

I.S. SPECIAL BULLETIN

(At the July 2, 1977 Central Committee meeting a new EC was elected to lead the I.S. This has already been communicated to the organization verbally, along with a brief summary of the politics behind the change, and what it means for the organization. This bulletin contains the documents involved, a statement by the new EC, and statements by Glenn and Jack. The document of the old EC majority is in three parts: International Capitalist Crisis, Our Future in American Politics, Short Term Scene and Organizational Shifts. It was passed by the Central Committee. The document "Completing the Turn--The Americanization of the IS" was defeated. The documents "On the Workers' Party" and "A Lesson in American History for the 'Americanizers'" were discussion documents and were not voted on.)

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EC STATEMENT

During the four months between the convention and the third central committee meeting which recently took place, serious problems arose on the executive committee. First there were difficulties in getting the group to function as a collaborative leadership body. Second there were developing political differences over perspective.

Difficulties in getting the group going after a split at the convention and especially given the change of roles on the EC, the creation of the CC and of the industrial department were to be expected. And political differences are healthy. But after a period of time it became clear that the problems of the EC were in fact preventing it from leading. The EC was reflecting the difficulties of the organization instead of leading it out of them.

After some prompting by Jack we held an informal "brainstorming" meeting to discuss the way forward for the IS. At this meeting it became clear that there were serious differences in terms of perspective. And the lack of collaboration and friction continued.

We didn't take the debate to the CC immediately because issues and the differences were still confused and we felt it would be irresponsible to take a confused discussion to the central committee. In addition we didn't want to harden people into positions they hadn't thought through and create factional situation.

The documents that were written in a certain sense don't seem to refer to each other. That is because neither was really written as a response to the other--though Jack produced a version of his first--but because both documents were attempting to speak to the differences that had come up in our discussion on the EC, to the problems of the organization, and to the situation of the working class in the current period.

In those discussions Jack and Glenn repeatedly stated that our perspectives had collapsed. At the time it seemed that they meant not merely our organization and perspectives but our perspectives in the sense of our overview of the world, of domestic politics and of the situations of the American working class. Our document attempted to speak then, not only to our short term organizational tasks but to our view of the period and our role in it.

Once our document was produced Jack and Glenn said that they by and large agreed with it but that it didn't point the way forward for the group. We were glad to see that they agreed with our analysis of the big picture, since it indicated that the differences between us were not as great as we had thought. However, they indicated that they would not want to continue to serve on the new EC if their perspective lost. And if their perspective won they would want to construct a new EC around their perspective. In any case they felt the EC would have to be reconstructed.

Given the friction on the body, the political differences, their refusal to serve and their position that the EC had to be reconstructed, we reluctantly came to agree that it must be changed. All of us agreed that a factional atmosphere should be avoided at this time since it could only damage our group. We had, after all, just gone through a bitter convention fight and a split. We decided to take this fight to the CC and go with the CC's decision. That we would take the documents and the decision of the organization, but that we would not have a fight throughout the organization at this time.

In the event that the differences continued, we would organize a political discussion in the pre-convention period and allow the convention to decide the future course and the future leadership of the group. All parties were agreed on this procedure as being the best for the IS as a whole. The old EC majority believes that Jack and Glenn's leaving the EC is a loss. We believe them to be extremely talented political organizers. We also feel the EC could have been stronger if there had not been a leadership crisis. But it could not be avoided.

After some discussion amongst ourselves and with some other leaders of the organization we came to the conclusion that Mark and Marilyn should be added to the CC and the EC. We felt that Mark on the Black Commission and Mariwyn as Ntl organizer had both proven that they could make a real contribution to the leadership. While the body would be weaker without the industrial experience and talent of Jack and Glen, we felt that it would in actuality be stronger with a leadership team that could begin ~~the~~ to lead the group forward and out of the paralysis that characterized the old EC.

The loss of Jack and Glen to the EC, the financial crisis and a reevaluation of the actual usefulness of the industrial department led us to the conclusion that it would have to be disbanded. Instead of EC members "in charge of the work" as Jack and Glen had been, we would have to have EC members in liaison with the Industrial work--Mark with Auto, Dan to Teamsters, and George reporting to the EC on Steel.

The new EC, strengthened by the addition of Mark and Marilyn, is a leadership team which can carry the group forward. It was elected by the CC on a political program and is in no sense a caretaker body until the next convention. The IS has a line and a perspective. We intend to take the IS forward around that perspective in the work of party building, in the building of a multinational revolutionary workers organization.

We hope that Jack and Glen, and for that matter other members of the leadership of the IS and of the membership as a whole will continue to develop their ideas about the future of the organization. However, all parties on the past and current EC and on the CC are agreed we do not want any factional atmosphere created. We must have no fight in the IS at this time. If the differences continue, they will be argued out in the pre-convention period and the whole organization will have an opportunity to voice its opinion on them.

Jack and Glen, as we said, are extremely valuable comrades. A role must be found for them in the organization. A role where they can make a contribution commensurate with their talents. So far we have not been able to find a place for Glen that was acceptable to him. We intend to try to come up with a mutually acceptable role for him.

It was unfortunate that a leadership crisis should take place so soon after the convention. However, it did. Now it's over and we are going forward.

Statement by Glenn Wolfe.

It has been clear for some time that there had to be a new central leadership for the I.S. In my view the organisation would have been best served by an EC reconstructed around Jack W. and myself on the basis of our political perspective. That perspective however was defeated by the CC and it is therefore correct to have a new EC that excludes us. It is equally correct to explain to the membership how this situation arose, for the documents alone cannot tell the whole story.

The crisis in the EC (for that is what it was, not the general "leadership crisis" referred to in other documents) did not begin after the March convention. It actually started much earlier during the course of the faction fight against the "lefts". It was at this time that the EC majority consciously developed a deliberately indecisive and timid style of leadership which was designed to appeal to all sections of the IS. In the name of maintaining unity, clear positions were avoided and political struggle was replaced by consensus politics. Nothing was faced up to that could be avoided and "don't rock the boat" became the slogan of the day. Members of the Majority Caucus will no doubt recall the indisciplined and ineffective struggle against this development that Jack and I made at the final Majority Caucus meeting.

The significance of this retreat from leadership responsibility by the EC majority was not immediately clear. I, for example, believed that after the convention the EC would once more start doing the job it was paid to do. That is why I pushed so hard for the election of our slate on the basis of the program and platform which clearly defined leadership responsibility. My belief was proved wrong, the leadership method of the majority remained the same. It refused to deal with the practical and political problems that were the inevitable result of a split. Moreover, as the lack of common political activity between the different units of the organisation developed, the EC took to blanching between the different forces within the IS and increasingly intervened only on the basis of "suggestions".

Thus the EC degenerated into a glorified co-ordinating committee. But even this role was not fulfilled successfully because its pretensions to political leadership prevented it even developing administrative competency. Within weeks this EC paralysis was magnified by the growing charges of disruption of the EC against those who opposed the self-imposed paralysis. It should be said that it was I, rather than Jack, who showed least patience with the performance of the EC. It naturally follows that it was against me that the unsubstantiated charges of disruption which began to permeate the organisation were primarily aimed.

That there have been two partially opposed trends in the EC for months was clear to all who had eyes to see. Even on minor questions such as finances we were divided between those who were ready to face the depth of our financial crisis and cut staff by half and those who refused to accept the death of the Golden Goose and steadfastly proclaimed business as usual. The sad truth though was that the majority, in line with its new approach, refused to do anything about this polarisation. They tried to ignore it in the hope that it would go away. Despite strenuous efforts by Jack to get it on the agenda, discussion of new perspectives was delayed for two months. When it finally took place the majority dismissed our position out of hand and started the lie (one that is repeated in their most recent statement) that we were against the basic positions of the organisation on the nature of the period and the potential for laying the basis of a revolutionary party.

They knew very well that this was not our position. But in our view the collapse of our perspectives was due to the fact that our old positions were no longer sufficient to guarantee the continued development of the IS. But the lie served a very useful purpose. It enabled Joel, Gay, Dan and Kim to re-write all the old documents (documents which Jack and I had taken more than our share of responsibility for developing in the first place) and present them as their position. In short it avoided any necessity to face up to the real problems of the IS. In fact the truth is that if the CC hadn't made it clear that it agreed with the Weinberg/Wolfe analysis of the problems, the present EC would still be firmly pushing the line that we have no problems that a little recruitment won't solve.

It should also be understood that the majority had no proposal at anytime to either make the EC work or change it. They could not totally ignore the ineffectiveness of the body but they were at a loss about what to do about it except "try harder". This position would have been maintained to this day if we hadn't moved to break the log-jam. For perhaps the first time in political history it was the minority that had to take the line that one side or the other must take control. That in itself is a measure of the paralysis which existed. That is how it came about that we proposed that the next CC meeting put one side or the other in total charge of the EC. Despite our failure to win a majority at the CC, it is clear that this was the correct approach. For without the excuse of our "disruption" there is no doubt that even this EC will now be forced to act as a more responsible leadership body.

Finally I have a responsibility to inform the membership what I will be doing in the next period. The EC has stated that it has tried and failed "to find a place for me". This is not true, they made absolutely no serious proposals (and only one unserious one). Instead they have waged a fight to remove me from the auto work. In my view this is an error. We do not have so much organising talent that we can afford for the removal of a comrade from the EC to automatically mean their removal from their responsibilities in a major fraction. Such a step should only be taken when there are differences between the individual and the EC on that area of work. As part of their campaign to get me off the Auto Fraction Steering Committee, the EC has hinted at differences but they have been unable to substantiate those hints. The proof of this can be seen in the CC decision to maintain me as auto organiser until the next CC meeting when the EC would be expected to come in with a political case.

I believed at that point that the CC decision was a good one and in the best interests of the IS. After all, no-one had challenged my political and organising abilities in this field. Indeed I have been subjected to several sickening eulogies from EC members on precisely this subject of my talents as an industrial organiser. But within three days I changed my mind about the wisdom of the CC decision. I resigned from the job because it became clear to me that the period up to the next CC meeting would be spent in attempting to prove that I should not do the job. The effect of this would be to do real damage to the auto work. In that sense, and because of the petty factionalism of the EC on this issue, my presence in the auto work would inevitably be disruptive. I remain too committed to the IS and to the work of its leading auto members in particular, to play even a secondary role in disrupting the work.

I should state clearly at this point that I do not regard this example of factionalism as a developing and therefore dangerous trend in relations between ourselves and the EC. It resulted primarily from the fact that the absence of new ideas from the EC coupled to the demands of the CC for answers to the problems of the IS forced them to resort to the rather dishonorable but understandable course of indulging in a bit of scapegoating. My removal from staff and the EC's obvious need to get on with the job should put an end to this nonsense in the very near future.

I will, of course, remain a member of the CC and tho' no longer a full-timer I will play a serious role in the auto units of the Detroit district. Being the originator of the proposal that there be no generalised discussion in the organisation on the differences between the old EC because of the danger of factionalism, I will give the new EC maximum possible support..

I believe that over a period and under the pressure of the CC, the EC will have no choice but to move towards solving the problems that are outlined in the "Americanisation" document. A new perspective will be developed and the unity of the new EC will eventually enable it to change its harmful methods of non-leadership. I believe the next convention will result in substantial, though not total, changes in EC personnel, for the present team is seriously over-loaded with intellectuals. I also fully expect the decision to terminate the Industrial Committee will be reversed. But all that is a matter for the next convention and speculation at this stage can only turn us away from the external work which must be the first priority of every IS member in the months ahead.

Glenn Wolfe.
July 14th. 1977.

The
number
and name

July 14, 1977

Comrades,

A statement on my resignation from the EC will be prepared in the next week, and will be circulated at that time. Because of a misunderstanding with the EC, I delayed preparing my statement in the belief that the EC wished to negotiate a single joint statement signed by them and also by Glen and myself. I was informed today that there had been some confusion, that no such joint statement was forthcoming and that I should write my own individual statement.

The EC offered to postpone circulation of their statement and the documents until my statement was ready. However, because of other pressing responsibilities, it will be several days before I can begin work on my statement. I believe the release of some information on the changes in leadership is already overdue, and I do not wish to be responsible for compounding this with a further delay. Therefore, I have encouraged the EC to circulate its statement and the documents immediately, with the understanding that my statement will be circulated promptly upon its completion.

For the revolution,

Jack W.

1. This is a summary of the EC majority document which passed the Central Committee meeting. The document is long and complicated and we felt this summary would give the members an overview.
2. The main task for the IS in this period is party building. That is the building of a revolutionary organization by the recruitment of individuals one by one out of our work. Party building is possible because there are changes in the working class which are producing a number of individuals who want revolutionary alternatives. There is as yet no section of the class seeking revolutionary alternatives, but there are individuals that we can recruit.
3. These individuals are produced by changes in the class that are the result of the world crisis of capitalism. The world crisis of capitalism is an imperialist crisis. It results from the contradictions of capitalist imperialism in this period--one in which there is rivalry between both capitalism and stalinism on the one hand, and among the national capitalisms on the other.
4. In this situation, the Permanent Arms Economy, which for over 30 years created prosperity in the capitalist world no longer works. Instead we move into an era of world capitalist crisis which expresses itself in cycles of stagflation, with permanent unemployment, high inflation, economic nationalism.
5. This crisis began in the late 1960s. The recession of 1974 was the most dramatic event in the crisis so far. We are currently in a recovery. But this recovery only demonstrates the depth of the crisis. The recovery in the US is shallow and weak. And in most countries there is little recovery. The US has been unable to lift the capitalist world into boom.
6. In the US, where there is a recovery, unemployment remains high, inflation high, the employers offensive goes on, the Black and Latin communities economic situation deteriorates even during the recovery with unemployment rising rather than falling.
7. The crisis has given rise to a number of tendencies in American society on which we base our plans for building the party. The crisis produces an employers offensive which is an attempt to make the working class pay for the crisis of capitalism. There is a drift to the right by both capitalist parties, a political offensive to take back gains of the past. The union officials at their higher levels adapt to both the economic and political offensive.
8. But there is a growth of reformism in the trade unions. This will eventually lead to splits in the bureaucracy and openings for the rank and file movement. The employers offensive and the political rightward drift will eventually lead to rank and file resistance and finally to rank and file rebellion. There will also be resistance and rebellion in the Black and Latin communities where economic and social conditions are deteriorating more rapidly.
9. Our strategy for building the revolutionary party remains an industrial strategy based on the rank and file rebellion. We will build the party out of the rank and file movement.
10. At present, this strategy gives us specific tasks. In trade union work, we will be doing primarily local work, building a base, winning positions of responsibility and influence, working with forces broader than ourselves, positioning ourselves for the future. But also recruiting in the process.

11. In the Black community, our job is to carry out a number of modest initiatives over issues like Gary Tyler, Southern Africa, the Sardine boycott, or the Krugerrand demonstrations. We are getting a good hearing, little motion. We can recruit a small periphery; there is not yet enough motion to build a movement. We will do political organizing in the community. We don't yet have resources to do community organizing.
12. We can recruit to the IS out of both the union and the Black work if we put the resources of the IS to that task. That means the reestablishing of organizational norms--public presence, forums, and other political activities, social events, etc. Building the party must be the main task of the IS. Building a periphery, working with contacts, recruitment. The Black Conference and the Workers Conference are the beginning of this campaign.
13. Key to the building of the party is the use of Workers Power as the "organizer of the party". Workers Power must not only report on the struggles of the rank and file-- but present a socialist alternative. And show that the IS is a key to that fight for socialism.
14. The world crisis of capitalism has produced, around the world, revolutionary groups to the left of the socialist and Communist parties. They were the result of the merger of revolutionary intellectuals with working class rank and file militants. Today there are small revolutionary parties in Britain, Italy, Portugal, Spain and France. The IS is the American expression of that development.
15. This perspective is both a political analysis and a sketchy scenario for the developing movement in this country. We believe that this political perspective, internalized by the individual members and by the organization as a whole, is what bridges our specific work whether in the unions or in the high schools or community and our goal of socialist revolution. The organizational sections in this perspective are merely the fundamentals. They need to be developed and concretized. The Central Committee will be taking them up at its next meeting; we would like the contributions of the whole organization in developing our party-building perspective.

INTERNATIONAL CAPITALIST CRISIS:

Revolutionary Politics in a New Period of Imperialism.

A) The First Period of Imperialism: 1914-1945. Imperialist War, Revolution, Crisis and War.

The International capitalist crisis is a new period of imperialism. The first period of imperialism, when capitalist economy broke out of the confines of the national state which was choking its development, lead to capitalist rivalry for the world market and an international anarchy of production. It produced a period from 1914-45 which saw 2 world wars among the capitalist powers for the division and redivision of the world. It saw the breakdown of the capitalist equilibrium in the 1920's, followed by total disruption of world trade and the long devastating depression of the 1930's.

In that 30 year period the means of production did not expand, but declined. Peaceful, gradual reforms ended. The capitalists cut deeply into the standard of living of the masses. Class struggle mounted and intensified as the working class fought back, accepted revolutionary leadership and created revolutionary communist parties. The defeat of the workers, by fascism, Stalinism, World War II and the Cold War, set the stage for the post war boom, the second period of imperialism.

B) Second Period of Imperialism: 1945-1968. U.S. domination of the capitalist World. The Permanent Arms Economy. Rivalry between capitalism and Stalinism.

1) U.S. Domination of World Capitalism. The U.S. displaces its capitalist rivals.

The post war boom was based on two fundamental pillars: U.S. domination of and regulation of world capitalist economy, and the state regulation of the US and other capitalist economies through the permanent arms economy. The struggle for the world market, its anarchy, and breakdown was resolved when America's capitalist rivals were destroyed during World War II. The U.S. displaced them in their empire, and made them dependent client states, economically, militarily and politically. These economies were rebuilt and subordinated to American interests, their growth dependent upon a constantly expanding American market, and an American dominated world capitalist market.

2) An Imperialism of Rival Social Systems: Capitalism vs. Stalinism. The imperialism of this stage was predominately a struggle between the U.S. and Russia. Between two competing socialism systems, capitalism and Stalinism, for world domination. It was predominately a military and political struggle--not a competition for the world market.

3) The Role of the Permanent Arms Economy (PAE). Flattening the business cycle. Holding up the profit rate. Prosperity and working class complacency. Socialists driven to the margins of working class life.

The defense of capitalist imperialism was the permanent arms budgets of the US and secondarily of its Western allies Britain and France.

The Permanent Arms Economy, while primarily a defense of capitalism, also acted as an economic mechanism. It introduced partial state planning of the economy, and flattened out the traditional capitalist boom, slump cycle. Ten per cent of the U.S. GNP in the 50's and 60's went into arms production, an amount equal to all of capital investment.

Capital which would have fuelled booms was drained off into the waste production of war goods which were rapidly obsolete and need to be replenished. The drain of capital from investment to war goods held down the organic composition of capital, and with it the tendency of the rate of profits to decline. On the other hand, the constant state market for military goods was the pro for production for giant corporations and limited the development of recessions to brief small slumps. Research and ~~xxxx~~ development paid by the government arms budget in its early days had the spinoff effect of raising technology and productivity for the rest of the market.

For 30 years the capitalist system saw the longest period of uninterrupted expansion and prosperity in its history. The rate of growth internationally was greater than ever in the history of capitalism with the exception of the "founder years" of early national capitalist take-offs. Cold war repression and the trade union bureaucracy as junior partners of imperialism played its role. But predominantly the prosperity and constantly expanding living standards of the workers was the ~~xxxx~~ material basis for reformism. The system could deliver the goods without the necessity for sharp class struggle. To be sure this labor peace was often bought at the expense of a trade off on working conditions and the atrophy of the shop floor organization and power won in the working class upsurge in the mass production industries in the 30's. The trade off was at times fought. But it and the collaboration of the union bureaucracy in it were manifestations of the pervasive ~~xxxx~~ prosperity and reformism of the working class able to increase its standard of living without sharp struggle or active participation in unions and politics. The result was the destruction of the remaining revolutionary groups and the transformation of other into middle class sects existing on the margins of university and intellectual life.

G) Third Period of Imperialism. Reemergence of capitalist rivalries, as capitalist-stalinist rivalry continues. Reemergence of the business cycle. Characteristic expression in stagflation cycles.

