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for is and rt members only

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ASSESSMENT OF THE DECEMBER CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING

The Central Committee made a number of important decisions; a serious long ranging discussion of changes in the labor movement and our role in the unions was opened; a plan for streamlining the organization was adopted; and a new Central Committee was elected which more accurately reflects the work and direction of the organization.

The discussions at the meeting itself, however, were quite poor. There was more abstaining on votes than usual. And, in truth, the positions that passed did so by relatively small majorities. There was not opposition along any particular lines, nor any particular alternative proposals. But there was uneasiness about the organizational proposals. In general the discussion represented or reflected a number of serious and related problems in the organization.

In the opinion of the EC, the political discussions reflected an alarming growth of fragmentation and parochialism in the organization. The comments of various CC members seemed to reflect more frustrations stemming from local problems, than any considered opinion on the various sections of the document. Much of the meeting had the sense of a group of delegates each primarily worried over the lack of resources for their local situation and the strains that resulted. Political discussion was often little more than the observation that the political sections of the EC document did not speak to a specific problem faced by comrades in their local work - without reference to the broader political ideas in the document.

The fault, of course, lies not with any of the individuals present at the meeting. The fault lies with the deep problems faced by the entire organization. The EC believes the problems can be outlined as follows:

- 1) A Center lacking in human and financial resources for itself and for the branches. Particularly felt in the lack of organizers.
- 2) Lack of political direction from the center for many months.
- 3) General, and farreaching, political unevenness in the whole organization - coupled with a cadre that lacks a commonly held program for the IS and its work.
- 4) Unevenness in the work and the objective situations we function in - some comrades work in politically advanced union situations, like USW, Dist. 31, while other in situations far less developed.

Ideally, the solution would be an enormous influx of human and financial resources combined with a rapid, dazzling discussion of our political direction under the lead of the center. No such ideal situation will magically appear. But, we believe, the EC has arrived at a program to reverse the worst problems of the organization and get us back on track in a unified manner.

The solution to the resources problem will not be short run. Money will not be coming in in large amounts for some time, and then we cannot predict how much. More importantly, the human resources to beef up the core of organizers and the staff shortages at the center will take

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time to develop.

The program passed by the CC attempts to prioritize just how to deal with the crisis of the organization. Its emphasis is on developing political direction. This, we believe, and our assessment of the CC meeting confirms, is the central most important job lying ahead of us. It is in this way that fragmentation can be reduced and the organization, again, have a sense of unity and purpose.

The political sections of the document passed by the CC represent the beginning of that process. To facilitate that process and re-establish stronger links with the industrial work, we will set up a Trade Union Commission under KM. We believe also that the new composition of the CC, with a stronger proportion of front-line trade union leaders, will facilitate the discussion.

The New CC is composed of the EC, plus: Mel, Ken, Eric, Enid, Bill, Larry, Frank R, Laura H., Jack W., Jeel J., - new members added: Pete C., Dave McC., Dennis S., Doreen L., John W., Mike U., - taken off: Harry (who has resigned from the group), Glenn W., Mike P., Candy C., David L.,

The new CC brings onto the body the leaders of our industrial work who had not been on before. Those taken off, have been taken off, not because they are not leaders in the group but because they are not playing leading roles in our external work at this time. The one addition to the CC who is not in industry is Mike U. He was put on because of the overall leadership role he has played vis a vis the organizers and the general political role he has played in the organization nationally and locally.

Documents from the CC will be sent out to the group in a special bulletin following the Christmas break.

PORTUGAL: POLARIZATION AND THE NEW CRISIS

1. BACKGROUND

Three and a half years ago, on 25 April 1974, fascism was overthrown in Portugal. This unleashed a mass upheaval from below. In 1975 workers forced through the nationalization of half of industry, established workers' control in the factories. The media (press, t.v., radio) was also under workers' control and supported the workers' movement. City workers occupied empty buildings and the unused houses of the rich. A rank and file movement in the army broke down military discipline and supported the workers' struggles.

Farm workers seized the great plantations and turned them into agricultural co-ops. Workers controlling in the factories was maintained through workers commissions whose members were elected, recallable and responsible to general assemblies of the workers. The workers commissions together with neighborhood committees, peasant committees, and soldiers committees became a popular power movement.

In the summer and fall of 1975 the working class began to move the democratic revolution against fascism forward to a working class socialist revolution. The question of state power, of which class was to rule, and how (through parliamentary democracy, which meant capitalism, or through workers democracy and organs of popular power) produced a revolutionary situation. It was resolved with a right wing victory. The Socialist Party, and its army officers, formed an alliance with the right wing and its army officers carried out a military coup on November 25, 1975.

For the last two years the right wing has been on the advance and the workers on the defensive. The first stage of the right wing offensive was the restoration of capitalist law and order. Newspapers and radio stations under workers control were returned to capitalist owners or to state control, and became voices of the right's propaganda. The state apparatus was rebuilt, and purged of left wingers, army discipline was restored, left wing officers were purged, and revolutionary units of the armed forces disbanded. Elections were held to create a strong government. Until the elections, the right's strategy was to rebuild the state apparatus, and not to have any confrontations with the working class. The power of the workers' commissions and workers' control in the factories was left intact. Similarly the living standards of the workers were not cut until after the elections.

The elections produced a parliament in which no party had a majority, but in which the Socialist Party had 40% of the seats. It formed an alliance with the two capitalist parties (Popular Democrats, PPD, the liberal middle class capitalist party equivalent to our Democratic Party - and the CDS, Center Social Democrats, the right wing party of the upper classes, equivalent to our Republican Party, which has connections with the underground fascist movement) to elect General Eanes to the Presidency. Eanes is a right winger who in the past had associations with semi-fascist elements. In return for SP (Socialist Party) support, crucial to his election, Eanes and the right wing parties promised to appoint an SP government despite its not having a majority in parliament.

2. The SP GOVERNMENT

The last 16 months of the SP government has been the second stage of the right wing advance, one which is now coming to an end. This stage was characterized by the slogan "capitalist recuperation." The SP attempted to restore health to a capitalist economy, and with economic stability establish a stable bourgeois democracy. The SP's economic program for capitalist recovery involves rolling back many of the gains that workers have made since the revolution.

The SP passed a new agrarian "reforma" bill, the Barreto Law, which recognizes some of the land that the farm workers have occupied, but restores some of it to the former landowners. To carry it out the SP has sent the national guard into the Alentejo, the Southern province, to dispossess farm workers from the co-ops. This has led to violent resistance with the result that few co-ops have actually lost their land yet.

Similarly the SP has tried to undo nationalization and workers' control, while maintaining most of the nationalizations. They have tried to bring back bosses from firms that were "illegally" taken over by the workers. The return of bosses produced clashes with workers, resistance, strikes, etc. The result again is that while some bosses have returned, particularly in the Center and North, most have not. Only one boss has returned in the Lisbon industrial belt, provoking a violent strike which has not yet

ended. To cut the enormous government budget deficit and the balance of payments (foreign trade) deficit, the SP has introduced wage controls of 15%, with inflation at 30-35%, devalued the escudo to make imports more expensive and exports cheaper, and introduced austerity measures. Higher prices have been imposed on basic necessities like bread, gas, electricity, water, etc., to cut consumption. For example, subway and bus fares have been doubled, and a gallon of gasoline now costs \$2.50.

The newest piece of SP economic legislation is called "sectors in crisis." It allows for industries which are not making a profit to apply for government designation as being in crisis. If granted they are allowed to layoff workers, now prevented by the workers commission and by law, and their collective bargaining contracts with the unions are declared void, allowing them to cut wages, and introduce speed-up. While a number of firms have applied for this new designation, so far none have been granted.

In sum, while this entire economic package has been passed by Parliament, the weak SP government has not been able to implement it. The enormous resistance of workers, although defensive, has prevented the SP from carrying it out in practice. Little land has been returned to landlords, most bosses have not returned, no firm has been given designation as a "sector in crisis."

The SP has been afraid that carrying out its laws against the well organized, radical workers of particularly the Lisbon Industrial Belt, would lead to sharp battles with the possible opening of a new period of unrest similar to 1975. Moreover, the SP fears that the army and police are still not sufficiently reliable to have the capacity for carrying out massive repression against a resistant working class.

The result is that there has not been a capitalist economic recovery in Portugal. Unlike the rest of the capitalist world, Portugal has had no recovery from the world capitalist crisis and the world depression of 1974-75. It is still suffering the shocks of the depression. The loss of its colonies, and the crisis of a large, backward, inefficient sector which only survived on the extremely miserable wages which the banning of unions provided under fascism, and which cannot afford the wage gains workers have made since the end of fascism. The economy is a mess. Production is stagnant. There is 20% unemployment (and it would be much more if firms were allowed to lay off workers). No companies (with the exceptions of the banks) are making a profit. There are no private or foreign investments. There haven't been for three years, nor will there be until the power of the workers is clipped. Inflation is the worst in Europe. The huge deficits in foreign trade can no longer be made up through Portugal's gold reserves, which are now exhausted.

The country is bankrupt. Debt service on old loans is now 17% of government income. Portugal is barely kept afloat economically through loans from America, Germany, and the International Monetary Fund. It is these powers who decide Portugal's economic and political policies. The SP government is only a conduit for international imperialism, and the country is being reduced to Third World colonial status. The conditions for the last IMF loan are so severe (massive cut in consumption, raise interest rates to 22-30% etc) that they would produce a deep depression and are unacceptable to both the workers and the capitalists.

The failure of the SP government to provide capitalist recuperation, its inability to produce economic stability, is opening a new period of political instability in Portugal in which sharp political turns will occur. The second stage of the right wing offensive, the stage of social democratic government passing the right wing's program, but being unable to have it implemented, is now coming to an end.

3. RADICALIZATION OF SOCIAL CLASSES

The SP government's futile attempts to provide stability in a declining capitalism (unlike the British Labor Party's similar, successful job in a healthier British capitalism) is indicative that the choices in Portugal in the next few years are socialism or fascism. Weak Portuguese capitalism cannot survive with democratic rule in a situation of profound economic crisis and with a powerful, revolutionary working class that refuses to let itself be made the victim to pay for capitalism's crisis.

