



BULLETIN

NO. 5  
FEB. 1  
1970



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Urbana, Illinois

## INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS BULLETIN NO. 5

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NOTE: Further documents of the National Committee meeting will be published in a special bulletin soon.

### CONCERNING THE NATURE AND USE OF THE I.S. BULLETIN I

This publication is the internal discussion bulletin of the I.S. Contrary to the impression some comrades have apparently had, it is not just a bulletin of the NAC. If this impression has been holding you up from writing a political document or discussion article, get out your typewriter!

As newly appointed bureaucrat in charge of the bulletin, I hope to get back to a regular bi-weekly publication. Articles should be submitted typed on Gestetner stencils if at all possible. I am not inclined to type your 20 page document (or even your 3 page document) for you. Please leave a margin of at least 3/4 of an inch from the edge of the stencil (i.e. slightly more than the guide marks).

Wayne Pierce

Perspectives and Tasks of the International Socialists  
by Joel Geier

(The following document is meant to be only an evaluation of the changes which have occurred in the radical movement since our last convention in order to chart some direction for IS activity in the coming year. It makes no pretensions at having a complete understanding of what to do. That can only come from gaining experiences, drawing conclusions and generalizing from work in this "new objective situation." My only aim is to begin that process and to overcome the current unconscious drift among comrades who had been active in the student radical movement.)

The last convention of the IS took place in June, on the heels of the greatest student upsurge in this country's history. The current NC, 6 months later, takes place when the student and radical movements are at a low ebb. The campuses today are quieter than at any time since the early 60s. Throughout the fall semester there has been a total absence of significant struggle at any college. This is not just true of explicitly radical struggles and confrontations, but also of the poor showing of the peace demonstrations this fall, the further retreat of the peace movement into a shell artificially maintained by the YSA, and even the miserable failure of the much vaunted, liberal Movement for a New Congress, to get off the ground. While at some schools, particularly places which had been generally isolated from the mainstream of the radical movement, the movement continues to grow and to engage in modest activities, at most places, particularly what were the movement centers there is not only no significant struggle, but practically no radical activity at all. With the exception of the revolutionary, ideological sects, practically no organized groups have survived this decline.

The decline and eventual disintegration of the radical-student movement, unless it were to sink roots in the outside society, and the working class in particular, is something the IS predicted long and often. It is one thing to predict, it is another to have to live through the disintegration. When confronted with the disintegration the initial response of most ISers has been to unconsciously deny it, and to hope or act as if this were just another one of those periods of lull, so common in our experience with the student movement cycle. Previous upsurges of students have generally been followed by waves of demoralization and inactivity. All of us who have been active in this student movement have seen repeated the cycle of eruption, lull, eruption fairly often. In the lull periods, the organized radical groups continued to function, to recruit, and to await or prepare the next upsurge. Almost without exception the radical groups were incapable of organizing the broader student layers who participated in the eruptions into ongoing organization and activity. Nonetheless they were able to grow with the eruptions, and with steady work, even during the lulls. The eruptions usually left in their wake lulls which were lulls only relatively speaking - the level of student activity during the lull was usually greater than what it had been before the eruption. The lulls themselves were usually due to 2 factors: the need for most students not just to return to normal school concerns, but to make up work lost during the period of heated activity and the demoralization which usually set in with the recognition of student powerlessness and isolation-- even if this only intuitively felt rather than being a conscious political position.

The suddenness and completeness of this lull, however often predicted, has caught most of us off-guard. The total lack of movement activity has affected even our cadre with demoralization or time-marking. This is so not just for campus ISers but also for comrades active in those movements which may have existed off-campus but were heavily dependent for their dynamism on the campus radicalization, such as the anti-war and women's liberation movements. Many comrades have generally tended to react to the lull by deciding that now was their time to put their school or personal

(Perspectives)

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lives into shape; that there was no point in bucking the general apathy; now was the time to take it easy, politically speaking; they would return to activism when the tide turned. This reaction so common in the movement, the milieu which surrounds and sustains us, inevitably seeped into the IS as well. However wrong this attitude may be for revolutionaries to take during a lull, however understandable, is not the real question. The problem that confronts us is that this "lull" is not just the downward trend of the usual cycle but probably represents a fundamental change in the student-radical movement.

During lulls, between mass confrontations and struggles which mobilized large parts of the campus, movement activity continued. On some campuses, some groups and issues declined while other issues and groups germinated. Activity was at a slower pace than during the eruption but soon caught up with or surpassed what had been the level of movement activity before the eruption. Things would be characterized by the searchings for new political directions and targets, the laying of plans for new activities, and ongoing although usually informal political debate. Although there was sluggishness, the movement as a whole awaited future developments with buoyancy and optimism. The totalness of the current decline indicates a social phenomena, not a lull. All campuses, all issues, all organizations have been affected. Broad groups have disappeared. Most of the campus radical leadership has vanished. None of the events of the last few months - Canada, the resumption of bombing, Panther shoot-outs, etc. - have sparked even minimal motion. A wave of apathy and demoralization has swept over the movement and the campuses. With it has come a rush away from political concerns on all levels, a retreat from all politics - revolutionary, radical or liberal- and a return to involvement with personal concerns and personal solutions.

The next period, barring some unforeseen upsurge which is not impossible but is unlikely, and which nothing at the present time allows us to predict or prepare, will not be characterized by the mass student struggles of the 60s. But neither is it likely that there will be a return to the tranquility of the 50s when radicals, and even liberal organizations were isolated on the campuses. The problems which produced the radicalization - war, racism, sexism, alienation etc. - are still deeply felt. Loss of belief in a secure, stable existence in a basically healthy, impregnable, unchanging America has permeated all strata of society. Belief in the rightness or ability of the ruling class to solve fundamental problems has declined drastically, and with it has come the collapse of traditional values, ideology and morals for many of the young, and not so young. Nor is there a wave of prosperity or the fears of the Cold War period to cement over the cleavages in American society. While the current decline of radicalism will probably generate a rebirth of cynical careerism and a rise in stock of traditional liberal "lesser evil" reformism, the disenchantment with American life even if takes non-political forms creates a climate in which radical and left-liberal consciousness continues to dominate the campuses.

#### INDUSTRIAL WORK:

The most important task of the IS in the coming period is to regear our work away from the campuses and towards the intergration of the IS with the ongoing struggle of the working class. This political task, which by and large the vast bulk of the organizations is politically committed to, is independent of the level of student struggle and was decided upon by the IS when the student movement was not disintergrating but was at its height. The shift to industrial work is not to "another arena" because the student movement is in bad shape and we need a new focus for activity. It was to be made even if the student movement was to continue with mass struggles. The only change that comes with the decline of the student

movement is that some of the excuses made for not carrying through on shifting to industrial work (the importance of the student movement, possibilities of large immediate recruitment, etc.) are now that much less valid.

The task of regearing the IS to working class activity has hardly begun. A few comrades have industrialized. The focus of the newspaper has increasingly changed so that it is fairly easy to sell among workers (more easily than on the campuses today), and it provides a means of back-up politically for the work of industrialized comrades. The organization gives more attention to discussing industrial and union questions. Some first steps have been made to coordinate the work of industrialized comrades nationally, but they are only first steps. These tangible results, while not a good record, are at least a start.

But a start is only a start, and if it remains at that level will accomplish little and endangers whatever gains have been made. The primary method of taking part in the struggles of the working class requires the industrialization of a significant part of the organization into ongoing day to day relationship with fellow workers. Strike support work, selling newspapers in front of factories, leafletting, etc however necessary and useful is the work of outsiders and is justified primarily if it can help us to recruit an industrial cadre. The talk of industrializing our membership has with a few significant exceptions remained talk. While we are not suggesting that students should drop out of school to industrialize, we are for those comrades who have marginal, or politically irrelevant jobs, or no jobs at all but exist on the fringes of the campuses, being industrialized in basic industry. In some cities the comrades have either attempted to get jobs, with little success due to the economic situation, or have waited to find other comrades who would be willing to industrialize with them, they quite understandably not wanting to enter an industrial situation alone, feeling that they would be politically isolated or ineffective due to lack of experience. We feel that the primary task of the organization is to make sure that such comrades are industrialized in politically meaningful situations, with a group of theirs with whom they can discuss their political problems, engage in activity, put out shop bulletins, etc. Since no amount of exhortation can remedy that situation, we propose that comrades who are willing to industrialize should relocate to a number of areas in which there will be other comrades working, so that they may go into particular factories as a group and not as individuals. Specifically we suggest that the next 5 comrades who are willing to industrialize move to Detroit and enter the same auto plant together. That after that the next 5 comrades to industrialize all move to Baltimore to enter the same steel plant. That following that targets be picked in Pittsburgh and Chicago.. Unless these or similar guidelines are adopted we will continue the pattern of comrades talking about industrializing but somehow never getting around to it, or going into a factory alone and becoming discouraged by isolation and the difficulties of factory work.

Beyond industrializing a significant part of the organization, the transformation of the IS into a group rooted in the working class requires changes in the life of our branches. While not all of our comrades will enter industrial jobs, their political work must become the primary political concern of the organization. The branches must be changed so that it is possible and desirable for ~~xxxx~~ comrades working in industry to bring their contacts to meetings, educationals, etc. Branch meetings should be such that the industrialized comrades

can discuss the political problems of their day to day work, and receive the support of the organizational resources of the IS for their work.