1) Arms production inflationary, drop in capital investment. By the late 1960's the contradictions of the system began to emerge with such sharpness that within a few years it led to the end of the post war boom and the start of a new long term period of capitalist crisis, a third period of imperialism in which the contradictions of both previous periods now pull apart at capitalist equilibrium. The permanent arms production was inherently inflationary, with wages and raw materials used up in waste production which did not reenter the cycle of production. Despite productivity rise, inflation was constant if small, for 30 years. As it built up a head of steam, it was first able to be exported by the U.S. to its rivals, by the system of fixed stable currencies based on the dollar and the dollar's convertibility to gold at the fixed price of \$35.00 an ounce. Also the cost for the permanent arms economy was shared unevenly, paid for mainly by the U.S. and to a lesser extent by Britain and France. While the benefits accrued to the whole world market, the drain on capital for investment by arms production meant that those not as encumbered, the Germans, Japanese and Italian capitalists, etc., could grow faster. And with lower wages, they were increasingly capable of competing with the US for world markets. By the mid 1960's this turned increasingly into competition over heavy goods, steel, auto, chemicals, etc.

- 2) Reemergence of capitalist rivalries as capitalist-stalinist rivalry continues. As traditional capitalist imperialist rivalry for the world market grew, the United States was forced to cut back on arms spending as a percentage of GNP. From the 10% of the 50s and 60s, it declined to 5-6% in the 70s. As an economic stabilizer of the system it wound down.
- 3) Reemergence of the business cycle in the characteristic form of cycles of stagflation. The contradictions of the two pillars of post war prosperity, the return of capitalist competition for the world market, and the destabilizing effect of the decline of the permanent arms economy brought with it the return of the traditional capitalist cycle of booms and slump, but with a variant peculiar to this stage of imperialism--stagflation, the simultaneous appearance of inflation and recession.
- 4) The traditional capitalist solution--recession--doesn't work in this period. In the traditional capitalist cycle, the inflation produced by boom conditions, demand for commodities, raw materials and labor, would be wiped out by the recession as the price of commodities and wages would drop, as inefficient firms folded or were bought out by cheap rivals thus lowering the costs of constant capital. From the new base, the rate of profit would increase. The cure for inflation in the cycle was recession, and the cure for recession was the cheapening of the elements of capital and reflationary governmental politics to restore demand for the market. In the new world crisis this mechanism has not worked.
- 5) The Pae is not only an economic mechanism--but also a political necessity. The permanent arms economy is not simply economic. When it goes down as a percentage of GNP there is no necessary corresponding decrease in Russian Arms spending. The lead of US power over Russian has declined, and with it the ability of the US to defend itself and world capitalism. This demands an expansion of the arms budget, despite its contradictions of being inflationary and taxing capital in ways which its capitalist rivals do not have to bear equally.

Moreover monopoly pricing now see price rises as a way to keep up profits despite declining demand. Large capitals are not allowed to go under. Their collapse would threaten to undo whole sectors of national capital and therefore economic & independence of the nation states. Strongly organized workers have been able to resist wage cuts in recessions, and corporations have therefore passed ~~wax~~ these on, with the inflation acting as a disguised wage cuts for more poorly organized ~~sectors~~ sectors of the working class. Coupled to the traditional contradictions of the system of the nation states and world market, of international anarchy of production without state regulation, the contradictions of the permanent arms economy and monopoly capital ~~was~~ a nother long term crisis of capitalism has been ushered in--one potentially ~~is~~ more destabilizing to capitalist equilibrium than the first imperialist crisis.

D) A new era of class struggle and party building.

- 1) The beginning of the crisis--the 1968 strike wave. The start of the crisis in the late 60's produced the first wave of working class struggle in the advanced capitalist countries since the ~~1940's~~ 1940's. Starting in France in May-June 1968, through the hot autumn of ~~1969~~ 1969 in Italy, to the rise of trade union militancy in Britain, and in 1970 to the first strike wave in Spain and Portugal since the consolidation of fascism. The revolt of industrial workers in the first recession of this new crisis in 1969-70 opened the perspective of building revolutionary workers parties.

2) Employers offensive. Internationally the employers went on the offensive, to hold down production costs in order to compete on the world market. The offensive undermined the ability of trade union bureaucracy to deliver the goods through the accepted trade off as the attacks became total--on wages, on conditions, on productivity and health and safety.

3) SP CP union bureaucracy reluctant to fight. The union bureaucracy, whether social democratic or "eurocommunist" were reluctant to lead the sharper forms of class struggle necessary to defend past gains or win new ones. To do so would put them sharply into conflict with their own national capitals, and their competitive position on the world market, as well as mobilizing the rank and file in a period of instability and growing radicalism. Such a mobilization would result in the revival of union participation and mass democracy. And that would threaten the bureaucracy with reform movements which are a threat to their caste privileges and power. While they have to produce some gains to maintain their hold over their ranks and their organizational power, they have generally agreed to or tolerated through lack of struggle, wage freezes, mass austerity measures, and social cutbacks.

4) Rise of the revolutionary left. Fusion of the revolutionary groups with the industrial militants. From the margins of working class life to the embryos of revolutionary parties. It is this combination of economic crisis, employers offensive, bureaucratic compliance, and industrial rank and file unrest which has produced the rise of a revolutionary left in Europe. It created a wave of workers who were to the far left of the Social Democratic and Communist parties, and opened the possibility for the revolutionary groups of the 60s to fuse themselves with this layer of industrial militants by providing leadership and militant tactics in the struggles over wages, conditions, unemployment, cutbacks. By providing leadership for rank and file groups and militant struggles for reforms in the face of a reluctant bureaucracy, they were able to tie the struggle for reforms with a revolutionary perspective on the crisis, and the conservative bureaucratism of the union officials, their collaboration with and subordination of to the needs of national capital in the struggle for the world market. The revolutionary groups, which before 1968 numbered between 100-300 members, were able to grow in this first wave of industrial unrest to groups of 500-1500, and were able to become the embryos of new revolutionary parties.

B) Resurgence of the economic crisis: 1970-75.

1) Recession of 1970. Resurgence of economic nationalism. The first international recession, with its features of inflation, trade and balance of payments problems, and resulting monetary crisis, was lifted in 1971 with the introduction of the New Economic Policy in the U.S. Wages were frozen, the dollar devalued, taken off the gold standard. The immediate recession was over come. But the introduction of floating currencies to replace fixed exchange rates produced a new contradiction--at least potentially, that of volatility and disruptive shifts in world trade, more rapid introduction of politically dangerous austerity measures to defend national currencies and trade, and the threat of protectionism.

2) Capitalist offensive. The capitalist offensive worked easiest in the US where prosperity was greatest, radical traditions in the working class wiped out in the late 40's, the Black liberation and New Left movement which might have provided leadership for a fightback wiped out on the very eve of the capitalist crisis, and the small rank and file groups which emerged in the 1969-70 industrial unrest (TURF, UNC, RAFT, ETC.) were too weak to withstand the wage freeze and the employers offensive.

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- Basis laid for rank and file groups.
- 3) Bureaucratic cooperation with management. The union bureaucracy in the US, with less rank and file pressure than in Europe, was even more compliant with the employers' offensive. It cooperated in the productivity drives, it was a proponent of the wage freeze, it accepted wage cuts, primarily in construction and in steel it gave up the right to strike. Real wages which from 1939-65 had increased every year at an annual rate of 3.5% (with the exception of 1954 and 1957 when they declined, but in both cases by less than 1/2 of 1%) decreased and stagnated at 1965 levels. Productivity advanced, not through new investment, but through speed up, job reclassification and deteriorating conditions. US capital was therefore able to improve its position on the world market relative to its rivals. But the objective basis for rank and file revolt was laid. The IS and a few Maoist groups used this new reality to start to enter the unions with the perspective of leading and fusing with the militant who would be produced by industrial unrest.
 - 4) Runaway boom: 1971-3. The recovery which began in the US in 1971 led to a runaway boom. All the capitalist countries entered boom together in a synchronized cycle. From 71-73 world capitalism saw its biggest boom since the Korean war. There was an international rate of growth of 10% at the height of the boom. The boom produced runaway, double digit inflation internationally through the world market and as boom conditions everywhere exacerbated commodity shortages.
 - 5) The revolutionary left grows during the boom. The process of working class radicalization and the development of revolutionary parties, while not altered was slowed down by the boom and the sharp rise of real wages in Europe and Japan.
 - 6) Depression: 1973. The biggest bust since the 30's. Towards the end of 1973 all of the capitalist countries marched into bust at the same step. The collapse of markets in each other's countries simultaneously produced in 1974-5 the worst depression since the 30's. The short lived boom of 1971-3 had not resolved any of the problems of the world capitalist crisis, but has exacerbated its contradictions. Capital investment and formation during the boom was weak. Inflation during the depression year of 1974 peaked internationally at 13.5%. The pound and the lira plunged. The world price of oil quadrupled, putting an enormous pressure on exports to cover the balance of payments deficits for oil, and a time bomb into the international trade and banking system which has to cover the now annual \$40 billion trade surplus of the little populated oil sheikdoms.
 - 7) Working class radicalization. The Portuguese revolution. Working class radicalism grew in Europe and spread with general strikes in India, Ethiopia, and the struggle of black workers for unions in South Africa. In Portugal the first modern proletarian revolution began, sooner than the revolutionary movement had expected.
- 1) A Weak Recovery.
- E) Recovery within the context of the Crisis. / The second international recovery in the long term crisis is already two years old, at its point of maturation in the business cycle, when problems of ~~data~~ declining productivity, rising unit labor costs, inflation, lead to its contradictions and its running out of steam. This second recovery, coming on top of the steep decline of 1974-5 has been weaker than the first recovery, not a real boom anywhere, less capable of solving the problems of the crisis than the first recovery. It reveals the weakness of the system and new aspects of the long term crisis. Inflation despite the severity of the depression was not knocked out, but only reduced to between 7.5 and 8.5% internationally, a rate of inflation higher than when it triggered the crisis, and low only when compared to 1973-4.

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2) Depression failed to do the job. Despite the severity of the depression,

the elements of capital were not sufficiently cheapened. Commodity prices declined, briefly, but are as high now as at the height of the runaway boom of 1972-3. The employers offensive, wage freezes, and austerity measures did not cut the real wages of strongly unionized workers. In the US, Britain and a few other places, real wages declined a few percentage points. In France, Italy and Germany and elsewhere, real wages increased despite the depression. While Herrstadt, Franklin National, Citroen and a few others folded, critically weak and inefficient corporations were not allowed to collapse and cheapen capital. The failure of the depression to wipe out inflation has inhibited the recovery turning into boom

3) The rejection of traditional stimulants. The traditional methods of stimulating the economy used during the depression, have been rejected as a way of turning a weak recovery into a boom because of fear of runaway inflation which mounted as the international recovery took over. Capitalist strategy shifted to monetary restriction and motion towards more balanced budgets. They are illusory as means of economically and politically solving the crisis. They threaten to restrict expansion, raise interest rates, another source of inflations, and reproduce another stagflation cycle.

4) A permanent unemployment economy. A new feature of the world crisis is the rise of permanent unemployment internationally. In the 50's and 60's the normal unemployment rate in the US of 3-4% was considered politically intolerable in Europe. Today the best the US hopes to achieve during recovery is 6% unemployment. The large European countries have rates of 4-6% and given their low rates of growth overall unemployment has grown and will continue to grow during the recovery. The large number of unemployed restricts the development of consumer demand and expansion, restricting the recovery and revealing its weakness. By creating a pool of permanently unemployed youth it is socially and politically potentially explosive. Already it has taken violent forms in Italy, ~~undermining the ability~~ undermining the ability of the CP to cooperate with the Christian Democrats in a stable way without fear of the growth of the revolutionary left.

5) Uneven recovery. The recovery is both weak and uneven. Rates of growth for the strongest economies are below the norms of the 50's and 60's. There is a reversal of the rates of growth among the strong. The US is growing at 6%, Japan at 5% and Germany at 4%. The weaker economies, Britain, France and Italy are growing at rates of only 1-3%, and increasing their pool of unemployed. Uneven rates of growth are accompanied by uneven rates of inflation 7% in the US, 20% in Italy and Britain, 35% in weak links like Spain and Portugal.

6) Trade difficulties, economic nationalism and protectionism. ~~Uneven~~ Uneven growth and inflation is producing trade difficulties and further weakening the position of the weak on the international market. In the midst of the recovery it has led to a drift towards economic nationalism and protectionism. Camouflaged under the title of orderly marketing agreements, the weak and uneven character of the recovery sees protectionism ~~in~~ come in the back door through so-called controlled means, to prevent a stampede, which might develop in the next recession. Even the strongest, the US, running a huge balance of payments deficit which raises the possibility of a new dollar crisis, is forced to organize restrictions of imports--Japanes TVs, shoes, steel, etc.--as so called orderly marketing agreements. The growth of protectionism, its restraint on the growth of world trade, restricts and may abort the recovery. Its potential is the next recession to disrupt

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credit it had with a social democratic working class willing even to make sacrifices for "Its government" if that would produce a road out of crisis. But Britains extremely anemic recovery, and the decline in real wages has eaten deeply into the credit that Laborism had built up during the years of prosperity. It has suffered a massive loss in its voting base. To the right, to regionalist parties, to apathy. But also to a layer of the rank and file to the left. The ISGB which stagnated, suffered splits and lost members during the first two years of Labor, did not move to the right with the rest of the Left into the Labor Party or union machine. Maintaining an industrial rank and file strategy it was able to grow considerably in the last year as disillusion with the social pact and Laborism took over. Posing itself as the socialist alternative to the crisis and Labor, with the CP compromised with Labor, it was able to move to the stage of declaring itself a revolutionary party.

111) Portugal

In Portugal as well the bourgeoisie leaned on social democracy to carry out austerity and initiate recovery. Despite alliance with the military leadership and the right wing offensive, capitalist recuperation has not been achieved. The social democratic solution has been used up, accompanied by the disintegration of the rank and file base of the SP in the working class, and their shift to the left. The immediate result of the collapse of the SP government will be a more right wing government. But it has also strengthened the growth of the PRP/ Basing itself on industrial action, day to day trade union work, opposition to the wage freeze and social pact, and the party building the PRP counterposed itself as the socialist solution to the SP government and the crisis. For the first time it is now as a party, not as in the past the axis of broad but unstable left coalitions, a small credible alternative in the working class.

2) Eurocommunism

The Communist Parties, which have not yet entered government, have not suffered the same loss in their base. In their desire to enter government both the Italian and Spanish CP's (as well as the Spanish SP) have been enthusiastic champions of social pact and wage freeze and have tried to prove compliance with austerity even before entering government. In Italy the CP has given backhanded support to the government, while in Spain the CP moderated working class activity as a prop to Suarez's "democratic transition." The attempt of these "Eurocommunists" Parties to play the more traditional social democratic role of "doctoring sick capitalism" has restrained working class action, but has not been able to stem the growth of the mass movement and the role of the revolutionary left in it.

3) The Revolutionary Left in Southern Europe

In Spain the healthiest groups Accion Comunista and the Left Communist Organization (OICE) have used the strike wave and the rise of the trade unions to enter the mass workers union organizations which they had previously precluded by fascist character of the state "unions". Together with the LCR (4th International) they were able to field the United Workers Front (FUT) in the elections. Whether their success in grouping together as an electoral alternative to the SP and CP can break through the thoroughly fragmented character of the revolutionary left - -

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and lead to a new level of party building is too early to tell. In Italy the left has shaken down to 3 large groups that similarly cooperated to pose an alternative in the elections without leading to unity. Avanguardia which grew to 6000, abandoned its struggle group perspective for an industrial rank and file strategy as well as winning union office. Its success in the working class has acted as a pressure on the working class and trade union wing of the PDUP in the direction of unifying for a revolutionary party.

4) In France

Continuing inflation and unemployment has started to shift France to another work link, and to the likely prospect that the first SP-CP will be in France in the next year. Its probable direction will be similar to the British Labor government. An initial period of reform followed by a social pact and wage freeze. The revolutionary left may suffer a period of stagnation initially similar to Britain. However the growth of the revolutionary left in the slump (approx. 2000 for Revo, 3000 for LO, 5000 for LCR), and the strong showing of joint slate of the three in working class areas in this years municipal elections are excellent signs. In this case the group with the industrial strategy, LO, has not overcome its conservative, sectarianism, and forged ahead in party building. The crisis and pressure of LO have forced the other 2 into much greater trade union and industrial work.

5) The Rank and File Strategy

In more stable capitalist states the crisis has allowed for the growth of groups with an industrial rank and file strategy. In Germany and Sweden the semi-Maoist populist, semi revolutionary Communist Unions (EB & FK) have grown to groups of 1500. In Chile the MIR in underground has become a credible alternative to the SP and CP through a policy of underground union work and factory cell structure. In South Africa however, while the Black consciousness movements and unions have grown out of the control of the ANC and PAC it has not yet lead to even pre-party formations.

6) Faster Than We Thought

Three years ago we predicted that the revolutionary left in Britain, France and Italy, basing itself on leading rank and file struggles for reforms had been able to grow from propaganda sects to the embryos of parties in the first wave of the crisis. That in the second wave, of the last three years we could expect to see the formation of small revolutionary parties, the first since the revolutionary communist parties in the 1920's. In fact, with all its unnewness, that has occurred--if anything in more cases than we thought. The outbreak of proletarian revolution, again sooner than we anticipated, in Portugal tended to speed that up. The setback of the revolution in Portugal in November 1975 retarded the process.

7) The American Expression of this Revolutionary Process

Today the revolutionary left in Europe in the early stages of the crisis is stronger than what it was in the 1930's. In almost all cases it has been the revolutionary groups which have based themselves on an industrial rank and file perspective which have been successful in growing quantitatively to the state of small parties. They have begun to become small credible alternatives to the mass parties and for the first time are able either singly or as a bloc to counterpose themselves on the national po-

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litical level in parliamentary elections and not just in individual plants or local unions where they have a concentration of forces and cadres. The size of many of these groups is now 3-6000 members. Such a size is the critical mass which previous revolutionary parties have achieved before being able to make qualitative leaps to mass size when events and pre-revolutionary situations presented themselves. While such historic events may not occur for some years, the next upsurge will find small revolutionary parties as credible contenders for leadership within the mass movement and growing as serious alternatives. If the next upsurge should revive proletarian revolution in Portugal, or see its outbreak in Spain or elsewhere, then qualitative leaps based on the preceding growth of the revolutionary left could occur, considerably raising the alternative posed by revolutionaries internationally. While we still have in front of us the accretion of members through party building activity, a stage which cannot be leapt over, we have to restore our international perspectives and ties to once again locate ourselves as the American expression of that world process which is creating revolutionary workers parties.

**OUR FUTURE IN AMERICAN POLITICS - FROM HERE TO INSURRECTION, A CRUDE
OUTLINE.**

Intro.

It has generally been an assumption of ours that we would ultimately make our greatest political strides under a Democratic administration. A Democratic administration and Congress, faced with capitalist crisis, would eventually expose itself, strip away the illusions of sections of the working class in the DP, and clear the way for revolutionary developments - possibly through the path of a labor party.

Now that we are functioning under a DP regime, however, we discover that we very poorly understand how things really work. The general formula is probably correct, but so general as to be no guide at all for even the next few years. It is not surprising that someone should re-raise the labor party idea in this context, but it is the wrong route to go at this time. We must, therefore re-think, our strategy and the manner in which our world perspective applies to the ever thorny problem of the U.S.

To begin with, I am absolutely convinced, we must re-assert that our strategy for becoming a relevant force in the American working class remains essentially an industrial strategy. It is, more than anything else, the industrial and trade union struggles of the present and future that are our handle on American politics and revolution in the U.S.

We may experience success in other areas of work, say "community" work around S. Africa, but our current potential and future fortresses lie in the factories and unions. For it is there that the growing struggles of workers come most sharply into conflict with the existing politics of the American working class. No matter how slowly the pace of industrial struggle may seem to be developing, it is here that we can have the greatest impact and influence so long as we can still count our numbers in hundreds or even thousands.

Basic Elements of our U.S. Perspective.

A perspective is no a time table or a battle plan. Those we derive from the perspective. So this document will not attempt the usual, thankless, task of predicting what will happen in the next year. Rather, it will attempt to locate what are the basic trends in American political and industrial life that will, over time, affect the working class.

Crudely put, the basic elements, the basic trends, in our U.S. perspective are:

- 1) Economic crisis - boom and slump, stagflation in varying degrees.
- 2) Employers offensive - in particular the assault on working conditions and job security. Proceeds in different ways and at different speeds in various industries.
- 3) Drift to the Right in American politics generally. Above all a drift to the right by leading sectors of the DP. Also rise of racist sentiment, adaptation to that by major parties, marginal development of extreme right groups - though this appears much slower and less significant than we previously thought.

