

THE ISSUES FACING THE 1976 CONVENTION-  
CLEARING UP THE OPPOSITION'S PUDDLE

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EXECUTIVE CTTE

As convention time approaches, a sharp debate has opened up in the IS focusing around a document entitled "Build a Worker Leadership" that was drafted in opposition to the EC document "Steps Toward Building the Party". Heated debate can often be very healthy to the development and growth of a revolutionary organization. But for it to be healthy, the issues in dispute must first be clearly and sharply posed. Otherwise, such a debate can end up as a destructive outlet for the frustrations and tensions that naturally build up in an organization like ours going through a long period of intense activism.

The "Cover Letter" to the opposition document is a welcome addition to the debate. It attempts to narrow down and focus in on the issues that are in dispute. This document compliments the EC in the past for giving a "bold lead", for not being "afraid to challenge our previous assumptions", and for leading the struggle in the IS for Democratic Centralism and a workers' combat organization. Hopefully this means that comrades who sponsored the opposition document are not intending to challenge the need for strong central leadership in the IS, and that any comrades who still oppose strong centralized leadership will not use the debate around this opposition document to gather support for that position.

The "Cover Letter" complains that the EC this year has undergone a "transformation from Richard the Lion-Hearted to Casper Milktoast", and has failed to analyze the key weaknesses of the IS and give a bold lead to overcome them. It charges, rather, that the EC has come up with "A laundry list of meek suggestions in place of forceful direction."

The EC "Steps Toward Building the Party", in conjunction with the three other EC convention documents, is not a laundry list of meek suggestions, but does rather point the correct direction. Wherever the opposition document points in an alternative direction, it is either confused or wrong. The opposition document makes a positive contribution in its proposal for monthly national reports with hard factual information and for a regular internal bulletin to organize political discussion within the organization. This has been accepted by the EC as filling a real need that has been too long ignored.

The opposition document is also correct to place heavy emphasis on the need to build up and strengthen the national fractions in the next year. This position was carried in the original EC document. It was the content

of the concluding paragraph of the EC labor document: "The IS in the Class Struggle," which asserted that "one of the most important tasks in the coming year will be solidifying national fractions." The EC has introduced an addition to its labor resolutions based on this section of its labor document.

#### DIRECTION BEING CHARTED BY THE EC

The position papers and resolutions being presented by the EC to the 1976 IS national convention sum up the key lessons we have learned over the past year, and chart a direction forward, contrary to the claims of the opposition document.

1. Mass Work: The mass work line presented to this year's convention represents a major political shift by the IS away from previous views of the organization. This line is a consequence and a summation of our experiences over the past year that have resulted from our agitational turn.

The essence of this position is that we aim to limit and focus our demands as much as we can while still remaining effective. In the past, it was our method to emphasize expanding and broadening demands as much as possible. And it was usually the responsibility of the comrades directly involved in the work to have a satisfactory answer to the traditional question: "And why aren't you also raising a demand on such and such."

Our experience now tells us that limiting and focusing are a necessary means toward creating the broadest unity and mobilizing the largest mass-- as we focus in on winning concrete victories.

This important shift is not being challenged by any section of the organization at the coming convention; this is not because of the milktoast character of the EC, but only because the EC has been successful in carrying virtually the whole IS on the shift.

2. Transitional Politics: Closely tied with the shift toward effective mass work, and with the method of organizing around minimum effective programs, is the need for a greater emphasis in our work on developing and raising transitional politics. Movements and organizations built out of mass struggle have their own political lives. A specific contribution of revolutionary socialists to the movement is raising transitional politics and ideas and winning the movements to them-- ideas that go beyond the minimum demands and tactics of the movement.

The concept of the "employers' offensive" has been the key transitional idea we have been using in the last few

months to provide a bridge between our main areas of trade union work and our overall socialist politics. The strength of this concept lies in the fact that it starts from the speed-up and harassment actually experienced by teamsters, telephone workers, autoworkers, etc., and explains that experience in the light of the economic and political needs of the ruling class. From there the socialist alternative to the ruling class is but a short step.