The attempt of the SP has led to the loss of confidence and support from all social classes, and the radicalization of social classes on the right and left. The industrial-

ists (Confederation of Portuguese Industrialists - CIP) have expressed their lack of support through the lack of investment, the failure of many bosses to return at the SP's invitation, waiting for a more favorable moment, and by their hostility to the idea of coming to terms with the CP dominated unions through a social pact. They want confrontations with the workers to break through the impasse of economic and political stalemate, not just another pasted together agreement that leaves the workers with much of their power intact.

The middle classes blame all economic difficulties on the SP government and significant sections have moved to the right. They are being ruined by the inflation; their living standards are now lower than under fascism. Less well organized than the workers, their standard of living has deteriorated more. Today well-organized sectors of the working class are doing as well or better than the middle classes who are being pauperized and resist being proletarianized. The middle classes blame their situation on the revolution against fascism, and can become the mass base for a new fascist movement.

Already there are indexes of the radicalization of part of the middle classes to the extreme right. A Nazi movement has begun among middle class youth which leads to daily fights in the high schools with working class and revolutionary youth. The underground fascist movement demands the return of the colonies and Portugal's imperial grandeur. The ties of the CDS to the underground right grow. Within the armed forces there is an attempt by the extreme right to replace moderate right wing officers with officers of increasingly more fascist coloration. Right wing demonstration in the last weeks have started to take on a violent character as well as now beginning to attack Eanes, the previous savior of the right, for his moderation.

Within the working class there is also a radicalization to the left going on. The SP government failure has shifted workers and small peasants into the North and Center who supported the SP to the left. The attempt to raise the rent of tenant farmers in the North (to drive them from the land and rationalize backward agriculture) has led to a movement among them which is led by the CP. The SP industrial workers of the North have moved to support the Workers Fraternity, or to join the CP or the PRP. (In the North and Center of the country, the most conservative area, the CP is much smaller than in the South and when workers move to the left, the PRP is a credible alternative). Moreover, since many working class struggles have been in the North, because of bosses' fears of taking on the more radical Southern workers, the radicalization has occurred sharper here first. As a result, the PRP, which like all left groups was based in the South, is today strongest and best organized in the conservative Center and North.)

The radicalization in the working class has led to the split of the Socialist Party in the last month. The left wing, organized as the Workers Fraternity and containing the most important trade union cadres of the SP, under the leadership of Lopes Cardoso, accused the SP of betraying socialism, selling the country out to imperialism, destroying the working class gains of the revolution, and opening the door to fascism. Organized for the last six months both within the SP as a tendency, and as an independent organization, it has just left the SP calling for the formation of a new political organization.

Until six months ago the SP controlled 1/3 of the unions, predominantly white collar unions in the South, and industrial unions in the North and Center. The radicalization has seen the rise of a strong revolutionary current in the unions. In the last months the SP has lost almost all the unions it controlled to a united front of the Workers Fraternity, CP and PRP in trade union elections. In the slates in these union elections, none of the three parties to the united front were given a clear majority, although of course one or the other predominates in different unions - for example, CP in Chemical Workers of the North, PRP in building workers of the Center, etc.

The split of the SP and the radicalization of the workers which it has helped the CP, has not been solely to its benefit, but has opened the union situation to the rise of a revolutionary current of which the PRP is the axis, but also induces many independent revolutionaries, and which now sees the revolutionary left as a strong force within the unions. So much so that the CP has been forced to open some of its unions to the revolutionary left by including PRP'ers and independents on its slates for union leadership bodies in previously totally-controlled CP unions. Moreover while the CP has

retained its strength by picking up previous SP'ers, this has been balanced by losses to its left. In Lisbon for example, it lost the textile union to the PRP. And among the Alentejo farm workers, the CP failure to resist the Barreto Law vigorously has led to a shift to the left among some of its previous cadres. Radicalization also expresses itself in the acceptance of violence and self-defense among Alentejo farm workers and hence the turn to the revolutionary left, particularly the PRP. As the country polarizes there has also developed a tremendous spirit of the need for anti-fascist unity among workers which all political forces have to take into account.

4. THE NEW CRISIS

The failure of the SP has led to the collapse of the SP government. It has however not been replaced by a new government because of deep divisions within the ruling class, and other social forces, which has prevented agreement on the composition of a new government. Most of the capitalists are for a government to the right, one which can implement the laws passed by the SP and the stiffer measures called for. This solution would be a government of repression, with sharp confrontations with the working class.

Other sections of the ruling class, led by President Eanes, fear such a social confrontation. They have proposed an agreement among all parties, including the CP. They hope to arrange a social pact with the CP unions as the way to get economic austerity measures carried out. They don't want to have it out with the workers yet, but to prepare for a future point when they would be stronger to accomplish that.

The CP has generally agreed to these proposals. The CP has called for a government of all social forces, a government of national salvation, to restore economic recovery. The CP now raises the slogan "maintain the status quo". It proposes that the revolution cannot go forward, but is against giving up the gains of the revolution. It is however prepared to negotiate some of those gains away.

The CP hopes to enter the government and to penetrate the state apparatus again. CP strategy is that with the threat of fascist restoration, it has to come to agreement with the moderate right around Eanes, to defend its organizational legality within the framework of capitalist democracy.

The CP position is similar to the disasterous strategy of the German social democrats during the rise of Hitler. This policy of "lesser evilism", of alliance with the moderate right, means accepting the maintenance of the capitalist status quo. But in Portugal today, as in Germany in the 30s, it is this status quo which is ruining the masses, radicalizing the middle class on the right and the workers on the left. This disintegrating status quo is giving rise to the alternatives fascism or socialist revolution. And as those alternatives to replace this decaying bourgeois democracy becomes stronger, the moderate right ~~will~~ the supposed defender of democracy, will go over to fascism as the only way to defend capitalism.

If the CP were to enter a new government, it would only be a rerun of the last year's SP government. It would delay confrontation and repression but not solve the crisis, and make more likely the right wing trying to carry out a coup. It would also open the gap between the CP and its ranks, a gap which closed when the CP went into opposition. This would potentially strengthen the revolutionary left, particularly given the great radicalization of CP workers in the last year.

5. POLARIZATION OF POLITICS

While the CP has come out for a social pact and class collaboration, the bosses (CIP) has turned that down. They want confrontation. The deterioration of the economic situation is so great they are uninterested in half measures to solve it, even with the cooperation of the CP. They want a return of the pre-1974 situation, with the severe slashing of wages, and of working class power. This cannot be achieved in cooperation with the CP and the unions. Rather it can only be done by the drastic weakening of the labor movement, and ultimately, by destroying it.

The failure of the capitalists to agree with Eanes' proposal of a new social pact and cooperation with the unions and CP has produced a parliamentary stalemate. The crisis

has now moved into the streets. IN Oporto on NOV 19, tens of thousands of right wingers demonstrated in support of extreme right winger Pires Veloso retaining his command as Military Governor of the North. Fascist slogans were raised. Left wing offices sacked. Attacks focused against the Constitution and Eanes for his moderate, legalistic approach.

In the South, in Lisbon that day, 200,000 workers took part in the most massive demonstration of recent times. They called for the defense of the gains of the revolution, against the right and its economic program, and for the revival and strengthening of the workers commissions. They called for maintaining nationalization, workers control and agrarian reform. The demo was called by the unions and workers commissions. It was dominated by the CP, but was a demonstration of the whole working class left. Similar demos have brought out 100,000 workers in Oporto, 50,000 in Setúbal, and similar large numbers in many smaller cities in the last 3 weeks.

The outcome of this parliamentary stalemate, which reflects the stalemate between the classes, has a number of possible immediate solutions. The first is a new parliamentary combination. The SP has just expelled its left wing. The Popular Democrats are also in crisis with a possible split brewing. Their right wing is against cooperation with the SP. The PPD may split with one wing joining the extreme right Center Democrats, and the other wing joining the SP. There is a chance that the PPD or its left wing may make an agreement with the SP for a new government, one which might have the support of the CP. There is also a proposal of a government of the SP and independents, tacitly supported by the CP. And of course, there are any number of other arrangements being negotiated. Given the polarizing nature of the classes, none of these governments, if ever agreed to, would have a long life.

If no parliamentary arrangement can be made, Eanes has threatened to dissolve parliament and call new elections. All the ~~major~~ major parties have opposed new elections. They fear that the polarization will show up not only in big gains for the extreme right and left, but that the middle ground's role will drastically decline as a result of new elections. Not only will new elections not settle the crisis, they might not produce even a parliamentary solution. Neither the SP nor the right are likely to get a parliamentary majority in new elections, and the parliamentary stalemate would continue.

If elections are called the PRP would organize a united far left slate. Such a slate would be part of its united front against fascism proposal (see below). The united left slate would be similar to the campaign for Otelo Carvalho for President in 1976 which received about 16% of the vote, and reduced the CP vote to 8%. This time a united left campaign would possibly include the former left wing of the SP, the Workers Fraternity, and would probably exclude the UDP.

6. COUP AND PRESIDENTIALISM

To break the impasse which does not seem possible on the parliamentary level, the right wing is playing with the possibility of a military coup. Within the armed forces they have been organizing to replace moderate right wingers associated with Eanes with extreme right wingers as well as restoring former fascist officers. They are the military reflection of the capitalists, the Center Democrats, parts of the Popular Democrats, and of the fascist underground groups, attempt to decisively break the impasse with a clear victory and undo the 25 April revolution.

A new right wing coup would be designed to overthrow the Constitution, written in 1975, which includes the agrarian reform, nationalization, and workers control, as well as vague proposals for the "transition to socialism". A coup would also be directed against Eanes if he persists in his moderate approach. In preparation for a coup the right is mobilizing its strength in streets as well as in the armed forces. To prevent a coup attempt the left is doing the same. There are revived calls for dealing with a right coup similar to what occurred on 28 Sept 74, and 11 March 75 when right wing coup attempts were foiled by the workers arming themselves and barricading the cities.

Given the polarization within the country, which shows up in the armed forces, the right runs the danger that a coup, even if successful, might lead to civil war. Despite that danger the ruing of the capitalists and the middle classes is producing desperation

and with it plans for drastic measures.