4) Adaptation to 1) thru 3) by old sections of labor leadership, both industrially and politically.

5)

5) Growth of reformist, social democratic trends in lower echelons of the trade union movement - expressing themselves both in TU reform and in social democratic political ideas and functioning within the DP.

6) Subsequent splits and fractures in the TU leadership along political lines, attitudes toward collective bargaining practice, union democracy, etc.

7) Rank and file resistance to the crisis, the employers offensive, and their effects. As splits at the top open wider, rebellion will be encouraged. It will express itself in industrial action and union reform.

8) Black resistance to the effects of the crisis on the Black community. This resistance will express itself industrially as well as through the eventual rise of a Black liberation movement.

These, then are the most basic elements of our perspective for the U.S. in years to come. These trends react on each other making the progress of our perspective uneven, but in the long run we expect them to lay the basis for a genuine revolutionary workers party in the U.S.

Part of our problem is that trends 1) thru 6) seem to be advancing faster than either 7) or 8). This we discovered is due, in part, to the lack of organizational and political traditions within the class. This has meant that even when workers do attempt to deal with the effects of the crisis, they often do so through old channels or by old means. Hence, the persistence of legalistic illusions, for example. But it also means that militants seeking to change things often feel they have to seek change in the union by sticking to the current practices of union politics. This might mean trying to influence incumbent officers or trying to link up with some "out" group in hopes of influencing them. More commonly it means going to the NLRB, Labor Dept., EEOC, and finally the courts. For tens of thousands of unionists it meant working for Carter or various Congressional candidates. All of these attempts to cope with the effects of the crisis are motivated by dissatisfaction. But most of them involve little or no direct struggle with the powers that be. And this fact has helped to slow down the development of what we think of as a rank and file movement - and of a Black movement and Women's movement as well. Short term economic developments are not enough to shake up this traditionalist and reformist response to events.

The major positive development in terms of rank and file response has been the rise of the union reform movements in the UAW, USWA, IBT, and a couple of other unions. Where these movements have arisen and we are involved, we have been able to maximize our impact. To do so we had to break with some sectarian notions we had. We had to learn to "go with the flow" rather than positioning ourselves as ineffective critics, or abstentionists.

We have, in fact, drawn the conclusion - with which I agree - that trade union reformism will be a major handle for our industrial strategy.

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But, there has been a price to pay. The gap between our TU work and our revolutionary politics has become even greater than two years ago when we tried to fill that gap with Class struggle unionism.

The gap, however, cannot be filled by static concepts or value systems. That is the problem with both Class Struggle Unionism and the labor party - they do not, by themselves, spell-out or even imply a process that fills the gap.

The strength of our old perspective was that it included a scenario that told everyone what was going to happen. The weakness was that the scenario attempted to tell too much and missed the boat. We need somewhat of a scenario, but one in which there is plenty of room for ad-libbing and one that is not tied to any short-run time table.

The new scenario must be based less on a time table and precise predictions and more on the existence of the basic trends that flow from the crisis of the sytem as it unfolds here. The fundamental message of these trends, however, is the same - there is no turning back the clock. The good old days of capitalists prosperity are gone. The road ahead will have hills and valleys, but so far as the living standards of the working class go, its course is relentlessly downward.

THESE

BASIC TRENDS IN THE ERA OF WORLD REVOKUTION AS THEY EFFECT THE U.S.

The basic theory and outline of the world crisis of capitalism appears in the document covering the broad perspective. This theory will not be repeated here. But the basic trends the are ubfloading in the U.S. will be outlined, and political conclusions drawn at the end.

The Capitalist Crisis in the U.S.

For two decades following WWII the American economy prospered and the over-all living standards of the majority of the American working class prospered. This prosperity was the material basis for conservative consciousness among the workers in the U.S. Hot and cold war re-enforced this consciousness. War, red-baiting and rising wages helped the labor leaders bureaucratize the unions. Socialist traditions and organization were irradiated from the working class. Above all, it seemed that capitalism worked, and that you could expect an ever expanding stadnard of living.

But this era of capitalist expansion and prosperity came to an end. Beginnig in the late 1960's the traditional crisis of the sytem re-emerged. The massive arms spending that had once helped save capitalism, now only made matters worse. All the siggs of capitalist crisis emerged in the U.S.

Profits, the life blood of the system, declined as a preporition of total production. This makes capital more scarce and expansion more difficult.

TABLE I (~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Billions)

Year	Gross Dom. Product - non-fin.	Profits, after taxes	Prof. as % of GDP
1957	99.3	13.4	13%
1960	231.6	21.8	9%
1966	430.7	40.0	9%
1976	962.6	75.1	7%

The permanent arms economy ~~xxxxxxx~~ no longer helped to prevent a falling rate of profit over the long run. Falling profits rates and the burden of arms production created problems.

Inflation grew and became a permanent feature of the U.S. economy. Following the Korean War prices seldom rose more than 2% a year until the second half of the 1960's. But after that, inflation took off. Even during the depression of 1974-75, prices continued to rise by 6%.

From 1950 to 1970 unemployment rose above 6% in only two years.

of "scientific management" and "Taylorism" in the years around WWI.

The employers offensive is highly uneven from industry to industry. In trucking, for example, it is combined with a rapid concentration of capital in the industry and is, therefore, highly visible and immediately felt by large sections of the work force. In steel, on the other hand, the day to day pressures of the offensive - which is no less real - is scarcely felt. Rather it appears in a shrinking workforce, and granting a long term erosion of job security.

Nevertheless, the employers offensive is as permanent a part of American capitalism as inflation. It will not go away or even abate. At different rates it will press down on every major sector of the industrial work force.

The greater the pressure, the greater will be the search among workers for way to resist it. The early, volatile resistance exemplified by the postal wildcat of 1970, the Teamster wildcat of 1970, ~~and the~~ the N.Y. TEL strike of 1971, and the GMAD wildcats of the early 70's proved insufficient. In most cases they tended only to reinforce cynicism and defeatism for years.

In general, the attempts by American workers to respond to the early stages of the employers offensive all broke on the same rock - the intransigency of the labor bureaucracy.

Accommodation of the Labor Bureaucracy to the Needs of American Capitalism

Years of prosperity allowed the American labor bureaucracy to win significant wage gains for their members without having to challenge the employers or their precious profit margins. This, in turn aided the process by which the leaders of the big industrial unions solidified their control over the union apparatus and isolated themselves from rank and file influence. From their seemingly impregnable position, the labor bureaucracy learned to turn their general loyalty to the system into a loyalty to the most detailed needs of the corporations and employers they bargained with.

When the crisis came, step by step, the labor bureaucracy responded through step by step cooperation with the employers. By and large, the employers offensive - even in its more blatant forms - has been conducted with the full cooperation of the ~~unions~~ top officials of the international unions.

Since the early 70's, each bargaining round has seen small wage increases and greater concessions on working conditions and/or shop floor organization.

TABLE XI

Wage and benefits packages of major contracts.

YEAR First Year Increase Average for 3 yrs.

The union leaders have rationalized each of their concessions by explaining the difficult position of the employers. Foreign comp-

etition, often a real threat in a world system of unions, and have been used as an excuse for collaboration in steel, auto, clothing, textile and other industries. Runaway shops have played a similar role in rubber and shoes among others. The shift to on-union labor has been the cover story in construction. And the simple playing off of one group geographical group against another in trucking and grocery, has done the job there. Whatever the rationalization, the practical results are the same. The labor leadership, at the higher levels, has been more than willing to actively assist the employers offensive.

The Growth of Trade Union Reformism

The stubborn insistence with which the top union leadership has assisted the employers and thwarted the will of the rank and file, on the one hand, and the growing pressures on large sections of the organized work force on the other, has meant an inevitable conflict.

For many workers who attempted to resist the offensive with direct action, as in the early 70's, the first conflict with the union leadership came as a shock. Whatever, these workers might have thought of their union leaders - and many already had a low opinion - they were unprepared for the proficient and aloof way in which top union leaders actively worked to break their strikes. The insistence and effectiveness with which top union leaders break wildcat has grown, tending to discourage them, at this point, as a general form of resistance.

Forced into conflict with the union leadership, not only over strikes but over the ineffectiveness of contract enforcement, grievance administration, on-the-job rights, etc., more activists were driven to the conclusion that they had to change the union - reform it.

Like wildcat strikes themselves, union reform movements were not new to the U.S. in the 1970's. There had been a variety of them in the 1950's and 60's. Most, however, had been small. Similarly, the large turnover of top international officials that occurred in the mid-1960's was largely a matter of slightly younger bureaucrats replacing those near retirement. Even the hard-fought Abel-McDonald contest in the USW was primarily a palace coup.

The 1970's has seen a more consistent development of generally larger reform movements and efforts. The UNC, IUPW, the Moroney opposition in the NLU, and the MFD represented the first wave. PICO, EDU, Sadlewski/SFB, and the Semratto campaign in the NALC represent the newer latest.

The actual pressures of the employers offensive and the specific structures and traditions of the different unions determine to a large extent the pace and form in which the reform movement arises in various industries. But the trend is clear and unmistakable.

It is also clear that the union reform movement or trends are an attempt to respond to new conditions - the crisis of the system - in more or less familiar, traditional terms. That is why most reform groups and campaigns invariably rely heavily on lawyers and legalistic plays. That is why, the politics of union reform represent only a

partial break with business unionism, that is, only a partial break with a basically pro-capitalist outlook, and then usually an unconscious one. Nevertheless, the union reform movement does represent a serious response to the crisis and the labor bureaucracy's role in it. While still deeply entrenched in the assumptions of the past, it is a first step away from them, a step toward conflict with the employers and their agents in the labor movement. It is a step toward class independence.

Splits and Fractures in the Trade Union Leadership.

During the 1940's and 50's, and 60's, the top officials of most major unions succeeded in building efficient political machines capable of controlling the membership under numerous conditions of economic stability. Backed by large professional staffs, armies of RA's, Rep's, or organizers, the International officials of most unions were able to insulate themselves from rank and file pressure, and to discourage serious opposition. Such changes at the top that have occurred have been either peaceful, family feuds, or palace coups. So far, the only exception to this is the UMWA.

The political nature of the machines that keep the bureaucracy in power vary greatly from union to union. The political structures of the unions are different as well. These differences have an important impact on the pace and manner in which splits in the leadership occur.

But, given the continuous pressure from above (employers offensive), and the more sporadic, but generally increasing pressure from below (direct action and union reform sentiment), splits and fractures along various lines are virtually inevitable in all but a few unions.

For many staffers and officials the pressures from above are more apparent. Viewed from the heights of the labor bureaucracy, these pressures are easily seen as general social and economic questions. For this reason social democratic ideas and organization are on the rise in the labor bureaucracy. DSOC is the archtypal organization for middle level officials and staffers. It offers the most coherent ~~strategic~~ version - for the moment, anyway - of the "political action" strategy of the liberal wing of the bureaucracy in the context of a view that ~~explains~~ more and is more long range.

In the short run, this social democratic develop will have little bearing on the development of a rank and file movement. It is, at this point, a diversion from internal union politics - toward DP politics. In the long run, however, this can help deepen the splits. It is also likely that at least some officials now developing social democratic ideas will eventually, as the crisis becomes extremely sharp, move to revolutionary views. For the most part, now, these social democratic trends do not dovetail much with the union reform movement.

Long standing tensions between different levels of the officialdom will also aid in producing splits in the bureaucracy. In a number of unions, UAW, CWA, for example, local officials often must take the flack for international policies. Large turn-over at the local level breeds

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tension and can lead to opposition development over time. There is some small motion in that direction in the UAW.

In ~~many~~ unions where locals are often small, as in the UMWA, NALC, APWU, and the leadership tend to maintain their close ties to the ranks, local leaders can provide the cadre for opposition movements. This was largely true of MFD and of the Sombratto campaign. In both of these cases, furthermore, ~~many~~ horizontal splits, led to splits in the top bureaucracy - Sombratto and Yablonski, just before MFD.

Whatever the particular form or pace, it is clear that splits in the bureaucracy - horizontal or vertical, provide an opening for the rank and file movement. Unity at the top has long been successful in beating back opposition and destroying reform groups. Disunity at the top will tend to encourage them.

So far, the bureaucracies of the major unions have been able to maintain a high level of unity. Even in the case of the USWA, the disunity among IEB members was minimal. In spite of great difficulties in the industry, the UAW has pulled off its second succession in bureaucratic harmony. Under heavy fire, the IBT leadership appears more unified - on the surface - than at any time in the past. The open warfare at the top in the UMWA is the exception - one that is viewed with horror by most of the labor leadership in the U.S.

Yet, much of this apparent unity is a surface phenomenon. We know that even within the UAW tensions at the top are mounting. The surface unity of the IBT leadership is entirely superficial and based only on untrustworthy alliances of convenience. Ultimately, in every union, this top level unity can exist only so long as the rank and file is ~~passive~~ passive or ineffective, and the employers relatively kind to their servants in the bureaucracy.

The employers offensive, the growth of rank and file resistance and union reform movements, and the splits within the trade union leadership are all trends that feed each other. They don't grow evenly, or side by side, but they will serve to encourage and spark each other. Doors will be opened to the rank and file that have been closed for nearly three decades in some cases.

Rank and File Resistance - An Upward Trend

The end of stability, the employers offensive, and splits in the labor bureaucracy all encourage workers to fight back. The wildcats of the early 1970's and the growth of trade union reform movements are both reflections of this. But resistance occurs even where no "visible" events or organizations emerge. In fact, it is usually a history of sporadic resistance and struggles that precede explosions of organization. But even when it does not actually lead to an apparently higher level of struggle, it is important in the development of consciousness. This is the level of struggle we often call "molecular" to signify that it is fragmented and sporadic.

In the past couple of years we have learned a great deal about sporadic resistance and how to relate to it. We have seen diverse and separate struggles by Teamsters in Detroit, for example, lead into the formation of EDU's stringest chapter. We have seen a flurry of local fights - some electoral, some over local contracts or conditions - grow in the face of the employers offensive. In auto, these fragmented struggles - at root the result of the same offensive - did not lead to organization among the ranks. Rather it ~~was indirectly and unevenly reflected at the UAW convention in the fight over the referendum vote.~~

For us, this "molecular" level of struggle is extremely important. For it is here that we ~~often~~ often find our first opportunities to be active in and - sometimes - provide leadership. Even when ~~the formation of an organization is premature or impossible, these~~ kinds of struggles provide us with the first tools for building toward a rank and file movement, for drawing lessons. It is also at this level that we must learn - for we have not yet - to draw socialist lessons. In this the employers offensive is usually the key idea. For it is usually the employers offensive that causes these struggles. To be effective, in this respect, we need to clarify and simplify a picture of the employers offensive in each industry and to tie it to our conception of capitalist crisis.

This level of work is extremely important to us, as well, because the employers offensive is a pressure on the working class that continues with as great force during periods of recovery as during bust. It doesn't have the system-wide drama of a depression, but it is, nonetheless, a basic proof of the crisis.

The desperate need of U.S. capital for profits and investment will mean a continuation of the pressures leading to rank and file resistance at the most basic level. While this process will involve numerous set-backs and defeats, it also offers opportunities. The degree to which the labor bureaucracy is dis-united or unable to put the lid on, is the degree to which this level of struggle will become bolder. This, in turn can encourage the rise of trade union reform sentiment and organization.

The growth of a real rank and file movement in response to the crisis is the heart of our strategy for building a revolutionary party in the U.S. The lack of a parliamentary system in the U.S. means that break-throughs in national politics are unlikely for small left groups. To become large enough to foresee electoral breakthroughs such as are occurring for the revolutionary left in part of Europe, or to see the likelihood of a labor party development, the revolutionary left here must already be sizable and influential within the organizations of the working class, i.e. the unions.

The idea of a mass rank and file movement within the unions is the specific form in which the industrial struggle can give birth to a significant revolutionary trend among the workers. In its earliest stages - stages we have only reached the very beginnings of - this movement will be politically confused and even stubbornly anti-political. Politics will be seen as divisive - socialist politics as embarrassing, even by workers attracted to them. But the long range press of events will force changes in this respect.

For some time to come, the government will often be seen as an ally by many rank and file reformers. Particularly, in terms of court suits, election supervision, and so on. But at the same time, a counter trend is growing. The government also has to move against the unions and against the rank and file and its ability to act independently. We see only the beginnings of this process in the recent behavior of Congress and in various Court decisions. As this aspect of government intervention grows, the need to become political will grow. At first this will most likely take an issue by issue, pressure form of resistance. But, in so far, as we are well positioned in the movement and the unions we can influence the direction of such political action and help generalize it.

We will have to learn many of the same lessons about raising political ideas that we had to learn in terms of union politics. That is, the need not to impose slogans prematurely, thus rendering valuable ideas sectarian slogans. We must understand that the first agitational opportunities will be limited, specific, and still surrounded by illusions in government, the Democratic Party etc.

This and sympathizers, of course, can initiate various kinds of political actions and events that point a direction for the broader movement, long before that movement is willing to do the same.

At the level of American politics, however, it is extremely important for us to understand that the rank and file movement will grow in the political context of a general move to the right in U.S. big party (bourgeois) politics.

Social Crisis and the Drift to the Right in American Politics

The crisis of the system, of course brings with it a general social crisis - not just industrial struggle. As the resources of the system are stretched, the ruling class demands for cut backs in social spending mount. Furthermore, the demands of various sections of industry for greater favors, in the face of declining profitability, also mount. All politicians, regardless of party or degrees of liberalism, come under this pressure. In varying degrees all succumb. Thus, the liberalism in social spending that accompanied the decades of prosperity are replaced by a general trend toward conservative policy.

At the level of government, this means a drift to the right within the Democratic Party, as well as among Republicans. The record of the Carter administration is an unexpectedly rapid demonstration of this trend. Of course, there are still many liberals attempting to move left at the local and congressional level. These politicians still respond to pressure from below, while the executive branch is more directly under pressure from the heights of the ruling class. But the trend is unmistakable.

Simultaneously, however, the response of the labor leadership - all wings - is to increase political activity and pressure as a means of winning things they no longer hope to win in bargaining. Or to win things, like national health insurance - that take pressure off of bargaining. The renewed involvement of labor in Democratic Party politics has strengthened organizations such as CAP and even COPE, along with the individual political machines of various unions - CWA, AFSCME, etc. This strength, and the existence of a layer of more liberal Congressmen and women, has created the illusion - and marginally the possibility - that labor will get some concessions. But so far, it is clear that the trend is mainly toward to the right and away from bog spending by government.

If labor represents a marginal pressure to the "left", it is also true that pressure toward the right have risen as the crisis forces sections of the working class, and middle class, to struggle over scarce resources. The anti-bussing movement and the general growth of racist activity is the leading example of that. Dovetailing with this is the growing reaction against the gains of the Women's movement and the rise of anti-Gay action.

Our prediction of a couple of years ago that extreme right groups like the Klan and the Nzi Party would see significant growth was exaggerated. The rise of right wing political activity is unmistakable, but it has not yet generally taken the form of openly fascist politics. While there will be some marginal growth among fascist groups, the main trend on the right will continue to be the issue oriented movements against Blacks, Latins, Women and Gay's. For some time these will most likely act a pressure groups on conservative politicians, locally and nationally, and, therefore, contribute to the drift to the right.

The effects of this right-wing pressure can already be seen in

recent Supreme Court decisions, the defeat of Gay Rights Acts, and the Fate of ERA in several states. This right-wing pressure will also play into the ruling class pressure to defeat social spending moves by labor or more liberal Democrats.

While we cannot assume that the Carter administration will never pass a single piece of progressive legislation, it is clear that it will continue an essentially conservative policy which, in turn will contribute to the social crisis itself.

In particular, the crisis in the Black, Latino communities is certain to deteriorate. Even, now, during recovery, Black unemployment continues to rise. And even a significant drop in the rate of Black unemployment is not likely to effect the desperate situation of Black youth. We can expect an explosive situation to take become the norm for most of Black America, as well as for ghettoized Latinos.

Indeed, the social crisis will eventually be felt by most sections of the American working class. Even now, white poverty is on the rise.

Farther down the road of crisis, potential breaks by sections of the labor movement and the Democratic Party are possible. The general line of the more aggressive sections of the bureaucracy, UAW, CWA, etc. makes it clear that this is not on cards by 1980. They say that any administration needs two terms to carry out its real program - the one they believe they can force on Carter and Congress. But, in the long run, a Democratic administration and Congress that can only deliver growing crisis will lead to disillusionment among sections of the labor leadership, as well, as in the ranks.