We took the first steps in learning to effectively use transitional politics during the IBT campaigns. The pressure of the struggle forced both the TDC and UPSurge to develop some basic political positions. Through Workers' Power we took off from there and put forward a transitional political view which did much to politically develop our closest collaborators. We are still novices in this area of real working class politics. In every arena there are transitional political ideas of class solidarity and self-reliance, workers' control of the union/safety conditions, the role of the courts etc., which can be used to bring large numbers of workers closer to our politics, but all too often we miss them. Only when the whole organization becomes expert and more successful in raising and moving workers with transitional politics will our extensive policy of open worker recruitment fully bear fruit.

Together with our new approach to mass work, the key task of the next year is developing the effective use of transitional politics. The opposition documents make no reference to transitional politics. In discussions, some supporters say they agree with the EC on this point. Others, though, have stated that they consider even raising the "Employers' Offensive" to be misguided.

The opposition clearly fails to fully appreciate the central importance of developing transitional politics. It is not enough for some of our members to develop themselves as worker leaders through effective mass work. In order to build the IS as a revolutionary current in the working class, we must put greater emphasis on building bridges between the current consciousness of workers and our revolutionary socialist politics.

**3. Focused Recruitment:** The third key idea in the EC party building document is a campaign of focused recruitment with major emphasis on our industrial fractions, as well as in the black community and around youth. The proposal is to target individuals we know and work with through our fractions, and to develop concrete programs for their recruitment during a two month national campaign period with a goal toward doubling the size of our fractions.

## THE OPPOSITION DOCUMENT

Economic Errors. There is agreement in the organization that the economic projections of the last convention were "somewhat off". The EC already made that observation in the Interim Perspectives. But the EC also reaffirmed its view that the projections were off only in specifics--that last year's document pointed a basically correct direction for the economy, and that the political conclusions drawn from it were correct.

The opposition document makes a big point that the projections were off, and it then draws confused and contradictory conclusions from that. "The economic jolts were not as abrupt as we predicted," it says. And in this they blame the failures--in the worker recruitment drive and blame the fact that hard work that was required to build the TDC. The document throws into question the projection that labor bureaucrats will be getting caught between the employers' offensive and the new worker militancy, and that "this situation made it possible for socialists to play a leading role in building a rank and file movement through agitation against the offensive the employers were taking."

Supporters of the opposition must admit that despite all this, our IBT campaigns worked out. But still they concluded that "our expectations were somewhat exaggerated." One could almost conclude that, according to these comrades, if our economic projection had been more correct, we might not have tried the IBT campaigns at all.

In truth, our expectations were not exaggerated. On the contrary, the TDC and UPSurge campaigns were--on the whole--much more successful than anyone would have dared to project one year ago. If the comrades were disappointed that "building the TDC was like 'pulling teeth'", the error comes not from our mistaken economic projections, but rather from our lack of experience in building workers' movements.

The comrades imply that the reason for the success of TDC, was less the employers' offensive, and more a union reform sentiment in the IBT against gangster unionism and dictatorship. But where does this union reform sentiment come from? Why did so many IBT rank and file reformers look to gangster Hoffa over gangster Fitz? The reason--gangster Hoffa had been able to deliver from the bosses, but Fitz came into office when the employers' offensive was taking effect.

The opposition's discussion of economic projections and the conclusions drawn create nothing but confusion.

## WORKER RECRUITMENT

The biggest error in the opposition document arises in the discussion of worker recruitment. There is no question

that of all the major goals projected for the IS at last year's convention, this is the most important area where we fell short of projections. And there is doubt in no one's mind that without breakthroughs in worker recruitment, all other achievements of the IS will eventually evaporate. That is why there is so much heat associated with this part of the discussion.

The opposition agrees in its document with the assessment of the EC that the worker membership campaign of last year was successful in changing attitudes in the IS that worker recruitment is possible, and it tremendously boosted the organization's morale. But it then draws conclusions that undermine the accomplishments of that campaign.

