expulsion for its own sake, without respect to the history, feelings, and talents of the people involved, not to mention the so-called "charges," is a very manipulative and cynical stance for a national leader.)

Glenn had a low opinion of the Bay Area branch, an opinion he had no qualms about sharing with us; a group about whom he had an even lower opinion. He repeated the old reference to the Bay Area as a "swamp," and the worst branch in the IS. (We later learned that he had also told the Los Angeles branch that they were the worst branch in the IS.) It was obvious that Glenn would happily have dumped the present leaders if there was anyone better around; he asked us for our suggestions. We were not prepared for this (since in fact we were not a faction) and responded individually. Some of us proposed ourselves as leaders; others proposed a cooperative, collaborative joint leadership.

We assume Glenn, as a member of the disciplined EC, was acting on behalf of the national leadership. Still, his tactics are instructive, especially since some of you reading this will probably find yourselves on the receiving end if this process is not halted. Glenn took up a whole variety of topics. We dealt with each topic and he'd raise another. While we were trying to be reasonable and look for ways to clear up the muddy waters, Glenn was trying to break us from our organization and from each other.

For example, Glenn raised the question of Dave's presence at the meeting the week before. He came down hard on us for involving a non-member in an internal dispute. We explained that it was the Exec that had first involved Dave in knowledge of the expulsions. Glenn appeared not to have known that (perhaps the Exec didn't tell him) and believed us. He said, however, that if they had done that, they were wrong, and he would deal with them; but now he was dealing with us. (Since they are still members and we are not, "dealing" with them must have had a different meaning. All members should be alerted; majorities can do things minorities cannot do, even internally.)

Another example was the trip Barry made across Canada last summer, after the convention. Glenn charged Barry with doing political work among fraternal organizations without proper authorization from the National Office. We pointed out that the notice to members about that policy had appeared in a National Report in the fall, and was a new policy. Glenn again backed down and went on to his next attack.

We were unable to reach any compromise with Glenn. After the business, we had a pleasant chat in which Glenn told us about his background in Britain, and his disputes with the national leadership there, all the while planning to get us all expelled. The next night, February 1, when members came to the meeting, we received a two-page "Restructuring" document by Glenn which seemed to supersede the one the Exec had written and which was supposed to be the topic of discussion. Unlike the Exec document, this one actually dealt with restructuring. It named factions and personnel, and settled the San Francisco question (not now, later). Since debate was supposed to be on the Exec's document vs. Jan's, debate centered on the actual topic of the Exec's document; membership standards, or how to deal with problem members. The question of how many branches there would be, and what the branches would do, had been superseded emotionally by the question

of who would be allowed to be in the branch.

Glenn's document carried a "Please Note" section explaining the status of those members who had not been assigned to fractions. Four of us, instead, had been "assigned" to a faction; Mike, Jan, Paul, and John B (who apparently was so considered because he had been at the meeting with Glenn). Barry was named as to be dropped from membership. The rest of us would not be allowed to work with the branch until our membership status had been clarified. This was our first notice that our membership status was in question. We feel that to exclude people from assignments because the Exec is planning to expel them, with no charges yet, apparently because it had been decided somehow that we were a faction, is a dangerous departure from previous IS practice.

Again and again the Exec paid lip service to our right to form a faction. In reality, as we understand the term, we were not a faction at the point that we were stripped of assignments because we were a faction. ("You have the right to form a faction, but if you do, or if we decide that you have, you will be singled out in branch documents and not assigned to fraction work." What sort of "right to form a faction" is this?)

Our conception of a faction is a group that has a unified program, usually covering a range of questions, and that acts together within the branch. Mike, Barry and Jan had been part of the "Transformation Caucus" led by Joel Geier, during the faction-fight year of 1973. We had a good working knowledge of what a faction looks like, acts like, and of what sort of questions are important enough to form factions about. None of us considered a third-rate tactical question like when to form a San Francisco branch to be worth forming a faction about. That was our main difference until the moves toward expulsions began. Then we differed on Barry's expulsion; and then other differences emerged. Our meetings over the San Francisco question had the nature of an informal, casual pressure group, not of a faction. Glenn and the East Bay Exec knew this perfectly well; but they apparently figured scare-stories about "fully formed factions" would help them get the newer members ready for the painful votes ahead.

At the same time, Tom C, Winnie, and two others then on leave-of-absence were also not assigned to fractions; because of their inactivity or role, they were also to be reviewed by the Exec. This was our first notice that Winnie was in trouble (for more on Winnie, see Appendix.)

WHO DO WE WANT TO RECRUIT? WHO DON'T WE WANT TO RECRUIT?

The Exec's "Restructuring" document centered on the question of membership, and particularly what to do about "problem members." The Exec stated that they had different standards about what's expected of "worker" and "non-worker" members, as well as variations based on length of membership.

One of the most humorous and yet most dangerous aspects of our internal struggle is that it is now clear the Exec has moved away from the Marxist view of the working class that the IS has traditionally held. In contrast to Weather-people and other bourgeois liberal-guilt-type radicals, the IS has maintained the Marxist position, that a "worker" is someone who makes their living by selling their labor-power to an employer (a business or the government). A "worker"

is someone who, either in manufacturing, distribution, service, clerical, public employment, or in whatever way, has to make their living by being employed by someone else. "Non-workers" are the employing class plus middle-class people such as small business-people, independently employed professionals, management-level employees, etc.

By classifying casual warehousemen (such as Barry), substitute teachers (such as Jan), unemployed clerks (such as Mike), building maintenance workers (such as Paul) and typists (such as Mark) as "non-workers," the IS Exec has moved away from the Marxist definition of relationship to production as what determines what class a person is a member of.