The greatest likelihood is that in the coming months is for the development of a strong authoritarian government under President Eanes - or if he doesn't cooperate, with someone to the right of him. This development is likely whether or not a new parliamentary arrangement takes place, and whether or not there are ~~ex~~ new elections. The Portuguese call this, the Presidentalist solution. Eanes would assume emergency measures, granted to him by the constitution, to rule without a parliamentary majority, probably with a government above the parties. While such a Presidentalist solution would suspend many parliamentary powers, and possibly legalize the revolutionary left in general, or just the PRP (Eanes has set up a commission to study ~~inxxxxxxx~~ legalizing the PRP) it would at this stage not be a fascist regime. It would maintain many of the forms of bourgeois democracy (trade unions, the CP, the right to meet, some press freedoms, although under greater censorship etc). The Presidentalist solution is a Bonapartist regime. Such regimes have occurred in the past when the ~~vixxxxxxxx~~ class struggle does not lead to significant victory to either side but takes such strong form that it cannot be allowed to be continued on that level. In such cases the state has assumed power independent of the social classes in order to be able to break the impasse and impose a solution on all social classes. Since the state maintains capitalist social relations it is in reality the state of the capitalists, but it rules with greater independence from them in order to be able to take measures to solve the crisis that the capitalists are not necessarily for.

If a Presidentalist, Bonapartist regime develops, it will not be able to solve the economic crisis. For the capitalists this requires the destruction of the labor movement in Portugal. Increasingly, in the next few years the choices will be socialist revolution or fascism.

7. United FRONT AGAINST FASCISM

With the rise of the right the PRP has proposed the formation of a united front against fascism. The threat of fascism has created tremendous sentiment for unity among workers, making this a realistic proposal. A united front, the PRP believes, would have to start defensively, defending the gains of the revolution of 25 April. In remobilizing the workers to fight against the right, it will be necessary to go on the offensive, to end the crisis and the threat of fascism through a socialist revolution. As the crisis deepens, and as both sides mobilize, the question of state power will once again be posed as it was in 1975, and socialist revolution will again be an immediate alternative.

The proposal is similar to Trotsky's united front against fascism in Germany in the early 1930s. Trotsky believed that within such a united front the CP would be forced to act to carry out the socialist revolution. The PRP has no such illusions, nor of course is it for the CP taking power. It recognizes that in such a united front it would have to provide leadership for a socialist revolution. The PRP is much smaller than the German CP. But Portugal has a real agency, a small organized revolutionary party, with the potential to put into practice what Trotsky was only capable of calling for in writing.

The components of the united front that the PRP proposes are the workers organizations the unions, workers commissions, and the workers political parties: the Workers Fraternity, CP, PRP and the remaining small revolutionary groups. As a part of the united front the PRP proposes the formation of committees of unity in the factories to restore the power of the workers commissions. The PRP also calls for the inclusion of the left wing of the armed forces in the united front. The military left consists of 3 groups, the Gonsalvists officers (associated with, but independent of the CP), the Melo Antunes group (associated now with the Workers Fraternity), and the Otelo group (associated with the PRP). Within the armed forces there is *ad hoc* united front activity among the 3 left groups. This is due to the greater polarization in the armed forces, with the ~~xxx~~ rise of right wing commanders. It is also due to a more favorable balance of forces within the military left, where the PRP is stronger than the CP.

The participation of the CP would be required to make a united front a reality. Unity of the military left, and the importance of the military left in the threat of a right wing coup, has acted as a pressure on the CP for a united front. So has the unity sentiment in the working class, and the rise of the revolutionary left in the trade unions. However

since the CP is angling to get into a new government, it will not agree to such a front in the immediate future. Given the volatility of Portuguese politics, this is not precluded in the near future. In the short run, without the CP, a smaller version of the united front, including in the new elections, may be achieved. In any case, the proposal for a united front against fascism, will be an important part of revolutionary strategy for the whole next period, whether or not it can be immediately achievable.

3. THE FUTURE

As the crisis in Portugal opens up again the question of state power will again be posed as it was in 1975. This is true whether or not there are immediate setbacks in the next few months (right government, coup or Presidentialism, none of which will solve the crisis). While the outcome in the next few years will be determined by the struggle, not by speculation, it is possible to estimate the balance of forces and their potential dynamics.

The right today is much stronger, more aggressive, than it was in 1975. Sections of the middle classes have been radicalized in a right wing direction. They are increasingly open to a fascist solution to end the crisis.

The last two years has demobilized sections of the working class. But workers today have greater political consciousness than the euphoric, but sometimes naive days of 1975. The greater severity of the economic crisis has radicalized workers who now recognize that a revolutionary socialist solution maybe the only alertaive to a fascist solution to the crisis.

Within the left there has been a political clarification and a change in the balance of forces. The CP has maintained its strength at the expense of the SP. But it is now losing its hold in sections of the working class to the revolutionary left (farm workers in the Alentejo, textile workers in Lisbon, etc). The revolutionary left is no longer fragmented into a dozen different organizations. There are only two groups to the left of the CP that are important, the UDP and the PRP. The Maoist UDP is still strong in the Lisbon radical middle classes, and on the South Bank. But it has failed to become a national working class organization.

The PRP is much stronger than it was in 1975 when it was able to play such a large role. It has greater organization and cadres throughout the country. It would be in a position to grow rapidly in a new revolutionary situation. It has strong roots in the factories and unions. Its mass influence has grown through its role in Pagina Um, the only serious revolutionary paper left. The PRP is also a greater force within the armed forces than it was in 1975. It now has the organization and cadres capable of taking part in all struggles whereas in 1975 it had to severely prioritize and limit the struggles it could engage in.

Where struggles have broken out, in the Center and the North, the PRP has generally been able to be a serious alternative to the CP. In the decisive Lisbon industrial belt, has until now not been a battleground for struggle. The CP is still decisively hegemonic here, although the PRP has gained greater weight as the only serious alternative to the CP in the factories and unions. The remobilization of the workers of the Lisbon industrial belt will again raise the question of the PRP's ability to break the control of the CP. It has been able to do this on individual occasions, because the CP has never been able to control the working class totally. But the CP has been able to reimpose control through its organizational strength, a situation which will continue unless the CP can be split.

The balance of forces is more favorable to the PRP than in 1975, but is still decisively weighted to the CP. The greater depth of the crisis, the radicalization of the working class, the greater acceptance of PRP politics in the the consciousness of workers, will all help in the PRP in a new mobilization of workers. But this has to be translated into organization and striking force. Whether this can be done will only be shown in the course of the struggle itself. Victory is not certain. Neither is defeat. Despite the setbacks of the last 2 years, and the aggressiveness of the right now, the battle is now over. In truth the final conflicts are only now starting. Portugal remains the country where the revolutionary working class is strongest, and where it may yet take power in the next few years.

December 19, 1977

Dear Comrades,

A publications group has been set up in the Center to handle production and publication of all International Socialist pamphlets. In the past different pamphlets were the responsibility of different individuals. There was no central coordinating body. This in part is the reason why so few new pamphlets have been forthcoming.

One of the major responsibilities of the Publications Committee will be to solicit and to assign pamphlets. The Organization has many capable writers who can be gotten to write.

The committee consists of Gay, Mark, Tom and Carl. This in fact makes the committee a sub-body of both the EC and Sun Distribution. The publications Committee will be responsible for assessing the needs of the organization and then coordinating the writing of materials in conjunction with the political magazine. It will seek to avoid duplication of efforts between the magazine and pamphlet writing.

Sun Distribution will be responsible for production and distribution of all pamphlets. Since Sun is set up to deal with the printed word it is only logical Sun should be the center of pamphlet production.

As a first step in this direction we would like to ask all IS comrades what they feel would be of use as an IS or WP pamphlet. Send us your ideas. We need to begin now formulating the needs of the organization and determining what is actually possible.

Some of the ideas that we are at work on are major pamphlets on women, blacks and the nature of the capitalist crisis. Any of these would obviously be major pamphlets and will take time to get produced.

We are also setting our eyes on short pamphlets (8 to 16 pages). Among these topics are Affirmative Action - Bakke, the Attack on Women, Andrew Young and others. Most of these are just ideas now, so give us what help you can.

After the holidays we will give more specific ideas of how Sun Publishing will work. In the meantime send all inquiries to Sun Distribution, 14131 Woodward Ave, Highland Park, MI 48203

BAY AREA BRANCH REPORT DECEMBER 1977

The Bay Area branch recently went through an internal crisis and seems to have pulled out at this time. We had found ourselves in a position of having a lot of good external work but a lack of energy and morale to build the branch and branch activities.

Branch events, including an August picnic, a couple parties, the LA Workers Conference, and a December film showing fund-raiser - have in general been disappointing with very low turn-outs from among contacts. WP use has stagnated, with few comrades really using it.

In order to break the slump, we focussed on 1) building a strong branch exec including industrial and community leaders, 2) keying in on branch meetings for well-prepared educationals, open to contacts, and 3) breaking down the isolation of fractions and general fragmentation of work.

Our fractions now are IBT, postal and community. In Teamsters, we've focussed on building a functioning TDU chapter. TDU's aid in a strike of grocery workers has been a big boost for the chapter, brought in an infusion of new members, and brought an excellent Black contact around the branch. It also helped make possible a real elected steering committee for the chapter with more Teamsters taking responsibility. The chapter now has the structure and core to respond to breaking developments, like activity around a major grocery warehouse that has just begun.

Our postal work is on an upswing. We've kept and integrated a shop steward we recruited last summer. In a recent Mailhandlers election at the bulk mail center, a close contact got elected administrative v.p., the top office there. It is not a full-time post, but involves being the chief steward and chief negotiator in loc L contract talks. The major focus of our postal work until August will be pulling together a national contract campaign spear-headed by the R&F Postal Worker.

Our South Africa work has sputtered to a halt, as our SALC lost most of its Black members. Our one Black comrade recruited through the South Africa work has been inactive lately. Our last big project - a ZANU drive - turned up lots of clothes but no contacts. Our tentative plan is to attempt to work in broader coalitions, such as the Zimbabwe Relief Coalition and a newly-formed coalition around getting the Krugerrand ads off the TV stations.