The central theme of the worker membership campaign was open recruitment. When the campaign started, we began by concentrating on and targeting our main worker contacts—primarily workers we cooperated with in our industrial fraction work. Each branch and each fraction, early in the campaign was asked to send to the NO a list of its targets. Toward the middle of the campaign, it became clear that we were generally failing in our efforts to recruit those workers targeted with whom we had been cooperating for a long time. IT IS NOT THAT WE DID NOT WANT TO RECRUIT THESE PEOPLE; IT IS THAT WE FAILED IN OUR EFFORTS TO RECRUIT THEM. The only comrades who might be confused about this are comrades who did not have or did not try to recruit long-term worker contacts at the beginning of the campaign!

As an organization, we learned an important lesson. Workers who cooperate with the IS in trade union work over a long period of time, tend to become unrecruitable, institutionalized contacts, unless we begin early on, with our efforts to recruit them and prepare them to join. It is only after the campaign had failed to recruit our long-term worker contacts, that a shift was made toward emphasizing the recruitment of newer people just coming around.

Over the past year, our practice has changed. From the beginning, we have put a much greater emphasis on preparing new worker contacts for recruitment to the IS. We have also been much more successful in proving to worker contacts our relevance and effectiveness as an agitational organization. For these reasons, we can expect to be much more successful with targeted worker recruitment this year among the workers with whom we cooperate in industry.

The opposition document rewrites the history of the worker recruitment campaign. It gives the impression that the leadership discouraged comrades from recruiting workers with whom we had long-term cooperative relations, and rather oriented the organization exclusively, toward newer people.

This is false. The whole significance of the turn to agitation and mass work, is that we can successfully launch effective struggles, and that we can recruit to the IS, leading activists from those struggles.

The opposition claims to have a recruitment strategy superior to that of the EC. They call it an orientation toward worker activists. What this orientation actually means is hard to say: different supporters of the opposition have different interpretations. The document itself, is confused.

The opposition document states: "We cannot hope to recruit and hold workers in numbers or to transform the organization or to make it a material force in the class while recruiting at the level of agitation. Our past year's policies-- recruitment aimed at people who came to only one meeting-- was that essence of our policy, recruitment aimed at 'we are the best fighters, join us' is insufficient." The alternative it gives is that "we must recruit on the level of strategy." To be sure, these formulations are abstract. But if they have any meaning at all, it is a turn away from building the IS as an agitational organization, toward building it as a workers' propaganda group.

An agitational group recruits precisely on the basis: "We are the best fighters- the only fighters who know what's going on and know how to win." We prove this in practice, through agitation. In most cases, workers will get a full understanding of our strategy, only after they have been members for a time, and have had the concrete experience of applying and developing the strategy in practice as a member.

The opposition proposal for recruitment on the basis of strategy, if it has any meaning, is recruitment on the basis of full prior understanding of our program and strategy. In practice, only a small minority of worker militants will ever be recruited on this basis. Why then do the comrades choose this formulation?

They want to focus on workers who have a base and who have influence. How much of a base? How much influence? They fudge the answers to these questions. But we presume that no one, not even the EC, has a strategy of focusing on recruiting worker oddballs with no friends and who no one will listen to. So, if this new theory has a meaning, the comrades want to focus on recruiting workers with a substantial base and substantial influence.

In practice, these workers already have a strategy of their own- usually, a strategy that differs in important areas with ours. It's only because they have some kind of strategy that they have a base and have influence. The opposition is not speaking merely of likeable people with

lots of friends.

For these influential workers to join the IS, they will usually have to carry out fundamental shifts in the way they have always operated- shifts that generally alter their base and alter their influence. Such individuals will not join and stay unless, from the beginning, they have a full understanding agreement and commitment to our strategy.