Nor is the Exec talking about class background when they refer to us as "non-workers." With a slight shudder, we will stoop to this level of "I'm more proletarian than you are" long enough to mention that Barry, at least, comes from what can only be called a working-class family, in which he is the only one of seven children to finish college (and thus qualify for the only white-collar job he ever held, as a welfare caseworker). How, then, is the Exec defining workers? As far as we can tell, the Exec has taken to using the term "non-worker" to refer to college graduates, or even college students.

Another way they are using the term "worker" locally refers to how the IS first meets a person. Regardless of their education, and regardless of years of left activities, if the IS first meets the person through TDC or a similar IS-endorsed organizing activity, or as leaders of an organizing activity of their own, then they are workers.

The reason all this became an issue is that we took the "Worker Recruitment Campaign" attitude of openness seriously. We thought the IS was removing barriers to joining. We agreed with the rallying cry of "There's a place for everyone in the IS, if you agree with our action program and are willing to work with us to build the rank-and-file movement and the IS." But this national trend toward openness appears to have been an intolerable strain for the local Exec.

There is a continuity between the leadership of the Berkeley Independent Socialist Clubs of 1965-1970 and the current Exec, through Joel J. Leslye, and Mike P., who politically educated John L. Sheila, and more recently Charlie and David. (When Leslye quit, Joel was put back on the Exec. Sheila reported numerous phone calls to Mike P. for support in their actions.) This continuity of leadership, which has been called the Berkeley clique, has always wanted to divide contacts into "good elements" that we want to recruit and "bad elements" that we don't want to recruit. With the Recruitment Drive, which the Exec's document admits was greeted locally with skepticism, they still had to find a way to be closed to someone, so they developed the notion that three months joint work was going to become the norm for non-workers (this was first unveiled in the case of Mark).

RECRUITING GOING POORLY? BLAME THE RANK-AND-FILE!

The Exec's document speaks of the progress in arena work in the Bay Area. However, so far the branch has "failed to recruit workers" (as defined by the Exec). Why? "It is only problems within our branch which hold us back." How can we deal with these problems? "It is absolutely essential for us to turn the Bay Area IS into the kind of organization, with the kind of members,

that can recruit and integrate workers." (emphasis added)

The Exec states its wish to divide into two smaller branches, and seems to support a San Francisco branch as a good way to do that--but as Joel J pointed out at the meeting, they cleverly didn't say when. They talk of an outward orientation--which begins with three closed meetings. The Exec must carry out decisions better--which is why they kept changing their minds about who to expel.

As Mirra later commented, "'Reorganization' of the branch...was really only a code word for the expulsion of Tom and Barry." It is worth quoting at length from the Exec's section about membership, even though for those of you outside the Bay Area many of the snide references to specific people will be wasted.

"Working under IS discipline requires a minimum level of activity, but just what that minimum is depends on many individual considerations, such as employment, family obligations, etc. It also requires a minimum level of responsibility and competence in the carrying out of IS decisions. And finally it requires a style which will not be a hindrance to worker recruitment."

The traditional minimal duties are passed over lightly, ostensibly because everyone knows what they are. Actually, it is well known in the Bay Area that we have Exec members who are months behind in dues, don't sell Workers Power regularly, etc. But there is an inner circle that agrees never to get too specific about such merely quantitative things. "More to the point, the organization must increasingly look to the quality of the functioning of each member and not just the quantity of activity. For instance, we have members who attend every meeting and speak a great deal, but their contributions often are sectarian or academic. This inhibits participation by other, less confident members, and turns off contacts." (We had a branch educational on Angola in which a few members discussed such things as the extent of Stalinist influence in the MPLA, what effect this was likely to have after independence, to what degree it should be discussed in advance, etc. This seems to be the "academic and sectarian" target. But "academic and sectarian" have been used as whispering-campaign slanders; the alleged offenders have not been called on it publically in time to salvage the discussions they allegedly ruined.)

"Similarly with irresponsibility. Comrades who regularly mess up such as taking on responsibilities and not following through, become a liability to the organization, especially in arena-related activities. This is an example of the violation of discipline of the IS. Along the same lines, comrades who have a cyclical level of activity, that is are inconsistent, are also violating the discipline of the organization. In general, we cannot afford to have inconsistent or irresponsible members." Better no contribution than a cyclical one! "Members who are chronically irresponsible cannot stay members. They give the organization a black-eye and undermine its efficiency." (Forcing people out gives the organization a terrific reputation among independents and worker militants.)

"Finally, the organization must insist on members who can collaborate well with other members and their work-mates....Members who allow their personal problems or animosities to permeate their behavior with members or contacts become a liability to us. We must insist that our members be stable enough, for instance, not to blow up at the slightest conflict and abuse other members."

"We are most likely going to recruit workers in the coming period who themselves will have some of these tendencies. But let's be clear about it; we want them to be members nonetheless. We take a different attitude toward workers with these problems than we do with non-workers, especially those with academic or sectarian tendencies. We will just have to train them to be more responsible. And if, over a period of time, they continue to fuck up, we will have to ask them to leave, as has already been done in other branches.

"Especially in this branch we must be careful not to recruit non-workers until we have had sufficient time to evaluate their functioning....

