

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT SUBMITTED TO NC BY THE NAC

In spite of expanded external activity, a growing consistency in that activity, and a sense of outward aggressiveness about our external work, the IS appears to be in crisis. Branch after branch faces internal problems and a sense of malaise pervades much of the membership. Many of the branches are not growing in spite of a high level of external activity, and this fact is affecting the morale of the organization.

While the particulars behind this situation are many, two causes seem to stand out: a lack of clarity about our perspectives and a lack of political leadership, particularly from the NAC.

The NAC feels that the IS may be on the verge of a breakthrough in terms of attracting to ourselves a periphery from which to recruit. A part of this periphery may come from the milieu around industrialized radicals, many of whom consider themselves Maoists. The collapse of the independent collective perspective is now apparent and the personnel of these industrial collectives and other worker-oriented political formations are being pulled to one or another hard political pole. We are one of those poles.

Our success in this milieu depends in large part on our ability to formulate clearly and propagate aggressively our labor perspective--for it is this that is our handle in attracting these radicals. We must place particular emphasis, in working in this milieu, to clarify the close interrelationship between our labor work and our party building work.

But our success among these radicals rests on our success in carrying out our primary emphasis which continues to be the task of building an IS periphery of indigenous worker-militants and recruiting to our organization from this periphery. Here too, the NAC believes, the possibilities for a breakthrough may be opening up. But the IS must be politically prepared to take advantage of these possibilities. To do this, our membership must have a fully internalized understanding of the relationship between our present labor work and our tasks as socialist revolutionaries--and be able to effectively communicate this to worker contacts.

Given the small forces at our disposal, the trade union work carried out by the IS is qualitatively superior to that of any other leftist organization in this country. The members of our tiny industrial fractions have done well in establishing themselves as respected militants and unionists. We have participated in building well read and well respected publications, we have made strides toward establishing real caucuses, we have participated in and have helped lead numerous struggles and campaigns, and our work has had significant influence on the consciousness of broad layers of workers around us. Most important, our trade union work has become the real center of the life of the organization, and for the first time has helped place us solidly on the road toward becoming a workers' organization.

But we have also reached an impasse. Its symptoms are easy enough to identify. Most industrialized members feel little confidence in their ability to recruit indigenous worker-militants to the IS. Many feel an almost schizophrenic tension between their trade union work and the IS. Expressed in political terms, they feel a confusion between their role as trade union militants and their role as revolutionaries--or at the least they lack a clear and satisfying understanding of how the two relate in every day life. The clearest symptoms, however, are the empirically verifiable ones. We have not yet experienced any significant recruitment out of our union work, or even any substantial prospects. Nor, in most unions, have we even been able to build up any significant periphery around the IS which either looks to our organization, or even shares with us in a self-conscious way, our full perspective for work in that union.

These symptoms should clearly indicate that a problem exists, either organizational or political--one that we can ignore only at our peril. No one in the IS will long remain satisfied with our being just the "best of the industrialized intellectuals". Our present organization and perspectives have already advanced us to that plateau. We have now, for the first time, gathered the concrete experiences on which we can base fuller and richer perspectives for the road ahead.

We have weaknesses on every single level. Our existing labor perspectives and strategy are sketchy and do not exist in a form which is easy for our membership to internalize, to educate contacts with, or to provide illuminating guidance to our day to day work. They represent the best we were capable of at the time they were written, have helped advance us to our present position, and are basically correct. But further concretization and amplification is needed.

We are also weak in our understanding of the concrete dynamics and tendencies in the unions and industries where we are active. This must be strengthened as a precondition to establishing an aware membership and periphery capable of making the correct tactical judgements within the framework of our strategy and perspectives.

Our newspaper is only now starting to become useful in our labor work and the positive effects of its use, as it improves, have not yet been felt. We still must learn to make systematic use of WP--a precondition for further improvements in it. Our lack of a theoretical journal--one that can be used by a working class organization--is another weakness.

Finally, our labor work is affected by organizational inexperience, sloppiness and just lack of resources. Our membership is not adequately trained to make the best use out of the tools at their disposal. Our general lack of experience is still enormous.

We must move forward in each of these areas. But they can not be approached as a series of disconnected tasks: problem to problem, union to union, branch

to branch. A useful perspective helps show how the pieces fit together and make up a single whole. The problems of recruitment, development of a periphery, educating our cadre in our perspective, developing understanding of the unions and industries, using Workers' Power effectively, establishing effective fraction leadership and guidance, etc. We will be overwhelmed if we take them up as separate individual problems to be attacked individually and administratively.

What follows is an elaboration, amplification, and concretization of existing general labor perspectives. It builds on what has ~~been~~ already been established but emphasizes the practical steps to effectively put the perspective into practice while providing a systematic framework from which to attack the various tasks facing us.

This discussion bases itself on our generally agreed to evaluation of the economic nature of this period: economic decline, growing instability, sharp economic fluctuations, possibility of severer economic crisis in the not too distant future, growth of ~~the~~ revolutionary movements internationally. It does not, however, attempt to deal with the specific short term conjuncture. So for example, the last few years, under impact of NEP, have seen a general decline in mass rank and file militancy over the late 60's when measured in terms of contract rejections, growth of national opposition caucuses, etc. The NEP effect is wearing off. The government crisis, inflation, and shortages, resentment at the bureaucracy for going along with corporate attacks--all have created a growing openness on the part of large numbers of workers to political ideas. At least in auto, with the still high unemployment, this has not yet been reflected in shop floor militancy. But it does seem to be a period of gestation and politicization.