One of our members worked in the labor Focus committee of the National Committee to Overturn the Bakke Decision, and we are now assigning more people to that work. Our plan is to approach third world workers in our priorities as a starting point.

As an experiment, we have combined the South Africa fraction and Bakke/women's committee into a single community fraction. We felt that both groups had many of the same educational needs. Also, both areas of work have proven to be quite uneven, and now we will be able to shift resources back and forth. We will also have the organizational structure to start into a new community issue if it arises.

CLEVELAND BRANCH REPORT

The main political issues in Cleveland over the past several months have been the court-ordered desegregation plan, the school board going broke, city elections loss of jobs - in particular the closing of Youngstown Sheet and Tube, and tax abatement and utility rates.

Fortunately for us, busing will not go into effect until September. The school board continues to resist every step of the way. The pro-busing forces at the neighborhood level are not very strong. The school board's current financial mess - the result of mismanagement, tax breaks to corporations, and the defeat of school levies over the past several years - is being used by the school board and local politicians as a further reason to oppose busing. In the white neighborhoods it comes out as, "They don't have enough money to pay the teachers, yet they want to bus niggers into our schools."

City elections were interesting for two reasons. One is that Bob (Chrysler loan Pres.) Weisman's political protegee got elected mayor running an anti-monopolist, anti-establishment campaign. His base was in the white ethnic wards. Weisman is now the mayor's executive secretary. Second, the election underscored the total collapse of the ~~Steel~~ ^{Steel} political machine in the Black community. With 2 white candidates running for mayor, black politicians wound up on both sides - denouncing one another. There was no solidarity, no program, only pork barrel politics. No one can now claim to speak for the whole Black community in Cleveland and go unchallenged.

With the exception of a few articles in WP on the schools, and articles in a local r&f Steel workers' paper on imports and the Youngstown closings, we have not been able to do much about the big events in our area. Since Sept. the work of the branch has been largely shaped by the fact that the TDU center and the IBT fraction steering committee is in Cleveland, that we have an active RT branch and that we have been host to the TDU Convention, a RT conference, and a IS Womens' Conf. in a little over 3 months.

Five members have national IBT work as a full time assignment. Because of these demands there is little time available to build a TDU base locally. Our activity has been limited to intervention in strikes - taxi, grocery - where we played a supporting role, but haven't been able to turn our intervention into an ongoing organization. In response to the mad dog speed up and harassment which

is going down at UPS we have been able to put, together a small group of part-timers. They have put out leaflets, had meetings on grievances, and staged a work slow down and circulated a ~~pet~~ petition in defense of a fired co-worker. He got his job back and credits the organizing done in his behalf.

We have recently recruited a woman car hauler, and have a few close contacts from our Teamster work, but there are no prospects for any major breakthroughs in the near future. In terms of the branch, the Teamster members have helped out with educational, and attended branch-wide activities - branch meetings, films, demos. The tension between the branch and the national Teamster work has not gotten out of hand.

The Red Tide has 16 members - 3/4 of whom are black. The group is divided between members who are still in school and those who are working or looking for work. Most of the experienced members are out of school, which creates problems, since the agitational focus for the group continues to be in-school issues.

The RT is now in the middle of a campaign to change a school tardy policy that a lot of students are pissed about. The RT put out a leaflet and followed up with a petition. To date they have gotten 80 signatures. The problem is that the principal is taking a hard line and we have not been able to expand our # of in school organizers during the campaign.

The RT has also started a young workers fraction. Its purpose is to help members find jobs, and to survive once they do find work. In addition they plan to educate themselves about how to organize on the job (the chances of getting priority jobs are slim), how to deal with racism and sexism, and how to introduce the RT to people they work with. This group is incredibly important for the IS since

it represents a transition to the IS and a bridge to young workers outside the organization.

The most important development for the RT is the beginning of a leadership core that has the potential to reproduce itself, and develop the politics for the group. To help this process along the IS has to provide more in the way of training and direct support.

In addition to the RT, we have been able to develop ~~in~~ a presence in the Black Community through our SALC work. We have held a number of pickets at stores selling

the Krugerrand and have succeeded in getting it removed from 2 stores. We held a demo down town to protest Cleveland bank loans to S. Africa and got 50 people to turn out. From these actions we made contact with a broad range of groups and individuals in the community and received excellent press coverage. We also learned a number of things about organizing pickets and demos. We have also shown Last Grave at a number of community centers, schools, and church organizations. Out of this work we have developed a network of contacts and active supporters, but no solid organization. Our plan is to keep this network together by setting up a Speakers and Film Bureau, and producing a SALC newsletter which would include up to date info developments in Southern Africa as well as local activities and research. The idea is to maintain a network of collaborators so that when things do open up we have a base to build from rather than starting over again from scratch. Without activity we will lose the few IS contacts that we have made in the course of these campaigns.

The work of the steel fraction is solid. The paper of the group is now a tabloid which is paid for by a # of sustainers. We succeeded in getting a motion in support of the iron ore strikers passed at the local meeting. 10 people signed a motion to the exec board calling on the local to withdraw its account from a Cleveland bank doing business with S. Africa. We have shown Last Grave to members and friends of the group. With our support a petition calling for the replacement of a company schedule clerk got widespread support. A key test for the group will be how we do in the upcoming special election for a vacated exec board position. Forging a sense that the group is contending for power in the local has only just begun. Our main weakness to date is the thinness of our cadre. At present we have only one experienced member and two new members who are still learning our politics and developing the skills necessary to play leadership roles in the local.

On another front, the Womens' Conference went away toward re-building the women's caucus, and our women's periphery. The local caucus will be meeting shortly to pull together the lessons gained by the experience of helping to organize the Conf.

Over the last period, we have recruited a few people. As a general rule it has been easier for us to recruit, then it has been to keep and train the people we have recruited to be cadre. We have several former members in our active periphery. Our periphery numbers about 30, the majority of whom are black. Most are not in our industrial priorities. Of the total, 10 are potentially recruitable. One thing that would help us in this regard would be for the black adult cadre in the IS to spend more time in Cleveland. In addition, if ~~we~~ we are to hold people, the branch has to have more weight.

Neither the branch or the exec has been viable in the last month and a half. Work has been carried out by the basic units, and even here it has not been done in formal meetings. While this way of functioning works for awhile, over time it undercuts any sense of organization and makes it difficult to recruit or train people.

We recently completed a 5-part class on Marxist economics. We've started a RT class on Shachtman's 'The Fight For Socialism, and are also doing a class on Malcolm X. More is needed. Not just in terms of formal education, but classes on giving speeches, writing leaflets, organizing meetings etc. Unless we expand our cadre, find our people jobs, and develop the type of organization that fits the period we will not be able to take advantage of the possibilities which are open to us in Cleveland.

ATLANTA REPORT

The Atlanta branch is both smaller and in better position than it has ever before been. We are down to four. After the Workers' Conference we had to decide whether to stay down here or to move back to the Midwest, where we came. We decided, with the support of the EC, to try to stay. We knew that we were charting a difficult course for ourselves, so far from the center or any of the other branches, at a time when the IS was forced after the split to consolidate in the Midwest. Nonetheless, the reasons for staying were and are great. The South is a crucially important section of the country; we had already been here a year and had begun to find our way around the city we knew that sooner or later if we left the organization would have to return and that it would be a real loss to give up what we had begun to develop here. So, we decided to gamble.

The perspective we adopted was to get into priority industries, and to develop real roots in the working class of the city. With so few of us so far from the center it would be hard for us to project much of a public IS presence, so our aim was to develop our roots, contacts, network so that when we got a new infusion of ISers we would be poised to take off.

The first point has been a success. Three people are in priority, two in IBT, one in auto. We have yet to crack freight, a significant section of which is unorganized down here. Both of the IBTers are in the same place, and one of them definitely needs to transfer, if not both. Nonetheless, it is a real step forward.

We have begun to make real contacts of serious people where we work. We have abandoned the people we were talking to previously, because given our small size, all our work would have to be focused on the workplaces. So it is our fellow workers where we can really hope to recruit and hold. One woman is going to the woman's conference with us. A black worker who has been around politics for years is seriously interested and may soon be coming up to visit Detroit.

The most significant thing we are doing in the short run is our work in AFSCME. Our support work during the strike is paying off here beyond our wildest dreams; the "lefts" would have been proud of us. We are tied up with a campaign to build the local on a real basis: workers' control vs. staff control; a strong steward system; job actions; a regular newsletter; an integrated union vs. virtually all black). This campaign is focused around the local elections in February. We have been going around to the yards campaigning and building up a network of campaign coordinators based primarily on the stewards. The campaign is the first step toward building the union. The campaign is proceeding under the slogan: "It's not the man -- it's the program", and what we are stressing to people is that electing a couple of people won't change anything, that what we are trying to do is to organize the workers to control their own union, and thereby their conditions. The reception given us by the workers has been very good: people have learned that the old methods don't work and are hungry for a real solution. If our campaign is successful and we are able to begin carrying out our program we will be in an excellent position. We will then desperately need people to help us build a real branch to take advantage of the opportunities that will open us.

REPORT ON SPAIN

Marilyn Danton
Enid Eckstein

A few words before the report: The point of view presented here is from our observations and discussions with Accion Comunista. We were not able to talk with any of the other important organizations of the revolutionary left because of time difficulties. Much of the report consists of basic political facts about the unions and parties in Spain today. This information is necessary to understand a very complex political situation. This situation is still very much in a state of flux and sorting out. We are in the process of establishing regular fraternal relations with Accion Comunista, including the exchange of newspapers.

INTRODUCTION

Two incidents say more than pages of description about the political atmosphere in Spain today. We met a 16 year old student at a demonstration demanding rights for the physically handicapped in Barcelona. For several hours he talked with us, pointed out the best daily newspapers to read, and good books on Spanish and Catalan history. He knew about all the political groups, what was going on politically in the city, and - he did not seem at all exceptional. He explained how students were organizing to take over their schools and how for the first time in his life he felt he could breathe freely. One of his friends proudly showed us his membership card in the youth group of the Socialist Party when we told them we were socialists from the United States.