The moves for independent political action could come first from the Black community or from sections of the secondary labor bureaucracy. It is even possible that revolutionary developments here and elsewhere will by-pass the "labor Party" stage of political development. It is too soon to tell or speculate. For now, the marginal trend toward "Europeanizing" American politics is being played out within the DP by liberal labor leaders, congressional liberals, and DROC. This trend is as yet too new and weak to see the need or possibility of a break. Rather, their whole strategy is based on working from within the DP.

For several years to come, our major political handle on events in the U.S. will remain industrial, assisted by events in the Black, Latin, and Women's movements.

Black Resistance

For years we have said that the "Black Question" is the question of the American revolution. First on line for the social crisis, Blacks are now also at the heart of American industry. The position of Black people in the U.S. as the most oppressed, and the pressure toward struggle that represents, has been joined with a powerful position at the heart of American capitalism's power.

Already at odds with America and its ruling class, Black workers

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The "europeanization of American politics refers to the rise of a small consciously social democratic trend within the DP, the great direct role of the labor bureaucracy, and the attempt to make the Congressional DP function more like a disciplined european parliamentary party. If, in fact, all of these trends grew in a linear fashion and triumphed the end result would be to transform the DP into something similar to a european social democratic party. It is, however, extremely unlikely that this could happen.

The DP is a bourgeois party. In spite of labor influence, it is in the final analysis controlled by sections of the ruling class. Its structure - organized largely through the state apparatus itself, does not allow for majority influence by unions, or even representation by such functional units.

No doubt, the program of a large wing of the DP will be similar to that of some european SD parties. But this has more to do with the fact that the SD's have chosen to preside over the decay of capitalism, to impose austerity and the social contract, than with the triumph of social democracy in the DP.

The moves toward a disciplined parliamentary party are also certain to fail in the long run. The DP can only win power by pulling together the coalition it does. This necessarily includes conservatives. As we have seen graphically this year, this precludes Congressional discipline. The strength of the Executive branch also makes discipline over the President extremely difficult. For a bourgeois party basing its power on appeal to contradictory social elements and classes, this is probably impossible.

Socialists, however have for decades seen the possibility of a labor party - certainly a europeanizing phenomena. This possibility, itself, however, was based on the assumption that significant sections of the labor movement and labor leadership would lead that break. Without the organized strength of the unions, such a move would most likely go the way of past third party movements in America - ie., back into the DP.

Given the enormous pressures that will be on the unions in the next ten years, the rise of a rank and file movement, more and more changes in the leadership of the unions, a labor party development is possible. But it is certain that this sort of development, or even the growth of large scale labor party sentiment among the secondary leadership is a long way off.

This very fact, may make the development of a revolutionary party a more volatile add, after a certain point, rapid process. We know that we have no choice but to grow by small, continuous recruitment up to a point. But when we have reached a certain critical level, one that allows us a widespread presence in the major unions, that qualitative leaps in revolutionary organization are possible. And the fact, that successful reformist trends are bottled up in the DP may actually help those qualitative leaps.

In such a situation, revolutionaries could lead political struggles the reformists would be unwilling or unable to lead. Most likely these would be issue oriented at first. But gain a sharp enough crisis and the lack of a credible reformist alternative, the revolutionary left could intervene effectively at the electoral level as well.

influence to affect that arena. Our level on political developments among workers will remain on the shop floor, in the local union, at a union convention, or in the Black community for years to come. Yet, the level is no less real. For the crisis is as severe, and in some ways clearer, at that level. It is here that the first wave of revolutionaries can be trained and recruited.

Our conception, therefore, of revolutionaries as a leading trend within the existing and arising movements for change among rank and file workers and Black and oppressed people, out of which the party is built is not just a timeless idea. It is a strategy that says that out of the pressure on the class growing out of the trends arising from the crisis, struggles arise. The reformists, trapped by their loyalty to the system and their futile attempts to reform the DP, will be unable to lead these struggles. In fact, they will be an obstacle to them. The revolutionaries will, over time, be able to take the lead more and more of ten. Out of this experience workers can be recruited to revolution. The revolutionary organization we are building today is the embryo of the revolutionary party that lies down the road of crisis. It will see many changes before it reaches the level of a party, but like a human embryo that gives life to a more complex, living being, we are the beginning.

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Where are we now?

The remains is a small group. We have no illusions that given our current size, or even our likely size in the next couple of years, that we can directly effect major events. We are not a party and cannot attempt to act like one. But we are the only socialist organization in the U.S. that understands, to any extent, the actual process that is unfolding and making the development of a revolutionary workers party in the U.S. possible. We are the only group with a commitment to the basic strategic tools that allow us to intervene in that process to build that party. For this reason, we are the nucleus of the revolutionary party.

There can be no social mysticism about the development of a party. The revolutionary party develops out of the process of the crisis and the response of the working class. But it cannot do so without an organization or organizations working to make it happen. Parties do not explode on to the scene of history, they are the result of years of painstaking effort by dedicated revolutionaries. This, as is pointed out elsewhere is the lesson to be learned from Britain and the SWP, Portugal and the PRP.

We, of course, are not nearly as far along as either of those groups. This is a reflection of our petty bourgeois origins, the greater strength of the American economy, the lower political consciousness of the American working class, the lack of organizational traditions of resistance among the workers.

Nevertheless, in the past few years, we have succeeded in positioning ourselves within the processes that make up our perspective. We are no longer observers of the crisis, we are actors in the crisis - even though our actions are not great enough to turn tides, or affect events of a national scale. Within a number of local unions we have already been able to affect events - to lead contract fights, alter the balance of forces in a couple of local unions. In the IBT we have had some national effect.

Furthermore, the composition of the organization reflected the new position we have in the working class. We are the same size we were in 1975, but our membership is more working class and Black by a long shot. More of our members hold union positions, more have genuine influence in their locals or work places.

Nevertheless, we have not grown numerically. This severely limits our ability to take advantage of even the position we have won. Furthermore, it obviously slows down that part of the process that is, in fact, dependent on the revolutionary organization - namely the construction of the party.

No matter how different the pace of events, we have learned from the British and Portuguese comrades that party-building is always a race with events. In Britain it has been a race over whether or not the IS and now the SWP could take advantage of national events, the social contract, elections, etc. In Portugal it was, and may be again, a race

for revolution itself.

We are still at an earlier stage, a stage traversed by all the effective groups in Europe and elsewhere. We are still racing to get the critical mass that allows us to begin the step ascent to the party. In Europe many groups have reached this critical mass. Given the events and the upheavals, they will be able to make qualitative leaps in growth. No party revolutionary party grew by steady slow recruitment and had the time to make it as a real force. To take advantage of great events a critical mass is needed.

For us, then, the task is still building toward that critical mass. More likely than not this will be a slow process for some time. In our 1975 perspective documents we had hoped to reach some sort of critical mass (1-2,000 members) in time for the next slump. It is fairly certain now, that this will not happen. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Even given the most efficient sharpening of our recruiting tools and efforts, we are not likely to grow by ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ that fast in the next two or less years before the expected slump of 1979.

Part of the reason for this lies in the particular phase of the crisis we find ourselves in. We are now in the second year of a recovery and can expect as much as two years more of it. This recovery is weak and bears all of the trade marks of the crisis. Nevertheless, it is enough to mute the sense of immediate crisis that existed in 1975.

We see that even in Britain, where the ~~XXXXXXXX~~ recovery indeed miserable, it is enough, combined with other factors, to produce compliance with the austerity of the social contract.

Here, the combination of recovery and a new Democratic administration - for the first time in eight years - is enough to limit resistance to a series of peer settlements. What resistance there has been was too weak to affect the outcome of most contracts. The only major exception, in the next couple of years, to this pattern will be the miners, this coming December - the one section of the class with strong traditions of resistance and local organization, and industry-wide solidarity.

Without a general sense of crisis in the working class, rapid growth and large scale recruitment are not likely. Without major confrontations, qualitative leaps are remote.

But, the crisis has not ended. In fact, the very reason for the weakness of the recovery - a world-wide lack of profitability - dictates that the employers offensive will continue and intensify in the next couple of years. And with this, will grow the difficulties faced by the labor bureaucracy in governing the unions.

As we have said a number of times, most of our industrial opportunities will arise at the local level. We will be able to lead and organize struggles of various kinds at the local level.

We will be able to recruit out of these struggles, local union events, and elections. For the next couple of years it is in this manner that we will build toward the critical mass of the future. It is this that must be the heart of our work for the next couple of years.

There will, of course, also be a limited number of broader possibilities for activity in the labor movement. National TDU campaigns may open the doors for ~~significant~~ recruitment beyond the few locals where we now have a presence. In the UAW it is likely that some activities or campaigns in alliance with various secondary officials can be pulled off. These, of course, can enhance our position and reputation. Similar alliances in the USW should the Sadlowski forces attempt some moves are possible.

Recruitment in the milieu of the secondary union leadership, however, is obviously very unlikely. This cannot, therefore, be the primary emphasis of our activity in the next two years.

While we may very well be in alliances with secondary leaders in various locals, the fact remains that our contact with the rank and file is far greater than it can be on a national or regional scale. Within the locals alliances with opportunist or officials of various types will be only one aspect of our work. Naturally, it will overlap with our shop floor, union, and political work directly among the rank and file of the local. For this reason, even alliances and maneuvers in the local tie in more with a heavy emphasis on recruitment.

It is also clear, that ~~the greatest pressure on the ranks and the secondary officials in the next two years will be at the local level. For it is here that the employers offensive is usually experienced - long before most workers generalize that experience.~~ the greatest pressure on the ranks and the secondary officials in the next two years will be at the local level. For it is here that the employers offensive is usually experienced - long before most workers generalize that experience.

Based on these expectations, the IS must use the next couple of years to entrench and strengthen itself at the local level. We need not only growth, but some concentration in that growth.

The other major source of recruitment will come from the Black Community. For it is there that the crisis is always on. It is here that the sense of a system pressing down on a people is the greatest. We see that even in recovery, Black unemployment grows.

While the political nature of our work in the Black community is different from day to day TU work, the IS must organize this work in the same way. That is, our Black work must be organized as a fraction, as it now is through the SAIC work, and our commitment to the specific communities where we work and recruit continuous.

We are at our most inexperienced, as an organization, in the Black Community. Yet, both the contours of the crisis, and the little experience we do have, point to the fact that recruitment here can be significant enough to make us a genuinely multinational organization.

In summary, then, we are still at that point of development where we must build toward a critical mass that will allow, given the events,

qualitative leaps toward the formation of the party. No tricks or gimmicks can dispell the fact that this task is accomplished through patient recruitment in small numbers among Blacks and industrial workers - Black, white, male and female.

Living Under a New Democratic Administration and Congress

The fact that we will be living under a Democratic administration for years to come - a second term seems more likely than not - is filled with promise and problems. In the long run, we have always believed that the unfolding of the crisis under a Democratic administration lays the basis for the long overdue break with the DP by significant sections of the class. As a long range perspective, this stands as good Marxist sense. But it is equally clear that this will be no simple, short or direct process.

The ties of the working class from top to bottom to the DP are deep and long standing. The obvious grofdom of the labor leadership to the DP is only the surface. These ties reach down to ~~thax~~ nearly every block of every ~~workingclass~~ urban working class neighborhood, Black or white, in the industrial centers of America. These ties are not just ties of loyalty of illusion, but of jobs, favors, education, etc. We are only beginning to understand how the DP's hold on the American working class works.

Beyond the structural facts of the DP, lies the tendency in the last decade of labor to intensify its active role in DP politics. This is perhaps most obvious for the UAW, but it is true of most other unions as well. Only the EBT stands as an exception to this, and then not entirely for reasons helpful to us.

The significance of all of this ~~thax~~ is that more sections of the union membership have been drawn into DP politics in recent years than since the Truman-Dewey contest of 1948.

Again, we can learn from the experience of Britain. The loyalty of ~~thax~~ large sections of the working class to the labor party have allowed the TUC leadership to impose the social contract/austerity plan with considerable success. Predictions of early breaks under Labor proved wrong.

The material ties, the role of the union leadership, and the general illusions of ~~thax~~ vast numbers of American workers that the DP is the party of the "little people" are going to contribute to the waning of struggles around national contracts. And, they are going to slow down, for the next four or more years, any trend toward independent political action. ~~thax~~

~~thax~~ It is almost certain that a slump in 1979 will reinforce the idea that a Democratic administration is needed in 1980. For, even workers who knew the DP is a bossess party, tend to believe it is the party more willing to speed to end a depression. And the fact, that Carter is stingy during the recovery will not do much to dispell that general

opinion - particularly since CAP, COPE and the Black middle class leadership will be pushing this line hard.

All of this points to the fact that our greatest handle on recruitment, agitation, and politics will lie at the local level in industry and the Black community for the next few years.

1979-81 Can Be Another Turning Point in Our Perspective

A slump in 1979 will ^{bring} return to America a sense of genuine crisis. Under the conditions of a slump, the next major bargaining round will open with the Teamsters, then the UAW. Whether or not there is significant motion - something that may be headed off by a slump - over those contracts, it is certain that the labor bureaucracy will be cautious and will produce lousy contracts. Another round of lay-offs another SUB crisis in auto, all those will intensify bitterness and disillusionment, though not necessarily immediately.

In 1980, Carter will most likely be re-elected - this time as a real loser overall. In that year, Doug Fraser and other top UAW leaders will retire, opening a real succession crisis in the UAW. In 1981, the USW will face another election.

There is no point in attempting to predict, at this early date, how workers will respond to these events and pressures. But it seems clear that the general trends we know are in motion will increase. Certainly the labor bureaucracy will be weaker in its personal and machinery. Its political credibility stretched as Carter presides over a slump and struggles with attempts to create even a weak recovery. The pressures on the working class to pay more and more for each such attempt will not cease. And, the second term for Carter and the DP will not have the patience and watchful waiting of the first.

For us, the real point is that we cannot hope to take advantage of the potential inherent in such events and times unless we have built our own strength and influence. Whatever else it means strength must mean numbers. And influence cannot never been gained only through the good offices of our allies.

Building the revolutionary organization must become the first priority. We grow in the next few years, or we will face failures and disappointments far more agonizing and destructive than anything we have seen in the past year.

Short term scene and organizational shifts.

I. Strengths and weaknesses of the last short term perspective.

Several years ago we adopted a long term perspective based upon the idea that a revolutionary party would be built out of a rank and file movement that would grow up during the long term decline of capitalism. Three years ago we adopted the short term perspective that we could in the depression of 1974-75 and in the contract bargaining round of 1975-77 build national rank and file groups, and recruit the leaders and activists of them to the I.S. By doing this we felt we could move away from the periphery of working class life to becoming a workers' group, and thereby lay the foundation for building the party in the long term.

While our short term perspective did not completely live up to our expectation -- we were nonetheless somewhat successful in it. Two or three years ago we were a group with no Black members, with no workers (except industrialized radicals). We were a group that was in contact with working class life on its fringes.

Today we have a worker membership and a Black membership -- small, but significant. And we have a growing worker and Black periphery. We are now moving much more deeply into the working class and beginning to get into the Black community. We are strategically placed in three unions in a position that we would have thought enviable three years ago. In fact, in one union we did build a national rank and file group and recruit a number of its leaders and activists.

There were serious weaknesses, however. One was a failure to build the party...we failed to develop a public face, to build a periphery, to recruit. In part this was a conscious decision -- it was bending the stick to overcome our isolated and sectarian past. We were driving into the working class and our trade union work. But it was also a political and organizational failure. Perhaps an unavoidable one, since we had not the experience, but a failure none the less. We did not properly raise and push our revolutionary socialist politics. We had not yet learned how to raise them in a working class arena and to a worker audience. Secondly, we did not know how to use our personnel and finances and other resources to build the group. We had not developed the organizational methods required.

Another problem developed as well -- that was the growing separation between our union work and our socialist politics. Union work was after all small, slow and painstaking (it is even more true now after the contract campaigns). And socialist revolution is a goal which is obviously distant and enormous. We believe that the perspective put forward in the first two sections of ~~of~~ this document bridges the gap between our work and our goal. That is, it lays out our essential view: a long term crisis based on cycles of stagflation, with periodic conjunction of the slow decline and depression, the employers' offensive, the drift to the right in American politics, the horizontal and vertical splits in the unions, the radicalization of the ghettoized Black and Latin populations, the perspective of rank and file organization.

These strategic conceptions in the hands of a group striving to become a revolutionary party are $\frac{1}{2}$ the bridge between our rank and file work and the goal of socialist revolution. This perspective not only overcomes the divergence between the labor work and the goal of socialism -- but also provides the basis for recruitment. We recruit people to the perspective and to the group.

In the last perspective there was also another error, it was an error in method. We laid out timetables instead of tendencies. We laid out a timetable for depression and boom, for rank and file activity and for recruitment. It was unrealistic simply because it was a rigid timetable. It was necessarily demoralizing, especially to newer members who understood the short term timetable, but not the long term tendencies. We have tried $\frac{1}{2}$ in the perspective given above to correct in the direction of tendencies.

The short term perspective's weaknesses should not cause us to ignore the fact that its strengths confirmed our general analysis. The long term crisis remains the same -- the crisis will give rise to rank and file rebellions, out of which the revolutionary party will be built. And we are the nucleus of that party.

II. Growth in this period.

Around $\frac{1}{2}$ the world during this period, small revolutionary parties to the left of the Social Democratic and Communist mass parties continue to be built. In the U.S. it is possible to build the party during this current $\frac{1}{2}$ recovery and the short period of stability. The recovery takes place within the context of crisis -- the crisis goes on, even if more slowly. But real wages remain the same or drop. Unemployment grows among Blacks, Latins and women. And the employers' offensive goes on during the recovery. In fact, the recovery is possible because it goes on. The attack on working conditions, shop floor organization, and even union organization goes on. And the political offensive against the working class increases as Carter, Congress and the courts attack the gains of the previous period. This means that we can and will recruit among workers, Blacks and Latins in this period, and we will grow.

In the trade unions it is a slow period. We must place ourselves in positions of influence among rank and filers. We will have to make alliances with forces broader and stronger than ourselves. We will work to build a network of rank and file activists. All of this with the goal of being better placed for the next rank and file upsurge. Our perspective remains that of rank and file rebellion, union reform and fights against the employers.

"Our trade union work in this period will be based on local work and building a local base. Where possible our members will attempt to win positions of influence including winning local office."

In some areas of trade union work, our rank and file groups, however, become little more than ourselves. This is not something we desire; we want to give leadership to a real movement. But in this period we may be limited to front groups in some situations. Our goal should be recruitment of the activists with whom we work.

We must overcome the backward and conservative notion that by joining us they are hurting the rank and file movement. We must convince them that by joining us and recruiting their friends they are legitimizing socialism as a current in the labor movement. We can and will recruit out of our trade union work and especially in auto and steel, but even in Teamsters a number of these new recruits will be Black.

Our political work in the Black Community, around Gary Tyler and Southern Africa has proven that we can recruit Blacks to the group. We are not recruiting because we are doing community organizing--for we are not. We are recruiting to our revolutionary socialist politics. It will continue to be possible to recruit Blacks out of this work.

In order to recruit we will have to upgrade Black work. We will have to discuss and take on the issues of importance to Blacks, much more so than we have in the past. We must put Blacks in the organization forward, into positions of prominence, into public roles. However, this cannot be done in a tokenized way. It is therefore crucial that the resources and time necessary to train and develop our Black members be given. We must develop Black leaders and Black cadres as well as recruit. If this is done we should come out of this period with the group with the most advanced consciousness on Black Liberation and its relation to socialist revolution. And we should come out with an integrated group that is the core around which a multi-national revolutionary party can be built. The Black Conference is an important first step in this ~~xxxx~~ change.

Organizational Shifts

The key to the health of our group, to recruitment, to growth, is the confidence of the group in the long term perspective and in the mid range tendencies which have been described in the document above. However, there are also organizational changes which will have to be made.

Part of the shift is a shift in resources to party-building work. Some of this has been done in the past: when we took Larry out of Telephone to make him nat'l Black organizer, when we brought Dan on to the EC and WP, when we made Al a nat'l speaker for the IS rather than TDU.

It will also have to do with a change in what the organization values and rewards. We must now reward much more those comrades who do consistent contact work, who follow through on the periphery, who recruit to the group, who use the paper.