While it is still too early to definitely state that an upswing in rank and file activity is certain, it is becoming clear that conditions increasingly favor the success of our industrial work. Continuing inflation and the complete adherence of the labor leadership to the defense of the employers profit margins combine to increase the pressures on the ranks. Without ~~the~~ predicting its proportions or degree of organizational stability, it is likely that our perspective for rank and file organization will achieve some limited by possibly important successes.

It must be borne in mind that we entered industry, for the most part, just as the rank and file rebellion of the late 1960's reached its limits; NEP succeeded in destroying the ~~momentum~~ momentum of that movement and we have spent the past three years experiencing that defeat--a defeat of the entire class. Our own confusion on the rank and file movement as a perspective stem in part from the conditions we existed in--we saw a politically primitive rank and file movement defeated.

The growing number of politically conscious radical workers, the relative successes in the Detroit UAW delegate elections, and a small rise in strike activity generally all point to greater possibilities.

But although we expect that conditions over the next several years will be increasingly favorable to our work, we must develop a systematic, sustained method of work which would permit slow political growth and advancement even if we were to be thrown back into an unfavorable political/economic conjuncture like the one we experienced over the past few years.

In its broadest outlines, what follows is based on the general nature of the period, i. e., the growing crisis of capitalism, but not on the short term fluctuations, which would, of course, affect tactical implementation. In its fundamentals/ it is essentially the same method and perspective as that employed by the early Comintern in Britain and the U. S., by the ~~First~~ Trotskyist movement in the late 1930's and 40's, and by the British IS today. That is, fundamentally it is a strategy for building the revolutionary party in a situation where the general crisis of capitalism is sharpening but the party itself is only a tiny minority in the class. It demands of revolutionaries that they function within the existing unions and that they exploit the contradictions between the needs of the ranks and the collaborationist methods of the bureaucrats to build a movement in which the party can grow by participating in the struggle and providing leadership.

It is one of our political failures that we all too often forget that the starting point of this perspective, regardless of the rather wide differences in detail and tactics from country to country and time to time, is the need to build a revolutionary socialist party in the working class.

OUR PRESENT PERSPECTIVES

Let's begin by summing up the perspectives under which we have been operating. They are just about unanimously accepted throughout the organization as far as they go. As such, they provide a firm foundation on which to build.

Objective conditions are laying the basis for the development of a rank and file movement inside U. S. labor. As conditions of economic stagnation and decline intensify, the present labor bureaucracy will find itself unable to respond in a fashion that effectively satisfies the ranks. It is a bureaucracy whose collaborationist methods and consciousness were molded in the years of post war capitalist prosperity. It will become increasingly disoriented--caught between a vicious capitalist attack on the workers and growing unrest in the ranks.

Under these conditions, a layer of militant activist workers will emerge. The IS wishes to embed itself in this emerging layer, to affect its consciousness, to participate with it in building a rank and file movement--giving what leadership and direction we can. We wish to win this emerging layer movement to a policy of Class Struggle Unionism.

Neither collaborationists, reformists, or stalinists will be able to provide satisfactory leadership that meets the real needs of this layer. Our politics,

on the other hand, will permit the IS to play a leadership role thoroughly disproportionate to our present small size and influence.

Our presence in this emerging layer will permit us to influence it with our revolutionary Marxist politics and to recruit workers from it who through their experience in working with us, learn the value of our full political program. In this process, the IS will be able to transform itself into a revolutionary workers organization.

Parallel to the development of a militant layer within the unions will be similar developments among unorganized ~~wor~~ and unemployed workers, and also in relationship to black work and community movements and struggles/ The revolutionary workers organization will ~~also~~ participate in these movements and struggles as well, giving what leadership it can. Within all struggles, we will attempt to relate the specific to the general: the union struggle to the community struggle to the political struggle. It will attempt to break through parochial and sectional consciousness.

The revolutionary party will be built through the interaction between the revolutionary workers organization, on the one hand and the growing rank and file and insurgent movements that attempt to ~~build and lead~~ shape and lead. We cannot predict the exact way the party will be ~~not~~ built. It could be through direct recruitment, through regroupment, through the development, under influence of the revolutionary organization, of a revolutionary tendency within a mass workers organization, or through some combination.

As an outline, this perspective is correct. But it leaves a number of questions unanswered. In day to day trade union work, what distinguishes the functioning of an IS member from that of ~~just~~ a good trade union ~~or~~ militant? How can we use our day to day trade union work to interject revolutionary Marxist ideas into the emerging advanced layer? Or, is our trade union work and our fight to bring revolutionary Marxism ~~in~~ into the working class, basically separate tasks which relate to one another only by virtue of the fact that the same individual IS member does both? Is there a relationship between the politics we fight for inside the trade union movement and our full revolutionary Marxist program? What is it?

SPONTANEISM AND CONSCIOUSNESS

Before going on to answer these questions, let us take a closer look at the emerging layer of militant activist ~~wor~~ workers upon whom our entire perspective is based. Before the IS ~~was~~ first entered industry, our organization shared a fantastic view of the emergent layer. The struggle group concept was based on the belief that this layer would explosively emerge on a mass basis/ Leading members of our organization were predicting that literally overnight, mass insurgent struggle organizations would emerge throughout U.S. industry replacing the unions and making them obsolete.

The fantastic character of this view has long been apparent to all. It reflected a total misunderstanding of working class consciousness and the dynamic through which working class struggle and organization unfold. We have come a long way since then. But

for an organization like ours, that developed outside the working class and is still trying to enter it, these are still the most difficult questions. The IS, as a collectivity, has still a long way to go before we have internalized that sure feel for working class consciousness and dynamic of struggle required ~~xxxx~~ of any effective proletarian leadership group. We will move in this direction only on the basis of careful attention to the experiences of our industrialized comrades.