That evening we observed a demonstration that had been banned by the government. The demand of the demonstration was freedom for the Spanish Sahara. It was led by a very small Maoist organization. There were only 50-75 participants. But they took on 1,000 armed national police. (this is the Civil Guard, similar to tactical squads - and just as vicious). The skirmishes took place throughout a whole section of the city and including shooting and molotov cocktails. At one point the demonstrators took nearby construction equipment and used it to block traffic. No one moved to clean up the street eventhough the debris blocked the street for at least 30 minutes. Cars were backed up for miles. Finally one man started to remove the stuff to allow traffic to flow again. Another older man in his 60's made some comment. We asked him what was going on and he said: "This is a strike. You don't break strikes." No one helped the man cleaning the street, except for one policeman while a small crowd looked sullenly on. The people walking the streets - and there were many unlike in this country at 8 at nite - got out of the way of the open fighting between the police and the demonstrators, but did not leave the streets. Like the comment made by the old man, they understood which side they were on - for the right to the streets, against the police or repression in any form.

For some forty years the Spanish people lived under a fascist dictatorship built on the blood and flames of the Spanish Civil War. Today they are finally free again to think and act politically - to wave the flag of their province, to join a union, to belong to a political party, to read and see what they want from Marx, Lenin, Trotsky and Che Guevara to the Hite Report.

The process of the breakup of the fascist government actually began in 1973 with the terrorist killing of Carrilho Bronco. The death of Franco 2 years ago removed the last formal roadblock to the establishment of a capitalist democracy in Spain. Almost everyone is involved in some form of political organization or organizing - at work, in the neighborhood, or in one of the social movements - women, gays, physically handicapped, old people, prostitutes, insane people, amnesty. The atmosphere is filled with a sense of excitement and freedom and politics.

At the same time there is a growing uneasiness about the developing economic crisis. Inflation is currently 30%, while wages are held to 20% increases. The average monthly income of a Spanish worker is \$375.00. Unemployment is growing. Official figures are 10-12%, unofficial figures range from 20% to 30% for youth. There is no investment in Spain today. Around 1,000 small to medium size factories and firms are going bankrupt per month. Tourism, Spain's biggest business (about 35 million people used to visit Spain per year) is dropping due to the less stable political situation.

POLITICAL SITUATION

The Spanish government is run by the Central Democratic Union (UCD), led by Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez. The UCD is a party with no clear politics. It came out of a merger of left and center bourgeois groups together with officials from the old Franco regime. The government's program is the development of a stable bourgeois democracy. All unions and most political organizations from the Communist Party to the POUM (small revolutionary organization which dates back to the thirties) are legal today. The government is doing its best to sell democracy. Debates in the Cortes (congress) are televised and discussed in the newspapers. Spain is consciously portrayed as the country which has been able to make a peaceful transition from fascism to bourgeois democracy without political chaos and the potential for revolution.

So far the process is working. The government successfully negotiated a social contract - the Pact of Moncloa - with the Communist and Socialist Parties. Few of the specifics of the agreement are known. Wages are held to 20% increases, and if they go over that, the work force will be cut back accordingly. The aim of the Pact is to stabilize the economy through forcing the workers to pay. The recent air port strikes and many of the other important strikes now going on are threats to the Pact, but so far the government has remained firm.

The strongest political party left of the government party is the Socialist Party. It has around 30% of the deputies in the Cortes. The Communist Party has 8%. Felipe Gonzalez, the leader of the Socialist Party (SP) is likely to be the next prime minister. This will further stabilize the government temporarily. Gonzalez met with US Vice President Mondale while he was here in November. (By contrast, Santiago Carillo, the leader of the Communist Party, who was also here in November as a guest lecturer at Yale University, was spurned by the government).

The right and the far right, including outright fascists are organized and on the streets, but they are relatively small. Most of these groups are organized into the Alianza Popular, which is an amalgamation of 7 smaller right wing organizations. The fascists are organized into the New Force (Fuerza Nueva), and a similar group in Barcelona which claims to be even further to the right. The right is strongest in the South and in the Toledo-Madrid area. There is no current danger of a return to fascism however. The political initiative lies squarely with the bourgeoisie. The working class is still on the defensive.

THE WORKING CLASS

Spain's active working class is approximately 3 million. Out of this, 1.5 million and growing daily, are organized into one of the unions. Class consciousness is quite high, but political consciousness is relatively low. Mass meetings of workers regularly take place in industry and business, but most of the attendance is still passive. Most workers are prepared to fight against the concrete parts of the Pact of Moncloa, despite the fact that the two largest political parties in the working class, the Socialist and Communist Parties support the pact. All the unions, even the ones dominated by the Socialist and Communist Parties called for and led

two massive demonstrations against the Pact. The formal title of the demonstrations was "For an end to the crisis favorable to the workers". In Madrid, 6-80,000 participated, in Barcelona, the major industrial center of Spain (20% of all Spanish exports are from Catalonia) 200,000 participated. Militancy and combativity is very high. In many of the small and medium size firms that are going bankrupt, the workers are taking over and demanding that the government finance the firms under their control. At times the neighborhood organizations build support for the workers and their demands. This is relatively common in Spain today. We visited one such place, a small factory of about 300 workers and talked briefly with some of their leaders. They reported that the situation was difficult because there was little organization outside their factory and this left them isolated. It is a clear indication of the level of struggle taking place today.

Unions

There are three main unions in Spain and many other smaller ones. Most are tied to one of the political groups. The situation is relatively chaotic at this time. Workers decide on the basis of their political ideas and the relative strength which union they will join at their place of work. Union leadership has not been formalized, and there is no national bargaining even in plants with the same corporation. Formal union elections are set for December. These elections are very important. They will aid in the overall organization of the working class and strengthen their ability to fight. At the same time the elections will establish a formal leadership for contract negotiations and will tend to limit direct participation of workers which now takes place. The government and the capitalist class sees the elections as an opportunity to begin the process of Americanizing (bureaucratizing) the newly legalized unions.

A place of work could have as many as 6 unions present. At the Mercedes Benz plant in Barcelona, there is an elected leadership. A committee was elected for 2 years composed of 11 members, 9 from the Workers' Commissions (CP union) and 2 from the UGT (SP union). This committee then acts like an executive board. At the same time the general assemblies of workers continue to meet irregularly at large plants and act as another base of power. These assemblies elect leadership bodies which are immediately recallable and be responsible to the assembly of all workers. The union committee is responsible only to the union from which it was elected. The governments wants to end the existence of the assemblies and their leadership bodies through the union elections.

Below are the major unions and their relative strength:

1. Workers Commissions (CC. OO.) The Workers Commissions are by far the most important of the unions. They were built underground by the Communist Party beginning in the late fifties. The Workers Commissions ran workers for office in the fascist corporate union. Generally the best militants and most combative workers belong to the CC.OO. However, this union is deminated and politically controlled by the Communist Party, which is quite conservative. The Workers' Commissions are strong in heavy industry, auto, metals, chemicals. The union is likely to win the majority of the important union elections.

2. General Union of Workers (UGT): The UGT is the second largest of the unions, and it is growing rapidly. Politically it is dominated by the Socialist Party. It was only reorganized after Franco's death. The UGT tends to be strong among skilled and white collar workers.

3. National Confederation of Workers (CNT). The CNT is the third largest and most important union. It is dominated by anarchist politics and dates back to the thirties. There is an important difference, however. In the thirties it was the most revolutionary union. Today it is more conservative. There are many good militants in the CNT. It is strong in white collar work places, in smaller factories and among young workers. Today, consistent with its anarchist politics, the CNT is boycotting the union elections.

4. Other unions with much less importance:

CSUT is associated with the Spanish Workers Party, the largest of the Maoist organizations.

SU: is associated with the Workers' Revolutionary Organization, the second largest Maoist organization. It played a major role in the Pamplona strike in 1973 in the Basque country and remains strong there.

USO is also associated with a Maoist organization

STV (Basque Workers' Solidarity is important in the Basque country.

POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTIES

Communist Party of Spain (CPE) The Spanish Communist Party has from 80-100,000 members. It is led by Santiago Carrillo and is the most conservative Communist Party in Europe. Carrillo's book, EuroCommunism and the State is a best seller in Spain. The CPE dominates the Workers' Commissions, the most important union in Spain. The CPE is a signer to and major supporter of the Pact of Moncloa. The CPE argues that everyone, including the workers must help to stabilize democracy in Spain or the fascists will return to power. This line is the Party's cover for selling out the workers on the immediate questions of wages, layoffs, etc.

Internationally Carrillo is close to Belinguer of the Italian CP and recently spent several days conferring with him. Carrillo was not allowed to speak in Moscow at the 60th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Recently he renounced the concepts of violent revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. While he was here he crossed a picket line. The Communist Party and what happens to it are central to any perspective for revolution in Spain. The Party has a hard and disciplined cadre containing many of the best militants in the class. It has these militants because it was the most serious and strongest group underground when Franco was in power. These militants will find the Party's stand on the Pact of Moncloa increasingly hard to swallow as the economic crisis develops. But an alternative must be built that can win these workers away from the CP. In Catalonia the CP is known as the PSUC (United Socialist Party of Catalonia).

Socialist Workers Party of Spain (PSOE). This is the reformist social democratic party. It has around 200,000 members, although membership is not clearly defined. It is led by Felipe Gonzalez who is likely to be the next prime minister of Spain. The PSOE attempts to attack the CP from the left eg accusing the CP of not taking the air port strike seriously. In reality the parties are both very conservative and there is very little different in their concrete programs. In Catalonia the PSOE is known as the PSC (Socialist Party of Catalonia).

The Maoist organizations together have a membership of around 15,000. Below are the important ones.

Spanist Workers Party (PTE). This is the largest of the Maoist groups with around 10,000 members. It originated from a split in the PSUC (CP in Catalonia). On the key questions it is not really to the left of the CPE, but it is verbally against

the Pact, has populist tendencies and goes overboard on the national question. EG: the organization's name uses the Catalan as opposed to the Spanish or Castilian words.