A concrete form of support the branches can provide for industrialized comrades is aiding them in the production of factory bulletins. The model for such factory bulletins should be those issued by the British IS and the French Lutte Ouvriere. Those bulletins appeal to workers by the immediacy of their discussion of shop issues, exposure of working conditions, reporting on local plant problems and struggles while at the same time also raising broader social and political questions. While not a panacea they can be used as a basis for grouping together shop militants, providing them with a voice and acting as a focus for political discussion among the militants we can get to join us in issuing them. Where comrades are industrialized and it is applicable to issue a factory bulletin, a group of student comrades should be assigned to work with them. That requires comrades who will familiarize themselves with the factory, industry and union of the particular shop so that they are capable of understanding its problems, helping in working with contacts made in that shop, and capable of meeting with, discussing with and helping the workers prepare and distribute a shop bulletin. While we are not asking student comrades to quit their ~~xxxx~~ studies and enter industry, we can expect that their first political concern be in aiding industrial work, rather than engaging in student politics. In reality the pace of such industrial support work is such that for outside-supporters there is plenty of time left over for the student work the campuses today afford. There is also no reason why close contacts of the IS, attracted to us because of our orientation to the working class and to worker's democracy as the key to revolutionary socialism, cannot be drawn into our industrial support work. The rising pro-working class sentiment on the campuses today has no focus and outlet. The IS would be in an excellent position to continue to recruit students if it were capable of providing them with direct links with working class activity and struggle.

#### CAMPUS WORK:

On the campuses the IS should maintain the perspective of looking toward the eventual reformation of a broad, national radical organization. Since we do not believe that it will be possible for the IS to take the leadership of the radical movement on the campuses our goal is the eventual formation of a broader group in which we can be the revolutionary Marxist wing - working together with independent radicals on a day to day basis proving to them the relevance ~~xxxx~~ and correctness of our politics in their ongoing struggles. Our orientation is that such a broad radical group while based on activism would have to be democratically structured, allowing for ongoing political and ideological debate and unlike the preceding student movement its politics should be based on a working class orientation. While that is what we would like to see occur, we do not expect to see such a development or even the initial steps toward it, in the coming year. Given the current malaise there is little likelihood of such a development. The remnants of the preceding student movement continue to exist. Their political predilections to adventurism, lack of any political coherence coupled with an inability to work with anyone with whom they don't totally agree with, etc., means that they would probably destroy any broad organization before it got off the ground. We have to expect the continued

disintergration of the SDS remnants, coupled with some new political which will probably begin off the campus, before there is any attempt made to form a new, national radical student organization.

The collapse of broad organizations of the type like SDS, or independent radical student unions, or most of the anti-war groups, has left in its wake a vacuum on the left. Practically the only organizations which have survived, with the exception of women's liberation groups, are the ideological cadre formations. None of the latter are today in a position, either numerically or politically, to entirely fill that vacuum. While it is not the case that broad layers of students will today engage in struggle, or join or follow the lead of a revolutionary group, it is true that those people who want to be active in the radical movement today have no home. The large number of activists and cadre elements who were created by the broad mass movement but did not join any of the ideological sects and have not entirely lost their interest in political activity have like many of our own members reacted to the disintergration of the student movement by burrowing in, waiting for better times. They will soon be confronted by the hard choice: either give up on politics for the foreseeable future, or begin to develop new political attitudes and work methods in order to be able to engage in political activity in this period. In this period the IS can attempt to fill a modest part of the vacuum on the left by providing leadership, activity and ideological sustenance for those radicals who in the past would not have been attracted to us, our ideas, or activities because we were not the mainstream of the radical movement. With the mainstream gone, some will be forced to join or work with one of the sects, or will be isolated from activity. This "advantage of backwardness" is one we didn't seek, but that we must use if we are to function and grow.

In a situation in which mass confrontations and mass mobilizations of the campuses are excluded, the IS must learn to develop new techniques and work habits to approach the campuses as they are today. Rather than awaiting a new student upsurge to solve our problems for us, we must ~~xx~~ start to engage in those modest activities which will initiate mass student activity but will begin to break down the lethargy of small numbers of students. We must be prepared to work in a milieu which will require long, painstaking effort, with little immediate, tangible result. We will have to ~~xxxxx~~ work in broader groups which rarely contain more than 15-30 other people, and these on an extremely low political level. Rather than expecting to see broad student organizations call demonstrations or initiate activity, the IS must be prepared to do so in those situations in which ~~xxxxx~~ no broad group exists or can be made to act. Such demonstrations will ~~x~~ rarely have more than 20-100 people at them. By the standards of the past they would be a failure. By the standards of the present when no demonstrations take place, they can act as a focus for propaganda and for drawing ~~xxxxxxx~~ independent radicals into activity.

Independent, modest activity by the IS is a necessity today, but it is no substitute for work in broader organizations, no matter how small. The IS should attempt to work in, and if necessary, sustain two types of broader organizations: women's liberation groups, and student labor committees. The general decline of the radical movement has impaired the activity of women's liberation groups. Nonetheless consciousness of women's oppression and sympathy to women's liberation has continued to grow and to spread, in however a distorted form, by the popular media. The result is that the women's movement has proven its viability in weathering the general decline. The general

AMENDMENT TO JOEL G.'S "PERSPECTIVES" DOCUMENT ... James Coleman

(NOTE: This was planned as a resolution on the student movement, before Joel G. prepared his "perspectives" document. I haven't yet seen Joel's document, but have heard an oral presentation of its major points. On the basis of the presentation, I am offering this as an amendment to Joel's section on "labor committees.")

(To summarize the points in common: Joel's presentation argued that IS has been disoriented by the sudden quiescence of the campus movement; that no return to the high level of activity of recent years can be expected in the immediate future; that our response should not be to quit the campus, but to mount an aggressive educational campaign combined with an attempt to launch modest activities, either through broader groups or, when necessary, in our own name; that our areas of activity should include women's liberation, the launching of "labor committees," and the calling of various actions on specific occasions [protest demos, etc.]; that this campus work should be in the context of a shift in the major work of IS branches to working-class work, especially backing up industrialized comrades.)

(This amendment views the perspective of building "labor committees" as inadequate in two respects: it is too narrow in scope to appeal to significant numbers of students, mainly because it is not transitional in its approach to students; and, it doesn't tap the significant resentments we can expect students to have in this period because of the impact of the social crisis on education itself. See below for expansion of these points.)

Our campus work, both educational and agitational, must be geared to the situation we have just analyzed - one of quiescence in the campus movement, combined with significantly greater general disaffection than existed in earlier periods. It will not do to continue to aim toward 1960's-style campus protests, i.e., to expect felt issues to quickly develop into major confrontations, polarizing whole campuses, etc. At the same time, we cannot simply propagandize around the importance of the working class, and thereby win people to work with us in our off-campus, labor-related work. This will indeed attract a few, but as will be argued below, we can expect the large mass of students to be more inward-turned, yet approachable at least in propagandistic work on the basis of their interests. Of course, we don't expect the general mass of students to be won to an active affiliation with our programs; but we do think that propaganda and agitation can make our ideas meaningful to large numbers, can make them see their own situation as linked to that of the workers' movement, and we think such propaganda can in some cases be built into serious campaigns.

The key to our work must be the situation on campuses as this is affected, in the lives of students - particularly those at the large state campuses, a different stratum from that reached by the Movement in the past - by the economic crisis we expect in this period. In addition to an intensification of the attack on workers' wages and conditions, we expect the crisis to take the form of a deterioration of social services. Indeed, this deterioration is already calamitously visible. This deterioration affects education as it affects other social ser-



VICES. It takes the form of a growing shifting of the expense of public education onto the shoulders of those being educated or their families. Tuition is raised as state governments see in this the only way past the unwillingness of legislators to raise taxes. Cutbacks occur - in admissions, often disguised as a raising of standards; and in faculty hiring. Faculty salaries are cut. The quality of education declines as does its "relevance" both for a new, more hip generation of students from white working class backgrounds, and especially for the specially oppressed, i.e., blacks and women. Moreover, as education in general is cut back, the special demands of the most deprived groups generate explosive tensions among families who see the right of education being taken away from their children "by the niggers" - rather than by the social crisis as is the actual case.

This crisis particularly affects the large state campuses, which have come to function as a way of rising a step or two on the social ladder for students from lower middle class and working class backgrounds. Paradoxically, the class background of these students does not in itself make them more likely to relate positively to workers' struggles - for they are most often looking for a way off the line; indeed, they are often unwilling to join purely politically-motivated protests, especially as these seem to disrupt the educational process: as one Chinese student at CCNY explained, "For me, it's this or life in a Chinese laundry." The economic crisis intensifies this; more students, even at elite campuses, are on scholarship or working part-time, and the combination of a precarious situation with the increased likelihood of repression (expulsion, suspension, or simply loss of job or scholarship which means the same thing) makes people less willing to risk their education for the general political-social concerns students have traditionally responded to. The same economic crisis, however, itself has begun to generate protests, such as the campaigns this fall against the tuition hikes at the state universities of Illinois. The crisis offers a way for socialists to speak to working-class-background students and to their families (workers). It offers, not a substitute for the broader issues we are used to agitating on - such as the war or racism - but a way to make these mean something...a way to show people, concretely, that their own lives are part of the social crisis splitting the country, and that the solution to their own grievances lies in building a link with the workers' movement.