We have learned the great difficulty we have in just developing a relatively solid rank and file opposition caucus. The first problem is bourgeois ideology. It is rare for even the most angry and militant worker to reject, spontaneously, the ideological basis of the class collaborationist policy of the bureaucracy. They know they are getting screwed. Some think the problem boils down to dishonesty and payoffs from the company. Others feel that the problem boils down to one of sincerity, intelligence, having a sharp ~~xxxx~~ tongue, or just some undefined quality of personal strength, will and charisma. The conclusion from this is that to improve the union you put into office younger people who are more honest, more sincere, more dedicated, more intelligent, and more strong willed. Those who get into office ~~xxx~~ on the basis of these views, of course, end up just like the people they replaced. Most workers become apathetic believing the problems of the union are problems of human nature, and you can't do anything about ~~the~~ it in any way. And what's to keep a militant oppositionist from going over to the union administration when he or she discovers the kind of pressures they are under and that ~~and~~ really, if they're not such bad people ~~after~~ after all?

Bourgeois ideology pervades the working class of every capitalist country. But its opposite, proletarian class consciousness, also exists throughout every working class. The two co-exist with a contradictory tension that determines the actual consciousness of the class. The pole of proletarian ~~consciousness~~ class consciousness is weaker in the United States than in the working class of practically any other capitalist country. This country lacks even such minimal class institutions as a rotten mass social democratic, communist or labor party. Revolutionary Marxism, the only true repository of consistent proletarian class consciousness has been dead in the U.S. working class for a quarter of a century.

The growing ~~capitalist~~ capitalist attack on the working class ~~provides~~ provides ~~the~~ ~~xxxxxx~~ the objective basis for a resurgence of class consciousness. The class has new experiences which it finds increasingly difficult to satisfactorily understand on the basis of bourgeois ideology. Workers are increasingly open to answers other than the traditional ones. They find themselves increasingly dissatisfied with the dominant institutions of leadership and authority and are open to considering alternatives. Often, conditions impel them into actions which contradict the values they believe they hold. It is all this which creates the material ~~potential~~ preconditions for the emergence of a new militant activist layer within the working class.

Objective conditions are determinant in creating a rank and file movement. That is, workers do not give up their free time or make real sacrifices unless they feel they have no choice; that is, things are viewed as being so bad (this is not a matter of starvation)

~~that one must do what is necessary.~~ that one must do what is necessary. While the first workers to feel this are necessarily small in numbers, that is the dynamic.

Furthermore, the nature of the conditions that impel workers to build rank and file organizations determine to some degree the nature of the ideas these worker leaders develop. Rank and file leaders are strongly pushed toward opposition to any sort of productivity deal because of the nature of the crisis. The movement they lead will certainly be opposed to wage controls now that they have experienced them/

Nevertheless, objective conditions cannot, by themselves, determine the specific outlook of rank and file leaders. Nor can conditions save people from becoming demoralized or falling for opportunist leaders or solutions. To become a stable leadership, rank and file rebels must be won to a consistent point of view, must become in fact a self-conscious cadre with a class struggle outlook. This is not to say that the emergence of a rank and file movement in the unions requires the presence of class conscious revolutionaries. It is to say, however, that a rank and file movement cannot achieve stability or win long term victories without that participation.

Certainly, the greater the objective contradictions between the ranks and the bureaucracy, under the impact of objective conditions, the greater will be the tendency for events to generate such a leadership group. We But we can no longer count on the naively spontaneous view that this will just happen automatically. The collective class memory of U.S. workers has been largely eradicated. At present, even the simplest of class concepts, required to sustain such a leadership, don't just float in the air--nor can they be easily reinvented at will. We live in a period when fundamental class lessons must be reintroduced into the working class. Objective conditions make this possible. But they don't automatically do it for us.

The only national rank and file oriented opposition caucus in industry that has shown any staying power at all is the United National Caucus. And it is an exception which proves the rule. Its political leader is Art Fox--one out of only a handful of old revolutionaries that has at all survived from the '30's and '40's. Its basic leadership cadre include Kelly, Gardner, and Singer, all immigrant and influenced in their youth by social democracy. McFadden has been influenced by the SWP, Dewey by the CP.

Class concepts reintroduced into the working class, can rapidly take on a life of their own inside the class, if they speak to the real questions plaguing workers and provide satisfying answers. It is difficult for a worker to enter into principled and sustained opposition to the collaborationist bureaucracy unless that worker is in the process of moving beyond the confines of bourgeois ideology, in the direction of a Marxist world view. It is possible for workers to move spontaneously in the direction of Marxist ideas. But only after these ideas have already been introduced into the class from the outside. Ideologically, the main task of the present period in the United States is the reintroduction

of elementary basic Marxist, class struggle concepts into the collective consciousness of the working class.

The key to the IS perspective is to embed our organization in the emerging layer of militant rank and file activists, and to affect its consciousness. This layer is still just beginning to come into existence as a coherent political entity. It will develop a life of its own, only when it becomes a political entity and not just a sociological one. Our organization can play a role, even in the task of helping bring this political ~~movement~~ layer into existence. But we can play this role, only if we ~~are~~ clearly understand the political tasks before us.

THE MARXIST METHOD APPLIED TO TRADE UNION QUESTIONS

Ideas have meaning only insofar as they have practical consequences--only insofar as they lead to or influence action. The only reason that we, as political people, and as Marxists, want to influence the way people think, is because we want to influence the way they will act. Looking at the same question from the other direction, we can only say that an individual's consciousness has changed, if there has been a change in the way that individual acts and in the way the individual relates to others.