Revolutionary Workers Organization (ORT). This is the second most important Maoist organization with around 3,000 members. It is formally recognized by China as its group in Spain. The ORT originated from a union/christian tradition. The ORT and the union associated with it, the SU played a big role in the Pamplona strike.

International Communist Party (PCI). This is a much smaller Maoist organization. It tends to be ultra-left. This is the organization that held the demonstration mentioned at the beginning of this report.

Communist Party - Marxist, Leninist (EC-ML). It is a Maoist guerillaist organization which is currently training people in Algeria

Red Flag - Spanish Communist Organization (Bandera Roja-OCE) A merger of 2 smaller Maoist organizations - no other information

Anarchist Sentiment. While there is no formal anarchist organization, (The FAI of the thirties is said not to exist), there is a lot of anarchist sentiment in Spain and especially in Catalonia and Barcelona. Last summer there was a CNT conference and over 300,000 attended. This political sentiment will have to be taken into account in any revolutionary perspective for Spain.

REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

Communist Action (Accion Comunista, AC). AC is the group in Spain with politics and a perspective closest to ours. It was formed underground and in exile in 1965. AC has had close ties with the British SWP and has identical politics on the important theoretical questions. AC is a democratic centralist organization of around 500 members, 100 each in Madrid and Barcelona. Currently it is growing in Madrid, Valencia, Saragosa, Seville, and in Barcelona but less so. AC has only been legal and above ground since the end of September. There are AC members in the Basque country (second in importance to Barcelona as a center of working class activity). AC has a bi-weekly newspaper called Voz Obrera (Workers' Voice) with a circulation of 5,000. AC participated in an electoral front with 3 other organizations in the revolutionary left, while it was still underground. During that time their paper had a circulation of 10,000. AC saw the electoral campaign as an opportunity to meet people, get publicity, and assessed its participation as successful even though the vote for the front was low (3,000 in Madrid and 12,000 in Barcelona, no figures nationally). AC works primarily in the Workers' Commissions as the most important union and secondarily in the CNT in some areas. The strategy and perspective of AC will be taken up following the description of the other organizations of the revolutionary left.

Organization of the Communist Left in Spain (OICE). The OICE was formed in 1974 and is the largest of the revolutionary left groups with 3,000 members. In reality it is several political tendencies in one organization, including a tendency close to AC, a traditionally stalinist tendency and a soft Maoist tendency. In Barcelona 80% of its base is working class. The OICE is in a crisis over strategy today, and tends to be ultra left and bureaucratic. It is strong in Valencia, Barcelona, Asturias and San Sebastian (Basque country). The OICE has a number of good worker militants.

Workers Party of Marxist Unity (POUM). The POUM is quite small, around 200 members. It was legalized in the middle of November, and has a monthly newspaper, La Batalla. Politically it is very close to AC.

Communist Liberation Movement (MLC). This is a soft Maoist organization of between 3-400. It is ultra-leftist and populist at times but is open to AC's politics. The MLC has a working class base and is located in Madrid, Seville and the Basque country.

Communist Unification (UC) The UC exists only in the Basque country and is in discussions with AC.

Revolutionary Communist League (LCR). This is the fourth International group, Mandel wing. It has around 3,000 members, and is strong in Bilbao, in the Basque country. The LCR participated in the electoral front with AC, but AC is not interested in unification discussions with the LCR because of its sectarianism. The LCR stands for a Communist Party/Socialist Party government in Spain.

There are other local and autonomous groups, collectives of the revolutionary left that exist in only one city or area. AC is in touch with a number of these groups.

ACCION COMUNISTA'S STRATEGY

Generally all revolutionary organizations in Spain went through some form of crisis when the death of Franco did not bring a rapid revolutionary development as in Portugal. The fact that capitalism would be stable at least for awhile meant that the groups had to regear for a slower period of economic struggle. AC has come out of this difficult situation in relatively good shape. Currently the situation is very fluid, with most groups just being legalized. AC is still in the process of developing their perspectives in this sorting out period. Their strategy is two fold:

First, given the standing and strength of the Communist Party, building a revolutionary alternative that is credible in size and worker militancy is key to building a revolutionary party in Spain. As the crisis deepens, a credible alternative would become the revolutionary pole for CP militants fed up with a rightward moving Party.

Following from this is a series of political discussions and agreements to work together in concrete situations with other organizations of the revolutionary left. AC is in discussions with and working with all the groups listed above under the heading of the revolutionary left except the LCR. In December/January there will be a unification conference in which all these groups will participate. Each organization will send delegates to the conference, and all votes will be democratic. If unification did come out (very unlikely) there would be an organization of 1,500 or more. It would also be an organization that was truly national with roots in all the important working class centers in Spain. What is more likely is further agreements to work more closely together, and the possible splitting of the OICE with AC winning a section to its politics and a new organization. The political questions that are up for discussion are the conception of the revolutionary party, working class strategy and tactics, the use of the united front, and how to intervene in the social movements.

The other aspect of AC's strategy and the most important part is its work in the unions and the work place. AS militants operate primarily in the CC.OO. and secondarily in the CNT. Inside the unions and in the work place in general they raise the following questions in as concrete way as possible: workers' democracy, opposition to the Pact of Moncloa, support to the social movements, demands for labor amnesty.

Spain

Specifically their strategy at the work place is to participate in and build the general assemblies of all workers and maintain them as seats of workers' power alongside the unions. The work in the unions as well and will run as union officers in the elections, in December.

AC has meetings, political forums, events to which it brings contacts of the group. It also sees its paper as key to growing in this period and as key to developing a revolutionary political pole in the working class.

AC's overall assessment of the general situation in Spain and their own prospects ranged from somewhat pessimistic in Madrid because of the difficulties of breaking workers from the Communist Party, to moderately optimistic from a Mercedes Benz militant in Barcelona to very optimistic from another militant in Barcelona. The reality is that it is too early to speculate, and there are too many unanswered questions. The next year should make a big difference after union elections, deeper discussions and meetings with other revolutionary groups, and the deepening of the crisis.

AUTONOMY AND NATIONALISM

The movement for local autonomy for the different areas of Spain that have their own culture and even language in some cases is quite large. This is not only true in Catalonia and the Basque country where it has historically been true, but in all areas of Spain today. It is not a question of independence or separatism except for a small minority in the Basque country. Just recently in the first week of December following a demonstration in Malaga around autonomy for Andalusia where two workers were killed by the police, there has been a general strike in Malaga for one day and a one hour general strike nationally in support of Malaga workers. The disturbances continue even now in the middle of December. This is an important question for workers, and some of the demands for autonomy will probably be granted by the government.

THE FUTURE

The next 2-3 years will be very significant. The economic crisis will continue to deepen. The Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) will be the next government, and the Communist Party will continue to move rightward. The Communist Party and the PSOE are the two major signers of the Pact of Moncloa that the government uses to make the workers pay for the crisis. Worker militancy will continue to grow, including factory occupations, strengthening of neighborhood organizations, and most importantly today, the unions. The union elections will provide the basis for a stronger working class organization and coordination as the struggle increases. None of this will be continuous ~~xxx~~ or even. There will be ups and downs, but the direction generally is clear.

The real question is the Communist Party and whether it will be able to carry its working class militants with it. This, of course is partially dependent on the existence of a credible revolutionary alternative that can be a real pole for CP militants disenchanted with the Party's conservative politics. The CP holds many of the cards inside the working class, especially through its political domination of the Worker's commissions. The question is workers power vs. the Communist Party.

We will not attempt to speculate about the possibilities. The situation is still too new, too apolitical and too fluid to hesitate an answer. But, it is not like Portugal, and that is good. There is a long political revolutionary tradition in Spain, the economy, with all of its problems is stronger, and the overthrow of fascism did not come after years of colonial wars, but peacefully over a 4 year period of time. Lastly, there is time - at least two years to build a credible revolutionary alternative, and we would be generally correct to be optimistic about the possibilities for the working class in Spain at this time.

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within the framework of International Socialism.

4) An understanding of the use of L/P as a constant reflection of our work and politics in National and world affairs. A living "Text" for contacts of our class analysis approach to all racial Liberation.

The above listed priorities are not in the main peculiar to Blacks in marxism particular. Still a question of priorities as they now stand should be discussed.

As a Black in the IS I am in accord with the decision to put some emphasis and resources into recruitment of Blacks. It is the necessary first step in the direction of achieving the goal of a multi-racial organization in something other than name only. Given the location of the centre, my understanding of the perspective is even broader. Add the fact of my being Black, and being "anted" and there emerges a certain rosy picture of self fulfilling "Prophecy". "Blacks" will be in the vanguard of the next American Revolution. Makes me feel warm all over. Alas, the Revolution will not be culminated from this emotional milieu. I therefore feel I must deliver myself from the indulgence of "feelin' good". It is my responsibility as a socialist and a Revolutionary to examine the facts in the light of reality. I certainly would like to believe that Blacks will be the Vanguard of the Revolutionary movement in the US, However I see no evidence of this "masoch" on the horizon.

What I do see is Blacks still in the pocket of the DP. Still tied to the illusion of reformism, reinforced by the rhetoric of "house niggers" and opportunist. What movement there is among Blacks is most certainly not in our priorities, but rather among the unemployed or the fragmented left. Any semblance of mass movement by Blacks is orchestrated not by Blacks themselves but by established institutions. That puts the IS squarely in confrontation with it's own politics. A reevaluation is in order. The primary move in that direction requires a change in thinking. To be a truly multi-racial or multi-national organization (a question that should not be a question) we must modify our top priority from the narrow label of "Black" recruitment, to that of non-white recruitment.

This is not to take away from the importance of recruiting Blacks, but rather to say that our assessment of the role Blacks will play in the second American Revolution will not guarantee the "prophecy" It is therefore unrealistic to have Black priorities in an overwhelming "Chicano" region. We must therefore be flexible in our approach to racial composition of recruitment, yet rigid in our Revolutionary goals. The true test of our politics is not dependent on our ability to predict the "front runners" It does depend on our ability to articulate all struggles within the framework of the class. What must be under-

though one particular race may be responsible for the initial movement, it does not mean that they desire it that way. In short, the struggles of the 50's and 60's would have gone nowhere without it's multi-racial character. By the same token a purely Black recruitment approach to priorities in such areas as West Coast and New York where there are large Chicano populations, is something less than realistic. Not only should we reorient toward the broader concept of non-white recruitment but we should prepare ourselves to teach Spanish to at least 10% of existing membership in areas where the Chicano population exceeds 100,000.