Of course, we will try to recruit influential individuals when we have the opportunity. Successful recruitment and integration of leaders can be an enormous boost. But for us to have a recruitment perspective centered on these individuals requires that there be a significant number of them, who in fact, are moving through their experiences in the direction of IS politics. Otherwise, this recruitment perspective will only generate demoralization- a get rich quick scheme that failed. And such a failure could easily lead to the next logical step: trying to recruit worker leaders who are not moving in the direction of class struggle politics by us adapting our strategy to theirs.

The supporters of the opposition document are serious about this recruitment orientation and want to regear the whole IS toward the task of recruiting workers with influence. They readily state that this guides their attitudes toward WP, toward fraction organization, and toward all other aspects of IS organization. But in fact, the number of established worker leaders who we could hope to recruit and integrate in the next year is so small, that an orientation toward them would prove unsuccessful.

Few established worker leaders are yet prepared to take the heat of becoming open reds who belong to an organization that stands for bloody revolution. Those who we do recruit will have to carry out a fight with sections of their own base who will feel betrayed when their leader declares herself or himself a "commie". They will demand that this leader drop the nonsense and quit the IS, and will try to impose their discipline. Those who stay in the IS and resist the pressure, will have to break with sections of their base, and also with elements of their own pasts.

In the last few years, we recruited at least three major worker leaders who already had an established base- two in Detroit auto, one in Chicago trucking. Two have left. And we had a hard time successfully integrating the third. We survived. But if this kind of recruitment were our strategic orientation, it might have been much more crushing.

Once before, the idea of orienting toward the natural leaders of the class was brought up in the IS. At that time, these natural leaders were called "primary work group



leaders", which is the academic sociological name for what is now called a worker activist. More far-reaching and much more conservative conclusions were then drawn than is now the case. Some of the proposals were, however, similar.

At a time when we were trying to change Workers' Power into a mass paper, the supporters of the primary work group leader orientation proposed a paper directed at these leaders which would emphasize strategy. Similarly, strategy pamphlets directed at leaders were proposed.

The worker activist orientation, like that toward "primary work group leaders" is based on a sociological abstraction and provides no real focus at all. What is proposed in the EC resolutions and documents is a far more common sense and more practical orientation; namely, that we orient our recruitment toward those who are working with us to build the rank and file movement.

These workers are not sociological abstractions, they have names and belong to specific causes and movements. Some of them are leaders, some will become leaders, others are just good fighters. We will be able to deal with the specific problems of recruiting and training them- the problems of their relationship to their base, their lack of a base, their politics, etc.- in a concrete way because we are involved in joint work with them.

Naturally, there will still be some workers who join the IS because of its revolutionary ideas rather than its specific industrial work. We will continue to recruit them as well, but our focus for this year will be to recruit those we work with. All of this was made clear in the first ECC document on party building.

We are entering a period where the traditional leaderships of the working class and the traditional methods of struggle are becoming obsolete-- where new leaderships and new means of struggle are emerging. Our basic orientation is toward the recruitment of the newly developing leaders- the workers who are now, side by side with us, learning the new methods of struggle.

Our policy of open recruitment means that we put no hurdles or obstacles in the path of worker recruitment. We project the IS as a serious fighting force of the class struggle, we prove our effectiveness in practice through agitation, and we recruit those workers- leaders or not yet leaders- who want to join with us in making the IS a more powerful force in the class struggle.

STRENGTHENING THE FRACTIONS AND WEAKENING THE CENTER

Over the past year, much of the resources of the IS has been drained from other important areas of work into the IBT fraction. The areas of work that suffered most from this have been the national USW and CWA fractions, and to a slightly lesser extent, the UAW fraction. The single biggest resource denied these fractions was sufficient time, energy, and attention of the central leadership--creating a tendency for the fractions to collapse politically as well as organizationally.

No one has raised that we were wrong last year to throw energy into the IBT campaigns at the expense of other areas of work. Many of the supporters of the opposition document were among the most vocal members of the IS demanding we heavily channel resources into the IBT fraction. The organization now pays a price for this draining of resources.

Comrades in the neglected fractions feel the effects of this neglect and are demanding more resources from the organization in the future. This is healthy. But the EC defends its decision of last year to drain resources into the IBT campaigns.