"Comrades must realize that we do have a serious problem with some of our members who have not been able to make the 'turn' in reality although they agree with it in principle." Note the implied distinction between "we" and "some of our members." "Many of these comrades have in fact functioned in such a way as to hold back the progress we have made toward attracting workers, and are often a source of embarrassment and demoralization to the other members. Extreme inconsistency in political work, reluctance to industrialize, reluctance to do rank and file organizing, chronic irresponsibility, sectarian-oriented speech-making, extreme negativism toward the organization and its leadership (including abuse of branch leaders), incompetence in the execution of tasks-- all these are far too prevalent in our branch to be lost on our worker contacts, not to mention their effect on the rest of the comrades."

The logic here is interesting. MANY comrades exhibit these traits, traits which are a problem for the rest of the comrades. Yet it is not proposed to get rid of MANY comrades, but to get rid of two (or one) and presumably the rest of us can then improve our behavior. But if behavior can be improved, why throw anyone out? That's where the concept arose that what was going on was scape-goating, blaming common problems on one or a few people to be sacrificed, whereupon the ~~xx~~ rest of the tribe, cleansed of evil, could start a new life.

Jan suggested an approach toward problem members which began with an assumption that people were in good faith and wanted to be responsible. There are severe communications problems in the branch that make it hard to be responsible. (It turns out that some of these communications problems were the result of deliberately cutting some people off from communications.) Difficulties with members should be seen as problems to be solved rather than crimes to be punished. Various private and public discussions were proposed; expulsion should be seen as an extreme final step, because of the internal and external damage that is done by a campaign to expel someone in any ambiguous case. Charges like "chronic irresponsibility" were almost bound to be ambiguous; for example, every charge against Barry that involved facts also involved a dispute over what the facts were. When the membership has an opinion that a member is irresponsible or inactive and the member does not agree, the member could be placed on leave of absence. Jan's document was more concerned with trying to spell out what the situation should be than to fill pages with innuendo about members. (Both documents are available on request.)

THE CHARGES AGAINST BARRY

The Exec's case against Barry paralleled their complaints about "problem members." Barry is old enough to know better, but he shows an "inability to function as a member of the IS." Other irresponsible members may be put on

probation, but Barry was already put on probation, "the terms of which Barry largely failed to carry out."

Barry had been called to two Exec meetings in October, and threatened with probation. But an agreement was reached that did not include probation. The Exec has no minutes, public announcement to the Branch, or other evidence that Barry or anyone else knew he was on probation. Further, it developed at the February 8 branch meeting (Barry's expulsion meeting) that there was no such thing as probation. That is, no motion had been passed by the Exec, or the membership, nor was there any national policy, about what probation is; how a person gets placed on probation, what their rights of appeal are, what their rights are while on probation, etc. The Exec (steely-hard Bolsheviks that they are) found this oversight somewhat embarrassing in front of the newer members, and they promised that after the members expelled Barry, they would write up a statement about probation for the Branch to consider. By the February 22 meeting they had a version ready to read orally. (Leo was placed on probation, with his consent, sometime in January. Tom was placed on probation between the February meetings, also before the concept of probation was clarified. This is an example of the new, responsible, professional IS that cannot permit irresponsible members to stay in.)

Most of the charges against Barry dealt with matters of fact about which there were disputes, such as whether he had announced in advance his intention to stay away for a month at Convention time last summer, or whether he had failed to pass out such-and-such a paper at such-and-such a time. Barry was charged with not doing any "substantial work in the branch" for about a year. (Any examples of work he had done were then called "not substantial," or "everyone does that," or "you weren't assigned to do that.") According to the new conception of discipline, he had shown "a clear inability to function as a responsible and dependable member (which) shows an inability to carry on work under the discipline of the IS."

Barry's detailed reply to the charges (10 pages) is available on request. Besides explaining the various causes of fraction between himself and the Exec, Barry demonstrated that each particular charge was "untrue, misleading, or beside the point." Barry claimed, correctly in the opinion of the other 10 people who voted against his expulsion, to be fulfilling the responsibilities of a member. Barry was not trying to be a leader, but only a rank-and-file member. It seemed the Exec resented his change from a hyper-active, night-and-day leader-type to a rank-and-file member, especially the few months of lower activity following his separation from Jan.

One example of a charge against Barry was that he "has not made a consistent effort to get a job in the local." Barry replied that he had, and also, that getting jobs via the hiring-hall route was very much a matter of luck. "on the whole, I find the suggestion that I am somehow to blame for not finding a job in the midst of an economic crisis to be inconsistent with a Marxist world view," Barry commented. In fact, an organization out to recruit workers will have to learn to be tolerant of periods of unemployment among its members. And even if true, "unwillingness to industrialize" is scarcely grounds for expulsion.

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT GROUNDS AND PROCEDURES FOR EXPULSION?

During the February 1 and February 8 expulsion meetings, the question of what constitutes grounds for expulsion from IS was re-interpreted by the Exec in

a way that not only sealed our doom, but should be cause for concern to other comrades. Jan's document upholding the notion that expulsion should be difficult was denounced, especially by Glenn, who called it "bourgeois legalism." Glenn (and, by extension, perhaps the national leadership generally) seems to think there should be no restriction on the right of any majority to expel anyone who is (temporarily) in a minority. This "bourgeois legalism" of Jan's consists of standing on the IS constitution, which reads; (Article XI, Section E):

"The bases for disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, shall be: (1) Political activity contrary to the decisions of the organization; (2) Actions (external or internal) which seriously threaten or discredit the organization; (3) Fundamental, irreconcilable and thoroughgoing differences of political principle that make common organization and unity in action impossible." Glenn orally added a few new ones, like "People who take vacations when they like shouldn't have the rights of people who break their backs."