We emphasize that the social crisis doesn't just offer some slogans or issues around which protests might, speculatively, be built. Rather, the crisis in education is real, it is here today, it is national in scope, it is generating both apathy and protest among students, and our program will have to take it into account.

We adopt a programmatic approach to the campus scene. This doesn't mean a list of demands conceived as the program for some student organization which we would like to see exist...we don't expect any major nationwide student radical groups of the SDS type to grow in the immediate future, and our approach is not to try to generate a new SDS. We expect (a) that our campus work will be done in smallish groups, most often single-issue protest groups, and often in our own name; (b) that a variety of different issues or actions will characterize our work rather than a single type of organization we try to build in all circumstances (such as "labor committees").

METHODOLOGY. "A programmatic approach" refers, rather, to the methodology (method???) of our work, and in fact, methodology rather than

some specific organizational form is the key to our campus work in this situation. Our method is, in our agitation and propoganda, to relate specific issues to the social crisis and its effect on students - the growing expense of education, its declining quality, the effect on working-class students and families, the intensified effect on the specially-oppressed. We build consciousness of the need for solutions in the interest of the vast majority, i.e. of the working class; and of the power of the working class as the key to attaining solutions. On this basis, we agitate for support of working-class struggles; similarly, on this basis we ask workers in struggle to support student struggles, from their own self-interest. We raise the slogans and demands which de-parochialize issues and turn them in a working-class direction - for example, in a protest against tuition increases, we raise corporate taxation and open admission, press for adoption of these demands, although of course, should they not be adopted, we continue to support the protest unless it takes a definitely reactionary course. At the same time, we link student struggles to broader social issues through relating both to the social crisis, i.e., we relate student issues to the economic crisis which causes them and to the war economy; we discuss war research in relation to the lack of funds for education, the lack of funds for research into solving social needs (the availability of funds for solving the social needs of the rulers) - and we relate the needs of specially-oppressed groups to the general lack of funds, admissions, etc. With this methodology, a variety of issues become organizeable - admissions, tuition, wages or availability of jobs for students; faculty salaries, cutbacks in hiring; organizing drives of campus workers, secretaries, etc. (their demands must be related to the general crisis of funding).

PROGRAM. As indicated above, methodology is the key to successful work in campus situations at present. The program which follows is the general set of demands which will guide our work (it is not a list which we try to get adopted in toto in every struggle or by every organization). We attempt to guide each struggle, or the work of committees of protest, and we lead in our own propoganda, toward the key concepts lying behind this program: FREE QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL; FUNDING THROUGH CORPORATE TAXATION; A WORKERS' PARTY AS THE KEY TO SOCIAL POWER. The general programmatic points around which we agitate and propogandize are:

- (1) Free quality higher education for all - open admissions to all higher education for black, brown, and white, male and female, working class as well as middle class; retraining for all workers at full pay, especially for the unemployed and technologically redundant.
- (2) Fund the expansion of education by taxing corporate profits; no passing on of taxes to the consumer through price rises.
- (3) End all forms of tracking in education. Expand special education for minorities. Make possible equal education for women - end nepotism rules, provide free, voluntary, client-controlled 24-hour child care for families of all students and staff; end racist and male-chauvinist guidance, admissions, fellowship, and hiring policies.
- (4) End research for war and repression. Fight to shift research to social needs such as mass transit, rebuilding the cities, etc., from the standpoint of human need and not business profit.
- (5) Decent wages, working conditions, and bargaining rights for

all university employees; the right to strike for all public employees; no injunctions, use of troops, etc.

And in our working-class support work based from campuses:

- (6) Independent organization of the ranks - struggle groups.
- (7) Wage increases without price increases, to combat inflation.
- (8) Guaranteed jobs for all. Full employment through shorter work week (30 for 40); equal pay for equal work, full access to all jobs; humanize working conditions, workers' control of production. Tax shift from workers to corporations.

(9) Independent political action of workers' organizations - for a workers' party based on shop-floor committees.

As mentioned above, we attempt to relate broader issues such as the war to the crisis in education. We don't do so in a sectarian manner, by counterposing our own demands to the demands in some struggle, but by educating about the social crisis and the need to reach to broader sections.

The implementation of this program may vary widely in different circumstances. We may be involved in a variety of different activities as a point of first contact with students - a student struggle that breaks out (we do believe they will break out, although on a smaller and less generalized scale than in the recent past); a strike support effort; or our own propagandistic agitation. In each case, our general orientation is that we want to point toward operating dually: bringing to the campus a programmatic conception of the social crisis and its working class solution, as a way of making our ideas relevant; agitating around such solutions whether by simple propaganda or, in more favorable situations, raising such demands in arenas or trying to form groups to push for them; winning those students most attracted to our ideas to work with us politically. Second, together with the students we have around us, or such groups as may be formed or won to struggle around such programs, we orient positively toward workers' struggles as an expression of the interest of students - we bring student support, ask for workers' support for student struggles, etc. We attempt to form broader groups, though the type may vary - e.g., a strike support group, an open admissions committee, a campus labor committee whose functions would be strike support and/or aiding campus organizing efforts. Worker-support activity emerges as one focus of such an orientation, rather than the whole program. To argue that we need a program which speaks to the crisis as it affects the campus does not mean that campus programs as such are our sole focus. Advocacy of a program, however, as opposed to simply moralizing about workers, can help win students to working class politics. Working around such a program offers not only the possibility of our work making working class politics mean something to students, but also - and for this very reason - it is the best way to recruit students for ongoing worker-related activities. For this reason, this conception isn't "student-oriented" as opposed to "worker-oriented." Where the initial form of our activity is a strike committee or a "labor committee," we press for it to adopt a permanent existence, with a program both for labor and for the campus - motivating this, as here, as the way most effectively to reach students with working class ideas and to attract people through a campus program. Where our initial activity is around a campus issue, we similarly raise a fuller program as we go along, pressing for worker-

support actions and, where appropriate, going to striking locals, etc., for mutual support.

In summary, we see putting out propaganda around the social crisis as it affects campuses, and agitating for particular programs (e.g., open admissions), on the one hand; and orienting positively to working-class struggles, on the other hand, as the dual foci of our work on campus. We expect campus work to become a relatively less important part of our work in the next period, but not by downgrading or abandoning on-campus activity - rather, by the increasing importance of our industrialized work. Maintaining significant activities on campus - and doing so around a program which relates to campus - is in fact no contradiction to this basic direction. We will never have all our members industrialized, and our presence on campus is a means to recruit as well as, in its own terms, a contribution to maintaining a student flank, staving off repression etc., while the workers' movement gathers force. A program which relates to campus, finally, we see as the most effective way to reach students. The method of work sketched above is what is critical to a successful approach to campuses; the formation of "labor committees" we see as a possible tactic in favorable circumstances, but not a general line - in any case, however, where significant numbers of people can be attracted to such groups, what has been said above holds true for the "labor committees" as well: their own work is more effective if they have a programmatic approach to the campus by which to attract new people, relate positively to campus situations which can contribute new members, etc. Thus the method sketched here, of relating broader political issues and the worsening conditions of students lives through an analysis of the social crisis and its effects on education, is the key to our success in a new situation.

#### MOTIVATION: BRIEFLY, CONTRA THE "LABOR COMMITTEE" APPROACH

A national line of pushing for "labor committees," conceived as groups of students which do worker-support work, aid in campus worker organizing drives, educate about the working class, etc., would be a serious blunder. The enthusiasm for relating to the working class, which sprang up during Cambodia, had specific roots: on the one hand, a series of militant workers' struggles (which we expect to continue); on the other, a tremendous student explosion, which paradoxically generated consciousness of its own limited power. That is, last spring's labor committees were a spin-off from the huge struggle of the student movement. However, we cannot simply build off the new consciousness reached then: this consciousness abates, leaving a slight change in the consciousness of the student population as a whole, and a rather small residue of people who still have this consciousness, and will act on it. In the present collapse of all campus activity, the numbers of such people are reduced to near zero. Beyond this number, "labor committees" would be rootless both in the workers' movement and on campus: in the former, because they would not be based in the shops; in the latter because, in their very conception, one of presenting no program to the student movement, they would have little to say beyond propagandizing in the abstract...in effect, though surely not in intent, they would relate to campus in a hectoring, ultimativistic fashion - "if you really dig where it's at, you'll drop this bullshit and join the workers' movement, man." Further, they would have, over time, no real basis for continuing to exist independent of IS: they would function well in some particular strike, then, with the end of the strike, die - or comatize. Certainly they would not relate to the vast numbers of students at large state campuses who, we suggest, do not respond well to abstract political moralism.