According to our generally agreed upon views, the key struggles in this country in the coming period will be going on within and through the unions (broadly interpreted.) All agree that a key goal of the I.S. is to influence workers in the direction of our politics, Marxism. The most important way to concretize this will be to influence them with ideas which change the way they relate to the actual class struggle. The more like a Marxist, a worker relates to the actual class struggle, the more like a Marxist that worker becomes--and the easier it becomes to win that worker to the full Marxist program and organization.

It is through our trade union work that most directly relate to the class struggle. It is in our trade union work that we most influence other workers in how they relate to the class struggle. It is for this reason that we view our trade union work as our primary method of winning workers toward Marxism, toward viewing the world from a consistent proletarian ~~vantage~~ vantage. But the IS has not yet effectively learned how to do this. Doing so will be the key to further progress--toward influence in the working class, toward recruiting workers, toward becoming a working class revolutionary organization.

Our immediate goal is to establish consistent and systematic methods of winning workers to take a Marxist approach to trade union questions--the questions that have the most immediate and practical consequences. This does not yet make the worker a Marxist. To be a Marxist, one must understand broader political questions: the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Stalinist degeneration of the Russian revolution, the popular front, the nature of fascism, the historical materialist world view, etc. Few U.S. workers today have the experience on which to really make up their mind on these questions--or the inclination to ~~do~~ do the study necessary. With only rare exceptions, when we attempt to win workers today to these broad range of questions we usually find ourselves, more or less, asking them to take our word for it. And even if they do, we can normally only convince them ~~in a~~ in a ~~shallow~~ shallow way.

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them to think of themselves and to think of us, the IS members, both as part of the same, as but growing, self-conscious class struggle tendency inside the labor movement.

PRINCIPLES OF CLASS STRUGGLE UNIONISM

To the IS, the policies of class struggle unionism are nothing more or less than our own trade union policies, the trade union policies of revolutionary marxism. But of course you don't have to be a marxist to be a class struggle unionist, and in fact, it's possible to express the basic political ideas form which class struggle policies flow in quite simple trade union terms. We can define class struggle unionism to be union policy that flows from the seven basic principles of class struggle unionism.

For us, each of these principles has a basically algebraic character. This means that they can be easily understood and accepted in a simple and shallow way. But through the an individual's growth and political development, they can take on an increasingly rich meaning. In fact, each principle represents a fundamental marxist concept, translated into the narrower language of trade unionism. Taken together, these principles form a bridge from trade union practice to revolutionary politics. In the struggle to raise and influence the consciousness of the emerging layer of militant workers we press, to the extent possible, to make these seven principles, the underlying ideas which shape the political common sense of this new strata.

1. Class struggle policy: The most basic idea of Marxism is the class exploitation of the proletariat through the extractomn of surplus value. For the capitalists, labor power is just a commodity to be bought at the minimum wage socially ex required to keep maintain and reproduce a productive proletariat. Translated into trade union terms, this means that working people only get what we fight fork and only hold onto what the boss is afraid to take away. Our desire for a decent human life, for ourselves and our families, both on and off the job, conflicts with the boss's greed for the greatest possible profits. Workers and bosses have basically conflicting interests. For this reason there can be no peace between us. The weaker we are, the more the boss will take advantage. A class struggle union policy is one that can recognize these basic facts and understands that the main purpose of a union is to strengthen the position of workers in our fight with the bosses for a decent life.

The class collaborationists who now run our unions try to preach the opposite. They try to tell us that we and our bosses have basically the same interests. Conflicts happen when one side or the other steps out of line and acts in an unfair or greedy way. The job of a union, according to them, is to avoid conflict and bring about labor peace. When conflicts do arise, according to them, the union and the company should try to sit down together and find out who is to blame. If the workers are in violation of the contract, the union helps the company bring them in line. The only kind of union struggle the collaborationists consider to be legitimate, are ones that follow the procedures laid out in the contract. And these these are only to be resorted to when the collaborationists believe the company acts in an unreasonable or an irrational way.

There are thousands of examples we can point to every day that show the difference be-

tween a class struggle policy and a class collaborationist policy. We as opposed to the collaborationists, believe that the worker is always right, the company is always wrong. We view ~~contracts~~ the contract as nothing more than a written truce in the class ~~struggle~~ war. If we can violate the contract ~~and~~ to our advantage and get away with it we will--just like we know the boss will. When we obey the contract it is out of respect for the power of the company, not out of any moral obligation. Our only interest in the contract is to use it to the advantage of the worker. We are perfectly willing to lie or to cheat the boss ~~if~~ if we can get ~~away~~ away with it. In making demands on the company we consider the needs of the workers and our bargaining strength. How easily the boss can afford to meet our demands is of no particular concern--providing we are strong enough to force him to pay.

2. Rank and file approach: another basic idea of Marxism is that the emancipation of the proletariat is the task of the proletariat--the working class advances only through self-activity, consciousness and self-confidence.

We translate these concepts into trade union terms as the rank and file approach to unionism. The purpose of a union is to bring together the weak, isolated, individual workers into a ~~single~~ single, powerful body. A union is strong only when the membership as a body, is strong. The main job of union leadership is to keep the membership informed, educated, and aware. They should always be seeking to instill in the membership an understanding that it must remain active, vigilant, self-confident, united, and ready to ~~stand up~~ stand up and fight for what's right. Class struggle unionists refuse to get confused or lost in the maze of official procedures and red tape, but merely use the procedure as one tactical part of a total approach. This is the opposite of the bureaucratic and elitist approach of the collaborationists. All they really want the membership to do is to passively support the leadership and do what the leadership says. They see no need for an informed, self-confident, self-activating membership. Their view of how a union works is for union officials and management to get together behind closed doors and settle things. The collaborationists think that the union ~~officials~~ officials make up the union, not the total membership. They see the job of the union as a middle man between the company and the workers, not as the organization and organizer of the workers in their fight against the company.