The third reason above was written to apply to cases like the expulsion of one-third of the organization in 1973, the Revolutionary Tendency. When we (including Mike, Barry and Jan) voted for that unconstitutional expulsion in 1973, it was because several branches of the organizations could not function externally because of the raging faction-fight caused by people with a fundamentally different world-view than the IS held. We are not constitutional cretins; we do not believe in constitutionality over everything. Still, organizations need a set of rules, and in our opinion, the membership should vote to throw out the rules when necessary. In the present case, tho, the membership did not vote to throw out the rules; the membership was told the rules had somehow been thrown out, at the 1975 convention. If anyone believes this, they should look for evidence that anyone at the convention had any intention of discarding the constitution. Far from that being the case, the fact is that one of the final sessions at the convention was devoted to amending the constitution. One does not usually bother amending a constitution if one is planning to ignore it.

Sheila stated explicitly at the meeting that the expulsion grounds in the constitution no longer apply. She never produced any proof of this assertion, but stated that she had talked to Mike P on the phone about it, and that he had said so, and since he was the author of the constitution, he ought to know. The claim is that the Democratic Centralism and Bolshevization documents superseded the constitution. Since those documents do not deal explicitly with expulsion, even if that was the intent of the convention, it would mean that there is now no explicit written statement of grounds for expulsion from IS. We feel current members should check this out. We were considering appealing Barry's expulsion in order to test these statements, but decided it was a waste of our time (and yours) trying to stay in an organization whose majority wants us out.

We also had a problem with expulsion procedures. We assumed we would have the same procedures that were used when the Socialists for Independent Politics were expelled from the Bay Area branch in 1972. We expected a commission of inquiry to be set up during the two weeks' defense period. We asked for it to include one or two non-Exec, pro-expulsion people, and an equal number of anti-expulsion people. We wanted this group to interview members and non-members, ahead of time, to establish the facts behind those of the charges that were factual. But we could not get any kind of fact-finding body set up.

It seems the traditional notion of expulsions has changed. Our tendency used to believe expulsions were for actions people had committed. We used to laugh at the "degenerated trotskysts" who regularly expel people for sleeping late at conventions or returning late from vacations--that is, for not totally subordinating their lives to the wishes of the leaderships. At one meeting, we stated that the Workers' Party had never expelled anyone from 1940 to 1958 (its whole life as an organization). Nobody contradicted this assertion. We think the current IS leadership is pushing a self-serving and bureaucratic view that majority rights include the majority's right to expel anyone they can get up the votes to expel, with or without reasons, for "vague, subjective charges."

THE CASE AGAINST MIKE, PAUL AND JAN

Once the Exec had gathered a majority for expelling Barry, the vigorous organizing on both sides tapered off. The rest of the events went predictably. The Exec's expulsion case against Mike, Jan and Paul was much simpler. It was limited entirely to the period during which we organized against Barry's expulsion, and had two main points:

(1) We invited Dave, a non-member, to attend an internal meeting January 24. We invited him to write a statement. Dave's statement "contained a number of extremely serious charges against the IS, both locally and nationally. It accused the Bay Area leadership of conducting a purge which would not stop with Barry. It accused the IS in general of being bureaucratic and Cannonite in its organizational methods...."

"The fact that a non-member should be invited to an internal IS meeting organized around an internal dispute is itself sufficient grounds for expulsion from the IS. That this particular non-member should be one with a history of sectarianism (including membership in the Spartacist League) makes an invitation to participate in the meeting especially reprehensible. And finally that such a non-member should be invited to write down his views and distribute them at such a meeting makes this incident triply dangerous to the IS."

(2) "There has been a concerted effort since that meeting to cover up the existence of Dave's statement or to refuse to give the Exec a copy." Various people are then named in detail; who said what to Glenn, to Joel, etc.

The Exec then explains that it is perfectly proper not to seek John B's resignation "because he is young and very new." Manja is not mentioned by name; the Exec evidently hoped to keep her in IS. But she is mentioned by implication. "The organization has the perfect right to expel some comrades for violations but not others, depending upon a variety of factors such as age, length of political experience, whether the comrade is a worker," etc. This kind of patronizing is hard to take. John B resigned the night these charges were distributed, at Barry's expulsion meeting. Manja stayed in long enough to help us in our defense and speak at both meetings against expulsion. She presumably was not charged because she is a worker--she never quite completed her college degree--and IS' only CWA member in the Bay Area.

(3) According to the Exec, we "violated the security and integrity of the organization, as well as the democratic rights of the majority of our

members." "Taken as a whole, in fact, the Exec felt that the loss of these comrades would help to improve the overall atmosphere of the branch and improve our ability to recruit workers."

Our reply to the specific charges was: (1) There was nothing improper about inviting Dave and Mirra (who is not mentioned in the charges) to our meeting. The Exec had a working relationship with Dave and Mirra. When the Exec decided to try to recruit Dave and Mirra, they knew all about their "history of sectarianism" including their past membership in the Spartacist League. Three months later is no time to tell us we should not have trusted these people. Sectarian history alone is no crime; Glenn also got his training in a small, sectarian Trotskyist group, the Workers' Fight group, who were invited to join ISGB as a group and then expelled as a group (except some who changed allegiance, like Glenn). Glenn also holds a view of the nature of Russia that differs from the ISUS and from the ISGB. What of it?

Dave and Mirra were being treated like members. They had access to all sorts of internal information; through fraction membership, they knew where our members worked, where papers were sold, etc. They had been given documents clearly marked "For Members Only" by Exec members. Finally, the Exec had already talked to both Dave and Mirra before we invited them to our meeting, about the expulsions. It was no more a violation of security for the minority to involve them in this internal dispute than for the majority, which did so first.