The industrial leaders must be brought into the party building campaign. In fact, they must play a leading role in it. Their rank and file union contacts must be brought into the periphery and into the group. They must be public spokespeople where possible for the IS.

A change in the use of the paper is in fact one of the major changes the group will have to make. In the last period we correctly attempted to change the paper into a workers paper. But we incorrectly tried to turn it into the organizer of our rank and file trade union work. We failed to use the paper as the organizer of the party.

In a Leninist organization, the paper is the organizer and builder of the party. We propose now to make WP a better tool in several ways.

1.) In part this was due to political confusion on our parts, on how we could actually use a revolutionary socialist paper in this country, in this period. In part it was also due to our lack of experience, and any successful model of what an agitational socialist workers paper should look like.

We semi-consciously exempted the questions of socialist strategy from the pages of WP, in the belief that workers, in general, were not involved in the debates that took place within the left. We were generally correct for then. We would not have been able to address those questions in a meaningful way to a working class audience. Our frame of reference, and our language would have reflected the world of the left sects that we were trying to leave.

But now those questions must become a prominent part of our politics again. It is the questions of our strategy and perspective that bridges our revolutionary socialist politics, our trade union work and our community work. And as we underscore more deeply, the question of party building, it is these questions our membership must be educated in, and these questions that we will recruit to.

To make WP a better tool in building the IS, we must bring these questions into WP. We will begin a weekly column/editorial on "strategy for Socialists." This will take up, in a highly editorializing way, our perspective. Questions will include things like: the limits of trade union reform, the need for black/white unity, the need for a revolutionary party, etc. It will also take up some topical questions that relate to the questions of strategy.

This column will be developed by the EC. It will be the one thing in WP that all members must read and will become a focus for political discussion throughout the IS.

It will be the line and all branch leaderships will assure that all members read it and get to discuss it with someone else, whether that takes place in branch meetings, fractions meetings, one on ones, or whatever.

2.) It must wage a consistent fight for socialist ideas. We want to present the socialist analysis of this society, of its political, social and economic problems--not merely the critique from the point of view of the rank and file. We want to do this, however, without losing the working class character that the paper has so far achieved (however partial this success.) This will not be easy.

3.) It must organize and build the IS. One way to do that is a calendar of the organization's events--forums, demonstrations, movies discussions.

4.) We want several features that show the health and dynamism of the group, and its Black and working class character: Why I Joined the IS, Workers' Viewpoint, and articles like the recent series Talking About Women's Liberation.

These changes will be made while keeping the other two aspects of the paper a) the coverage and analysis of our rank and file work, such as 299, the picnic and Odorcich, JAW 869 etc. b) and our higher level political coverage: Carter, courts, energy, union bureaucracy, etc.

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The paper however can only organize such activity as goes on. In the past period, under the enormous burden of our trade union work, the IS was at points virtually liquidated. There was no public face of the group. Public forums, paper sales, contact work, political discussion--were all sacrificed to the trade union work. It is now time for a shift without erring in the other direction.

The change is crucial and must be carried out at once.

First, it must become part of the life of every branch to have one external event each month. Because we have become so rusty at this the center will give a major lead in developing topics, speakers notes, leaflet mock-ups, etc. Branches will be encouraged to put on the public forums/events developed by the center.

However, it is understood that the needs of the different branches are not always the same and what is appropriate for Detroit is not necessarily appropriate for Boston.

What we expect is one public event each month. Changes from the general format worked out in the center must be done in consultation with the National Secretary or National Organizer.

Over the next six months we will have discussions on the following topics: strategy of the rank and file movement, workers revolution in Black Africa, women's liberation, world crisis of capitalism, developments of opposition in the Stalinist countries, the Democratic Party, Black liberation. The actual titles and events they are tied to would be snappier. In a period of six months these forums will reclarify our perspective to the group, to our periphery and to a new developing periphery as well.

Each forum will be a party building event. They will be advertised in the WP calendar of IS events and built in our work places, the communities in which we do political work and in the city at large. We use all we've learned: attractive hall, well situated in an integrated neighborhood, attractive decoration, music, social event after, sale of paper, literature, keep out sects. In addition to the speaker on the topic there will be a speaker for the organization speaking as a member of the EC, CC etc, who will make a personal and punchy explanation of our politics and a recruitment pitch. Funds will be collected. There will be a speaker for WP who will present the paper, sell subs, and bundles. Pictures of the event will be taken for the IS section of the paper and the organizer will make sure that an exciting account of the meeting is forwarded to the paper.

Second, the IS/RT will also occasionally hold demonstrations and other political events in our own name. (The RT is generally way ahead of the IS on this question.) The purpose of these demonstrations is to bring together our members and friends, not only as rank and file steel, auto and teamster militants or supporters of Gary Tyler's freedom or liberation in Southern Africa--but as revolutionaries who are actively involved in the struggle against the state in this country.

An example of this might be during the miners strike. If there is a long strike and it threatens to cripple the steel industry, they will attempt to import coal from out of the country. We might mobilize people in the name of the IS to stop them.

We will also participate more frequently in other political events in our own name. For example, black IS/RT members in Detroit, participated in the PAC demo on African Liberation day in the name of the IS/RT, not the SALG.

The purpose of this is to rebuild a sense of the IS as a fighting revolutionary group. It is also to assert ourselves, when and where relevant, as a political pole on the left.

At this point, because of the overall lack of visible struggle, demos, etc. the opportunities will not be all that great. However, they do exist and we must be on the look-out. These are necessary and proper tools with which to build a revolutionary group, a sense of revolutionary spirit and ways to train our members in how revolutionaries operate.

The kick off to this series of public forums and demonstrations is the workers conference. Following this conference in the month of September, there must be a general discussion throughout the group of perspectives which have been presented in these documents. And following that discussion and the clarification of the position, a popular pamphlet should be written which conveys this general outlook to the members, and periphery.

These shifts are actually the completion of a turn, a turn which the group has already begun--the turn to party building. It has been going on unevenly in the organization. The May Day picnics, the social and political discussions in Detroit are part of this process. But now this turn must be carried on evenly throughout the group.

In addition, the entire organization must be geared up for a recruitment drive this fall. During the last campaign we proved we could recruit workers but not that we could hold them. And there are as many theories as to what went wrong as there are cadres. It is of little use to go into those problems here--because they were the problems of a very different organization.

Since that campaign we have continued to recruit workers--black and white--in ones and twos, and to hold them. We are today, in fundamental ways a different group. A good percentage of the IS is working class, many are becoming cadres and leaders of the group. We have learned better, how to politically educate and train working class people. Our organization is far more habitable to working class people. We also have a far broader spectrum of work to plug new members into. We have a much greater backlog of experiences that speaks to their needs as new revolutionaries at their jobs and in their communities. We don't yet have all the answers but we do have a lot more of them.

We are also committing ourselves to a greater allocation of resources to party building. Part of that commitment includes the commitment to training and developing working class people as revolutionary cadre after they are recruited.

The group is going to build and grow, to recruit workers and Blacks. The perspective primarily, but also the organizational shifts give us the wherewithal to accomplish it. These documents clarify our view of the world. The point now is to go out and change it.

The World Revolutionary Crisis grows and deepens--the weakness of the recovery demonstrates it. The employers offensive continues. While there is a political shift to the right, sections of the working class are being radicalized at the molecular level. There will be a rank and file upheaval and given our politics and sufficient forces we will take advantage of this upheaval to build the core of a revolutionary party in the U.S.

Attention of the Central Committee (ISUSA)
COMPLETING THE "TURN" - THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE I.S.

Jack Weinberg & Glenn Wolfe.

1.) Since the 1977 convention we have made important progress in almost every area of our practical work. Tested against the dual standards of increased influence and working class recruitment, it is clear that the I.S. is moving forward in its industrial fractions, youth organization and Black work with more confidence and success than at anytime in over a year. At first glance the organization appears to be in excellent shape. But first impressions are deceptive. Despite the progress of the last three months, it remains a fact that the morale of the cadre is very low. It is increasingly understood by experienced members that the I.S. is in political trouble. Yet there has been no measurable progress towards solving our political problems or even defining them clearly.

One of the most prominent symptoms of this emerging crisis is the growing atomisation of the organization. Our members are increasingly disinterested in areas of work beyond their own as well as decreasingly clear on the significance of their immediate assignments in relation to our long term perspectives. The sense of purpose, direction, comradeship and mutual respect that marks a healthy revolutionary socialist organization is breaking down. The EC rather than fighting this dangerous dynamic has become the essence of it. In truth no-one is in charge of the I.S. as a whole and each day takes us one step nearer to the situation where the I.S. is merely a coalition of various areas of work fighting for the same shrinking personell and financial resources.

2.) An organization like the I.S. must have enough political and organizational cohesion to ensure that the organization is stronger than the mere sum of its parts. If its separate parts relate to each other and the common political program correctly, then that cohesion will exist and the organization will survive and grow. It is precisely this organizational and political cohesion that is now breaking down in the I.S. The faction-fight did much to intensify this process, but months after the successful completion of that fight the process continues. The organizational initiatives we have taken, such as the Workers Conference for example, are positive, but will not reverse the situation. The truth is the organization is breaking up because our overall political perspectives have collapsed.

3.) This collapse is not yet total or irreversible. It is also confined to our general perspectives for in each area of work we have operational perspectives that are in more or less good shape. Our perspective for geographical and industrial concentration continues forward and our trade union work is approaching a level of maturity unparalleled on the left in this country for several decades. Our perspectives for youth work, black liberation, women's liberation and periphery building are perhaps less sophisticated, but are no less successful for that.

What has collapsed is our perspective for the I.S., our perspective on how the parts come together into a single unit that makes sense. There is no longer a single unified logic which ties together the separate elements. That is the essence of our present crisis. The relatively good health of our different areas of work gives us the time

to develop the political understanding, the common political program, to end this crisis.

If we fail however, the very existence of the IS will be thrown into question. We are now in the real world. The option that exists for a sect to cover its weakness by ignoring or redefining the reality of the world is no longer open to us. The solution to our crisis begins when we face up to our incredible weakness in relation to the other real forces around us. The IS cannot guarantee its growth by deliberately understating the problems we face because of the strong hold that the bosses, bureaucrats and racists have over the working class. We must therefore shift our perspectives to make them relate to the real forces and real events in the world around us.

There are no easy solutions like changing the EC (though that must now be done) or shifting personnel in the fractions or strengthening the CC, etc. The only possible solution is a political shift that the whole cadre must take. It is a gamble, for this is not the ideal time to take the organisation through a political turn, but it must be done.

The EC majority will offer less alarming definitions of the crisis and the easier solution of merely re-affirming and refurbishing our present collapsing perspectives. Though they are not yet conscious of it, these comrades are actually offering the sectarian solution of ignoring reality. And by offering us a cheap insurance policy against failure they are actually sapping our determination to succeed.

For the authors of this document the present situation in the organisation represents a significant turning point. We are not prepared to return to the twilight world of the sect. We have finally got out into the cold harsh conditions of the real world and that is where we are staying. We will not give up mass-work politics just because it forces us to relate to the low political level of the American working class. Neither will we side-step the challenge of making our revolutionary politics relevant to leading sections of this backward working class.

4) Prior to the "turn to agitation", the overall perspective of the IS could be summed up as a "turn to the working class". During this period we more or less intentionally introduced a workerist and even economist deviation in order to accomplish our objectives. Those objectives were to break with the organisation's middle-class past, to embed our organisation in the life of the working class and to begin the penetration of the labor movement. Beyond this our view of how these tasks related to the building of a revolutionary party were at best vague. The post-war boom was over, a new layer of militants would arise in the working class, we would be part of this emerging layer, help shape it politically and crystallize a revolutionary socialist pole within it. All very abstract. But sufficient for the accomplishment of our immediate tasks.

So long as the main task was transforming ourselves, a band of industrialised middle-class radicals into a cadre that could operate inside the working class, the struggle to accomplish those goals gave our organisation the necessary sense of purpose and direction. The fact that the long-term perspectives were vague and abstract was of little consequence. But by the beginning of 1975 the mere "turn to the class" perspective could no longer sustain us. Internally we had matured to the point that it was no longer enough to be the "best industrialised radicals" with the "best perspectives" and the "best politics". Rather we had to begin testing ourselves by the

yardstick of real results in the real world of working class struggle. Externally the 1974 depression marked the return of long-term capitalist instability world-wide. In Europe the proletariat was returning to centre stage and in America we were facing the first real opportunities in decades for revolutionary socialists to lead and recruit workers. The time was right for the "turn to agitation".

5) This turn could be summarised under two themes, practical leadership and worker recruitment. The aim of the turn, which we failed to achieve, was the rapid transformation of the IS into a workers organisation several times our present size. The theory, which was less flawed, was that our members could fill a vacuum by providing practical leadership to the defensive struggle against the employers offensive. It followed, we assumed, that workers who wanted to be the best fighters would respect this lead and join us to become ~~XX~~ more effective leaders and fighters. Once in the IS they could be quickly developed into revolutionary cadre. In fact the whole organisation was geared up to a high pitch of activism and strained to the point of exhaustion in the belief that a rapid wave of worker recruitment would re-energise us.

During this period of exceptional activism it was widely believed inside the IS that we could expect the revolution by the mid eighties. No leading body ever discussed or adopted this view, but most members believed it was an established line and the leaders did not challenge that. The following ~~XX~~ scenario is a crude version of what much of the organisation believed.

1) By virtue of the lead it would provide in the growing economic crisis, the IS would be an organisation of thousands of industrial militants by the end of the decade.

2) Simultaneously, revolutionary crisis would mature internationally, particularly in Southern Europe, with Portugal in the vanguard.

3) Proletarian ~~XX~~ victories in Europe would disrupt and intensify the capitalist crisis and have profound revolutionary impact on the American working class.

4) Through international solidarity with the spreading revolution, the IS would then be rapidly transformed into a revolutionary party of hundreds of thousands.

Neither our publications or spokespersons ever laid out the perspective in this sharp way. They were much more moderate and reasonable, but nevertheless this was the perspective behind the worker membership campaign and the Portugal rallies. It was the atmosphere generated by such a perspective that gave considerable credibility to the later charges of "hypes" and "triumphalism".

The unconscious but considerable telescoping of our perspective in this period has undoubtedly done major damage to the organisation. But it should also be remembered that it was also in this atmosphere that IS attitudes on leadership and recruitment took tremendous steps forward. For the first time we actually struggled with the problems of trying to bring workers into the organisation and integrate them. For the first time we had the audacity to take bold initiatives like the TDC and CGC, putting our own members forward as leaders in the effort to create a working class movement. For the first time the IS began to act like a working class organisation.

6) In the early period of the turn we targetted recruitment from our industrial priorities. The results were poor and little by little, without a conscious decision being taken, we shifted our emphasis outside auto, phone and freight in order to achieve our target figures. At this time we developed the line: "people we are going to recruit next month, we don't even know today." This was no accident. Our perspective of extremely rapid radicalisation of the working class and the development of a revolutionary party in a meteoric burst, made most sense to unemployed workers, to workers

in peripheral industries and to those with least experience in the actual economic struggle of the class. It made least sense to those engaged in systematic trade union work. But we could not, bay and large, hold on to the people we recruited and transform them into systematic revolutionaries. Instead they saw that the reality of the IS was far short of the revolutionary spirit conjured up at the campaign rallies, and they drifted away.

During the early part of the turn the IS concentration on industrialisation and priorities began losing ground in favor of an orientation to those sections of the class in ~~in~~ motion. By early 1976 however, this process was decisively reversed. It had become clear in practise that we could not build a viable group thru recruitment off the streets on the promise of a rapid thrust to revolution, while maintaining at the same time a policy of penetration into key unions and a realistic appraisal of the world around us. As a result the main energies of the organisation shifted back to work in our priorities, specifically the TDC campaign.

7) At the time of the 1976 IS convention, the EC was maintaining a centrist position between the two developing poles in the organisation. Without going over in detail the specifics of the dispute, the program of the convention Opposition by and large represented the direction the organisation was moving toward. The Opposition wanted to emphatically repudiate the policies of the first part of the turn, going where the action is, losing focus on the industrial fractions, pep-rally recruitment, etc. The EC fought the Opposition but also capitulated to them at the same time. It was a confused and confusing battle. It was in this context that the "lefts" began to organise. Within a few months the EC and the Opposition were in alliance against the "lefts".

The "left faction" congealed primarily out of the section of the organisation least rooted in IS industrial work and most energised in the earliest period of the turn to agitation. On the whole it was the section of the organisation that had held the most extreme view of the meteoric radicalisation of the class and the very rapid development of the mass revolutionary party. It is ironic that while the TDU was for the IS as a whole, our biggest success, for these comrades it was the final straw. So long as we had never lead any significant working class struggles, it was still possible to romanticize what it would be like when we were actually in a position to do so. The TDU was real enough and significant enough to destroy romantic illusions. UPS workers proved not to be super heroes, but rather allowed wildcat picket lines to crumble in fear that they would lose their jobs and their ability to support their families. Building the TDU was slow, painful work, with only a minimum of glory and reward. Middle class illusions of the romantic heroic worker shattered under the impact of reality. The "lefts" felt deceived by the EC and betrayed by the working class. At root, their program was full-scale retreat to the campuses and the cess-pools of petit-bourgeois radicalism.

Going into the faction fight the IS majority was divided and confused. In the face of a proposal for full-scale retreat, a majority cohered on a minimum and defensive program. Maintenance of industrialisation, priorities, mass work and no retreat to petit-bourgeois radicalism. But the majority was unable during the fight to constructively confront the fact that IS perspectives had been in trouble since before the 1976 convention. It was mistakenly felt that going much beyond the minimum program of defense was dangerous because it threatened to disrupt the unity of the majority and thus destroy the organisation. The majority took up questions such as politicisation, developing political life in the districts, broadening the leadership and integrating the political and industrial leaders. But the solutions proposed were all

cautious and mechanical. They were not satisfactory but we were in a fight to defend crucial elements of our perspective from total retreat. It was not the easiest time to discuss the fact that much of our perspective had already collapsed.

8) Today, no one believes we are on the verge of a meteoric leap to the construction of a mass revolutionary party in a few years. Nor do we continue stating with any degree of certainty that we are the nucleus of the party in America. We have seen large scale wildcat movements (UAW in 1973, IBT in 1976), mass lay-offs and SUB bankruptcies, high inflation, bad contracts, successful and unsuccessful national and local contract campaigns, rank and file organisations, etc. etc. There is no longer any reason to believe that in the short run any particular economic conjuncture will yield large scale, rapid recruitment to the IS merely by virtue of our effective lead to the economic struggle. Nor is there any reason to believe that in the next few years any particular development will result in our ability to lead any struggle qualitatively greater than the TDC. Of course we will do our best. But we cannot have a perspective based on a hope or a wish. Nor can we allow illusions to disorient us from the slower and more painstaking task of recruitment in ones, twos and handfuls from our economic work. No one any longer feels that a decisive workers victory in Southern Europe in the next few years is a great likelihood. No one believes that the US will be faced with a developed revolutionary situation by ~~XX~~ 1985 or that we, based on the logical extension of our current perspectives, will be in any to be a force strong enough to give a decisive lead at that time.

The ten years to revolution perspective, held at the time of the worker membership campaign is dead. It was largely incorrect and seriously flawed even when it was widely held. A short-fuse revolutionary perspective is inconsistent with the kind of slow patient trade union work that is required in this period to build a base in the working class and get results. It was this contradiction in our perspective that split the organisation. The EC, by trying to straddle the contradiction became isolated in the organisation and confused. We must now take full advantage of the expulsion of one side of that contradiction. The danger is that in its confusion the EC majority will re-create the same contradiction in the smaller IS of today.

9) The original I.S. decision of industrialization with rigid priorities, the decision to penetrate and struggle for influence within the central powerful unions, the decision to build a base in the strongest and best organized sections of the working class has a logic that must be followed out. To succeed in this area, we need a cadre capable of long term patient work, immune from romanticism and adventurism, and immune from the flip side of the same coin, cynicism and despair. Organizations that operate among students, among the unemployed, among workers in unstable, underpaid jobs, etc. can operate and even grow with ultra-left perspectives based on a false and distorted view of the actual relations of forces. In basic industry, a false assessment of the relation of forces leads either to adventurism and wipe out, or demoralization and disgust at the conservatism of the workers around you.

Our 1977 IS Convention decided clearly and unequivocally that industrialization and concentration in basic industry is central to the IS perspective and is not up for rediscussion. More important neither is the strategy of mass work. This work is the center of our perspective for building a revolutionary party in the U.S. Our overall political perspectives must be consistent with that and not a hodge-podge.