STUDENT MOVEMENT -- VINTAGE FALL 1970

by Brian McKenzie & Rose Veviaca

The mass student strike of last May failed to generate a new organizational and political basis for the student movement. No organization, tendency, or perspective has been able to rekindle the spirit or militancy that characterized the student movement of six months ago. Not only did the pro-labor tendencies fail to crystallize, but even the widely publicized "responsible" liberal electoral campaigns could not draw students out of their apparent apathy. Neither Congressional candidates, the UAW, nor various sects -- with lengthy programs in hand -- have been able to create significant motion among students. In the wake of this fact, the annual Fall anti-war "offensive" was an embarrassing flop.

To a degree, this situation represents the negative side of the inherent instability of the student milieu -- the positive side being its explosiveness. Most ISers would agree that the intensity of the current slump is in large part due to the politics of the various tendencies in the student movement of the past few years. For all their differences, ultra-leftism, terrorism, liberalism, etc., have left a heritage of distrust of mass democratic self-organization and coherent political perspective that has sown confusion and directionlessness among left-moving students. At the same time, the student movement of the recent past has shown that even this confusion can express itself in action -- adventurism, terrorism, liberal campaigning, and working class-directed activity -- at various times or simultaneously.

What is unique about this year is the nearly total absence of organized radicals. In particular, those radicals that "led" the movement of the past few years have left the campus. SDS, RYM, Labor Committee and many others simply have no presence on campus this year. The only exception is the YSA, which has never acted as a campus ginger group in spite of its large role in the anti-war movement. It is not suggested that any of these groups could have organized serious activities, even of a sort we would be critical of or opposed to, but rather that virtually no political leadership exists on campus at this time. Mass left-liberal and even radical consciousness remains dominant but inactive. The experience of the past few months suggests strongly that the socialist organizations, ourselves included, are not strong enough to fill the vacuum. In all likelihood, another explosive and probably disorganized response to events will be required to generate a new student leadership or to place the socialist tendencies in the leadership of that movement. Whether or not the IS will be in a position to become a leading force, i.e., to intervene in and direct activity, depends heavily on what we do in the coming months.

At present, student ISers and ~~most~~ ~~agree~~ the IS as a whole reflect the demoralization of the student movement. Neither hell-bent enthusiasm nor detailed programs have been able to change the objective situation of the moment. The fact is that no degree of intervention or programmatic suggestion by the IS will set students in motion. While there is no reason to assume that the student movement is permanently dead, there is also no reason to assume that we can devise a program for reviving it. The question for us is how we prepare to intervene at the earliest moment and play a leading role in the next wave of student activity. In terms of issues or forms of struggle, the only thing that is predictable at this point is that we cannot

predict either. What is predictable is that, outside of the socialist and Stalinist groups that we must compete with -- above all the YSA -- there will be little or no experienced leadership or clear perspective. Furthermore, as new movements tend to form their ideas in relation to preceding movements, we can be sure of the ideas that will be discussed, proposed, and possibly carried out. Ultra-leftism, elitism in its various forms, and liberal reformism will all be on the agenda of the next resurgence in student activity. What then can the IS do to prepare itself?

In periods of relative inactivity the tasks of socialists necessarily become educational. When it is objectively impossible for us to recruit and build socialist cadre on the basis of our ideas in action, our praxis, we have no alternative but to recruit on the basis of our ideas alone on their own merits. There is no doubt that during periods such as the 1950's when this became the dominant mode of recruiting that both our politics and our organization suffered. We do not believe that we are now in such a period generally. We are not proposing, and would argue against, any withdrawal from active intervention in the student arena when such intervention is possible. At the same time, we are opposed to organizing the demoralization of our students cadre by desperately seeking programs of activity in a short-term period of inactivity and apathy. Rather, we propose that the IS student fractions establish a serious educational presence on campus. If we cannot intervene in the activities of students, we must intervene in their intellectual life in such a way as to establish ourselves as a serious political tendency. As most of our student cadre come from an activist milieu, there may be some feeling that to "retreat" to a primarily educational role somehow casts dishonor on our politics. This would be true if it were we who had led the retreat. Clearly, our intervention in the May student strike belies such a feeling. In our view, what is proposed here is not a retreat, since our current position is tenuous and confused, but a step forward.

What we are proposing then is that campus IS groups initiate a series of on-campus classes and forums designed to make our politics relevant to the re-emergence of student activity. The specifics of such classes and forums would be determined by the specific political situation on each campus; i.e., by whether YSA, PL, etc., was our most prominent opponent, the degree of liberal Dove support, etc. The general outline, however, should be fairly standard: classes on Marxism and Marxist politics (our historic politics) and forums on terrorism, liberalism (the Democratic Party, doves, etc.), women's liberation, black liberation, the working class today, etc. As the YSA is our primary national competition, the forums should be viewed as alternatives to the YSA "Educational Conference" approach wherein the audience is attracted on the basis of movement "names" and is treated uncritically to a parade of various irreconcilable positions. Wherever possible, our forums should deal with, and if possible involve students in, active off-campus struggles, particularly working class struggles. In this period of inactivity, our primary task is to assert our presence in the intellectual life of the student left in such a way as to prepare our active intervention in the active political life of the student movement. On those campuses where we have comrades our presence should be visible given the present context, and vital in its orientation toward future possibilities.

Footnote on activity: While it is impossible to predict what will cause the next burst, or even slight ooze, of student activity, we are aware of present and future labor actions (lettuce strike, steel strike), as well as actions by the anti-war and women's liberation movements. Whenever possible it is important that we build for these activities. At the same time it should be understood that, without another blunder by the ruling class such as Cambodia, these will not serve as a basis for a new student movement.

#### IMPLEMENTATION FOR NEW YORK

1. The student fraction and students' chapters. The New York student fraction has existed in a state of limbo since the beginning of the Fall 1970 term. Although its failure to meet has been the result of confusion and demoralization, in essence the current context of the student movement gives little to meet about. It is our position that the student fraction should continue to exist as a body with a convenor, ready to function whenever the context changes, but should not meet regularly now.

The various campus chapters should of course meet to plan and carry out an educational presence for their campuses. They will be directly responsible to the exec until the fraction begins to meet formally.

2. The Spring '71 term. Unfortunately it is too late to begin a serious educational campaign this term. (The holidays will be beginning shortly, then finals -- all of which generally mean a decreased responsiveness to political forums and educational.) However we must begin to plan now for a coherent and consistent educational campaign for the Spring term. This means that the campus chapters should work out a specific schedule for the educational forum series already passed by the exec. (It is of course understood that additions, subtractions, and substitutions should be made when relevant.) In working out dates and personnel, etc., plans should also be made for publicity. In addition to leafleting, school papers, the Village Voice back page, school radio stations, Workers' Power, etc., are all possibilities if plans are made in advance.

Chapters should work out a regular schedule for setting up lit tables and the regular sale of WE. (Chapters should let Dave B. know if WE is getting sufficient distribution, or if outside help is needed.) In addition, where there are sufficient personnel, a study group should be set up on campus. This is something that contacts can be brought to that is more immediate than the IS office and more intimate than forums. (Chapters can get help from the exec and from non-student comrades if plans are made well enough in advance)

It is important that the IS presence be on the campus, not some office somewhere that interested contacts are referred to. Students will be more interested in something that is ongoing where they are. A forum or a study group on the campus will seem more relevant to them and require less energy. As their interest increases, it will be easier to interest them in the organization as a whole and in its more centralized activities and educational.

The various campus chapters should work out a written perspective for the Spring term to be presented to the exec in two weeks (Dec. 23). Keep in mind that it is more important to have an ongoing presence

rather than a burst of activity and then a vacuum. If someone buys a paper and becomes interested he should be able to find us the following week.

3. Debates and Forums. Wherever possible IS chapters should begin to set up forums, along with other defined political points of view, on various topical questions, e.g. women's liberation, perspectives for revolution: the working class vs. terrorism, the Middle East, etc. These should be seen as counterposed in conception and style to the SWP-YSA style of Forum in which all points of view speak but never confront their differences ("We're all in the movement together"). The purpose of these forums is to attract a broader audience than an IS forum alone would do, but one to which we can push our politics aggressively.

As part of this push toward confronting other positions on the left, a major emphasis should be on debating the SWP-YSA specifically. This will be extremely difficult, as they have been continually unwilling to either debate us specifically or to get into political debates generally.

It is important that we begin to confront them with both the inconsistencies and the opportunism of their positions. We should attempt to schedule these debates as issues become current in the student movement, such as the Middle East.



A MATTER OF DEFINITION: Struggle Groups, Workers' Party  
and Other Terms in the Revolutionary Lexicon. Wayne Price NYC/IS, 11/70

"When I use a word," Humpty-Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty-Dumpty, "which is to be master - that's all."

Alice was too much puzzled to say anything.

--- Through the Looking-Glass

The purpose of this paper is to contribute to the I.S.'s internal discussion on our perspective for the working class by defining our terms. This paper will minimize criticisms of other positions as they will be largely implicit in my positive statements. The writer belonged to the NYC "Theory-Action Caucus" and, as such, supported the original "Baad" convention document-- with proposed amendments. I still hold the "TAC" positions, yet I can only claim to speak for myself.