(2) Dave's letter played such a minor role at the meeting that Glenn's inquiry into it a week later was very confusing. He referred to it as a "document," and we had a hard time connecting that with the casual letter we had seen--those who had seen it at all. We certainly didn't lie to Glenn about it.

However, once we found Joel making such a big deal about it, testing us one by one for loyalty, we did refuse to go along with such petty internal orders. This was partly mischievous, we must admit. But we saw no good reason to obey an order about an internal matter, that is, turning in a letter. We had as much right to regard Dave's letter as private correspondence, as the Exec had to regard it as a serious political document.

The contents of the letter aren't the issue. These so-called serious charges are either obviously true--like the prediction that the expulsions would not stop with Barry--or they are a matter of opinion, such as the general charge that the IS leadership is introducing Cannonite methods. This opinion is not far from the opinions of a few delegates to the 1975 convention who voted against the Democratic Centralism document and raised the danger of Cannonism. This is a minority opinion in IS, of course, but not unheard of.

(3) We disagree that something so subjective as "improving the atmosphere" is a reason to expel people. Until we held our famous January 24 meeting, nothing came up in the membership review about needing to expel us, so evidently we passed the atmosphere test until we organized against something the leadership wanted. We also disagree that holding an extensive internal campaign, with three members-only meetings in a row, improved the atmosphere.

We also disagree that the IS is better off without us. We offered to try to build a San Francisco branch. Instead there is now a smaller East Bay branch. This is a setback, not an improvement. The only difference is on how much of a

setback it is. We told Glenn on January 31 that the expulsion of Barry, and its aftermath, would set recruitment back a year. Glenn felt it would only be six months. Regardless, that's not an improvement.

We also heard from members (who shall remain nameless because they wish to remain members) that the East Bay grapevine was clear by early January that all of us were to be expelled, not just Barry. In that case, the decision to expel us was made before the meeting we held that supposedly is the reason we were expelled. (or, to revise Alice in Wonderland, "Sentence first, indictment after.") That explanation would account for our difficulty in finding out what was going on around "Restructuring."

Dave C's famous letter (two pages), the Exec charges against us (three pages) and our reply (ten pages) are all available on request. But it was clear by the time of our expulsions that the charges weren't the reasons we were being expelled.

After we were expelled, Manja read a resignation statement. Her main reasons for resigning were the lack of internal democracy, and the gradual diminishing of the importance IS attaches to the fight against the special oppression of women and gays. In addition, Manja felt insulted and patronized by being allowed to get away with taking part in our activities, evidently because she was considered more of a worker than the rest of us. She considered that attitude insulting to workers. Manja promises a written letter of resignation if anyone wants it, but so far she's been too busy with external organizing to write it.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM, OR JUST CENTRALISM?

One of our differences with the Exec which developed during this struggle concerns the nature of democratic-centralist socialist functioning. We reached no new or startling insights. Basically, we have come to agree with the criticisms that were advanced by Sam F and others (including Manja) in 1975.

We believe in disciplined external functioning. We support more centralized leadership, that actually leads the organization in the workers' struggles IS is involved in.

What we oppose is the dangerous concept of "internal discipline." For example, the Exec stated that "members of the IS have a perfect right to distribute position papers to any member they please without showing them to the Exec, to others, etc." So far, so good. "But not to allow the Exec to see a statement circulated by a non-member at an internal meeting...is the height of irresponsibility and disloyalty to the organization." This is a trivial distinction. If Mike and not Dave had distributed, that is, xeroxed and passed out, the identical words, it would have been okay. How can members know in advance what trivial distinctions the leaders will think up? They can't; they are supposed to obey as fast as the leadership thinks up new rules.

The Exec also distinguishes between their "informing Dave about an internal dispute," and our "involving Dave in an internal dispute." With distinctions of this sort being invented at the convenience of the leadership, security has come to mean something new and different. Security used to mean protecting our members' and friends' jobs, union activities, lives and limbs, but now it is used to mean protecting the Exec's peace of mind, protecting the Exec from feeling insecure.

With distinctions this ludicrous being used to justify expulsions, members can only be sure of staying in IS as long as they stay on the good side of the leadership. Comrades, that is Cannonism, cliquism, bureaucratism.

Bolshevik functioning includes a fully democratic internal life without worrying about whether you might violate some rules that the leaders will invent next week. The actual Bolsheviks, in fact, went far beyond anything in the recent IS tradition. They shared their internal disputes with the entire working class through their public press. The American IS only occasionally allows differences of opinion to appear in Workers Power, and entirely at the decision of the leadership. Yet the Bolsheviks, far more open to the prying eyes of non-members than any of us have been, managed to play the decisive role in organizing the working-class seizure of power in Russia in 1917.

SCAPEGOATING AND HOW IT DOESN'T WORK

Since branch execs, fractions etc. will henceforth be judged by results, we feel the local leadership was worried by Glenn's approaching visit. Since by their definition of workers, they didn't feel any of our eight potential new members were workers, the local Exec felt the Worker Recruitment Campaign was mostly a failure in the Bay Area. By creating an uproar about the awful sectarian atmosphere Tom, Dave, Barfy etc. were supposed to be creating, the Exec had a sacrificial lamb ready to throw to the Wolves...

But we don't think it will work. The local Exec, especially Joel and Sheila, are staking their reputation on their ability to recruit workers now that all the trouble-makers are gone. Since we don't think the real reasons for slow recruitment in the Bay Area are being explored, we expect recruitment to continue slow.