The EC has put forward a perspective for building the fractions next year. Those who challenge the commitment of the leadership toward strengthening fractions based on the failure last year to provide them with sufficient resources, must either argue we were wrong to put so much into the IBT, or else show that the resources were available and not used. That resources were not the basic problem.

The opposition document appeals for support on the claim that the opposition stands on the plank of stronger fractions. But once we go beyond rhetorical points and get down to concretes, there is nothing concrete they propose that moves beyond the proposals already put forward by the EC.

The EC document, "The IS In the Class Struggle", was written before it was known by the EC that anyone would be organizing a convention opposition with a major plank calling for strengthening the fractions. The concluding paragraph of the EC document makes the following points:

1. Solidifying functioning national fractions is one of the most important tasks for our industrial work in the next year.
2. Fractions must take on a life of their own to professionally guide the work, though it notes that fractions are no substitute for the full life of a revolutionary organization.
3. Local and national fractions will be instrumental in building a periphery and in recruiting.

- 4. Training industrial cadre and leadership will largely fall on the fractions.
- 5. Beginning with this convention, we will hold regular meetings of the national fractions, delegated if necessary to broaden the section of our industrial leadership able to have input in the formulation and implementation of our perspectives.

Going in to the convention, three of our four basic national fractions will have been assigned efficient administrative personnel. Our worker recruitment campaign of next year, proposed in the EC party building document: "will be a series of specific, simultaneous campaigns in each of the fractions. We will recruit more on the basis of our on-going work than before, and we will have a situation in which we have an organized area of work to involve each of our new members from the start."

The EC resolution on integrating new members states, "Serious integration means building the full participation of new members in the fighting units of the organization, where they can learn through activity. The successful operation of our fractions at both local and national level does more to integrate new members than any other single factor."

In truth, we have found over the years that building strong national fractions is a difficult task. It has only begun in the IBT fraction, and is still only a hope in the other fractions. But it will be accomplished only on the basis of full collaboration between the EC and the fraction leadership. It is a task that will not be fully completed in the next year.

The opposition document appeals to the genuine frustrations in the fractions, but fails to offer concrete, implementable proposals that actually advance progress. It is agreed by all that the fractions must be strengthened and given more of an internal life. The opposition program can be summarized as follows (from point 4 of their resolution):

- 1. Mandating at least quarterly regional and delegated national fraction meetings.
- 2. Assigning the fractions greater responsibilities for organizing and implementing functions of the organization: running external meetings and tours, recruitment drive, preparing literature, guiding the development of transitional politics in WP, etc.
- 3. Providing the money and staff needed to carry these out.

In practice, this proposal will prove abstract and utopian. Let's begin with the question of money and staff. We are

already committed to providing each fraction administrative personnel. Together with the costs of a Workers Power Staff that can put out a weekly paper, and a resident full time leadership, the needs of the fractions are already the greatest (by far) drain on the IS financial resources. Until we establish the ability to print our own money, money will remain a scarce resource in the organization. We are already committed to plowing all the money we can beg, borrow, or steal, into the fractional work of the organization. If anyone thinks that passing the opposition document will release a mass of funds to the fractions, they will have to explain where the money will come from, or what will be cut out of the organization. It must also be remembered that the centralization of these scarce resources is one of the policies that has helped the IS increase its effectiveness in the labor movement and elsewhere.

With the exception of WP staff, the greatest (by far) demand on the time and energy of the IS full time staff is already committed to politically servicing the fractions. If anything, in the past year, we erred in the direction of liquidating much of the political functioning of the organization by not putting enough of our personnel resources into maintaining a much more rounded political life for the organization--one of the reasons recruitment was not up to expectations. We are in no position to expand our staff at this time either. The proposal to strengthen fractions with infusions of money and personnel is naive at best.