10.) A revolutionary party is not created out of the will of a group of revolutionaries to build it. Nor is it merely a revolutionary organization that has grown to some minimum size. A revolutionary party only comes into being when there is a section of the working class that is being radicalized by events in the world. The party is built when a revolutionary organization earns the right to lead the revolutionary section of the working class. Another way of saying the same thing is that the revolutionary section of the class develops its own organization to discipline it and lead it. The party shapes and forms its class. The class shapes and forms its party.

In the United States today, there is no section of the working class moving toward revolutionary politics, under the impact of commonly perceived experiences in the world. Individuals can be recruited to revolutionary politics, but there is no generalized working class motion in this direction. As a result, when we talk to workers about revolution and socialism, the topic is an important and interesting theoretical question: Is it possible? Can it work? Is it desirable? Should I dedicate my life to the achievement of this goal?

But in the US today, socialism and revolution are not presented to workers as an immediate and practical political question. Events in the world force workers to choose: for or against union reform; for or against busing; for or against gun control; for or against national health insurance; etc. But only individual workers are confronted with the question for or against socialism, for or against revolution. We are not yet experiencing those kinds of events. Nor does the working class yet have the organizations and institutions through which socialism and revolution are posed as a real question to large numbers. Until this changes, while a revolutionary socialist workers organization can be built, even a large one, a revolutionary socialist party cannot.

11.) The IS exists for one and only one purpose: socialist revolution. As Leninists, we understand that this goal can only be accomplished under the leadership of a mass revolutionary party of the working class. We are not that party. Nor in the immediate future will the IS become that party through more efficient recruitment practices, through members working harder, etc. This must be thoroughly understood and internalized by the membership. Otherwise, comrades doing practical political work in the real world will become overwhelmed by distance between on the one hand, our small size and influence, and on the other hand, the enormous size of the task ahead. Or, if comrades do not get overwhelmed, there is the equally disorienting and sectarian error of losing touch with a real assessment of forces in the world.

For example, in the past period, in Louisville and then in Boston we sometimes thought that the IS should be able to do more than attempt to help coordinate the militant pro-busing forces. We sometimes acted as if the IS could intervene in the struggle as a decisive independent force. In the workplace, mis-estimates like this get you wiped out. In political situations, when you make mis-estimates like this, and then act seriously on them, they can get you killed to no use.

Those who make systematic mis-estimates however do not generally get blown away. They are more likely to just cease to act on their own politics-to substitute militant or revolutionary phrase mongering for serious political activity. In short to become sectarians. Unless we get a firm hold on what we are and where we are going, the I.S. is doomed to return to the world of the sects.

12.) The slide back to sectarianism must be seen as a real danger in the present situation. For once it is understood that the IS is not yet the party, and that we are not about to become it in the immediate future, we are still not out of the woods, for we are immediately faced by a new problem.

Being a revolutionary in capitalist America involves considerable strain. It requires great dedication, commitment, sacrifice and just plain hard work. To sustain our membership and cadre we must have a collective understanding of a perspective which relates, as concretely as possible, the day-to-day work of the organization with the goal of building a party and seizing state power. It is this perspective that the I.S. lacks today. The evaporations of the "ten years to revolution" perspective has left us with a vacuum. We are already there and most of our new recruits have been there all their lives. The pressures that are now demoralizing our cadre and taking us towards a process of political disintegration will not be eased until we can agree on a new general political perspective for the organization.

This perspective must be first and foremost a political perspective for the US today. It must be the Americanization of the I.S. We must develop a general minimum political program for the IS which can be used in all our different arenas. It must be a program that takes a clear sharp stand on the political questions facing the American working class that relate, specifically, to the way that workers perceive these questions. Such a program cannot be born out of a revolutionary socialist view of the concrete reality of American politics in 1977. Through mass work we have succeeded in making our revolutionary politics relevant to workers in relation to the trade union struggle. Our task now is to make them relevant to workers by also speaking to the political issues that face them.

We cannot long maintain our relevance as revolutionaries on the trade union level if we fail to become relevant to our fellow workers on the general political level. In a very real sense the step we must now take represents the third and final phase of the IS turn to the working class. Our first step was to get into the working class from the campuses which were our initial base. Second, we started to give a lead in the economic struggles of the class and thus developed understanding about where the consciousness of the class was at. Now we must tailor our political activity to the real situation we find.

Such a proposal can lead to all kinds of accusations of accommodation and tailism. If the price for the survival of the IS is a struggle against such slanders, the price will have to be paid. For having made it into the class the IS must now take the final step of locating itself in this class. And this class is the most politically backward in the world. Even its leading sections lack any solid political or organizational traditions and we have no choice but to start from where the class is at. Things will undoubtedly move fast when they do move. But we will play no part in the direction of that movement unless we have positioned ourselves in advance and already broken out of the isolation that has been the lot of revolutionaries in the US for decades.

In many ways, the process of relating to this class is already well advanced in our industrial fractions. As long as we are able to politically defend the gains of mass work and recruit to revolutionary politics out of the broader groupings, we will not have tremendous problems in continuing the development of our fraction perspectives. In a sense, the third step, the Americanization of the IS is already well under way in the industrial arenas.

The similar Americanization of our overall political perspectives must now be accomplished. That is the essence of what this document is about.

13.) For over a year, all sections of the organization have wrung their hands about the problem of "depoliticization" of the IS. Yet no matter how sincere the concern, little progress has been made in repoliticizing the organization. The reason is simple. It is not education, internal discussions, etc. that are the key to the creation of a political atmosphere in the I.S. The reason for a poor political atmosphere is the fact that the IS, today, has very little to do with politics. We have become, primarily, a league of organizers and issue oriented activists. In our main trade union arenas, our concerns are overwhelmingly focused on organizing for the economic struggle. But even when we approach explicitly political issues, like: South Africa, Gary Tyler, Busing, etc., we have been unable to generate a self-sustaining political atmosphere around the work. Our members who become involved in these activities feel little pressure to develop a rich political understanding of the related political issues.

During the whole period when the IS was first turning to the working class, and then turning to agitation, it was proper that we stressed developing our members as organizers and not as politicians. Our political heritage was so incredibly abstract, intellectualist, academic, and often moralistically liberal, that more often than not, raising "politics" merely exposed us, not as revolutionaries, but as an incursion from an alien class. It was through our organizing activities and the economic struggle, that we begun to develop a common language with the workers around us.

The "politicization" of the IS, and the development of a political perspective that relates our day to day work with our goals of building a revolutionary party and socialist revolution, are one and the same task. The IS will have a political internal life, when we have such a political perspective. Members will hunger for a knowledge of politics and political theory, when they need this knowledge to either do their political work more effectively or better understand how their political work can influence the future of the world. Today with our new worker members and contacts, on the one hand we talk shop and union politics. On the other hand, we talk about life under socialism, (in the second and third generation). But we have a much harder time developing an intense political interest in topics which fall between these two extremes.

An organization which on one hand engages in practical work that is on limited issues, systematic, concrete and level-headed while on the other hand creating an internal political life that is primarily utopian, cannot long survive. And the truth is its death will come through its capitulation to reformism. For in an activist organization the practical will always win out over the utopian, and our practical low-level work is little different from the work of union reformists unless it is underpinned by a realistic political program. It is that program which links the practical and the utopian and thus locates revolutionary politics in the real world. The alternative to developing this link is the unreal world of the sectarian or the un-revolutionary world of the reformist, and an organization that continually decomposes into these constituent parts.

14.) In recreating a political life for the IS, it is important we begin distinguishing between "politics" and "political theory". At present, we tend to lump these together, and do justice to neither. Politics is about the world we live in--it deals with events in the world, our evaluation of the

forces involved, about attitude toward the different forces, our estimate of the direction of events, our line, what we are for, what we are against, what we think should be done, what we can do, etc. Political theory: is our method of developing our line, of establishing and clarifying our goals and objectives, and developing strategies that link our immediate line to our long term goals. Today, when an IS member talks about "our politics" they are usually referring to our attitude on the nature of the Soviet State, or Permanent revolution, etc. ---ie., they are referring to theoretical views that distinguish us from other left intellectual theorists.

The IS does take a political line and campaign around specific political events: the Portuguese Revolution, Angola, Southern Africa, busing, and so on. And Workers Power is a paper that primarily covers political events. But with the exception of our specific, narrow, political campaigns, politics is not central to the conception of what our members feel they are doing or what their organization is all about. This is the reason we have such an incredibly hard time getting the organization to take WP seriously -- despite a million discussions of the paper, despite the fact that every old member pays lip service to the importance of the paper, and despite the fact that WP sales have become a ritual of socialist morality.

Most people take a serious interest in politics only when they see that politics is directly relevant to their own experiences and their own life. Once a person has become politically involved, their political horizons can be expanded, and their political conclusions generalized. For the IS to become an organization that brings political awareness to American workers, it must become an organization that is about American politics. For example, workers around us get hot and bothered about "welfare bums", and we either reply with a moralistic rap about racism, a reference unemployment, a thought provoking comment on the need for childcare centers, an incendiary call for revolution, or a utopian comment on the "socialist solution." Failing that we just lapse into silence to avoid a discussion that is going nowhere. The relationship between this discussion going on around us all the time, and what the IS is all about, is very vague, very abstract, and very unspecific.

The IS must be turned into a political organization that is first and foremost about American politics. In a very concrete and practical way, we have to develop lines and programs on issues of concern to the workers around us, and in terms that relate to the political discussion that goes on inside the working class. A major part of the internal life of the IS should be discussions in which these lines and programs are developed and refined, --with worker members having the loudest voice. Also with careful controls to keep the intellectuals from skewing the discussion into the realm of abstraction and intellectual theory. We want this internal debate to be kind of thing that attracts workers to the IS, so that they can have a voice and vote, and so that they can be politically trained and their political ideas sharpened. In an organization that engages in a high level of public and private political discussion. An organization which develops and propagates a line on mayoral elections in the major cities, the struggle in the mines and Carter's energy policy, the battle over gay rights, etc. In such an organization there will also be great interest in world politics and revolutionary theory.

15.) A teamster who joins the TDU, joins an organization that is committed to a long term struggle for power in the IBT. It is a far off goal. But it is a goal that can be easily grasped by ordinary people with ordinary experiences. In auto, our goal is to build a movement to struggle for power in the UAW.

There is no organization like the TDU that represents this goal. But it is still a goal that guides our work. In like manner, we want workers to join the IS, who want to change the government, want to get rid of the capitalist government and get a workers government dedicated to a working class program.

The TDU is just barely large and strong enough to project itself as an embryonic competitor for power to the IBT bureaucracy. There is no way that the IS can project itself today, even embryonically, as a competitor for power with the Democrats and the Republicans. This is true, not only because of our tiny size, but also because there is no dynamic inside the American working class today, that is propelling any significant section of the class toward revolutionary conclusions. And the IS is an organization that stands explicitly for revolution. For this reason, today, we can not project the full program of the IS, even embryonically, as a contender for hegemony inside the American working class, as a revolutionary party embryo.

Revolutionary socialists in the unions must project themselves as the best, most consistent, and most energetic builders of the rank and file movement that will contend for power with the bureaucracy. In the same way, the IS, as a political organization, must begin projecting itself as the future builders of a working class political party based on a class program in opposition to the Republicans and Democrats, and ultimately contending with them for power. This perspective does not commit us to any particular timetable for running candidates for any particular office. Or even for the emergence of such a party in any form. No more than our UAW fraction is obliged to field candidates against the UAW bureaucracy at every convention, or even to organize a national opposition caucus without sufficient forces. Indeed it is possible that the realization of such a perspective in practice can only really get under way in the second Carter administration. But the adoption of a long-term Workers Party perspective and the immediate integration of this goal into our propaganda and work would mark the beginning of a long-term perspective for the IS, as a whole and the end of our demoralizing and enfeebling political drift.

16.) The point is that the final phase of the "turn to the class" must also be viewed as the preliminary phase of an unfolding Workers Party perspective. As of now such a perspective involves the concrete development of our minimum political program and an explanation of where that program is going in terms of long-term organization and independent working class political action. Increasingly such an explanation is demanded by our new worker members as they develop beyond the confines of trade union militancy. That demand must be satisfied and not with designated but sterile discussion on "the Trotskyist theory of the Labor Party".

The opening up of this perspective parallels our industrial perspectives. In the trade unions we seek to develop a network amongst those who share, or can be convinced to share, our perspective of building an opposition. Likewise we must now begin to seek communications with political forces outside the IS who share with us or can be convinced to share with us the perspective of building a working class political party based on a class program. For us the touchstone will be independence from the Democratic Party. And we must realize that just as the forces on the left of the Democratic Party such as DSOC are now growing there will be a similar development of forces who see the utter futility of depending on the Democratic Party. Over a period of time, while avoiding the various lunatic sectarians, we can begin to end our self-imposed isolation from the other centres of political radicalism in this country.

Over the next few years we would aim to carry our political identity as the builders of a working class party into all areas of our fractional work. This does not mean that we will try to push a resolution on Independent Political Action through the TDU, or fight to make this the issue we focus on at the UAW Convention etc. It does mean that our own militants and friends openly and vigorously project their own conviction on class politics in these arenas in the kind of bold and audacious open way that they can't always do with revolutionary socialist politics. It does mean that we try to generate an atmosphere around our rank and file work that "of course" rank and file militants and activists are against the Democrats and for a class party, etc. It does mean that we try to hold conferences, meetings, etc. on class politics and attempt to prominently implicate as many of our trade union associates as possible, etc. It means we try to popularize this issue and give it content everywhere we go, and it means that we struggle to make this a central part of the identity of our members and of the IS.

At those points in history when socialist revolution is the immediate task on the agenda, a political program for the transition from capitalism to socialism is the minimum program around which a revolutionary socialist organization or party defines itself and recruits. When revolution is not the immediate task, a revolutionary party or organization requires a minimum program that is based on the immediate political needs and objectives of the working class as perceived by the most politically advanced sections of the class based on their own experiences.

The minimum political program of the IS, is the program we project to be the full program of the future Workers Party. Our full program, of course, is much richer, containing our revolutionary Marxist theory and world view. In general, workers will be won to an understanding of our full program only after a period of time, inside the organization. Workers will be recruited to the IS who: 1) are willing to be associated as revolutionary socialists; 2) who are favorably impressed with our practical work; and 3) who are politically won to the goal of a working class party with a working class program as something worth struggling towards.

A working class party will be built out of the rank and file movements of the working class in alliance with the movements of other oppressed groups in society --women, Blacks, Latins, etc. As well as with support of renegades from other classes who believe in justice and equality. The Workers Party goal will help unify our youth perspective, our women's perspective, our Black perspective, and our other liberation perspectives with our overall class politics. In particular, it will give us a handle to make our line on Blacks and on women, less abstract, and help us relate that line to real forces in society.

When we campaign on issues like South Africa, Gary Tyler, jobs for youth, this perspective will lead us to seek a better understanding on how the present political forces in American society line up on these issues, so that we can most effectively pressure them and most effectively expose them.

17.) For many years we have tried to make WP the main political tool of the IS. But despite enormous pressure, this has been a dismal failure. This perspective can help rectify that.

The problem with WP has not been the weaknesses of its editors and staff or the laziness of the members. The fact is that WP has no focus or clear purpose. Under the new perspective, WP would continue with articles reporting and commenting on the movements, and would continue with socialist educa-

tional articles. But the main focus for WP would become agitation for the minimum political program. This would not just be a one line moral added to the end of each article, "therefor workers need there own party". The staff and organisation would X need to develop creative ways to get the program and the idea of a working peoples party across. The organisation would discuss how to raise class politics and this would be reflected in WP.

Members who are identified by their friends and co-workers as advocates of a working class party would have more reason to use WP as well as have more reason to ensure there was feedback to the centre to make the paper better. The Red Tide newspaper accurately reflects the life and line of the Red Tide. That is why it sells so well and is so useful. With this perspective, we can have a line of the organisation as a whole, a common line that is being carried in all our areas of work, and the newspaper can reflect that. This will totally change the use and usefulness of WP.

In conjunction with this change, WP should become much more of a subscription paper. We want to build up a regular X readership greater than the number of people our members can personally visit every week. We want to start using WP to hold together and maintain a network of people around our general political perspective, just like Convoy maintains a network of IBT activists. Except for those we work with every day, sales of WP should be converted to subs with proper follow up organised for renewals. We should be shooting for a regular readership of WP and WP pamphlets of several thousand and more. There is no way to do this without either going to subs or discontinuing all other aspects of IS political work.

CONTINUES.....

18) In beginning to put forward the concept of a workers party we are not projecting this future party as being explicitly revolutionary or explicitly grounded in Marxist theory. Nor do we project it as requiring the commitment and discipline of a Leninist democratic centralist party. But neither do we project it as an explicitly reformist or anti-revolutionary party. We want to define it as a class party which represents the political needs of the working class and its principle allies, the movements of blacks, Latins and other oppressed groups. More specifically, we want to fight for a party that stands on a program which is based on these political needs.

To join such a party, or to become an activist within it, a worker need not make up their mind on the question of socialist revolution or commit themselves to Leninist discipline. It is enough merely to be committed to the program of the party. Indeed a member would be free to oppose Leninism. But the IS, IS members and WP will make clear our view that in the long run, the needs of the working class and the needs of the oppressed masses cannot be met under capitalism. That the struggle to meet these needs will ultimately be crushed by the capitalists unless the working class, at the proper time, is prepared to go on the revolutionary offensive.

In the long run the Workers Party will be forced by events to chose between a policy which defends the class on the one hand or a policy that betrays them in order to defend capitalism and oppose revolution. As the capitalist crisis matures only a Leninist party can represent the needs of the class, but those who believe that the interests and needs of the working class and oppressed can be defended within capitalism have the right to join the party and attempt to prove us wrong by events.

We project the Workers Party as a united front of all who are now committed to the interests of the working class and oppressed and who understand that these interests can only be defended by a party that is totally independant from the Democrats and Republicans. For the immediate future there can be little doubt that such a united front would be radical in character since independance from the Democrats is in practise a radical move.,

It has to be understood that the Workers Party perspective is the only way to prevent our organisation from slowly moving to back hand support for liberal Democrats. We will have a hard time convincing black auto workers not to support the reelection of Coleman Yung or convincing a Chicago teamster to break with the machine on the basis of a purely negative opposition to the Democratic Party. We can make progress however if our opposition is understood as a practical necessity in order to start the construction of a positive alternative to the Democratic Party. The only arguement against lesser-evilism in politics is to demonstrate that supporting the lesser evil actually stands in the way of a greater good. Otherwise opposition to lesser evilism in politics becomes little more than moralism or ultra-left boycottism.

19) The revolutionary party will be created out of mass working class upheavals of an economic and political character. It will be in the midst of these movements that the leadership and cadre of that future party will be forged. The present political formations, including elements of the Maoist left, that prove themselves to be genuine revolutionary socialists will be the building blocks of the party which will lead the working class to state power.

The IS today is building a base in an extremely narrow and focused constituency, though a constituency that will be decisively important in future revolutionary periods. The danger in this prioritization of the most powerful and most stable sections of the working class is that we ourselves will become a consumed and so narrow that we cannot react to mass political events as they occur. A perspective towards a Workers Party allows us to continue concentrating on our priorities while having a political orientation to the working class as a whole. In an immediately understandable way, such a perspective reflects the fact that the revolutionary party will come out of broader working class political movements that are radical but do not yet adhere to a conscious revolutionary program. It is through this new perspective that we can link our present work to our future goals and develop a cadre capable of meeting its historic task. The alternative is to continue the lack of vision, declining dynamism and growing fragmentation that characterizes the IS today. For our current perspective won't fly. No amount of refinement, rediscussion or deepened understanding will make it fly. A functioning perspective has a logic of its own, its very existence aids the development of the organization and the expansion of its cadre. The lack of such a perspective means that instead of broadening the horizons of the workers who come around us, the IS often ends up narrowing them instead.