The Bay Area IS has five years of Teamster connections here, now being harvested through the push coming from the national contract campaign. However, the Bay Area IS has no connections in auto or steel, and none in telephone any more. It is unlikely that what is called worker recruitment will proceed beyond a few Teamsters. Of course it will be a great event to recruit a few Teamsters. But will that be enough for the national office? We think in six months or so, the national leaders will be back, looking for recruits or else more expulsions. Or--and this seems to be what Glenn really expects from the Bay Area--more recruits for the Midwest.

Eight weeks later, in mid-April, we hear that one or two people have resigned and two or three have joined. This is simply a continuation of the normal Bay Area recruiting pace of the last couple of years. It seems, so far, that expelling us didn't help the atmosphere as much as the rank-and-file perhaps believed it would.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERNAL CADRE

New members may not realize this, but up until the 1975 convention, we had a year-round discussion bulletin in IS. A discussion bulletin means that, within reasonable space limits, and assuming the members type their own stencils, members had the right to communicate with the entire IS membership through the facilities of the National Office. Of course very few members did so, but the right was there. There also was a National Report where leaders communicated with members. Until

recently, minutes of meetings of leading bodies were printed for the membership's reading, in the National Reports. Until this fall, branches often sent minutes of their meetings or of their Exec meetings to other branches.

The IS now has no bulletin in which members may communicate with each other. (It will probably be revived for a short period before the convention.) Instead of branch-to-branch communications, the IS now has communications in the style of the Workers' League, where branches are not supposed to communicate with each other, but only with the national office. The national office prints branch reports in which the leadership's version of what might be heartening news is passed on from the center to the branches. When people are recruited, that is news; when people quit or are expelled, that isn't news.

We oppose censorship for morale-manipulation purposes. We think members deserve an accurate picture of the state of this organization to which we give so much time, thought, energy, money, so much of our lives. We think who quits or gets expelled and why is important, besides who joins and why. This is especially important when, as in St. Louis, Detroit, and Los Angeles, important worker-recruits quit or are asked to resign. Of course we accept censorship for security reasons.

We oppose the closed attitude towards Workers Power, where members have no right to have minority opinions printed. We found it insulting this fall when we read in the National Report that letters from members would not be printed if they differed from the national line. What sort of an organization is it where you lose your right to criticize when you join? The policy is not being carried out; there have been critical letters from members. But it's apparently at the staff's discretion rather than a right of members.

We oppose the end of printing Exec Committee minutes; even this fall's cryptic versions were of some value. Needless to say, we oppose the disciplined Executive Committee. If leaders can share their discussions with each other, they can share them with the members. We oppose the increasingly rigidified "levels of communication" within the organization. There is developing an "internal cadre," a few people in each branch who get more complete information than the membership as a whole. We feel this is a return to the pre-1973 clique setup, where you had to have a contact in the National Office to make sense of what was happening nationally. Where members are certainly risking their jobs and may be risking their lives for the IS, we feel members deserve to know what's happening.

Taken as a whole, we feel these changes in access to information point towards Cannonism. The leadership is putting its needs ahead of the needs of the membership as a whole. The political danger here is that the group may soon put its needs ahead of the working class as a whole. The IS is moving toward a self-perpetuating leadership. A few people in each branch will feed the leaders the information that will please them in return for getting the trust of the leaders. There will be a rapidly turning-over rank-and-file which does not get well educated in Marxist politics before leaving. We feel the drying-up of internal discussion and communication retards the political development of the new members. We feel the major internal discussions now are about strategy and tactics and there is little attention paid to politics and theory. An example of well-organized internal education was the discussions on China and on economics a couple of years ago.

The leadership's closing down internal communications in the name of "security" does not in any way guarantee security. In the Bay Area, security is a joke. The local leaders haven't the foggiest idea how to run a secure operation. They're good at making events hard to find out about for contacts, but the sectarians seem to find out about them anyway. Here are two minor but amusing stories. (1) A month after Jan was expelled, she received the monthly bank statement from the local checking account. The security-minded comrades took the treasury out of Jan's hands two weeks before she was expelled, but hadn't told the bank about it a month later.

(2) And for those who've worked their way this far into this document, another amusing touch has to do with the local San Francisco Branch post office box. Although Workers Power was still printing a San Francisco address as recently as issue #154 in early April...who did the Exec think was picking up mail from that box after Paul, Jan and Barry were expelled in February? They made no attempt to find out.

More seriously, we oppose the patronizing attitude towards workers contained in the two-level theory of membership, that some members will be excused from maintaining the usual level of activity because of the sort of work they do. White-collar unionists may be equally busy, but the implication in the Exec's concept is that certain people, designated as "workers," can expect to get away with things white-collar workers cannot. It seems the leaders want to keep certain people as members even if they have to make all sorts of exceptions for them, in order to gain stature in the eyes of the rest of the organization. We believe in being humane and forgiving towards members, but towards all members. The "workers" selected to be patronized will find this insulting, and they will catch on quickly enough. If there are people who want to be token workers with special privileges, we question their value to the organization. The workers who have full-time jobs but are not considered workers, and are expected to go to meetings every night, will soon get exhausted and become ineffective until they eventually quit. These methods will not build a workers' organization.

CONCLUSION

We were asked, by more than one member, from more than one branch, whether we would appeal our expulsions, in the hope an appeal would contribute to internal discussion.

We decided not to appeal our expulsions. Not because we wanted to leave IS: if we had wanted out, we would have resigned. Not because we don't care about IS. We have contributed years of effort to IS, and we were, and are, deeply concerned with both the people who have been our comrades and friends, and with the political ideas and rank-and-file strategy IS stands for.