The other points are abstract. The EC is already proposing regular fraction meetings, delegated if necessary and moving toward greater responsibilities for the fractions. But there is no reason to believe that, for example, quarterly regional and national meetings of the CWA fraction--at this point--is a program for strengthening that fraction. The CWA fraction must first be considerably strengthened before it will be in any position to make good use of such meetings.

Nor will any fraction be strengthened by assigning it the job of "guiding the center on the transitional politics to be carried in the paper, as well as seeing that good stories and letters are regularly submitted." In truth, every fraction has been instructed repeatedly to discuss WP, to make suggestions on improving it, to generate articles and letters, to develop programs for its greater use, etc. It is the weakness of the fractions that has led to failures in carrying out these instructions.

And it's the same with other tasks as well. Fractions are not automatically strengthened by assigning them additional responsibilities. Each fraction will have to be strengthened by its own specific program and its own timetable.

More dangerous than the abstract character of the opposition proposals on fractions, is the political direction they imply. The direction of the opposition document and resolutions is clear. It is not explicitly anti-Democratic Centralist, but even though the majority of its supporters do not want to move that way, this is where the document is heading.

Underlying the urgent demand for resources is an implied program of transforming the political full-time staff of the organization into the administrative and technical assistants of the fractions. This is reflected in the opposition's conception of an NC that excludes District Organizers. (more on this later) The result of moving in this direction would be to liquidate the rounded political functioning of a full revolutionary organization into making the IS a trade union organization.

Tied to this is a tendency in the documents to make the IS toward becoming a federation of fractions with an EC at the center that coordinates their activities, allocates scarce resources, and makes sure that the fractions don't succumb to the conservatism of their parochial milieus. The opposition tries to allocate to the fractions virtually all the functions of the organization. While fractions play a central role in the recruitment, training, education, and integration of new worker members--this can not become an exclusive role of the fractions.

When the opposition document asserts that the fractions of today are the trade union and factory branches of tomorrow, it demonstrates, in fact, that it wants to move toward fractions assuming all the functions of the organization--demonstrates the implied program of the IS transforming itself into a federation of fractions.

The goal of organizing the revolutionary part on the basis of work place units is unanimously accepted by our tendency. But to do this, while maintaining the IS as a revolutionary socialist, and not a trade unionist/syndicalist organization, requires the creation of strong district organizations and strong political centers--not the liquidation of the political tasks of the organization into the fractions. It is an illusion that even an EC made up of super-humans (and ours is made up only of normal people) could hold back an organization that was organized around federalist lines from becoming conservative, parochial, and syndicalist.

## NC SLATE

The disagreements over NC slates is not primarily over personalities, but over political conceptions. The opposition slate includes only members of our ~~xx~~ central leadership staff based in Detroit, and leaders of our fractional and black work. It excludes nominees whose main contribution to the IS is rounded political leadership on the district or branch level. In particular, it includes not a single District Organizer other than Mike P who is on because he is also an EC member. The EC slate has 5 members who will be serving as District Organizers in the next year, in addition to the other categories.

The exclusion of District Organizers is a reflection of the federalist direction of the opposition position. The opposition ~~xx~~ places little importance on the development of strong political district organizations taking responsibility for a rounded revolutionary political life.

It is the District Organizer and the District Organization that has front line responsibility for combatting the parochialism inherent in agitational work, and for making sure that pressures toward conservatism and economism don't distort our development away from becoming a rounded revolutionary party. The best EC in the world ~~xx~~ sitting in Detroit cannot ~~xx~~ accomplish this in the absence of strong district organizers and organizations.

We need an EC that reflects ~~xx~~ not only the experience of the ~~Center~~ center and the experience of mass work, but also that reflects the experience of the struggle to create political districts. The opposition slate ~~xx~~ reflects their underestimation of the need to build up political district centers and have that experience ~~xxx~~ reflected in the NC.

Instead, they view the NC, basically as a collective bargaining body between the central leadership and the leaders of mass work. They project an antagonistic relationship between the two. It is wrong to build up and intensify this antagonism by assuming that it is inevitable and then constructing an NC slate around that assumption.