20) The proposal for a new perspective arises out of an understanding of the most advanced work of the organization, the work of the industrial fractions. That is always the source of new direction for a political organization for there was never any organization which enjoyed uniform development in all its elements. But it does not follow from such an observation that the new perspective is only applicable to the advanced industrial fractions. Far from it, for the fact is that such a perspective will do much to speed up the development of other areas of work. This is especially true for the black work, the one area of work that is more important than the industrial fractions. At this point, under the leadership of the black commission, the black work is proceeding successfully in a way that is not fundamentally different from how our industrial work got off the ground. The work is not yet sophisticated, but there is no need for that, for its aims are simple. To make the IS a multi-racial organization, to recruit blacks and get a feel for the politics of the black community. The means to that end are many and varied, conferences, education, films, contact work, etc. etc., but there is a simple unifying political theme, Southern Africa. The similarity between our early successful black work and our early successful industrial work is almost stunning, it is the same strategy in both cases. But the Black work will come up against the limits of such a simple strategy much sooner than the industrial work did. The combination of being part of a more mature organization, of operating in the black community where there is much less resistance to radical solutions and of facing the thorny question of nationalism in a community where black consciousness is once more on the rise means that our black cadre will face the difficult question of "what next?" much sooner than our original white industrial cadre did. The undeniable fact is that the black members who work in basic industry are already faced with that question even while we are still struggling to get the beginning of a black base for the IS.

The answer to the question of what next for our black work will not be found in the combination of rank and file and ultimate socialism that constitutes our present perspective. The truth is that this combination adds up to little more than the liberal slogan "black and white unite and fight." It means black and white unity today while putting off the commitment to black liberation into the far distant future. Instead we have to

have agitation for a minimum political program which includes immediate black demands, which includes a struggle for black liberation well in advance of any revolutionary change. Indeed black separatism can best be combatted by the total commitment of the IS to the fight for a multi-racial Workers Party which is in the vanguard of the struggle for black liberation.

21) It will be said, indeed it already has, that while it is true that our political perspectives have collapsed, the development of a minimum political program, the Americanization of the IS, is not substantial enough to solve the problem and that the perspective towards a Workers Party, though substantial and correct, is not immediate enough to balance that weakness. This is not an unreasonable position to take but there are three flaws which render it incorrect. First, while the minimum political program is not the best handle that ever existed for pulling us out of our political crisis it at least has the merit of existing, of being a concept that can quickly be turned into reality and give us a sense of direction. Our present perspectives contain no such concept. Two, it would be a mistake to make the development of a new perspective something akin to the search for the holy grail. Our perspectives have never been full and complete visions of the road ahead and our members are demanding a sense of direction not a detailed navigators chart. Three, There is a sense in which the perspective proposed is merely doing for the IS what has already been done in the fractions. It will be some time before we have stable local caucuses in the UAW but that goal none-the-less gives us direction. A national rank and file opposition that can re-take the UAW is no closer than the Workers Party but it is still part of the perspective of the fraction. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Workers Party perspective takes us in the correct direction and it is not too early to at least begin the implementation of such a perspective.

Finally a word must be added on the process by which the new perspective, the completion of the turn, should be carried thru in the organization. There can be no large-scale, long-term debate in the IS of the question. That would produce a level of disorientation in the organization even greater than that brought on by the faction-fight and the collapse of our old perspectives. It is the CC that must take sole and total responsibility. It will be asked to chose between a majority EC position which in essence defends the present perspectives and argues that they can be rebuilt and made to function. And a minority EC position which provides the framework for a new long-term political perspective for the IS as a whole. There is no third course either in terms of another new perspective different from the minority one or a meaningful compromise between the two positions. The CC must chose, at its next meeting, without any general debate in the organization and then make the necessary adjustments in the composition of the EC so that the CC decision can actually be implemented and the central leadership paralysis ended. In the event of this document (or edited and less repetitive version) carrying the day there should be a period of several months of open discussion to educate our members in the new perspective and collectively develop the new minimum program.

June 15th, 1977.

A LESSON IN AMERICAN HISTORY FOR THE "AMERICANIZERS"

To the Heart of the Matter.

The heart of the Wolfe-Weinberg document on the "Americanization of the I.S." is the call to build a workers party on a minimum program.

The argument is simple: there is no material basis for building a revolutionary party at this time. But there is the basis for building a reformist workers party on a minimum program.

They say economic, political and social conditions, and working class ~~xxx~~ motion are not enough to produce a revolutionary party. No section of the working class is moving towards revolutionary politics. Therefore: in this more stable period we should build a workers party on a minimum program.

Off the Mark

American history in fact indicates that the "workers party" is on the agenda only in specific periods. And that those periods are ones in which the working class is militant, in motion and comes into conflict with a Democratic Party administration.

And, in fact, a movement to build a workers party occurred in the same period in which revolutionaries parties were also created.

We believe that a crisis is beginning to unfold. But only beginning. There is not yet motion enough to sustain national rank and file organizations in the major unions, much less a cry for independent workig class political action. We do not believe that either a workers party or a revolutionary party will be built in this immediate period. But it is a period of party-building. A period for building the revolutionary group by slow accretion.

The History in Brief

A workers party has been on the agenda in this country in five previous periods:

1886 - The Year of Hay Market

1894 - The Year of the American Railway Union strike.

1919 - The year of the Steel and Packinghouse strikes.

1937 - The year of Flint Sitdown.

1946 - The year of the Post War Strike Wave.

2-2-2

We are referring of course to a period and not to a specific year. Each of these periods saw working class militancy, conflict with the government, and a drive towards an independent working class political party.

In different period the "workers party" took different forms. In 1886--it was the fusion of a number of socialist sects to form the Socialist Labor Party, there was the Henry George movement, and there was the phenomenal growth of the Knights of Labor. In 1894 it was Peoples Party, and by 1901 the Socialist Party. In 1919 it was the Farmer-Labor Party movement. In 1937 and in 1946 it was k a Labor Party, and a number of half-way houses-- Michigan Commonwealth, American Labor Party (New York).

More Specifically

1886 - The Year of Hay Market. American labor historians call 1886 "the revolutionary year."

Economically, the period from 1873 to 1896 was what is called a "long wave depression" that is an economic valley or trough. In that period there were only 8 partly or wholly prosperous years--and they were not very prosperous (1878-82, 1885-90, 1892). There were three depressions or recessions (1883-5, 1890-1, and again in 1893).

The economic situation gave rise to general labor unrest. There were a number of unsuccessful strikes against wage reductions in 1883-4. There was the growth of the 8 hour day movement culminating in the Hay Market Square on May 4, 1886.

The confrontation of the strike wave and the eight hour day movement with repression on the part of the government headed by Democratic President Grover Cleveland gave rise to a working class movement demanding political power.

Some of the ~~background~~ foundation had been laid earlier. 1874-6 saw the fusion of a number of socialist sects into the Socialist Labor Party. Still something less than a party it was in 1886 something more than a sect. Also, as a result of European influence a number of "revolutionary" socialist groups formed, including in 1880-1 a few "armed workers clubs." The anarchistic Black and Red Internationals had influence in the labor movement, especially around the Central Labor Union in Chicago.

The economic crisis, the labor militancy, the confrontation of the labor movement with a Democratic Party administration gave rise to a "workers party" movement. It took three forms: The Socialist Labor Party, the Henry George movement in New York and the east coast, and the phenomenal growth of the Knights of Labor between 1885-7. An organization which became national, falling between a trade union federation and a labor party, and containing every odd notion and currents of revolutionary socialism.

That first movement for a "workers party" was analyzed by Engels in a series of letters written in 1886 and in the American preface for his Condition of the Working Class in England. It is well worth reading the letters to see how Engels deals with the question, there are a number of lessons.

What we want to concentrate on here however is what Engels saw as giving rise to these three movements (HG, SLP, and K of L.). Here is how he describes it:

"And yet, at that moment, the coming class struggle was casting its gigantic shadow before it in the strikes of the Pennsylvania coal miners, and of many other trades, and especially in the preparations all over the country, for the great eight hours' movement which was to come off and did come off that following May...no one could foresee that in such a short time the movement would burst out with such an irresistible force, would spread with the rapidity of a prairie fire, would shake American society to its very foundations....there was but a series of confused and apparently disconnected upheavals of that class, which, by the suppression of Negro slavery and the rapid development of manufacture, had become the lowest stratum of American society. Before the year closed, these bewildering social convulsions began to take a definite direction. The spontaneous, instinctive movement of these vast masses of working people, over a vast extent of ~~the~~ country, the simultaneous outburst of their common discontent with a miserable social condition, the same everywhere and due to the same causes, make them conscious of the fact, that they formed a new distinct class of American society: a class of --practically speaking-- more or less hereditary wage-workers, proletarians. And with true American instinct this consciousness led them at once to take the ~~very~~ next step towards their deliverance: the formation of a political workingmen's party, with a platform of its own, and with the conquest of the Capital and the White House for its goal. In May the struggle for the eight hours' working-day, the troubles in Chicago, Milwaukee, etc., the attempts of the ruling class to crush the nascent uprising of labor by brute force and brutal class justice; in November the new Labor Party organized in all great centers, and the New York, Chicago and Milwaukee elections."

Those are the points: "the coming class struggle casting its gigantic shadow", "the attempts of the ruling class to crush the...uprising of labor by brute force". That was the basis of the call for a workingmen's party, for a "workers party".

1894 - The Year of the American Railway Union

The year 1893 was a deep depression within the longwave depression. Here is a description of 1894 from Ginger's biography of Debs.

"When the first national convention of the American Railway Union met in Chicago on June 2, 1894, the entire labor movement was in a critical situation. Layoffs and wage cuts had aroused fierce resistance, but strike after strike had been beaten down. The formula perfected at Homestead, Coeur d'Alene and Buffalo, was even now being used against a hundred fifty thousand coal miners; strike-breakers, injunctions, Federal and state troops, starvation. The glorious

promise of the unemployed march on Washington had been broken. General Jacob S. Coxey arrested for walking on the Capital lawn. Only the American Railway Union had managed to beat its way forward. Debs had been ridiculed ten months earlier when he predicted three hundred lodges within a year, but his estimate had been exceeded; the convention held more than four hundred delegates from four hundred sixty-five local unions."

One month later the strike would be broken, and Eugene Debs, who had been an active campaigner for the Democratic Party and Grover Cleveland would become first a Populist and then a Socialist.

MAX Giner explains why: "Eugene Debs, a lifelong Democrat who three times campaigned for Grover Cleveland, was deprived of faith in the major political parties by the actions of Cleveland and Olney." That is injunctions and the use of troops to break strikes by the Democratic Party. "He could no longer advocate labor's adherence to parties which were firmly controlled by the large corporations. At the last strike meeting, Debs made a personal appeal to the workmen: "I am a Populist, and I favor wiping out both old parties so they will never come into power again. I have been a Democrat all my life and I am ashamed to admit it. I want everyone of you to go to the polls and vote the People's ticket."

Again there are the same factors: the long shadow of the class struggle, the brutal force of the ruling class government crushing the workers movement. That was the basis of the call for a "workers party".

1919 - The Year of the Steel and Packinghouse Strikes.

The First World War was followed by demobilization and depression, and deep depression in 1921.

The year 1919 was one of tremendous labor upheaval--two massive industrial union organizing drives among packinghouse workers and steel workers.

The labor organization and then the depression caused a political crisis of sorts. The bourgeois parties saw defection. Progressives left and formed independent parties--Full Freedomite, Bull Moosers, and so on.

There was the growth of the Progressive movement within the bourgeois parties taking power in seven states, the most important being LaFollette in Wisconsin.

There was also a crisis in the left. The Socialist Party in this period had 100,000 members. It could win nearly 1,000,000 votes. In this period the CP was carved out of it to the left and another group moved right, anxious to drop the socialist label and form a Labor Party. There was the growth of the Farmer Labor Party movement particularly in Minn. and Wis.

The labor upheaval had created strong sentiment for a labor party. Hundreds of AFL union bodies voted for a labor party or a farmer labor party. The center of this organization was the Chicago Federation of Labor led by Fitzpatrick.

During the period from 1919-1924 there were constant negotiations between these various movements and groups--AFL union bodies, Progressives, Farmer Labor Parties, various Labor Parties, the Socialist and the Communists. The Communist International intervened in this period on the wrong side, urging the CP to get out of the Fitzpatrick and Farmer-Labor Party. It turned out to be a total fiasco.

The point

5-5-5-5

Again the same factors made the call for a "workers party" a possibility: class struggle, confrontation with government, ~~the~~

1937 - The Year of the Flint Sitdown

The year 1929 saw the greatest crisis of American and world capitalism. The depth and significance of the crisis is well known.

This crisis gave rise to the greatest labor and social movement that this country has seen: the fight don't starve movement and the organization of the unemployed from 1929-34, and the organization of the CIO from 34 to 40. Six million workers came into the labor movement, between 33 and 40--1 million AFL and 5 million CIO. The percentage of organized workers grew from 14% in 1930 to 22% in 1944. The movement had a very radical dynamic--sit-down strikes challenging private property and picket lines which tended to become workers militias and engaged in direct confrontations with the police and army.

There was a tremendous growth of political activity outside the two parties in this period. In the 1932 elections, the SP and the CP combined got over 1,000,000 votes. In 1935 the CP began to agitate for a labor party, sort of half-heartedly. The SP was for a labor party. And by 1938 the Trotskyists were for a labor party.

The labor bureaucrats of the AFL and the CIO and the Democratic Party did everything they could to squelch labor party sentiment. Roosevelt overwhelmed all political opposition in the landslide of 1936 burying forever the Socialist Party of Norman Thomas.

The ~~xxxxxxx~~ great sit-down strikes of 1936 and 37 and the recession of 1938 again produced labor party sentiment even more strongly.

During this same period the Communist Party grew from 15,000 ~~tax~~ members in 1929 to 50,000 in 1938.

1946 - The Year of the Post War Strike Wave

The Labor Party slogan was even more seriously raised in the period during and after the war. The war began with Roosevelt turning the troops loose on UAW members in the aircraft factories, with the segregation of the Army and the internment of the Japanese. It went on to the war labor board, the no strike pledge, the Smith Act, and so on.

After the war there was demobilization, post war recession and the Democratic Party of the strike-breakers embodied in Truman. There was a raft of anti-working class legislation: Smith-Connolly (forerunner of Taft-Hartley), a call for the militarization of labor and forced labor conscription.

1946 saw the greatest strike wave in the nations history 4.6 million workers out that year. Truman attempted to break the strike wave with anti-working class legislation, with injunctions, with threats and with the army.

6-6-6

Labor bureaucrats in many states in the midwest and the east admitted there was strong sentiment for a labor party as a result of the labor confrontation with the Democrats. In the UAW-CIO the movement was strongest. Labor Party resolutions passed in the Wayne County (Detroit) Labor's Non-Partisan League and in the Michigan State CIO in June of 43.

As a result of this pressure there were established half-way houses to the labor party--the Liberal and the American Labor Party in New York and the Michigan Commonwealth. They supported local independent labor political action and backed Roosevelt nationally.

Again, it was a classic case--~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ working class militancy in conflict with the Democratic Party of Roosevelt gives rise to labor party sentiment.

Conclusion

The evidence is that there is a basis for a "workers party" when there is working class motion and militancy that comes into conflict with the government, particularly with the Democratic party.

We are at the beginning of an unfolding ~~crisis~~ crisis of capitalism. There is not yet enough rank and file motion to even sustain national rank and file groups in the unions. There is not yet enough motion to bring sections of the working class into conflict with the Democrats. The crisis will deepen, there will be a class upsurge, and there will be a call for a workers party. But let us not deceive ourselves. It is not now.

We are at the beginning of a ~~crisis~~ crisis. And while it has not yet put sections of the working class in motion--it has begun to ~~to~~ radicalize individuals who are open to revolutionary alternatives. It is a period for the recruitment of those individuals who are being created by the beginnings of this crisis. They are there and they can and will be recruited.

If we pursue the course outlined by the Wolfe-Wainberg document, however, we will fail to build the nucleus about which a revolutionary party can be constructed as the crisis unfolds. To take up now the course that they propose would be to decline ourselves as the proponents of a minimum program of non-existent labor party. The I.S. would be the proponents of the rank and file struggle in the union, and of a ~~minimal~~ minimal social and political program in society. It would be to liquidate ourselves as a Bolsheviki, Leninist organization. That course would not allow us to build as a revolutionary group in this period.

Consequently when the crisis unfolds and the working class goes into motion and the call for a workers party or a labor party becomes an actionable agitational slogan--we would be ~~unprepared~~ unprepared to take advantage of it. At that moment when a revolutionary party might intervene in the rank and file struggle of the working class with the call for independent working class politics--we would not have the forces to intervene.

A revolutionary party is built in different ways in different periods. This is a period for building the party by the slow and painful methods of accretion of individuals one by one to the perspective and the party of revolutionary socialism. This is the period in which we will build the party by building a base in the plant, mill or barn. By small initiative in the Black community around Southern Africa.

1-7-77

This is a period of party-building. The crisis and working class action and militancy will make possible the creation of both a revolutionary and a workers party. But if we fail to build and grow in this period by the small painful steps necessary, then we will fail in the future.

Kim N.
Joel G.
Gay S.
Dan L.

Where to read about the labor party:

1886 - Knights of Labor

Marx and Engels. Selected Correspondence, Letters to Americans, Preface to the American Edition of the Condition of the Working Class in England.

1894 - Populist and Socialist Party

Ray Ginger. Bending Cross: Biography of Eugene V. Debs.

1919 - Farmer Labor Parties

David Shannon. The Socialist Party of America. Chapter VII.

James Weinstein. The Decline of Socialism in America. Chapter 7.

1937 and 1946 - Labor Party

Art Preis Labor's Giant Step. Chapter 22

Leon Trotsky. On the Labor Party in the United States (pamphlet).

Second Document for Central Committee

ON THE WORKERS' PARTY

Jack Weinberg and Glen Wolfe

We have been accused of provoking a leadership crisis on the Workers' Party question. This is false. The EC majority, for months, has refused to admit that the organisation has any problems that cannot be solved by repeating our old perspectives and re-educating our members in them. The original draft of the Americanisation document was written in an effort to provoke an EC discussion on problems in the IS. It was not, at that time, a hard position. When the majority re-iterated that there were no problems, that everything could be solved by an educational discussion on our old perspectives and by disciplining EC members, then the leadership crisis came to a head.

While we did not originally put forward our position on a take it or leave it basis, once the majority declared that there were no problems that required shifts in perspective, we realised and stated openly that a new EC would be required. The Americanisation document is our best effort at a road forward. The EC majority documents reflect their opinion that there are no problems that cannot be solved by reiterating things we already know and agree on. In putting forward this position the EC majority demonstrates that it is out of touch with the organisation and the world around us. It studiously ignores the fact that despite a wide area of common agreement which is represented by their documents, there are significant sections of the organisation, including ourselves, who believe that this common position is not enough to take the IS thru its next steps. The more the EC majority ignores this reality the more this out of touch quality pervades their other actions. The CC must now begin to solve these problems.

However the point of this second, and last, document is to defend the development of an IS perspective towards the question of a workers' party. So far there have been widespread misunderstandings about what we are getting at when we raise this question. In part this is our own fault. Our document was not as clear or as fully developed as it should have been, and could certainly have gained greater clarity with another re-write. But it is also the case that, either innocently or with malice, we have been rather systematically mischaracterised. The following questions and answers will help clarify exactly what we are getting at.

- Q. Do you really believe that conditions in the US today are ripe, and the forces exist to create an independant mass workers party?
- A. No. But we do believe that the US is moving into a period of increasing political and economic attacks on the working class and therefor into a period in which the idea of a mass working class party, independant of the Democrats and committed to the needs of the working class and oppressed will make sense to a growing number of workers.
- Q. But isn't the heart of your proposal for the IS to "call" for the formation of a workers party and begin taking steps to organise that party?
- A. No. Our proposal is for the IS to begin, in a systematic way, popularising the idea of a workers party. And by doing this propogandising for the view that politics is a class question. That the working class and oppressed require a class party to defend their political, economic and social interests.

Q. The IS has always been for working class political action. If all you are talking is the Workers Party as about / an idea, then this proposal contains nothing new or different from our present positions.

A. For at least two or more years, the IS has all but totally ignored the question of independent working class political action, labor party, etc. It formed an extremely small part of our agitation around the 1976 elections. It appears nowhere in the WP "Where We Stand" box. It is not something that new members are educated in with any depth, taught to argue, taught to raise, or taught where it fits into the overall perspective for building a revolutionary party. We believe that the Workers Party represents a political idea that all IS members should thoroughly understand, and should popularize as a key transitional idea. We also have specific proposals on how it should be raised, and how raising it fits into an overall perspective. Its false to say that this is nothing new.