We decided we honestly do not want to be members of IS as it is now, the IS that made these decisions and backed them up. Some people wonder whether this is some kind of local aberration, a local clique-fight. Once Glenn arrived, and intervened so destructively, we knew it was not a misunderstanding or a local aberration. We also have communicated with ex-members in Detroit and Los Angeles and have pieced together enough of a picture to be quite sure there's a national trend toward this way of dealing with disagreements. We feel we would not

win an expulsion appeal to the National Committee or Executive Committee. In addition, we have other activities to occupy us that are more interesting and politically valuable than a Quixotic battle within IS. That's also why this paper is rather out of date; producing it has not been our highest priority.

Dave C. feels much more strongly than we do. He says, "A Cannonite party cannot be corrected; nor can it be made into a revolutionary party. Period." But we feel the question of whether these changes can be reversed is still an open question. We wish to close with a summary of the changes we hope to see in IS:

(1) There is a place for everyone in the IS if they accept the action program of the group, and are willing to work under discipline to carry it out. It's up to everyone, the organization as a whole, to find that place.

(2) All members should be equal in a socialist organization. In place of decisions made behind the scenes, and then manipulative methods used to insure a majority for the leadership, there should be equal and democratic decision-making.

(3) The anti-theoretical atmosphere should end. "Academic" should be used as a scientific definition, not as a swear-word. The theory and history of the working class and of the working-class movement should be taught to new members. We should take our theory and history seriously, and develop socialist discussion and education for members and friends.

(4) The levels of information should be ended; a free flow of information to members should be restored. The year-round discussion bulletin should be started again. Interbranch communications should be restored. There is leader-to-member communication; we need to restore member-to-leader and member-to-member communication. There should be some discussion within Workers Power.

(5) The "disciplined EC" should be ended.

(6) The concept of "internal discipline" should be ended. Discipline applies to external acts, not internal ones. The military-discipline concept of "you have to obey me, I'm a leader" should be used only in genuine combat situations, not whenever it suits the convenience of the leaders.

(7) The IS needs a constitution, although it can be waived in emergencies. Rules should not be broken on the whim of the leadership. When rules must be suspended in emergencies, the membership should decide to do that. Arbitrary suspensions of rules by leaders should end. The basis for membership and the basis for expulsions needs to be clearly spelled out, along with clear procedures including some form of commission of inquiry. We stand for the current (1975) bases for expulsions (see page 12).

(8) The right of political proportional representation on leading bodies should be re-established. Instead of leaders threatening to quit if they don't get their way, IS should have collaborative leaderships with people representing minority opinions in the group. To prevent people feeling they need to divide out, IS should return to the custom of setting up leading bodies such that known minorities are represented.

APPENDIX A - WHATEVER BECAME OF FIGHTING SEXISM?

When the Exec attacked ex-Spartacist Dave, and attacked us for involving him in Barry's defense, they somehow neglected to mention that ex-Spartacist Mirra was equally involved. Mirra was the one who then contacted the Exec to "sever relations" with IS. Yet a few days later, a rank-and-file IS woman asked her what her reasons were? The IS comrade had heard what Dave's reasons were, and wondered what Mirra's were? Evidently the grapevine had neglected to mention that it was Mirra who spoke for the two, not Dave.

Mike and Manja are roommates. Mike is brought up on charges, when Manja was equally involved in all activities and made no secret of that, but elaborate contortions were gone through to avoid mentioning Manja. Barry and Jan remain close friends but even when Barry was already up on charges, and Mike and Paul were about to be charged; Joel was still trying to manipulate Jan into obedience by holding out hope she could remain in IS--presumably so she could be expelled later without support from Barry, Mike and Paul.

We believe the IS leadership thinks most IS women are not capable of independent thought. We consider the attempt to split Mirra, Manja and Jan off from Dave, Mike and Barry to be sexist, and patronizing to women. The IS totally ignored Paul's wife Laura, waitress, and Mark's roommate Carol. We regard this to be in violation of the recruiting insights offered by Joe N and Isabel in New York, as expressed in Workers Power--that if a man joins and the woman closely associated with him does not, it endangers either the relationship between the couple, or it endangers the long-term political activities of the man.

We think that in other ways, too, the IS approach to sexism is deteriorating. Several months ago, a local gay comrade was criticized in an industrial fraction for wearing a Bay Area Gay Liberation T-Shirt to a social ~~xxx~~ event planned for industrial contacts. This was settled quietly and amiably. Then we heard from two different sources in Los Angeles that a national leader, who spoke at the Bay Area recruitment rally, remarked in Los Angeles that he was made uncomfortable by the large number of gay people at the Bay Area rally.

Then in the revised "Where We Stand" statement, the word "gays" was dropped. The IS remained pro-gay-liberation when asked, but the custom increasingly is that the IS has to be reminded to mention this fact. (After about ten weeks the word "gays" was inserted back in the statement, which shows that removing it had nothing to do with space considerations and that it was a conscious act.) Instead of leading the working class on this question, the IS seems to be starting to capitulate to the backward consciousness it assumes exists among American workers. We oppose this retreat on the gay question.

The fight for women's liberation and against sexism does not just mean having a couple of IS women leaders, or a few "model women workers," or a women's bulletin which focuses on how to recruit women to IS. The IS women's caucus has gone through many phases; more and more it seems to be viewed by the leaders as a recruiting device. IS opposition to sexism was once highly developed and complex; it is shrinking to a recognition of the role of women workers as a specially oppressed section of the working class.

The IS supports the autonomous organization of working women, but presently devotes no resources to this arena. Glenn was adamant that the Bay Area IS must pull out of Union WAGE. While the local IS women may not completely carry out

this directive, the direction of national thinking was clear enough. While the Exec's Restructuring document (as well as Jan's alternative) gave favorable mention to WAGE and BAGL activity, Glenn's version dropped all reference to both groups. This was not a central issue in the recent dispute, but for some of us it added to our alienation from IS.