There is real working class movement in the American Chicano population. Movement that far exceeds that of Blacks, with the exception of South Africa. Not only at this time, but well into the foreseeable future, it is the Spanish speaking people who hold the keys to driving a wedge in working class reliance on the two party system in the US. None (with the exception of the American Indian) are more deeply effected by past and present Govt. policies of exploitation and exclusion. In the West and Southwest they are also in the position to provide momentum within the trade unions and American agribusiness. Even the farm belts of Mich. and Ohio base a large part of their profits on the cheap Chicano labor pool. The explosive nature of the Barrio, coupled with movement already underway in American agribusiness represents a conducive composition to establish the "Socialist Culture" capable of halting the move to the right along racial lines within the class. That the increased pressures of continued scarcity, escalating unemployment, along with the "Employers Offensive à Bakke" will produce further right-wing reaction is inevitable. The language barrier that now exist between these two major non-white populations can only accerbate the situation.

Now is the time to sink Socialist roots into the most forward elements of all non-white movement in America. Now is the time to take advantage of this so-called "slow" period to establish within the IS a truly multi-racial and multi-national class character. It is the organization with the multi-national working class face that stands the best chance of checking developing rightward tendencies within the class and further fragmentation of the Left.

The ties we build today along the lines of interjecting Socialist "Culture" within all third world groupings, will serve as cohesive "class" recognition for future struggles.

In "struggle"

Al F

For the attention of the C. C.
"The Myth of Democratic Centralism"

The need to take Democratic Centralism out of the realm of mythology and put it into practice within this organization is critical. Practices of those in position of leadership (commonly known as the LC) are anything but Democratic, especially in the area of open discussion and debate.

Repeatedly this body has construed its function as the instrument of the will of the Convention, to range far wider than anyone in their right mind could conceive. It does not require a high degree of political sophistication to see in some of these practices, the very forces at work that we as an organization are trying to overthrow. By that I mean even the Capitalist system makes periodical noises about the "Peoples" right to know! Alas, this is not the case with the LC.

ie, the rank and file are "not" to know certain things about our organization. We are to believe "Censureship" is not only good for us, but a necessary tool to allow the fractional bodies to function. In plain english, we cannot do our work if we know there are political and personal conflicts within the organization. Therefore we will not be allowed to decide for ourselves which is which. The LC will do that for us.

I have been privileged to attend two Conventions since my first contact with the Is. Neither to my recollection extended such exclusionary rights to the elected leadership. Not in the area of suppression of documents, nor in the area of political discussion. Still, the right to be heard in the internal bulletin is "overly" vulnerable to mistakes in production. Mistakes that allow one side of an argument to be heard (usually the LC side) while opposing arguments are left for the "Next" edition.

Such practices are contagious and projected throughout the divisional bodies of the organization. So are the same weary excuses for covering up the truth and limiting debate and discussion. We are not a debating society, it is bad for morale, people cannot function in conflict, are some of the reasons advanced for the arbitrary censorship. Nothing could be further from the truth or more unrealistic! On the one hand we are a "Revolutionary Combat Organization" with full knowledge that if we are successful, blood will be mixed with the politics. While on the other hand this hardened "Cadre" is unable to cope with or digest the fact that we are subject to internal short falls that culminate in political and personal conflict. Add to this the paranoid fear of another faction fight and the inherent dangers of such policies are brought into clear focus. Nothing can do more to insure "fractionalism" than the suppression of dissent, debate, and the truth. The seeds of organizational destruction may be sown from within, or out, but it is the nature from that guarantees destruction.

What then is the solution? Shall I go on reiterating incidents of the malady?

~~xxxxxx~~ To do so would only reinforce the position taken by the leadership. I would rather demonstrate the ability of the rank and file to think for itself. There are political reasons for the detrimental tendencies of our leadership bodies past and present. Those tendencies are fueled by the warped concept of leadership itself. Not only have we produced a microcosm of Capitalist leadership norms, but have improved upon them. We have substituted Capitalist ideology with Marxist rhetoric plus. The plus being the addition of the "Guru" mystique. Being a political "Guru" means you have attained a certain level of political sophistication. This high plane allows you to look down in all your benevolence and spoon feed the special blend of "Pab" the rank and file is able to absorb. If this sounds familiar it should. It is a direct carry over from the Capitalist system, the leadership of which is forever protecting the people from the hard realities of life. Are we to do the same? If our concept of leadership is so narrow, what can we hope to replace Capitalism with?

Except the vision of the Revolutionary Party encompass this total and complete change we will blueprint our own failure. Only with the clear understanding of the need for creativity throughout the structure of the organization can we garner the strength for the task ahead. That means a leadership constantly aware of itself as the forward element of the working class, nothing more, nothing less. Such a leadership must be sensitive to the trends and forces at work within the class. This requires a constant interchange of information, assimilation, evaluation and action, all based upon a free flow through the Democratic arteries of the organization. To put it graphically, we must create a human "Computer": One capable of meeting and handling all the needs of the party and class. This includes addressing ourselves to internal conflicts as well.

To maintain the continuity of the class, its forward element, the secondary leadership, and the workers being exposed to the culture of class consciousness must not be allowed to separate. For the Revolutionary Party there are no valid reasons for one element to separate itself from the others. However, the strength of all elements are directly dependent on the ability of the most forward element to develop the most backward. This is exactly opposite of what most of us have been trained to envision as leadership. Any excuse for closing down the arteries of Democracy within this organization stunts the development of the rank and file, and is counter Revolutionary in nature. Even now when we are little more than a fly speck on the world scene, people are making all sorts of miscalculations as to where we are on the road to revolution. These misconceptions are causing all sorts of Capitalist rashes break out on our leadership bodies as they react to criticism:

Some concrete examples of the manifestations of the "Guru" approach to leadership: The plenary session of the recent IS convention, where I and an attorney tried in vain to get a Bakke' resolution on the floor. We were steamed rolled into silence on the pretext of "no time". This father knows best attitude resulted in a IS leader uttering a racist tirade from the floor of the convention. Proof that subjects deemed too controversial to discuss do not disappear. They erupt! This top down concept of leadership also surfaced again in Cleveland during the SALC clothing drive pick-up in which I drove the truck on a three city pick-up and Demo. The same leadership that could not discuss Bakke' on the floor of the convention, could not turn out any black workers for the SALC demo either. On to Pittsburg I had trouble with the truck we rented and was do to exchange the unite in Pittsburg. The last of many break-downs in route culminated in a stall-out within 8 blks of M.P.s house. I phoned him. "Why are you calling me?" The comrade took great pains to explain that he had nothing to do with the planning of drive. Even though I explain the difficulty and could not separate in my own mind that I was an ISer first and a member in several periphery organizations second I was unable to convince my comrade. The silence maintained by the leadership in the area of internal conflict had still another effect. The trip organized by SB in Detroit had me scheduled to stay overnight (you guessed it) at MP's house who had a strict hands off policy on the SALC pick-up along with some other community work in his area. In other words SB did not know he was sending me into a hornets nest. The warped concept of leadership had made full circle. From the IS to the periphery and back to the periphery again ~~to the IS~~ IS again.

On the Cleveland Convention fiasco I asked an ISer about how he felt since we had obviously missed the boat in teaching the right lessons in our dealings with the IS leader. We had not been able to strike out racism in the trade unions as we had struck at corruption. "It's not our fault" he said. "We had nothing to do with the fact that he is a racist". This disclaimer of any IS responsibility was totally unrealistic as well as untrue. I myself had been instrumental in getting this particular leader into the position he now holds. On countless occasions AT and others such as DW when he was in Detroit spent hours with the subject teachin him and others to rewrite successful by-laws. Yet this close and repeated contact work was not seen as an opportunity to teach the fallacy of believing in race as a valid tool for reform in the union. The destructive role that racism plays in organized labor was obviously not touched upon. It must also be rembered these were not just new rank and filers like myself (who had only limited contact) but seasoned leaders within the IS. Here we have the classic example of those who would destroy a system that produces such evils as racism afraid to illuminate that goal in the presence of their contacts. Why? Because they do not see themselves as leaders trying to create other leaders. Rather they see ~~themselves~~ themselves prototypes. The only difference being they are willing to lead for less. In reality there is little difference in the two. Each believes they lead because they know more than those who follow. How absurd! The act of leading is in the main dependent upon the position you happen to occupy within the structure of the overall general movement of ~~themselves~~ those who happen to be traveling in the same direction. The moment you lose sight of the direction and wander off on another tangent such as entrenchment, you are not moving at all! There is such a nice thing about movement. When it is happening everyone knows it. When it is not everyone knows that too. Everyone except the leaders apparently. Because when we are not moving

leaders like ~~the~~ DL will put out documents that tell us we ~~xxxx~~ are. Of course if I wrote all the questions along the ~~xxxxxxxx~~ line of march I wanted every-one else to take then I too at least would appear to lead. However, let me be the first to say that I can think for myself and I don't think all the right questions were asked. Nor do I think much of the answers! I too agree that the use of Patric at the Cleveland convention was a move forward. The only thing I question is the direction of that movement. After all, to a Revolutionary, direction is all! Any movement except in the direction of revolution, is considered counter-revolution--ary.

What we have here is the Capitalist concept of leadership with all the inherent tendencies. Arbitrary censorship, limitation of discussion and debate, the ever present entrenchment which demands that the troops be told (repeatedly) that there is movement in the right direction. Yet in Pittsburg this kind of leadership has a new black comrade looking upon a white comrade as an enemy. Both in the same organization, both supposedly heading in the right direction, but only one is willing to discuss just which way is the way to achieve the journey's end. In California comrades are being categorized as "far-out" because they question, probe, and debate the tactics and direction of this organization. Yet this right to know, to question is the life blood of the organization. Make no mistake about it, Democracy is nothing if it is not exercised.