The main task for the next year, rather is to reconcile whatever antagonisms exist between the pressures of our mass work and the political needs of an organization trying to create a rounded revolutionary party. It is the District Organizers who have front line responsibility for working out that reconciliation. The only reason for ~~xxx~~ excluding them is either the assumption that reconciliation between the conflicting pressures is impossible or that it is ~~unnecessary~~ unnecessary. Both assumptions are wrong.

## THE FLIGHT FROM POLITICS

A central feature of the EC documents is the need to develop our use of transitional politics--our ability to politicize the rank and file movement with political concepts that point toward a full socialist perspective--and our ability ~~to~~ to use WP to pick up on those political concepts and draw out the full conclusions.

Without the development of transitional politics, mass work is a trap that won't build the IS. Without transitional politics we ~~will~~ will be unable to recruit workers to our full revolutionary views, or hold them in a revolutionary organization.

The opposition document makes no mention of transitional politics. Rather it puts emphasis on developing ~~analytical~~ analytical workers power articles and ~~pamphlets~~ pamphlets on trade union and economic strategies and tactics. In response to this criticism, the phrase "transitional politics" has been thrown into the opposition resolutions (only in quotation marks), but the content is not there.

Recruitment and building the IS requires us to struggle with workers, not only about trade union strategies and tactics, but also about politics. Of course the opposition document is right to say: "Revolutionary fighters are trained in struggle by learning to draw lessons from their own experience." That is the whole significance to us of mass work. But workers don't draw lessons from experience automatically. The view that socialist ~~consciousness~~ consciousness flows automatically from the economic struggle was fought and politically defeated by Lenin in his struggle with economism.

When Russian revolutionaries in the ~~early~~ early 2900's became involved for the first time in mass work, some of them developed the theory of economism. It was a view that the task of socialists was to help workers build mass struggles. Through these struggles workers would be forced into increasingly sharp conflict with the boss and state and would thus become revolutionaries. The economists resisted winning workers to revolutionary politics until "experiences prepared them for it." In practise, the economists degenerated into a reformist tendency and disappeared. There is no excuse for anyone making that mistake ever again.

Socialist consciousness comes to workers only through a political struggle. The opposition, by downplaying the need for an IS political magazine, by pooch pooching political education, by de-emphasizing the need for political district organizations, and by giving no more than lip service to the need to develop our transitional politics, is trying to avoid the struggle of developing worker militants into conscious, rounded, revolutionaries.

This flight from politics by the opposition, goes hand in hand with another error. Throughout their documents, there is a systematic confusion between building the mass organizations of the class, and building the party. Time and again, they merge the two into one.

Yes, we are stronger when there are non-socialist militants prepared to share leadership responsibility in mass agitational campaigns--provided we can work out sufficient programmatic agreement and collaborative relations with them. This has never been challenged for one minute inside the IS. But the non-socialist militants who are prepared to cooperate with us in leading agitational campaigns will often be non-recruitable to revolutionary politics. Often, in fact, they have strategies and objectives quite different from ours.

Often, they will test out their ability to discipline us against projecting ourselves as ~~ex~~ socialists, selling WP, raising transitional ideas. Often, we will have major differences on the direction for the rank and file movement. So long as they believe that we are totally dependant on them, and that we are afraid or unable to lead without them, they will hold this like a club over our heads.

Successful collaboration with non-socialistx militants requires our willingness to struggle with them, and even to be prepared, if needed, to split with them. When, how, and on what issues is a matterx of strategy and tactics. But an attitude of deathly fear of any split at any cost, will guarantee defeat.

The opposition fudges the distinction between worker militants with whom we can share leadership in mass work, and workers who are recruitable. It implies, that by and large these are the same people. In fact, this is not now the ~~case~~ case. And as we become increasingly successful in leading mass struggles, we will develop political working relations with more--not less--worker leadersx who will cooperate with us in mass work, but who are not socialists, and are not moving toward becoming ~~socialists~~ socialists.