APPENDIX B - IS THERE A PLACE FOR EVERYONE IN IS? THE CASE OF WINNIE

Winnie is a lifelong socialist and a member of our tendency for decades. In the late 1930's, at Trotsky's urging, Winnie, and many other Trotskyist youth, industrialized. Around 1972, Winnie retired after 27 years at his most recent job in the New Jersey railroad yards. He moved to San Francisco and transferred into the branch here.

Winnie does not fit in culturally. He does not say much at branch meetings, and most Bay Area members have ignored or patronized him. He found activities for himself; once assigned to the Farmworkers fraction at a time when a number of us were active around boycott activities, Winnie continued that connection after the rest of us dropped out, since nobody reassigned him to any other activity. Winnie devotes several afternoons weekly to selling WP on the streets, mainly at the unemployment office. Until recently there were no systematic WP sales assignments in the Bay Area, and Winnie found his own niche, selling 60 papers weekly out of a total of 200-300 for the whole branch (East Bay and San Francisco combined).

Winnie has adapted to life in San Francisco. He is known to hundreds of local activists. The IS lives a semi-underground existence in the Bay Area; it's hard to know it exists. Winnie is our best-known member, gets mass-media publicity for us, has contacts with many community groups, etc. John D, who at one time was an eagerly-sought-after contact because he is a Portuguese worker, first found out the IS had any members in the Bay Area through Winnie.

Winnie has been hard to involve in day-to-day activities, because until recently he did not get a phone installed. His reasons were that installation would cost \$28 and he lives in a furnished room from which he hopes to move soon. It has been hard to contact Winnie, but not impossible; it took a couple of days. Yet the Exec ignored him for two or three years, until suddenly his name appeared in Glenn's document on February 1.

Around February 18, the Exec asked Winnie to "become a friend of the IS," that is, to resign. Winnie refused, and they placed him on probation. Their request that Winnie install a phone was valid, and Winnie did so at once. But there were also a whole battery of cultural charges made orally against Winnie, presumably to shame him into resigning.

The three Exec members who spoke against Winnie at the branch meeting, Joel, Sheila and John, are a teacher-turned-teamster, a teacher, and a French-chef-turned teamster. Winnie was accused of having straggly hair, a long bushy beard, and a lot of political buttons on his cap that made him look too "new left" and not "worker" enough. He was accused of not looking like a retired railroad worker, but of looking like a San Francisco hippy. Winnie's image was under attack.

Of the three members placed on probation, only Winnie appealed his to the membership, and the membership overturned it. We alternate between extreme anger at this shabby treatment of a man who has spent his life in our movement, and

helpless laughter about this incredible incident. It reminded us of the cultural workerism of the song "I'm Proud to be an Okie from Muskokie" and Barry wrote a song for the occasion, called "I'm Ashamed to be a Teamster from South Berkeley," which is available on request.

Copies of Winnie's (one-page) statement appealing his probation are available on request as well.

APPENDIX C - THE CASE OF MARK M

Mark has been friendly to the Bloomington IS for some time. In summer 1975 he moved to San Francisco, contacted the IS, and worked with us steadily whenever we found something for him to do. At the Recruitment Rally Mark announced that he wished to join IS. Mark's name was submitted to the Branch at its next meeting, December 21.

As is usual for San Francisco applicants, Mark was not well known to the Exec. He had two discussions with Exec members in January. On January 27 the Exec voted to recommend Mark's admission to membership at the February 1 meeting. He was assigned two tasks; forum preparations for Glenn's forum, which he carried out; and distributing literature at a hotel Saturday morning. Mark arrived at the hotel; he did not see our contact, he had not been told where to go, and he had not been told the name of the group that was meeting. Although this was an important fuckup, it was understandable. If a new member was sent alone to do something important, the instructions should have been more complete.

This sort of fuckup is usually the occasion for a little head-shaking, but in the superheated atmosphere of that weekend, the Exec decided to use it to delay Mark's membership so he couldn't vote against Barry's expulsion. Sheila announced at the Branch meeting that the Exec had met again and reversed their recommendation. She mentioned the task he had not carried out but not the ones he had. Sheila then announced that three months joint work for non-workers was a national policy that it was time the branch began enforcing. She also said there was evidence that Mark was participating as a non-member in a "forming faction." Mark had attended one of our San Francisco meetings, the one also attended by David of the Exec. It was after that that the Exec had voted to admit Mark. However, Sheila and Mark had conversed about the expulsions. Mark felt that Sheila implied he should stay out of the controversy or it could jeopardize his admission. Mark told us about this conversation. Sheila vehemently denied she had implied any such thing. Then, Catch-22, she carried out her non-threat.

The next week, Mark leafletted the meeting from outside, asking the branch to vote on his membership despite the Exec recommendation of waiting three months. The branch declined to consider Mark's membership that night. Mark asked to address the branch, and stated that everyone knew that the Exec had changed its position on his membership because, as one side in an internal dispute, they wished to regulate who could vote in the dispute. Mark said that democracy was dead in IS, and he withdrew his application for membership. (Copies of Mark's two-page statement are available on request.)

We'd like to hear from you--what you like about this paper, and what you don't. We'd like to hear your news and views of problems facing the IS and the workers' movement. Address correspondence to; Jan Arnold

460 14th Street (apt. 3)
San Francisco, CA 94103

If you want more documents, this or others, please send stamps or money to help.