3. Workers control: Marxist understand that it is the struggle against capital that prepares workers themselves, as a class, to rule. To us trade unions are a school for socialism.

We translate this into trade union terms ~~through~~ through the concept of workers control. The main reason ~~why~~ why we ~~do this~~ as workers organize our selves into unions is to gain more control over our own lives and our own destinies. This is the reason we fight for higher wages and benefits. This is why we fight for more humane working conditions. In every area, we as a ~~collective~~ collective group, fight to limit and encroach on the prerogatives of management and to increase our own freedom of action and initiative as workers. We try to limit and control the authoritarian and arbitrary power management tries to exercise over us, and try to extend to the greatest extent possible the rights of workers and our freedom of action. We press from within the system for the greatest power we can to organize and control our own work processes.

The notion of workers control and that of democratic unionism are really one and the same idea. We can't use our union to fight ~~for gain~~ to gain more control over our own lives unless we democratically control our own union. And workers who democratically control a union always use it to fight to gain more control over their lives as workers.

In practice, collaborationists always reject the notions of workers control and democratic unionism. They respect, defend and enforce the prerogatives of management. They help management limit worker self-activity directed at gaining more control and help to maintain the authoritarian structure of the work place. They do all in their power to free themselves from the controlling pressures of the workers who want the union to fight for their real needs. Not only ~~the~~ does this lead to undemocratic practices. But they also enforce and defend rules and procedures which limit the range of effective action open to the union.

4. Class solidarity: Marxists believe that the interests of workers as a class supersede all individual, sectional and parochial interests. We translate this into the terms of today's trade union movement as class solidarity. Every victory of workers advances all workers--every defeat sets us all back. We fight for solidarity among all working people: those seeking work as well as the employed, those not yet organized into unions as well as the organized, working people of all countries of the world and not must working people of the U.S. In response to every major workers strike of struggle, the bosses try to defeat the workers with cries of damage to the "public interest." We recognize no such thing as "public interest". There are only class interests--the interests of the workers versus the interests of the bosses.

The collaborationist bureaucracy undermines class solidarity. They defend the boss'es notion that so called "public interest" comes before workers' interest. They refuse to use the power of the employed worker to vigorously defend the unemployed; ~~refuse~~ refuse to use the power of the organized workers to defend and to help organize the unorganized; refuse to use the power of the union to ~~champion the~~ support community struggles; refuse to champion international class solidarity but rather help the capitalists and politicians play off worker of one country against worker of another. We respond with the slogan: "An injury to one is an injury to all--a victory for workers is a victory for the class."

5. Champion liberation, support all struggles against oppression: Marxists understand that capitalists use special oppression to divide and weaken the working class by undermining class unity. Special oppression pits white workers against black, man worker against woman, worker of one national group against a worker of another. We also understand that effective fighting unity can not be achieved between workers of the oppressed group and workers of the dominant group on the basis of any acceptance of social inequality. A precondition for effective unity is the commitment of workers from the dominant social groups to become champions of the fight against inequality and for the liberation of the oppressed.

We fight for these ~~divers~~ ideas inside the unions. In particular we fight to convince workers that in order to become effective class struggle unionists, and in order to accomplish our objectives, it is necessary to join in the fight

against ~~xxx~~ black and racial oppression, women's oppression, etc. We point out that no part of the labor movement (not even the rank and file, class struggle opposition) can expect to have the confidence or real support of workers who are subject to special oppression if it goes along with that oppression and refuses to lead a fight ~~xx~~ against it.

The racism and chauvinism of the union bureaucracy is covered with only the thinnest liberal veneer. They have not only refused to champion the fight against oppression, but have shown themselves to time and again be a party to it.

6. Labor's need for our own party: As Marxists, we understand that basic defense and advancement of working class interests requires a political and not merely an economic response. It is only in the political struggle that the most fundamental class questions facing the working class can be raised and fought for. We call for and fight for a party which will consistently champion the interests of the working class. We understand in advance, that no reformist labor party can do this. Nor do we call for a reformist labor party. Our fight against collaborationism in the trade unions carries over into a fight against reformism in the realm of politics. In posing the need for a party that fights for a program to meet the real needs of workers, we are posing the need for a party that goes beyond reformism. We raise the question of labor party in a way which algebraically poses the question of class power and workers government (The best detailed presentation of this ~~xx~~ approach can be found in the "Fight for Socialism" program pamphlet put out by the Workers Party in 1946).

In labor terms we argue that both the Democratic and Republican Parties are controlled by the bosses and by politicians loyal to them. For these people, the private greed and profit of the powerful few are more important than the real interests of the vast majority. They use the government to defend the interests of the big corporations against the workers. Working people need our own party so that we, the majority, can use the power of government to defend our interests against the greed of the wealthy and powerful few. We need a party that can fight for a political program based on real working peoples needs and not on the defense of private profit. We argue for labor party in terms of specific issues such as inflation, unemployment, wage controls, government anti-labor intervention, Watergate, etc.

We point out that our collaborationist union leadership are already fully involved in politics through the Democratic Party. This is nothing more or less than an expression, in the realm of politics, of the same class collaborationist policies that they carry out within the unions. They refuse to lead workers, the majority, to fight for our ~~xxx~~ own interests against the bosses. Rather they hope to get crumbs from the bosses in return for the favor of helping ~~the workers~~ tie the workers to capitalist dominated democratic Party. But as economic conditions get worse, we don't even get crumbs any more--just a kick in the ass. Our union leaders sit on the Republican President's wage control boards and support the Democratic politicians who are pushing for more wage controls.