STRUGGLE GROUP (good)

There are two types of working class organizations. One type is the broadly based, heterogeneous, mass organization, such as the trade union or factory council. This tries to get all the workers to join and to represent all of them. Its power lies in its numbers.

The other type is more narrowly based and homogeneous, such as a party or an intra-organizational caucus. It includes, at least, only those workers who agree with the organization's program and excludes all others. Also a revolutionary party or caucus limits membership to those who will actively work to spread its ideas. Its strength is basically in its program.

So far, I hope, no one will disagree with me.

Unfortunately, NOT A SINGLE DOCUMENT HAS SEEN THAT THIS ORGANIZATIONAL DICOTOMY APPLIES TO THE "STRUGGLE GROUP" CONCEPT. As a result the term has mushed together two different, although related, ideas.

On the one hand, there is a tendency for workers to take extra-union actions and form extra-union groups of the heterogeneous type. Examples: wildcats, informally organized political strikes (West Virginia miners), apolitical shop stewards struggles, factory councils. This tendency has appeared far clearer throughout Western Europe than here. Consider the Swedish miners' strike, where there was three-way negotiations: the union bureaucrats, the management, and the workers' (unnamed) organization! In a revolutionary situation, these "factory strike committees" ("soviets" in Russian) would be the basis for the workers' state. Obviously such groupings cannot be "organized" although we can try to provide leadership when they are created by the class.

What we can do -- on the other hand -- is help to organize an ideologically homogeneous group, which accepts some program, however minimal. Such a group, if it limited itself to intra-union activities, (running for election, attacking the misleadership, etc.), is called a union caucus. If it also tries to relate to the above types of mass extra-union struggles, it is what I will call a "political struggle group". (Alternate names requested; special prize for the best three!) What will it do, BESIDES running in elections, etc? For the benefit, especially, of the "Reorient" comrades: it will try to provide leadership for wildcat strikes; it will try to link up with other such groups in other industries and with student groups, black community groups, etc.; it will attempt to initiate independent political action without waiting to win the union election. The funny thing is that the anti-struggle group "Reorient" papers advocate every one of these activities! which certainly do not belong among the "traditional" activities of a "rank-and-file caucus". Rather it sounds like what I am calling a political struggle group. As the Scholastics put it, "A difference which makes no difference is no difference." Political struggle groups would not "attempt to be mass institutions of the working class" (M. Parker). Rather they would attempt to become the ELECTED MAJORITY CAUCUSES of the mass institutions of etc. What mass institutions? All of 'em, bar none: unions, factory councils, any workers' party based on unions or factory councils (as opposed to a --smaller-- party based on the political struggle groups themselves), etc. Before continuing this chain of thought, we have to consider the STATIFICATION OF THE UNIONS (bad)

The basic conflict of capitalist society can be expressed either in class terms--worker versus capitalist--or organizationally. That is, there are two social principles in conflict: the anarchy of competition between capitals, and the cooperation of labor within each capital. The latter is both created by the competition and dominated by it. The TENDENCY of bourgeois capitalism is towards one economic monopoly, merged with the state, and competing--economically and militarily-- with other national capitals: complete state capitalism. (In my opinion, such a society would differ from present-day Russia only in the existence of "private property" among the ruling class; a distinction of merely academic interest to the workers.) Only the workers' revolution can make cooperation the primary principle social organization.

Again I think that we all agree on that (except for the parentheses; one can't have everything).

The Permanent Arms Economy, the Stalinist demoralization of the workers, and other factors have had two effects on the private-capitalist economies since WWII: (1) a qualitative increase in the growth of bureaucracy, monopoly, and state merger with the economy; (2) a long period of prosperity, permitting, even requiring, political democracy and union rights. Both have

had important impact on the unions.

Hal Draper has described the first effect in several places; calling it--mistakenly in my opinion-- the "bureaucratic collectivization of capitalism". (Mistakenly because the concept of

"b.c." was developed to emphasize the supposedly unbridgeable DIFFERENCES between our system and the Russian system.) Strangely enough, the "Reorient" comrades explicitly deny that this process, effecting the whole economy and the state has any effect on the unions (David Benson "Reorient Papers" #2, p. 15)! To demonstrate that it has had an effect would require going over those union "atrocious stories" yet once more, a job for which I lack the stomach. I cannot understand Benson's rigid counterpositioning of "class collaboration" and "statification". Today the bureaucracy collaborates by furthering the integration of the unions with the state ("statification") and business. The insistence on "collaboration" makes this appear to be solely a POLICY of the union bureaucrats rather than a trend toward organizational integration of the union structure into monopoly capitalism. This trend cannot be permanently reversed unless workers decide on a revolutionary... reorientation.

Other people appear to underestimate the importance of (2) on the unions. Parker has it right when stating that union statification is a TENDENCY, counteracted by the workers' struggle. Indeed it cannot be completed without fascism. However, Parker and others over-emphasize statification, and virtually ignore the TENDENCY toward integration of the unions with business independent of the state. Side by side with this statification fetish is a formalistic approach to questions like dues check-off, union recognition, etc. For example, the unions of Britain have no evil dues check-off, union shop, legal enforcement of a contract or state recognition of representation rights. In any one plant several unions compete for the workers' membership. Nevertheless, these unions manage to be as bureaucratic and generally no-good as their American relatives. In reply, one might point out that British workers also have a (weak, uncoordinated) shop stewards' system. True, but the Scandinavian nations and W. Germany also manage to have rank-and-file struggle groups in spite of their American-style monolithic unions.

Short of a revolutionary situation, there can be no substitute for unions. The bosses have to be negotiated with, and something called "unions" or "mudpuddles" will have to do that job. Moreover, the workers give support, at least passively, to the labor lieutenants of capitalism. WHATEVER ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS IT MAY REQUIRE, there is no getting around our need to compete with the union bureaucracy for the allegiance of the workers. Which means: we will use union elections, etc., as vehicles for expressing ourselves wherever practical; we intend to either take over the leadership of present unions or to lead the workers in a split when they can see the need for it. Or will we win the

support of the mass of workers and yet LEAVE the bureaucrats in control of the unions?

Contrary to the Labor Committee, capitalism is not on its last legs, it still has excess fat, its limbs are still flexible (ugh.). When the workers are angry enough and conscious enough, they will be able to override all sorts of state regulations, goon squads, and financial arrangements. AND CAPITALISM IS STILL ABLE TO PERMIT THIS WITHOUT POSING THE QUESTION OF FASCISM OR REVOLUTION! This also implies that sections of the union bureaucracy can be expected to move in a progressive direction as this working class revolt builds up. If we ignore these probabilities, we will be mighty surprised and confused!

WORKERS PARTY (good)

The following is the "workers' party amendment" the "Theory-Action Caucus" proposed to the "Band" convention document. It is very good (I wrote it myself). I have been told that Bandites (sic) accepted it at the convention, with what effect I cannot say, since the NAC is keeping the Convention documents in their pristine, undistributed state.

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The intention of a significant sector of the American working class to struggle for state power will be declared by the development of a working class party. In every other industrialized democracy - and many poorer nations - the question before the working people is WHICH workers party to choose, or should a new party be created, i.e., what PROGRAM for the class party? Only in the US, with its backward working class, is the question, "should we have our own party?" a real one. The formation of any sort of workers party at least implies that workers are a group with common interests as workers, opposed to those running society now, and that they should try to rule society through their own government. Such a party, with real roots in the class, raises the question of class rule in the minds of other workers and by its mere existence qualitatively transforms the character of the class struggle.

The idea of a WORKERS PARTY and its concomitant, a WORKERS GOVERNMENT, are necessarily vague and might be accepted by working people with many different interpretations. Revolutionaries advocate these broad ideas filled with our own content. We want a party supported by the overwhelming majority of the class, with its activists comprising the most advanced and militant members of the class, and with a revolutionary socialist ideology. Similarly, by workers GOVERNMENT, we mean a state consisting of indigenous mass workers organizations, such as workers councils, which directly rule society. (We present these ideas as reasonably and as transitionally as we can, now emphasizing one thing and now another.) Given the limitations of the situations, workers may fill our slogans with their own reformist content, but WE NEVER ADVOCATE A REFORMIST WORKERS

## PARTY.

How will the party come about? The growth of nuclei of revolutionary socialists into a mass revolutionary party is extremely unlikely. Both the backwardness of workers consciousness and the rapidity of their motion once aroused will require a different framework as a beginning. During the thirties, revolutionaries believed that the industrial unions could be such a framework. As workers came to see the limitations of economic trade unionism, it was thought, they would fight to win the mass organizations of the CIO to the formation of a Labour Party. Within this movement and party, revolutionaries would be the left wing, opposing union bureaucrats and reformists. The logic of events would facilitate the revolutionaries in democratically winning leadership of the party.

The labor party did not develop and by now is not the MOST LIKELY form of development. The bureaucratization of the unions and their amalgamation with government and business has made it improbable that unionism will be transcended through the unions. MORE likely is that independent workers political action will grow out of rank and file struggle groups and also from black and brown workers organizations. Needless to say, struggle groups would and should fight to win the support of unions for class political action, and this fight might be successful on a local level or with some of the more militant larger unions, in a period where these are pushed leftward by the intensification of the class struggle and pressure from the ranks. The mode of origin cannot be perfectly predicted, which is why the more flexible slogan "workers party" is best. (Outside small sectarian circles, of course, people will not see any difference between "labor party" and "workers party" as slogans.)