This ~~fox~~ fudge gets carried over into conceptions of the fractions. The opposition hints at recruiting worker to our fractions, not on the basis of their becoming revolutionary ~~workers~~ socialists, but only an agreement with the trade union strategy of the fraction. It creates the illusion that we can quickly increase our strength in the class this way. But it is wrong.

Fractions must be a section of the revolutionary organization guiding the work of revolutionaries in the unions. Fractions are not a section of the rank and file movement. To ~~the~~ fudge this, is to create fractions that will not develop worker revolutionary leaders and that will not be able to give an effective lead. Rather, it will bring the divisions of the rank and file movement into the IS, paralyze our ~~fx~~ functioning, and create weakness rather than strength.

Our IS industrial members still have very thin roots and meagre class struggle experience. It is natural that they seek strength from workers with deeper roots and greater experience. We still have a lot to learn. But as an organization, we must develop the ability to overcome ~~the~~ the lack of confidence shown by many of our



members in their own ability to lead workers, and in their own ability to train workers to become a new leadership for the class.

It is a dangerous illusion, that we will overcome the lack of confidence in leading worker basically by recruiting already developed leaders. Rather, we will have to develop the IS into a ~~xxxx~~ leading force in the class struggle, by developing our present and future members into self-confident leaders. It won't be easy. But there are no short cuts. Our members will have to learn to lead a s worker militants who are also revolutionary socialists. There is no one who can teach us that but ourselves.

### THE RESOLUTIONS

In response to the EC documents and resolutions to the convention, an opposition has formed. It has issued alternative documents, alternative resolutions, and an alternative slate to that proposed by the EC. In its "Cover Letter" the opposition explicitly states that it ~~xxx~~ intentionally chose the course of not amending the proposals of the EC, but rather, of fielding a full organized convention opposition to the EC positions. This can only have one meaning: the opposition believes that there is a basic dispute between itself and the EC majority on the road ~~xxx~~ forward for the IS--so basic that it must chart an alternative course and not merely amend the EC documents.

In examining the final resolutions that are being voted counter to each other, it is often hard to find just where these basic ~~xx~~ differences are focused. On one important issue, the EC adopted the plank of the opposition as a valid criticism and amendment to the ~~xx~~ EC proposals: the section on internal communications. On all other matters, the EC stands by its original positions as outlined in its ~~xxx~~ original documents.

The position of the opposition, on the other hand, has gone through quite an evolution. Going from two drafts that were circulated, prior to its published document, through to its resolutions, the issues in dispute have been fudged, muddled and toned down. In many cases, only someone who has been involved in the debate from the ~~xxx~~ beginning can ven tell where the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ differences lie.

It is the responsibility of the EC to bring in proposals to the convention. Where comrades have differences with the EC on important matters, it is their responsibility to propose alternatives to the convention. But in doing so, the burden is on them to ~~xxxx~~ demonstrate where they differ~~x~~ and what the difference means. Where alternative resolutions do ~~xx~~ not pose clear alternative directions to those originally brought in by the leadership, they should e withdrawn.

Where convention delegates cannot clearly see differences between the positions put forward, they should vote for the leadership resolution. In Democratic Centralism,

a leadership proposal should be voted down and reversed when the leadership is in error. But the comrades who are urging the rejection of the leadership positions, must demonstrate that ~~vx~~ there is an error, and must project a clear sharp alternative policy that can guide the leadership for the next year.

Voting down leadership ~~propos~~ proposals without clarity on the difference only weakens the leadership and generates a year long hassle over what the vote really meant.

So far, the ~~fx~~ differences raised by the opposition--while they ~~xx~~ tend toward federalism and economism--in no way draw out the logic of those positions. Further, we are ~~xmxx~~ confident that most comrades belonging to the opposition will draw back from following out that logic. ~~x~~ If our convention discussions can achieve clarity and focus, the current debate can serve a healthy purpose to the organization. There is every reason to believe that when the debates are ended, and the votes finished, all factional formations that developed going into the convention will dissolve, and we will leave the convention, a unified organization.