Our unions are already involved in politics. We fight for a labor party as something that will be needed before it will be possible to effectively fight in the political arena for our true needs as workers. Today, the fight for a labor party is an important ~~xxxx~~ part of the fight against the collaborationist leadership.

But until the collaborationists are thoroughly defeated, even if we can win our unions to the task of launching a mass labor party, we will have to continue to fight the collaborationists within the labor party for a program that really ~~meets~~ meets working peoples's needs.

7. An organized class struggle movement: As Marxists, we understand that political objectives can best be accomplished through organization. We argue to workers that ~~it~~ will ~~be~~ take an organized class struggle movement to effectively lead a fight to rebuild our unions and to reclaim them from the collaborationist class traitors who now control them. We concretize this by fighting for local ~~and~~ caucuses and national caucuses and for the need to win them to policies and programs based on class struggle unionist principles. We also raise the idea for a broader class struggle movement based on these principles to connect up workers from different unions together with unorganized workers, unemployed ~~and~~ workers, black minority and community organizations. Without generating illusions about the speed at which this can happen, this is the task we pose.

To summarize, class struggle unionists are trade union militants committed to:

1. Class struggle approach
2. Rank and file orientation.
3. Workers control
4. Class solidarity
5. Championing liberation and support to all struggles against oppression.
- 6/ Labor's need for our own party
7. An organized class struggle movement

It will take experience and experimentation to learn how to best use and formulate these principles of class struggle unionism. They are not being ~~pre-~~ posed as something we try to get caucuses to adopt to to vote on or carry in a box in their bpublications. To repeat a point made earlier, to us, class struggle unionism is the term we use ~~to~~ to describe our own, IS labor policies, programs, proposals, views, analysis, etc. when we are addressing these views within the labor movement./ to a workers audience. If we believe a fight must be made to reject the CWA contract, we argue that class struggle unionists should be organizing to reject the contract. If we wish to write a pamphlet, on, let's say, a strategy for struggle in the UAW, we argue for it as the strategy that all class struggle unionists in auto should be following. If we have an analysis of a split or tension in the teamster bureaucracy, we can put this forward as a class struggle unionist analysis, and so forth.

We project the IS as a socialist, revolutionary marxist organization whose members are all good class struggle unionists. We argue that class struggle unionism is one important part of revolutionary marxism. But marxism is much more. It is the science that gives a proletarian class answer to all questions confronting the working class, ~~throughout~~ it represents the crystalization of the international class memory and class experience of the working class, it represents the understanding that there is an emerging international crisis of immense proportions and that on an international scale, either the working class will take power, or civilization will be destroyed. The IS represents the organized commitment to fight to build the U.S. section of the international revolutionary ~~marxist~~ marxist workers party. Marxism tells us that either the party will be built, or the working class will be defeated.

We use the political concepts embodied in the principles of class struggle unionism as a bridge from today's consciousness and trade union experience to marxist ideas. An individual who in a serious and rich way internalizes these concepts will rapidly move in the direction of our total politics. These exist ~~not~~ not a single organized political tendency of any size or consequence whose politics are even consistent with a serious commitment to the, . No. 1, by asserting that labor peace is impossible because of basic conflicting interests between classes, already begins to weed out reformists. Nos. 2 and 3 include concepts that gnaw away at the very core of stalinism. No. 6 is inconsistent with syndicalism and most forms of anarchism. No. 7 rejects dual unionism, and the whole approach, taken together, rejects anti-union spontaneism and abstract sectarianism.

From a positive side, these concepts pose many of our basic political ~~ideas~~ ideas. The seven points, taken together, algebraically pose a set of tasks, that can, in fact, only be carried out by a revolutionary party, or at least a mass revolutionary ~~workers~~ workers organization on the verge of becoming a party. The fight to win workers to a rich understanding and acceptance of these principles, in terms of immediate tasks, is in an algebraic ~~sense~~ sense, the fight to win them to the need for a party that can organize to carry ~~out~~ out these tasks.

In the ~~late~~ middle '60's, politically serious students who were anti-stalinist, anti-Democratic Party, and who favored non-sectarian full participation in the mass movements, joined the ISC. Once they were sure on these questions, they were willing to receive the rest of their political training inside the organization. We want politically serious workers, who are clear on the questions of class struggle unionism and have drawn revolutionary conclusions, to join the IS and learn the rest of their politics inside the organization.

It is fundamental to our perspective that the world crisis of capitalism is what makes both a class struggle rank and file movement and a revolutionary workers party possible. Furthermore, it is the nature of the crisis and the history that precedes it that even makes the rank and file movement a relevant form of struggle in which a revolutionary movement can arise. In life, the "bridge" between militant unionism, class struggle unionism and revolutionary marxist politics is the nature of the crisis. The ideas of class struggle unionism are essentially a reflection of that objective reality and the contradictions in it. As ideas they embody the direction the struggle must take to ~~succeed~~ succeed at any point. Without the crisis they would be ideas that could not win a mass following.

While this document attempts to focus on one aspect of our work, it would be a mistake to forget that in winning workers to class struggle unionism and marxist politics, it is essential that they understand the crisis and its nature. By themselves, the principles of class struggle unionism appear timeless. Seen as a bridge in today's context, however, they provide the means for educating workers on the nature of the capitalist crisis by relating it to their experience today.