We can prepare the way for such formations by our active propaganda. We cannot form them ourselves. Once such a party, parties, or pre-parties are created, we will work within them advocating our transitional program. This is up to and including the goal of socialist revolution. We present our program as the only one that can develop a viable, independent workers party. It is conceivable, of course, that we might someday oppose a particular workers party. For example, the union bureaucrats might throw up a labor party tied to the Democratic Party liberals in order to head off a really independent or revolutionary development. The key is whether any particular party will serve as a step toward the mass revolutionary party.

A workers party will utilize all the standard economic weapons of the class, particularly strikes, for political purposes.

Its long term goal will have to become the democratic seizure of political and economic power by the workers councils. (This, of course, will be educational on our part until such time as the formation of workers councils becomes objectively possible.)

Meanwhile, it will also be necessary to use the electoral arena to the fullest extent. Elections and "parliament" are a central arena for the struggle for power. Just as with non-revolutionary strikes, elections are limited by bourgeois boundaries, yet - just like strikes - elections are more than merely "tactics". They are the stuff of the class conflict, CARRIED OUT ON THE ENEMY'S TERRAIN. Any sector of the working class that wishes to show other sectors its determination to win power and that desires to expose the undemocratic nature of capitalist "democracy" can no more forego the electoral process than it can be limited to it.

For the present, the workers party perspective must be pushed on an educational and propagandistic level. We must raise it both within "middle class" movements and within the workers organizations in order to prepare the way. We favor demanding that unions initiate working class political action and a workers party; we also tell workers not to wait for the unions.

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#### MORE ON THE WORKERS' PARTY

Three developments invalidate the Labor Party perspective:  
(1), Even the Reorientniks recognize that there will have to be electoral action by union "caucuses" (?) before the unions get into motion. It is a pity that they do not explain this deviation from Labor Party orthodoxy.

(2) Workers' parties are being built right now, outside of unions, by minority sections of the class. We note the La Raza Unida Parties of Texas and Raza Unida Party of Colorado and the attraction they have on California Chicanos; also the southern black parties. These parties are winning elections while white workers have not even begun to move politically!

(3) I believe that "middle-class" based movements can and should be expected to engage in independent political action and attract sectors of the working class toward them before the class moves itself. I cannot argue this here; I refer everyone to the "TAC" amendment on "Independent Political Action" or to Sy Landy's "A Modest Proposal" (4/70).

There is no point in guessing whether the Workers' Party will be ten-percent unions and ninety-percent independent or the other way around.

Our approach means that we advocate our entire program for the workers' party or parties IN A TRANSITIONAL WAY. However we expect that the party will start with a reformist leadership and a confused membership. We regard that as a big step forward anyway and go on from there.

BRIEF FACTIONAL COMMENTS (to be expanded)

I believe that the problem of the I.S. lies in our empirical re-acting to the world's events, without any serious attempt to develop a consistent analysis and program. It is an amazing thing to contemplate that the largest "tendency" in the I.S., the one which elected the national leadership, produced no documents for the national convention-- and had not even discussed major issues, e.g. Gay Liberation. No wonder, after all these months, the convention documents have not been circulated! One way this crude empiricism is revealed is in the useage of terms which are defined in the most contradictory fashions. Key phrases, around which our "program" is "Organized", are mush-bags. I have made a brief attempt at developing these terms in the direction of meaningful clarity. I cannot say whether, e.g. Parker or Fischer or The Band or Bob S. will disagree with my construction and I am truly interested in finding out. (But I clearly disagree with Casey.)

The Reorienters have attempted to break out of the bog THEY THEMSELVES DUG by going back to the roots. Alas, they end up just as self-contradictory as us struggle-groupniks when they try to adapt their "tradition" to reality. They suffer from the same empirical lack of a real program as does the national leadership (as Dave Melamed points out). It is a noble tradition, as traditions go, but they forget that, "Any old radical who thinks that an American socialist movement can be reborn simply by resolutely going back to business at the old stand, is dreaming senile dreams. (Even if he or she is a young Old Radical --WP.) The problem is HOW to work out the new " (Hal Draper, "In Defense of the 'New Radicals', New Politics, IV, #3).

Comments on "Down on the Farm..."

(NOTE: This was submitted to W.P. as a letter last fall; various priorities kept it out of Feedback, so we publish it here with a reply.)

Any article on Cuba which Workers' Power carries, because of the attitudes of much of the American student left and because of the tendency to begin a radicalization process by an identification with various third world countries such as Cuba and Viet Nam, must be well reasoned and contain convincing arguments. The article in the October 9-22 copy of Workers' Power, "How are you Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm..." besides being flip in tone, totally failed to contain any such convincing arguments.

The article's argument proceeds from Cuba's proposal of an agreement with the U.S. to return hijackers, including boat hijackers, to the assumption that Cuba wants honestly to attain such an agreement. I will argue later that that is not the motivation for the proposal. However, from this it is assumed that any agreement of this type would cause an exclusion of revolutionaries who hijack planes to gain entry to Cuba. Although on the surface this is correct, it ignores the fact that most plane hijackers have been seriously mentally ill, not revolutionaries. Certainly, that is the case with hijackers to Cuba. Very few, if any, revolutionaries have entered Cuba by hijacking a plane. The two revolutionaries which the article mentions, Eldridge Cleaver and Robert Williams, did not arrive that way. The article does not convince me that in the future more revolutionaries will be hijacking to get to Cuba, either. The article then goes on to characterize the Cuban state as a "workers' and peasants' jail" on the basis of its offer "to close its door to revolutionaries from other countries" and its desire to regain a few lost fishing boats and crews. There is insinuated in the last paragraph that closing its doors to revolutionaries is actually what Cuba is doing despite the earlier admission in the article that only hijackers would not be allowed to remain in Cuba. On the face of it, however, to politically and socially characterize an entire regime by one international proposal for an agreement is simply absurd. The article totally lacks back-up evidence on its contention that workers want to leave Cuba, besides the usual flood of upper class refugees. Certainly a few fishing boats are not proof of the discontent of the masses of workers and peasants in Cuba.

This article clearly shows that the author has a pre-conceived notion about how he wants to describe the Cuban state and then has searched for evidence, found in an incident, and jammed it into a pre-conceived mold. There is a tendency throughout this article to label and characterize rather than to understand and describe the development of a state. The author seems to feel that once he has so characterized the Cuban system, his task is done. In fact, the task has been misconceived. The job which must be done is not to label the Cuban system as a "workers' and peasants' jail" but rather to take our understanding of the degeneration of the Russian revolution, to apply that understanding to the Cuban and other present Third World revolutions, and to develop a theory and understanding of the problems in the road of development to socialism for these revolutions. This theory would require an historical analysis in all its complexity not the application of a supra-historical theory of any sort.

I feel that the situation can be better understood by analysing the proposal for an agreement on hijackers in a somewhat different light. The Cuban government advanced the proposal and specifically mentioned boat hijacking not because it wanted to stop disruption of its fishing industry, which is absurd, but rather because Cuba wanted to embarrass the U.S. Despite U.S. press and State Department claims to the contrary, the hijacked "fishing boats" and crews are actually CIA agents who have been attempting to establish an anti-Castro army in Cuba. The method of returning these agents is boat hijacking. The Cuban government specially mentioned these boats because it knew that their mention would force the U.S. to refuse the agreement. The refusal would make it obvious to the world



who the "fishing crews" really were. The U.S. refused that agreement. The reasons the article advances for the U.S. wanting to refuse the agreement seem singularly unconvincing.

The above analysis does not prove the revolutionary nature of the Cuban regime. It does not establish that Cuba is fighting for socialism. We have successfully avoided a common pitfall if we realize that merely opposing the U.S. is not, thereby, fighting for all that is good and for socialism. But we are too quick to assume that those who are unwilling or unable to achieve socialism are in league with the reactionary capitalism of the US. We have gone from one error to the other.

Charles W. Moss

REPLY: The above comment, by a comrade in Seattle, points out serious weaknesses in the article, which I wrote. With the formal argument in his paragraph 2 I must agree: my article did hang far too much on a single incident, and "lacks back-up evidence for its contention that workers want to leave Cuba..." On the other hand, what Moss desires, "an historical analysis in all its complexity," was beyond the scope of a short article and would probably need a series - probably in our (perhaps) someday-to-be-established theoretical journal. This article fell between two stools, and should have confined itself to the incident of the offer for an agreement on hijacking.

With regard to that offer, Moss is probably right that Castro expected his offer to be rejected (I didn't mean to imply the contrary). What bothered me was the content of the offer: "You help me control my population, I'll help you control yours." Moss focusses on the fact that the hijackers haven't been revolutionaries; but he "lacks back-up evidence" for his contention that they are mentally ill. What was wrong with Castro's previous policy - returning the planes and letting the hijackers stay? I'm troubled when a "revolutionary" offers any agreement with the United States involving control of persons. Moss's interpretation of the fishing boats - that they are CIA-hijacked - seems more strained than mine. You mean to say the CIA successfully infiltrates the crews of fishing boat after fishing boat, when they can't infiltrate anything else in Cuba?