Workers Power

In my travels throughout the organization, there has been a consensus of opinion that the paper though improved, is not quite reaching the mark as a Revolutionary organ. Chief among these complaints is the lack of political content. Next is the claim that it is centre oriented. People feel left out. On the other hand the leadership says those who complain the loudest are incapable of meeting deadlines. They never have and never will! Suffice it to say I believe this is a crow of Bullshit. * If it is true and we have comrades that are incapable of functioning within certain normal parameters of our work, then we are all lost. On the west coast I met people capable of anything, just like the people throughout the organization. I therefore offered my suggestion to the effect that paper should devote specific space to the various regions. That there should be logos such as "IS East West, North, and South" In the case of the Westcoast there would be a sub-division south for LA and north for the bay-area. I am of the opinion that the paper should be a reflection of the organization and the activities of the organization. I lean toward the belief that real sales and usage of the paper is directly tied to the degree of participation the branches and their periphery contribute to it. Some say this idea is divisionary. That we do not want to divide the paper up. I obviously do not agree with this concept at all. I see the paper already divided. Perhaps fragmented is a better word. There is no flow, no continuity to the politics. If we

on the one hand can understand that our past sales figures were not sustainable, we should also understand why. When you sell primarily to strangers, your ~~xxxxxxx~~ sales will reflect that kind of relationship. When you build your sales on the pride of those who participated in it's production and content, they will be real sales. They will not need a ~~xxxx~~ pamphlet to tell them how to use it in their work. It will be a direct reflection of their work. It will also be a reflection of the organization as a whole. Contacts and members of periphery organizations will not have to go through all the changes some comrades now feel they must before we "spring" the WP on them. The skills that can be taught and learned by all concerned is of tremendous value to a leadership that wishes to teach that much desired trait. The paper like the organization that calls itself Revolutionary, should be a living breathing example of our ability to maintain a recognizable communication between the most advanced and the least advanced elements within the class. Nothing less is acceptable. Any breakdown in that communications will not be bridged with a pamphlet.

Summary

Just to make my position clear to any and all comrades I will repeat what I said earlier. I can think for myself. I find all regions of this organization useful and with something to offer. I do not take the politics of any completely without question, and that includes the centre. The only hope I hold out for this organization is it's ability to keep open the arteries of Democracy and the free flow of information and truth. Only with the "encouraged" enlightened participation of us all can we create the kind of human computer necessary to in the end bring about the one Revolution to end all Revolutions. There is nothing I fear from the vast arsenal of the state so much as the slow strangulation of Democracy with all the attendant excuses put forth for it's death. IS excuses are just as deadly.

Yours in "Struggle"

Al F.

THE REALITY OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

DL for the EC

It is a healthy sign that our members are concerned about the group. Since Al has raised questions about the democratic functioning of our group, we welcome this opportunity to reply to them. However we believe he has reacted in an extreme fashion to some of the problems which have arisen.

First to the specifics:

1) Regarding getting a resolution on Bakke to the floor of a recent rank and file convention, Al writes, "We were steamed rolled into silence on the pretext of 'no time'." The organization that held that convention has its own leadership and its own organizational structure. It is our understanding that that rank and file group ;as discussed the convention and believe the last session was poorly planned and did not leave enough time for discussion. The chair of that meeting attempted to cut off debate, it is true; the reason was because there was no time, it was not a pretext. Al says this resulted in a "racist tirade" by a ~~MMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM~~ rank and file leader on the floor. That "tirade" was an objection by a white union activist to Black caucuses. I believe it is an issue on which the rank and file group has no position. The rank and file group is a broad organization, which while it has an excellent position on discrimination, also includes many workers with racist attitudes. It would have been good if the issue of black caucuses could have been discussed at that convention, probably best if it had been first discussed in a workshop before coming to the floor. The white union members might still have disagreed-- and it would have been his democratic right to do so, though we think he's wrong. He might have ~~xx~~ thrown a fit, or another tirade. It is democracy which would have allowed us to discuss it with him. But there was no time.

The chair exercised democracy in the meeting calling for procedural motions to deal with various items left on the agenda. A motion to make the discrimination workshop one of the few items to be discussed failed. ERA and Pension got priority, democratically.

2) Al states that no Black workers from a certain union came to the SALC demo in Cleveland. It is well known that we have little work among those union members locally in Cleveland because of the great amount of time given to taking on national responsibilities. It is unfortunate--but not surprising--that there were no Black members of that union at the demo. The same might also have been true in other cities. A complain is not enough. We need a political program for getting those Black union members into the movement and into the IS. We hope Al will contribute to the development of such a program.

3) Al states that he did not know he was going into a "hornets nest" in Pittsburgh. He should have been briefed on the situation there if it would have affected his work. There had been difficulties in that branch; the EC intervened to work out a solution. ~~xx~~ Al attacks MP in his document. That is poor. It is the kind of incident which no member in the country can evaluate on the basis of Al's remarks, and which can only produce a flurry of charges and counter charges. ~~MP~~ MP is generally one of our most responsible members, a member known for conscientiousness and reliability. If there were difficulties, it is the fault of the EC for not having worked out the trip with the local organizers. We apologize for the inconvenience and irritation.

4) With ~~xx~~ regard to the rank and file activist who Al feels the IS failed to engage in political discussions on the race question. First, Al also worked with him and therefore bears some of the responsibility if that's the case. Second, the man's partners in his own local include a couple of Black union members. Third, we may have failed to convince him, however it would be surprising if the issues had never come up. If it did fail to come up--then we were wrong. Al has brought this issue to our attention and in the future we should try to raise the race issue politically. However it must be done on the basis of a working

2-2-2

relationship over time.

5) Al says that some California comrades are characterized as "far out" by the center. Al says this is because they "probe and debate" the issues. It is true that some of those comrades are regarded as "far out", but because they hold positions which represent the sectarianism and new left politics of the past of the organization. Not because they probe.

6) In the section Workers Power Al raises some legitimate criticisms and suggestions. It is certainly true that the paper is best used when it involves our members and our periphery, their real work, can be written by, read by, and sold to people involved in on-going activities. We should try to use the paper more, and in that way.

However, there are some mistakes in Al's approach. The paper is not oriented to the "center", certainly not to the political center. But it is aimed at the center of our work--that is the industrial mid-west, the major industrial unions, the blue collar working class of mid-America. The coasts will necessarily not be equally represented in a paper with such a focus. They should be fairly and adequately represented--but not equally. The LA branch for example has some small amount of student work on the UCLA campus, we don't expect that will find its way into our ~~paper~~ paper--the rank and file work done there must find its way into the paper.

Sometimes the fault for poor coverage has been the center's. Often it has been the fault of the coast. For example, there was a national rank and file campaign in ~~the~~ the Bay Area around the ~~SW~~ Wards contract--but we never got a story about it. Hopefully things will improve.

Some generalizations:

Now to go back to some of the claims that Al makes early on in his document. He sees in the IS "... the very forces at work that we as an organization are trying to overthrow." He says: "Not only have we produced a microcosm of Capitalist leadership norms, but have improved upon them. We have substituted Capitalist ideology with Marxist rhetoric plus...It is a direct carry over from the Capitalist system..." And he implies that the practices of the EC are "counter-revolutionary."

First this is wrong theoretically. Capitalist ideology is one of the ways the capitalist class defends its position in society. Capitalist ideology supplements the two key powers of the capitalist class: its role as the owners of private property and its role as controller of the state. The IS is a group of workers committed to overthrowing capitalism. The leadership has no special relationship to the means of production to defend; it has no coercive powers which ideology supplements.

Undemocratic practices in social democratic groups (The Socialist Parties of Europe) or Stalinist groups (The Communist parties and Maoist groups) result from the special relationships of the leaders of these groups to the means of production. The socialist parties are based on the trade union bureaucracies and the aristocracy of labor and communist parties are based on the bureaucratic ownership of the state and property (or their relation to such states). The IS has no such relation to the ~~trade~~ trade union bureaucracy or any foreign state.

It is possible to have a bureaucratic voluntary association. But that is usually based upon its isolation from the real world and stagnation; the Spartacist League is such a bureaucratic little group. But our group has a dynamic relationship to the real world, growing and developing work. We are constantly attempt to change the balance of forces in the group and create the basis of new leadership. It is true that capitalist attitudes: authoritarianism, hierarchy, racism, sexism, and so on influence our group--we live in ~~a~~ such a world. But we fight against those influences.

3-3-3

So much for theory. Now for practice.

If anything our group is ultra-democratic. The last two conventions each saw large caucuses (the convention opposition, the political solution caucus, the left faction). The group had an opposition with a split perspective--the left faction (today the ISO). The group was so "democratic" that ~~ix~~ it nearly let the Left Faction--the ISO--destroy our political tendency because we didn't act swiftly and decisively to kick them out. Our political tendency was nearly destroyed by that--something which would have set the American workers movement back years. Thousands of pages of opposition documents were printed for those two conventions.

Since the convention, different political positions have arisen in the group. One political minority (SZ, JJ, EB, JB) and others have submitted and had published in bulletins and fraction documents scores if not hundreds of pages of material. Another group of members (GW, JW) also published dozens of pages of material. None of these positions has been stifled.

Recently the EC has initiated a political discussion on the basis of draft documents, sending those documents not only to the CC but to a number of other leaders of the group, documents which have circulated at large in the organization. The reason was to get the fullest input from the cadres of the organization.

We recently proposed changing the CC and adding to this leadership body, the highest outside the convention, several leaders of our external work, several members who have not before sat on such a body. This was an attempt to bring forward new leadership, including Black, worker and women leaders. Our motion passed changing the CC,

~~yx~~ You refer several times to "gurus". There are no "gurus" in the IS. There are sects built around gurus--the OL (Klonsky), the RCP (Avakian), the SL (Robertson). In their pathetic little way they immitate the Stalinist cult of the personality, or the Orthodox "Trotskyist" caricature of it. We have no gurus, want none. We have some respected leaders and hopefully will develop more.

Your concerns about the group are legitimate. Your reactions to the problems are extreme. Your characterization of the leadership is irresponsible.