The IS can begin recruiting workers by a strategy of attempting to group around our organization a milieu of workers won to consciously view themselves as class struggle unionists, and then recruiting them to our organization out of that milieu. It is this strategy for building a revolutionary party and the notion of the rank and file movement (the material embodiment of class struggle unionism) which is the distinct characteristic of IS politics. It is also the rank and file movement and the struggle to build it that allows us to have an organized relationship with

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Building a rank and file movement, and an IS periphery within it, requires a systematic notion of our work. This means an understanding of the tools we have and of their relationship to our tasks, and to each other. In the context of actual work and struggle, the starting point for winning a periphery is the consistent propagation of the ideas, practice and strategy of class struggle unionism and the rank and file movement that strategy fights for. At present the most consistent, most serious means for doing this is WORKERS POWER. It is potentially the most consistent advocate of class struggle unionism because it can relate those ideas to our entire perspective for socialist revolution. WORKERS POWER can, as a revolutionary socialist paper, draw both the logical and objective conclusions that flow from our labor policy. Those conclusions, of course, are the need for a revolutionary workers' party and for a world socialist revolution.

Other publications, in particular our local and shop-based bulletins, are expressions of the same politics and policies put forth by WORKERS POWER, but they do not draw all the conclusions. While they center on problems specific to one union, shop, or local, these are the publications in which we can use the life experience of the workers to "prove" our ideas and to convince workers, over time, of class struggle. Today's consciousness is still quite localized, so in most instances caucus building and related educational tasks that we use the bulletins for must be carried out at the local level.

With the sole exception of WORKERS POWER, all of these publications are put out with other workers who do not have our politics. While there is a good deal of consistency, some of these publications are more politically advanced than others. That is, some are more consistent advocates of our class struggle unionist ideas and strategy than others. This, of course, simply reflects the varying levels of consciousness of the people in the groups that officially sponsor these publications. This in itself should not be a source of confusion. We are for bulletins, newsletters and journals that consistently reflect a class struggle point of view. But the fight to make these publications and the groups behind them consistent has a different time table, even a different road, in groups so widely divergent as Grass Roots in the NY AFT and the Voice of Chrysler Workers in Detroit. In all cases, our purpose in publishing such a newsletter, bulletin or journal is to win workers to class struggle unionist policies on a consistent basis. This, of course, is done by a combination of educational and agitational articles that relate and guide real struggles.

When our roots and contacts on the one hand, and the objective situation on the other hand allow, we can move beyond local publications that put forward class struggle unionist policies and arguments to union-wide or regional newsletters, papers or journals. In IBT, for a number of reasons, it has been possible already to establish papers that speak to more than one local. In the AFT, it has become possible because of fairly extensive networks of collaborators and contacts to have two state-wide publications (Teachers Forum in NY and Network in California).

In addition to newsletters, papers and bulletins that go beyond one local union, but are still of the same character as the shop bulletins in terms of the depth of ideas and conclusions, it will become possible in some industries or working class arenas to publish journals that deal with class struggle policies in more depth and detail. These journals could be more analytical and educational than most bulletins. The need for such a journal depends on the existence of a substantial milieu that is politically advanced enough to develop a consistent class struggle view, without however having to agree with IS politics.

Whether or not such militants view themselves as socialists, the journal could help to solidify them as a hard core for the rank and file movement in that industry. It would be this core that would give future rank and file organizations their stability.

Over the next several years, the task of winning our co-workers to take the leap of identifying with socialist revolution in general, and politically identifying with the IS in particular, will be a difficult job. Most workers will resist openly and explicitly identifying themselves as IS supporters until they are pretty sure of us and themselves. But we wish to have a method which permits a worker to openly and explicitly identify with our labor policy, while not yet taking responsibility for the IS as an organization or taking responsibility for all of our revolutionary conclusions.

Class struggle union journals (for specific proposals see section II below) will represent an organ of IS labor policy and strategy. It will be possible to win workers to openly and explicitly identify with these journals and with their political line who are not yet ready to enter into this same relationship with WP. It should be possible to get numbers of workers to view these journals as an expression of "their" politics who are not yet ready to view WP as representing "their" politics. In relation to this layer, WP can play a particularly important role - extending the conclusions of class struggle unionism to their necessary completion, revolutionary socialism, and educating these workers in broader political questions. It can thus be a key tool for solidifying these militants as a periphery and for recruiting them to the IS.

In most cases, it remains the case that ~~xxx~~ even the best militants have not been won to the most rudimentary aspects of class struggle unionism or our strategy. That is, for most militants who form our potential periphery, the bulletins are still effective educational tools.

Our basic tools, then, for winning workers to a class struggle unionist point of view are WORKERS POWER, the bulletins, and as our work advances the journals. Each plays a specific role at a somewhat distinct political level, in the process of cohering a worker periphery ~~xxx~~ for the IS in the context of building the rank and file movement.

But systematic work requires organization. The basic form of organization by which we carry out our trade union work is the fraction. It is here that we organize our interventions, plan tactics, make contact assignments and determine the specifics of using all the various levels of publications.

One of the problems in the past is that fractions have limited themselves to discussing the day to day tactics of caucus building or other specific activities. If, however, our practical task is to cohere a periphery based on our labor policy, then more must be discussed systematically. The use of WORKERS POWER in the plant and the union - not just selling at the gate - with those we work with should be regularly discussed and assessed. Person to person educational work should be organized here. After all, convincing one worker of our strategy and ideas takes hours of patient discussion and explanation. Of course, actual contact work for the IS should also be a regular fraction function.

On a national scale, industry-wide fractions are beginning to play a more important role. Essentially they should do on a national scale what the local fraction does: regularly assessing all aspects of our work. National fraction bulletins, such as the IBT and UFW fractions have, can help this.

The following proposals and motions are meant to help concretize the perspective set forth in the discussion document and to further systematize our work.

I. THE DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF WORKERS POWER.

Central to developing a political periphery, for the ideas of the IS and for the organization itself, within the rank and file movement is the use of our newspaper WORKERS POWER. WP must become in reality what it now is only on paper - the organizing tool which represents the public face of the IS, the struggle for a national, politically organized class struggle opposition in the unions, and the fight to build out of this movement a revolutionary socialist working class party.