The interpretation of the fishing boats, however, involves an interpretation of the regime. Moss is unwilling to accept the idea of fishing crews defecting because he is openly skeptical that workers would want to leave Cuba. He offers us not an argument, only his skepticism. My article "lacks back-up evidence," fishing boats don't "prove the discontent of the masses of workers and peasants," etc. Similarly, Moss doesn't hint at what his interpretation of the Cuban state is. Castro is "unwilling or unable" to achieve socialism. Which?

For the reasons why Cuban workers might be dissatisfied, the reader should consult Roger Cid's two articles in W.P. no. 29. As to the "usual flood of upper-class refugees," it ceased several years ago (except for a few diplomats, members of the new upper class) - somewhere between 300,000 and 500,000 people have left Cuba since 1959, they aren't all upper-class. The remaining old bourgeois (doctors, professors, etc.) continued, as late as 1968, to receive pre-revolutionary salaries as an inducement to stay. Meanwhile, the regime's conditions for allowing emigration become steadily more punitive: the emigrant must apply months in advance of the date he leaves, but loses his job immediately. This, however, surely doesn't bother the upper class.

As to the basic nature of the regime, the question whether it is "unwilling or unable" is a complex one. But, at bottom, can one point to a single measure by the regime in 12 years which points to the regime having the slightest intention of fighting for socialism in our sense? Measures allowing independent workers organizations? Measures pointing towards workers' control? Theory and history are needed, but the uncertainty about the nature of the regime is much less than comrade Moss seems to feel.

James Coleman

## MADISON CHAPTER STATEMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL DISCIPLINE

The Madison branch of IS is requesting clarification by the NAC of the meaning of "discipline" as applied in its recent discipline motion regarding the GM distribution at the time of the contract voting.

c It is a serious matter to make any action a discipline question, and

(1) It should not be done hastily at a last minute, without previous political guidance and leadership;

(2) Nor should it be done without a detailed explanation of what discipline means as applied to the specific action involved;

(3) As well as explanation of what actions will follow to determine whether an action covered by discipline has been carried out;

(4) And also what procedures will be followed if discipline is violated.

Regarding the recent GM distribution, none of these 4 steps of political leadership was carried out. Without some explanation of why these steps were ~~omitted~~ omitted, we can only conclude that the NAC has been careless about providing the organization with national political leadership.

We raise these questions even though we supported the NAC decision to distribute at the GM plants and voting meetings. Because we carried out the distribution, and as a result gained a worker contact inside the plant, we feel we are in a better position to question the application of discipline without anyone suggesting that we really wanted to drag our feet on the distribution.

We raise the following questions: What is the meaning of discipline in a revolutionary organization? And what are the responsibilities and rights of a minority? If a minority violates discipline, what procedures and protections do they have if discipline is applied?

For a national office to label an action a discipline question, when it is remote from contact with local branches and the difficult complexities of each branch, and still quite weak and without a strong national prestige and reputation, is a very questionable procedure. In an organization which has many new members and a new national leadership, any new move such as issuing a discipline call should be carefully explained and all ~~app~~ implications carefully examined. Otherwise it is an empty threat which only undermines the authority and prestige of the NAC.

In a healthy revolutionary organization which desires members to be critically-minded and speak out without fear of restraint, there should always be members with minority positions on some questions. If a member of any organization has serious criticisms and nevertheless remains within the organization, he does so with the conviction that, given time, events, and critical internal discussion, he should be able to change the minds of the members. Until the minority member can do this, he must not disrupt or prevent the majority members from carrying out the actions they think are necessary. The minority member has the right and obligation to criticize, but he must not prevent the majority from action by excessive internal debate.

However, the minority member does not have to accept responsibility for making a majority policy work. If the minority member thinks a policy is wrong, he has the right to do nothing and let the majority implement its policy and learn in action whether the policy is correct. This allows the majority the opportunity to apply its policy without the revolutionary organization being turned into an endless discussion group, and also protects the minority from being blamed for the failure of a policy. The majority cannot say, "Our policy failed because the minority carried it out only in a half-hearted manner or even sabotaged it."

It would be politically and practically unwise for a majority to organizationally compel a minority to carry out a policy when the majority cannot convince the minority with the power of its ideas. This is precisely what distinguishes revolutionaries from bureaucrats. Revolutionaries believe in the power of their ideas and their example; bureaucrats believe not in persuasion but in compulsion by the use of the organization.

In what manner should discipline be applied in a revolutionary organization? While discipline ought not be applied to require a minority to engage in positive actions, it can and should be applied to require them to abstain from actions which directly contradict and negate the positive actions of a majority policy. Inaction by a minority must not be construed as a negative action. Rather, it is an abstention, a neutralization giving the majority an opportunity to test its policy.

Bureaucrats of a monolithic party refuse to accept the proposition that a minority has the right to abstain. In the bureaucrats' eyes, if the minority is not working for the majority position it must be helping the class enemy. This warped thinking is a refusal to recognize that all individuals have the right to  $\alpha$  make up their minds through persuasion, and not by the majority handing down an edict. When an organization has to compel people to act by decree rather than conviction, it has taken the first step toward being an organization of apparatchiks.

Since many young people are very sensitive to the bureaucratic reputation of the "old left" and bureaucratic discipline it is doubly important than no misunderstanding arise on this question and that the leadership take pains to carefully explain the full meaning of revolutionary discipline. Otherwise new people may just ~~quit~~ quietly drop out in disillusionment and disgust.

Then when can revolutionary discipline be applied? Here are some examples:

(1) If a majority is against political campaigns in a certain period it can prohibit a minority-dominated branch from running a political campaign.

(2) If a majority ~~can~~ in a union wishes to picket and the minority does not, the majority ought not to require the minority to picket, but it can prohibit them from engaging in actions such as distributing leaflets opposing picketing.

These examples of how discipline ought to be used exclusively to neutralize the actions of a minority so that the majority can have a fair opportunity to test its policy. A minority which wishes to remain in an organization and win over members so that it can become the majority will be willing to accept such disciplined neutrality. This is a demonstration of its good faith in the organization and its desire to "reform" the organization while remaining inside it.

In the recent GM distribution, did the NAC follow up the discipline with a questionnaire to determine whether the branches acted in a "disciplined" manner? If not, the "discipline" was only an empty threat, a hasty afterthought - which can only weaken the concept of discipline in the future as well as respect for the political leadership of the NAC. At the very beginning of the GM strike the NAC ought to have issued a document explaining what the branches' strategy ought to have been toward intervening in the strike, and suggesting ways the branches could make contact with the workers on the picket lines before the contract vote. We hope the NAC will issue such an evaluation and strategy guideline for the approaching steel strike.

For healthy internal self-criticism of the organization we feel the NAC is obligated to print this document in the internal minutes or as an internal document along with the NAC reply.

NAC Response to the Madison Queries on discipline:

First of all, we are enclosing a copy of the constitution which should answer many of your questions concerning discipline. We feel that your letter is in complete agreement with the type of discipline that we have expressed in the constitution. However, one point needs to be emphasized.

All decisions taken by the convention, NC, or NAC are disciplined. It does not have to be specified in every motion. Only those questions which are not disciplined have to be specified. Thus the recent NC passed a motion calling for a national campaign around the ERA and protective legislation. This motion is disciplined, and all branches are expected to carry it out. Of course, as you point out, no member who disagrees with the policy can be forced to carry out the policy, only prevented from say, pushing support for the ERA.

Now with regard to the four points in the beginning of your letter. We agree with points 1 and 2. Point 4 is contained in the constitution. With regard to point three, we expect reports from all branches on their activities, especially concerning national campaigns, activity in national arenas such as the anti-war movement, etc. We should not have to send out questionnaires, though these might be helpful to indicate what kind of reports should be sent in. A sentence should not have to be attached to every motion saying that a questionnaire will follow to make sure you carry out the policy.

With regard to the GM strike. We did prepare and send out a perspective for the strike, suggestions for activity, etc. Unfortunately, we got little or no response from the membership. During the course of the strike, we even suggested certain slogans and demands to emphasize in leaflets, etc. This is not to imply that the NAC is not open to some criticism for its leadership during the strike, but only that in general we attempted to do what you argue we should do. With regard to your questions concerning the discipline on the leaflet distribution, etc. We pointed out the discipline here for two reasons: first, to emphasize that we wanted this leaflet distributed, that it was not just a suggested leaflet; and secondly that we wanted it handed out. It shouldn't be necessary to point the latter point out; however, at this time, we felt it was. This does not mean that we ignored local situations. Some branches contacted us saying that for certain reasons they did not want to hand out the leaflet. While we disagreed, we bowed to their local judgment. The point here is that it is up to the branches to justify their not abiding by the discipline. If a branch believes that it has good reasons for not carrying out a national policy, they can report such to the NAC and hope to convince us. Of course, it is a different question if one is suggesting that we not adopt that as a national policy.

We would like to reiterate again that with regard to the central part of your letter, where you explain the meaning of discipline, etc. we are in complete agreement with you.