When the IS turned away from middleclass discussion group norms toward workingclass agitation, we correctly put high value on those parts of our program we could specifically organize around, and very low value on the ideas we "propagandize for". We were so alien from the life and the experience of the working class that we lacked an audience for our ideas and we lacked an understanding of how to make our ideas directly relevant and understandable ~~xxx~~ to workers. We bent the stick toward the depoliticization of the organization to accomplish specific goals. We must now repoliticize the organization. The Workers Party concept is an important tool with which to do this.

Q. Why can't we repoliticize the organization through raising revolutionary politics and propagandizing for a revolutionary party? Isn't your proposal to propagandize for a Workers Party around a minimum program, in fact, a step in the direction of reformism and the liquidation of the IS as a revolutionary organization?

A. This question represents a total misunderstanding of how revolutionaries utilize transitional slogans and concepts. When the Bolsheviks raised the slogans "Bread,

Peace, and Land -- All Power to the Soviets" this in no way liquidated or counterposed itself to their revolutionary objectives. "For the expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat--- Political power to the Bolshevic Party." In fact,

the transitional ideas were tools to express socialist and revolutionary objectives in broadly understandable class terms. We propagandize for a Workers Party and a class program in order to ^{help} win workers to revolutionary politics and to an understanding ~~for~~ of the need for a revolutionary party.-- and to surround ourselves and our contacts with workers who have not yet been won to our full program, but who are moving in our direction.

Q. This proposal assumes a much higher level of political interest and motion than actually exists in the working class today. There is not yet enough motion to sustain a rank and file organizations in the major unions, much less a cry for independant working class political actions.

A. When we put forward our conceptions of national rank and file movements in the trade unions, this too is as much a transitional idea as an immediate organizing task. Of course, in every union, we do all we can toward building for and organizing ^{such a} movement. But what we actually organize and build in each union is much more specific, much more concrete, ^{more original and much} more impure than the model of a national rank and file movement that we project. And until the eve of the revolution, when soviets are on the agenda, this will remain true. The notion that we will put off ~~agitation for~~ propoganda and agitation around class political objectives until the working class has passed through the phase of national rank and file trade union organizations is utterly utopian and misunderstands the ~~task~~ dialectic of the relation between political and economic movements. It ~~is~~ has taken us a long time to learn how to effectively and concretely pose ^{and work toward} the goal of national rank and file trade union organizations in our economic work. It will take just as long to learn how to concretely and effectively ^{work toward} the goal of Workers Party. ~~and~~ But it is now time to start.

Q You still haven't explained why you beleive there exists a basis in present day American working class consciousness for raising the Workers Party? Won't

efforts at this type of propaganda just bomb out.

- A. Having a Democratic Administration in Washington, particularly, *the conservative* Carter administration, is the main handle for Workers Party agitation. In discussions with our fellow workers, when we analyze and criticize the policies of the Carter administration, how these policies fail to meet the needs of the working class and the oppressed, and what kind of alternative policies we favor, we use Workers Party *concept* to sum up and give direction to these analyses, criticisms, and alternative programs. *As political people we must have things to say as answers to contemporary American political questions.*

Everyone knows that *the barricades are* still a way off. We need to be able to discuss our political answers to political problems and questions this side of the revolution. If we have nothing politically *sensible* to say to workers in the here and now about *immediate* questions, they will have little *interest in* our long term political views. To ~~say~~ say that there is no interest among workers to sustain discussions of Workers Party is to say that there is no interest among workers to sustain any discussion on concrete *political* questions. We believe that it is not a vacuum of political interest in the class that makes it so hard for our members to discuss politics with their co-workers, but rather, a depoliticized IS ~~whose~~ whose internal political life fails to prepare *and stimulate* its members to *to sensibly* discuss the nitty-grittles of American politics from a consistent class perspective (i.e. from a revolutionary socialist perspective).

- Q. If there were a labor movement heading toward *sharp* increasing *clashes* with the Dem administration, we could *concretely* talk about the need for the unions to form a labor party. If there were a mass rank and file workers movement, we talk about a Workers Party based on it, and carrying the fight into the trade unions. But in the absence of any substantial working class movement, isn't the idea of a Workers Party just as abstract and unconnected, as the idea of a revolutionary party? And if so, what is the advantage of raising the Workers Party

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A. Building a revolutionary workers organization is very difficult in a period like the present. For practically every single part of our program, we are unable to point with concreteness toward actual forces in the field through which our political goals could be realized. The statement that the forces do ^{not} yet exist upon which a Workers Party could be based is exactly the statement that the forces do not exist that could give substance to the demand for a welfare & reform program, or a jobs program, or a public housing program, or a desegregation program -- that actually meets the needs of the working class and the oppressed. Because these forces do not ~~exist~~ sufficiently exist, our members have been trained either not to discuss these kinds of questions with any depth, or to merely have a single answer to all questions: socialism and the revolution. As a result, our members tend to come off as either ~~unconcerned~~ unconcerned about concrete American political questions, or as unworldly utopians. The Workers Party concept does not solve the "sufficient forces" problem. But it is only in the world of formal ^{absurd} logic that someone could reach the conclusion that the concept of a workers party and the concept of a revolutionary party are equally abstract today, equally unconnected to actual forces.

Non-ideological working people, based on their own perceptions and experiences, can visualize the kinds of forces that could unite to create a class party, while it is still very difficult ^{For anyone} to visualize, except ideologically, the kinds of forces that will unite to create a revolutionary party. We can point to the struggles, the consciousness, the aspirations of black people in this country and state without embarrassment: "these can only reach fruition through class politics and creation of a class political formation that includes and embraces the black movement." In relation to every working class struggle, upsurge, movement, organization --- however incomplete, impermanent, and fleeting, we can make the same projection. Ditto with struggles and movements of community groups, the oppressed, and the like. We can even point to the political inadequacies of the trade unions to make our point. This need not

and should not be mechanically translated into "calls upon these movements" to come out for a Workers Party or any such sectarian nonsense. But the very existence of movements, struggles, political and economic conflicts, and the like indicate the kind of forces which must someday come together in class political formations, and therefore help to point a political direction,

which helps
 \ non-ideological people visualize and understand the concept
of a workers party.

The same can not be said of the call for a revolutionary party. In the absence of other healthy revolutionary forces in the U.S., our organization has declared the I.S., an organization of less than 250 members, to be the nucleus of the revolutionary party. To project that the various struggles and movements around us must come together in the creation of a revolutionary party --- translates into the assertion that the historic direction of progressive movements and struggles in the U.S. today is that they must ultimately come under the ideological hegemony of the current IS and its leadership. An IS member whose life is surrounded by the organization might start believing this (and in a long term, highly mediated sense, its even true). But when our newspaper, Workers Power, starts subtly projecting this view, people outside the organization who have any understanding of the world, have a hard time taking us seriously. And when our members are asked to carry this view to the world they get embarrassed --- however good they are at spouting the line inside the IS.

Q. Your arguments for a Workers Party are timeless. They flow from the internal needs of the IS, not from objective evaluation of forces in the world.

A. To some extent this is true, but misleading. When the IS first began to industrialize, the needs of the organization demanded that we move toward a trade union policy based on efforts to actually lead workers. If conditions were such that ultimately we failed to lead workers and remained totally isolated in the plants, we would have been set back and defeated. But we industrialized

at a time when we projected certain political and economic trends which would generate conditions under which the needs of the organization would be met. We were sufficiently correct in our projections to have survived.

Similarly, when we begin recruiting workers and turning the IS into

a workers revolutionary organization. the needs of the organization demand we start taking approaches to American political questions that our worker members can carry and make sense of to their non-revolutionary friends, relatives and workmates. Most workers do not have the option of breaking all social ties when they become revolutionaries. If our long-term projections of growing economic and political conflict are wrong, then pursuing such a policy opens up powerful trends toward

reformism and worse. But if our general projections are wrong, nothing else about our organization will succeed either ---and then we can debate which policy will lead to which type of political degeneration (not very interesting). The Workers Party perspective is based on a projection of increasing economic and political conflict over the next several years, and their understanding that what our members say to their co-workers today will become increasingly true ~~more~~ over the years ahead. One advantage of an organization with roots in stable sections of the class is that we remain in dialog with the same workers for years.

- Q. If the key handle for our political propganda is Worker Party, why should anyone want to join the IS, a revolutionary organizaion?
- A. Because at present, it is only the revolutionary socialists who understand the need for a class party and who are fighting for that idea in the class. Once a person is convinced of that, it won't be hard to show that our same Marxist world view also demnstrates the inherent instability of a Workers Party and the need for organized revolutionarjx socialists to carry the basic goals of a class party and perspective through to completion.
- Q. In Eurppe, small revolutionary neuclei have grown into significant sized groups on the way toward forming parties based on industrial agitation. Isn't your perspective a break with that experience?

A Not at all. The IS GB, from its earliest days was forced to continually define itself politically in relation to the Labor Party and The Communist Party. In Italy, even the extra-parliamentary left always had to define itself politically in relation to a mass Communist Party. Economic agitation provided an audience and practical experiences on which this political propaganda could be made. It is only the ISUS that seeks a policy of not defining ourselves politically in relation to any other force in American society be it the Democrats, the political arms of the Union movement, or even any competing sects. The organization has become depoliticized and stale since we are in political dialog with no one

outside our own ranks. This creates an ingrown top political leadership that has repeated the same arguments to each other for the last hundred years. *It has created* a membership that can have no political input because *dialog without* outside forces has little effect on our views and therefore the insights that come from such dialog have *little value in the IS.*

Q. But isn't your perspective a turn away from a perspective based on economic industrial agitation?

A. That charge is outrageous. The Workers Party perspective is designed to create a political life in and around the IS that is consistent with our industrial agitation and our established long term perspectives. An organization can not long practice a policy based on real-world politics in the *economic* sphere and sect politics in the *political* sphere without the two continually coming into conflict, without continuing splits and disputes, *and without* one side ultimately killing off the other. No amount of EC discipline can *forever* bridge the unbridgable, held together by force of will and personality irreconcilable currents. This perspective is designed to apply the lessons of our industrial work to our political work. It is a supplement to industrial agitation, not an alternative.

Q. How does this relate to our black liberation work?

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A. Our recent successes and growing prospects for black liberation work make this kind of perspective doubly important. We are successfully carrying out black recruitment on a high level of abstraction. When collecting shoes loses steam, we will have to develop new programs. To make good on our promises to our black membership, we will be forced to start dealing with real forces and immediate issues in the black community in a practical way. If this succeeds, our black members will feel -- much more quickly than our industrial and white worker members -- the divorce between our practical activities and our political line. They will ^{tend to} interpret the breakdown of ^{political} communication with blacks outside the IS, not as a personal failure, but as a reflection of white ^{thinking} in the IS. They will ^{tend to} interpret difficulties in having input into IS political discussion based on their own experiences, not as a reflection of their political inexperience in relation to IS whites, but as a manifestation of racism in the organization, or paternalism when the whites listen politely but don't learn from the input. And in the long run, they will tend to interpret the concept of the IS as the nucleus of the party as a formula through which the white IS leadership is seeking hegemony over the black movement with them ^{in the middle}. The concept of an independent political movement of the black masses which seeks to become a powerful component part of a larger political movement of working people and the oppressed helps bridge these gaps. It provides a basis for dialog with other forces ~~in~~ in the black community. It sets the stage for down-to-earth political dialog on the political needs of the black community, and allows black members greater input into IS political discussion.

Just as important, it is the Workers Party concept ~~that~~ that provides the political link between our black liberation perspectives and our industrial trade union work. By and large, our industrial comrades have not been able to find the handles ~~for~~ for mass agitation against racist practices. They deal with racism as they can and when they can. But their work does not add up to a significant assault against

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racism. Nor, do we have handles for consistent ~~and~~ propaganda among white workers about the questions of black liberation. Over time, IS black members who are not immediately committed to the industrial work will tend to doubt the meaning of IS trade union work for ~~the~~ goals of black liberation. ^{The fact that it will all come} ~~together~~ together with the revolution is just too far off. The workers party concept is the ~~next~~ handle with which we discuss the question of black liberation with white workers --"the black movement is a powerful and necessary ally, but we must support black issues to achieve this alliance." The workers party concept is also the next historic step that ~~links~~ links the direction of our black work and the direction of our trade union work-- that provides us with a common practical language among our members in separate arenas, ~~and~~ provides common objectives, and allows our members active in one arena to explain to their ~~for~~ non-revolutionary friends in that arena, the practical significance ~~of~~ to them of IS work in some other arena.

Q. Why do you raise the slogan "Workers Party" rather than the more traditional slogan, "Labor Party"?

A. The Labor Party slogan connotes a political party formed by, and based on the unions. The unions today are still so conservative, and the rank and file movement today is still so primitive that the labor party slogan automatically carries a very liberal and reformist connotation. Until such time as the rank and file movements in the unions are ^{such} ~~are~~

stronger and more visible, and until such time as they are widely conceived as a radical, militant contender for power in the unions, the Labor Party slogan is inappropriate. It would be too difficult to convince large numbers of black liberation activists, youth activists, feminist activists, gay liberation activists, etc. that their political future lies with the unions. The Workers Party slogan is a handle for convincing ^{these} ~~that~~ that their political future lies with the working class ^{movements.} We do this by projecting the

Workers Party as a political United front of militants and activists from the various movements -- with emphasis on the rank and file movements in the unions, and on the black liberation movement . We project a Workers Party with a radical, activist flavor --- that is, we project it as a movement party, not merely some sort of electoral alliance. While we are not projecting this united front as based on the full IS program of revolutionary Marxism, dictatorship of the proletariat, democratic centralism, and the like--- neither do we project an anti-revolutionary, anti-marxist, reformist united front . We want a united front based on a commitment to struggle for the political and economic needs of the working class and the oppressed. We Want this united front to define itself as opposed to the Democratic Party because it is a party of the capitalist class. We want a united front that defines itself by taking political stands on specific political questions, and on immediate tactics. However, we project a united front that does not specifically define itself on the political means and methods of struggle that will ultimately be required to accomplish the political objectives of the working class and the oppressed.

The question of what methods of struggle ^{and types of organization} will ultimately be required, is today a theoretical question. The IS is defined on the political conviction that ultimately a socialist revolution will be needed, and a revolutionary party will be required to lead it. The IS, therefore, takes stands on a whole host of long term political and theoretical questions, and organizes itself to best move toward accomplishing our long term objectives. Those who agree with us should join ^{the IS} But the IS would fight to leave the long term questions ~~open~~ open, until such time as they are posed, concretely by events. In this way the Workers Party becomes a political formation that could unite people with various long term ^{political/theoretical} views, and people who are as yet unwilling to take personal responsibility for any long term political/theoretical view. The Workers Party is projected as being based, not on any theoretical or ideological proposition, but rather on a common commitment to immediate struggle for the immediate needs of the working class and the oppressed.

Q. If we adopted this perspective, what changes would it mean in IS practice?

A. It is impossible to give an exact blueprint. If adopted, the final implementation of this perspective will be shaped by the input and the creativity of comrades involved in every sphere of IS activity. Like any shift in perspective, it is first posed theoretically. Its implementation is a creative process that produces results ~~much~~ that are much richer and much more original than anything contemplated by the early proponents. Prior to any implementation, a proposal like this must be thoroughly discussed and adopted, not only by the top leadership, but by the entire organization.

However, we can project, in broad outline, what implementation of this perspective would look like. We will start with certain things it will not look like. We must oppose any premature formation of an IS front group or of some united front of sects and ideological radicals that calls itself The Workers Party. This would be just a sectarian trap and a joke. We would oppose any declaration of the workers party that lacked a genuine mass character.

In the first phase of implementation (following thorough discussion and clarification among our own members), the Workers Party is a concept that we project in the various movements where we are active, and project to activists from other movements that we come across. We will do this, not only by rapping with people, but also with IS literature, with Workers Power, with IS conferences, forums, and the like.

This process would go on at this point as the background to a situation in which the IS begins to systematically raise the issues of everyday American politics. That is we would begin to do political agitation both amongst some of those who work with us around economic struggles as well as some workers in our priorities who are not that interested in our economic agitation but who have a real interest in politics. The questions

of gay rights, the key issues of a mayoral race, agitation on the right of poor women to abortion are obvious issues we would be raising at this time. The form and depth of such political agitation is not ^{yet} clear and will not be clear until the whole organisation accepts the need for this form of agitation and begins, as a collective, to work out the most creative and effective way of putting into practise. The Americanisation of our politics would have something of a trial-and-error quality to it at first, for we are not overwhelmed with experience on this level. In as much as we have attempted this method of operating in the past it has usually been isolated to one unit of the organisation such as the womens caucus initiative on maternity pay. Only if we succeed ^{OVER THE NEXT YEAR} in this endeavour will the background theme of the Workers Party ^{THEM} become central to our politics.

In this phase, if an individual activist is turned on ^{by} the the workers party idea, but is not ready to join the IS, we tell that individual that the best way to advance the goal of creating a Workers Party is to be a vigorous activist in one of the existing movements (rank and file, black liberation, etc.) and to help us popularize this idea with other militants and activists. We will encourage such a person, if appropriate, to ~~use~~ use IS literature and Workers Power in doing ~~this~~ this.

Workers Power would specifically and regularly propgandize for a Workers Party. This ~~would~~ include educational articles, as well as slanting our coverage of political events, toward class independant political action. As a regular feature, the IS EC would designate a specific line article -- each week, or every other week -- ^{as} /a topic comrades are highly encouraged to rap about with their friends and workmates. It would be chosen on the basis of currency, that is -- the political issue most people are talking about. (examples would be things like Patty Hearst, Anita Bryant, Oil embargo, mine strike) etc. It would not be chosen on the basis of what we beleive people should be talking about and thinking about, but what they actually are. The paper would take a simple clear political line. Members, through their branches and units would

regularly feed back -- was it the right topic, was it the right line, how did it go, what reactions did they get, etc. The topic and the line would be discussed in terms of a class position~~g~~ - not a revolutionary socialist one. In this phase, we would also organize internal IS discussions on class stands on current political issues, and we would try to involve our periphery and our contacts in such discussions.

Phase two (how long it would take to get there can't be predicted) would involve the establishment of a modest educational center for a Workers Party. This would not be a mass organization or something that tried to act like a workers party. It would be sponsored by individuals, not groups, and could only be launched with a sponsors list significantly broader than the IS. This would represent the kind of coalition that we didn't quite know how to put together at the time of the April 26 March on Washington. It would be united by a commitment towards ~~and~~ a Workers Party based on a specific programmatic conception to be determined. It would produce a few pieces of basic literature. And it would solicit individual endorsers. This would allow us to ~~k~~ approach militants in various movements to take with us united political stands on current topics, without forcing them to commit their organizations to that stand. (The problem with the April 26, Coalition, Detroit IS anti-busing efforts, etc. is that we tried to force the rank and file groups to take controversial stands or to engage in actions--- while their leaders not in the IS feared this might get the group into something unexpected. the result was lots of hassles, but little progress).

With the existence of such an educational center, we could facilitate militants and activists from one movement approaching those from another--- without this specifically implying an IS socialist intervention. For example, Pittsburgh steelworker activists could use this as a framework to approach rank and file miners, black liberation activists could be invited to a rank and file group to talk under this auspices. It would be a framework in which

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Gary Tyler, South Africa, Jobs for Youth, rank and file union activists, community activists, etc. could be related without an automatic association with the IS but rather, under auspices that non-socialist workers and activists would be willing to be associated with.

In this phase we could move toward united conferences, demonstrations, support activities by activists of one movement to struggle of another, etc. We would project the actual formation of a Workers Party, running of candidates, etc. only at such time as it represented broad forces of a mass character. And even then, of course, we would project, that such a Workers Party could only become a significant force in American society -- and not just a radical ginger group -- when the union rank and file had succeeded in winning the unions.

to class struggle policies and a class political approach to politics.

Q. Do you think that your Workers Party proposal is the only solution to the problems of the IS?

A. No, the basic problems of the IS are these: 1) establishing a sensible IS relationship to current American politics. 2) finding a method of tying together and integrating our various areas of work so that all IS members share short and medium-term common objectives, and learn to speak a common language, and learn to value each other's work; and 3) establishing a schema that helps our members, contacts, and friends understand that the revolutionary party will be built out of genuine mass, radical, political movements of the working class and the oppressed --- that it is not created merely by an act of will of a handful of revolutionary intellectuals and their followers. The Workers Party perspective is an excellent political tool with which to accomplish these objectives. But other tools could be found as well. What is necessary is a leadership that understands the kinds of problems we are having, and that is committed to solving them -- not just wishing them away.

July 1st. 1977.