Class struggle unionism is the policy of revolutionary Marxists inside the labor movement. Thus, our newspaper must identify with the slowly developing struggle for class struggle unionism - i.e. the rank and file movement - and seek to speak and become known as broadly as possible as the centralizing organ of this struggle and its most consistent voice. Of course, we realize that today this movement is extremely fragmented and weak, and has no authoritative public voice of its own. It is all the more critical, then, that the IS systematically fight to make WP the paper which is known as such a voice. Today, this is the concrete political meaning of making WP a real workers' paper. Moreover, as we have understood for several years, this rank and file movement is the only soil in which our organization and newspaper can grow.

Of course, WP is much more than a class struggle union paper. It is a paper of revolutionary socialism going far beyond trade union issues. WP must deal with the economic and political crisis on the US and internationally, with every progressive social struggle against capitalism and Stalinism, and with all the problems of building the revolutionary movement. It must draw the conclusions of class struggle unionism, pointing out how its consistent application requires revolutionary opposition to capitalism. It is in many of these areas that WP is today least effective, consistent or precise, but their importance should be clear to all. However, none of this is new - it simply means that in fighting for a class struggle opposition movement, we do not tailor our paper or its basic ideas to the current level of consciousness of that movement. We struggle to broaden that consciousness and draw the political conclusions - from the labor party all the way to revolution.

Our goal, our perspective, is to make WP the paper that working class militants feel they must read in order to know what's going on in their own movement - in terms of both information and analysis. Of course, this cannot be accomplished until our own members feel this way about their paper. What we are arguing, then, is that the use of WP by our branches must be changed and dramatically improved. The paper is our central ~~link~~ link between trade union work and party-building. It must be used intensively - i.e. on a one-to-one basis - by worker members with contacts whom we want to draw into the IS or its periphery. At the same time, expanding its circulation and influence among new groups and layers of militants is critical in the coming year.

This perspective requires that branch leadership bodies, and comrades and fractions in industry, play much more aggressive roles both in shaping the paper and distributing it. The national organization devotes far and away more of its financial, political and personnel resources to WP than to any other single concentrated activity. This expenditure is what is responsible for the improvement of WP - however, the potential represented by these improvements can be realized only through the activity of the whole IS.

Writing for WP about industrial activities and struggles cannot be allowed to remain the lowest priority for the fractions. Features like the Dodge Main interview in #97 should be common, not exceptional.

It is obvious that we are not in a position to publish a mass circulation paper (even the British IS is only beginning to find this a possibility). However, the perspective of making WP the paper which most consistently fights for the rank and file movement and organizes for IS politics within it will enable WP to play the role of a revolutionary socialist paper in this country in the real sense.

II. JOURNALS OF CLASS STRUGGLE UNIONISM

A. AUTO. The national auto fraction shall publish a journal. This journal shall be open to non-ISers, and shall not be presented as strictly an IS publication, although we intend to control it politically. It is our estimate that there are now a sufficient number of militants whom we work with in auto, that such a journal can have a real base. The journal should discuss strategy, tactics and politics in greater detail than is possible in shop bulletins or WORKERS POWER. By drawing others into such a discussion we hope to make them self-conscious of themselves as the embryo of a growing movement in the UAW conscious of its existence, methods and strategy. We will use the journal as one of the tools to win militants to the political periphery of the IS, along with the bulletins in each shop and WORKERS POWER.

Normal content will include the following: articles on trends and developments in the union, the industry and the economy; articles on class struggle unionist perspective for the union; reports and articles on opposition groups inside the union and on national oppositions, if any, describing experiences, successes, failures, struggles, campaigns and local perspectives; political educational articles from a class struggle unionist viewpoint; reprints of interesting rank and file leaflets, articles etc. of particular interest; facts, information, and anecdotes.

B. NATIONAL TEAMSTER NEWSLETTER (from KS IBT Perspectives doct.).

We should attempt to establish a loose national network with ourselves well positioned in it. What is possible and appropriate to the general task would be a national newsletter aimed at the militants and oppositionists, including the remnants of TURF, subscribers to our papers, people we work with, and various radicals.

Such a newsletter would take up events in the union and analyze them. Additionally, such topics as TURF in perspective, PROD and government reform of the union, and political action could be dealt with. Naturally it would also carry local news, reprints, etc.

While such a newsletter would be under our influence or even control, it should be quite open to debate and should solicit contributions from various individuals. Like the auto journal, it will not be labelled an IS publication.

C. CLUW. The Women's Commission should organize the establishing of a national journal for CLUW. It should not be labelled an IS publication, but will be under our control. This journal should ~~be~~ be seen as the voice of the left-wing rank and file elements. In it we will put forth, in greater detail than is possible in WP, our views and perspectives on both the labor movement and women's liberation. We will encourage others in the left wing of CLUW to write for the journal and use it to help build a radical tendency in CLUW under our political leadership.

III. OTHER LITERATURE.

A. An IS pamphlet should be written aimed at workers, presenting our ~~perspectives~~ labor perspectives as the perspectives of class struggle unionism, based on "IS Labor Perspectives" and also on the method of the NAC discussion document. It should also include US roots of class struggle unionism, economic and political reasons for its decline in the '50's and '60's, and prospects for its re-emergence in the framework of the growing economic crisis. Finally, it should include a discussion of the need to go beyond class struggle unionism for a party and a revolutionary perspective.

B. Resources permitting, we should also draft an IS pamphlet aimed at industrialized radicals and other would-be revolutionaries discussing our approach to class struggle unionism as a way to fight for Marxist ideas inside the working class.