N Jan 20, 1971

Dear Comrades,

In the past few days the Editorial Committee of the Reorient Papers has decided to resign from the I.S. Hal Draper is currently preparing a document explaining their actions. The enclosed statement by the NAC is our initial reaction to their leaving the organization. We plan to answer them in full after we receive the document by Hal.

The only people who left are the 9 signers of the Reorient Papers. They made this decision overnight without prior discussion and without consulting anyone else in the IS, including people who sympathize with their political point of view. Other comrades whom we have notified of their action have expressed dismay at their decision and those who have agreed with them in the past are determined to continue their membership and activity in building the IS.

The comrades leaving have no plans to form a separate, competing organization but rather to set up a non-membership "educational center" to publish educational material for a broader audience in line with their new position rejecting the utility of political sects, a position which solves the problems of developing an organization by having no organization. This position may have some appeal to independent writers but for a political tendency can only represent dissolution and suicide.

The "educational center" will be similar to the Independent Socialist Committee which was set up as a non-membership group in 1963 with Hal Draper as Chairman and Joel GEier as Secretary. The function of the Committee was to issue pamphlet and clippingbooks and to maintain political collaboration, through correspondence, with other independent socialists who at that time had no organization of their own but were scattered within the Socialist Party, in local split-offs from the SP, as isolated individuals, etc. Even in 1963 when a national organization was objectively less viable than today, the activities of the Committee were highly non-productive. The Committee could not really act as a political center, or pole of attraction, even for the disintegrating left wing of the SP. Without ongoing political discussion, activity and interaction with other comrades and the rest of the radical movement, which can only occur through coherent organization, the independent socialist tendency continued to disintegrate. Our modest educational material was poorly distributed, at a fraction of what the YPSL had, or what the IS today distributes. Even this modest activity requires a network which only an organized, national group provides. Even if distribution had been more successful, a few pamphlets or articles, lost in a sea of competing publications and ideas, rarely makes a lasting impression -- those that were interested in our ideas preferred not to be isolated and often went into some organized "socialist" group, where of course they were politically transformed. Those that didn't were usually lost to the movement, this was particularly true of the few working class militants we had who usually disappeared as a result of their political isolation. Without a revolutionary organization individual revolutionaries are not just incapable of recruiting and developing a revolutionary cadre but as all past practice has shown usually become conservatized in their isolation from revolutionary politics.

The job of recruiting and training a political cadre requires patient, systematic development in an ongoing revolutionary organization. The turn toward this task was only begun with the formation of the Independent Socialist Club in Berkeley in 1964. By then our numbers were so reduced that our conceptions of our role and organization were the most modest. The difficulties the IS faces today are not unrelated to our development in that period. It took years of work before we could play any role in the national radical movement, which proved to be a tragedy not just for ourselves but for the direction that the radical movement took in the absence of a revolutionary Marxist, anti-stalinist tendency. Naturally our own politics came to reflect our own local isolation. Naturally it was impossible for such a group to play any role in the working class or trade union movement.

Although angered by their decision we feel that the I. S. should refrain from any of the personal vituperation and squabbles that usually accompany a split in a revolutionary organization. Our attitude to them is that of mistaken comrades whose road leads nowhere. We hope to be able to continue to collaborate with them in the future. For the present, we are determined to ensure that their departure does not mean any retreat or retrenchment on the part of the organization, and that it in no way stops us in our unshaken determination to go on with the job of building a revolutionary, democratic, socialist organization.

Yours in struggle,

Joel Geier  
National Secretary

## NAC RESPONSE TO THE ACTIONS OF THE REORIENT EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

The IS considers the decision of the Reorient Editorial Committee to leave the IS and form a non-membership "educational center" along the lines of the Independent Socialist Committee of 1963 to be a political disservice not just to the IS, but to the third-camp, Marxist, revolutionary politics we share in common and even to the special political point of view that the Reorient Editorial Committee holds. We reaffirm that a minority tendencies within the IS have all democratic rights, including those of explaining and publishing their views to the outside public, and constituting themselves an "educational center" within the IS. We ask only that all members of the IS be disciplined in carrying out the democratically decided upon decisions and actions of the IS in their outside political activity, including trade union work. Members are free to abstain from policies they disagree with, so long as they do not organize a public campaign against the activity of the organization.

We feel that this basis allows the Reorient Editorial Committee and any comrades who share their political views to remain on in the IS. We regret the decision of the Reorient Editorial Committee, regret losing them from the only organized expression of revolutionary third-camp politics in this country, and invite them to return to our organization again. We invite all who sympathize with their political point of view, and who were not consulted in this decision so potentially disastrous for our common tendency, to remain within the IS, where we will continue to comradely discuss the political views raised by the reorient comrades. The attempt to transform the IS into a group oriented to, and rooted in, the working class will be a long and painful process in which we will be continuing to discuss trade union questions to be able to develop programs and organizational forms appropriate to the working class as it is today in America.

While we cannot answer their new organizational document until it appears, we reaffirm the necessity for revolutionary organization. The justification for the existence of a revolutionary sect is the absence of a mass revolutionary party or organization. Those who turn their back on the difficulties of building a small revolutionary organization, and cut themselves off from the organized expression of revolutionary Marxist politics, are striking a blow at the task of developing a revolutionary cadre which can play a role in the development of a mass, revolutionary Party of the working class. This decision, unilaterally decided upon by the Reorient Editorial Committee without consulting their own supporters, comes with the barest minimum of attempt to win over the IS to their point of view. To return to the Independent Socialist Committee of 1963 when our tendency was decimated within the Socialist Party is disastrous. The Independent Socialist Committee itself, aside from publishing a few pamphlets and clippingbooks, played no role in the job of educating and training a revolutionary cadre. Our tendency continued to disintegrate and only the formation of the Independent Socialist Club in Berkeley in 1964 began the slow job of rebuilding our political tendency by recruiting, organizing and educating a new generation of radicals.

That activity which won to our ranks the best of the New Left we are, with all the difficulties involved, proud of. The loss of old comrades pains us, but it will not deflect us in our ongoing fight for revolutionary socialism from below and its only organized expression in America, the I.S.

(unanimously adopted by the NAC)

NAC MINUTES - JAN. 19

Present - all

AGENDA: 1. Reorient, 2. National Secretaries report, 3. NC followup  
4. Staff, 5. Newspaper

1. Discussion of the decision by the Reorient Editorial Committee to resign from the IS. Joel to write an introductory letter to go out with the resolution passed by the NAC.

2. National Secretary's Report - After the NC, Joel spoke on Poland in Los Angeles. He then went to Seattle where he spent several days, giving a public talk on Poland and also having discussions with the branch on the middle east, history of the IS and other topics. Two people were recruited, one in Seattle and one in Tacoma.

Joel reports that both the LA and Seattle branches are very active and should show a steady rate of growth in the coming period.

Two people have asked to join the IS in Chappel Hill, N.C. where we presently have one MAL. Motion - to accept them both for membership.

Passed - all for

3. NC Followup - Motion (Mike) All branches are to discuss the NC documents and their branch perspectives in light of the documents, and their assessment of the possibilities of implementing the NC decisions. (Documents should be distributed to the branches in a week.) All for

(What the NAC wants is a discussion of the applicability of the NC documents to the local situations. For instance on the ERA and protective legislation campaign, what are the possibilities for such a campaign in your area, what personnel do you have available for it, what other activities and perspectives for the branch are planned, Reports on these discussions should be sent to the NAC. If there is doubt about the meaning of a document, or what is expected of a branch, clarification should be requested from the NAC. These discussions should take place as soon after receiving the documents as possible and reports sent to the NAC immediately.)

Motion: To send out monthly questionnaires to all branches.

Passed - 4-0-1(chris)

4. Staff - Motion: Mike to remain on staff - Passed - 4-0-1(Mike)

Motion: Mike to be National Organizational Secretary - passed - all for

Motion: Joel and Mike to bring in proposals on more staff - all for

(this question of staff arose because it was felt that in the absence of a field organizer Joel should spend more time traveling, speaking, and writing.)

5. Newspaper - discussion of articles for next issue.



NAC \_ JAN. 27

Present - all

1. Anti-war - SMC conference in Washington in middle of February, also People's Peace Treaty Meeting in Ann Arbor soon. Documents for these to be prepared for next meeting.
2. Trade Union discussions - To discuss first the nature of the period, next week. Schedule other discussions on it after that.
3. Motion - to accept for membership an MAL in Waco, Texas. - all for
4. Two people to go to Columbus this weekend and possible also to Cleveland.
5. Staff - Motion: not ~~to~~ to hire someone else at this point ~~since~~ since we have a volunteer for several times a week to help us. - all for
6. NY Request - Asked for Joel to spend a week in NY - giving classes and talking to people - Joel to arrange with NY and also to go to Balt, and NJ.
7. Kentucky request - There is a statewide radical conference being held in Lexington. They have requested that we send down resource people to lead workshops etc. We have accepted and will try to send at least five people. Conference is on Feb. 26-28. Ask Detroit exec to organize.
8. Madison - Motion: to endorse reply to Madison motions concerning Discipline. All For.