

Special Bulletin Number Five
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SPECIAL BULLETINS

This bulletin is number five in a series of bulletins being produced for the discussion and faction fight which is now going on in the organisation. These special bulletins will continue up to the weekend on January 29th when the NC meets in Detroit to make final decisions on the questions at issue.

The next edition of this bulletin will go to press on Tuesday, Jan. 4th. Contributions should be at the national office (typed on Gestetner stencils) by Monday, Jan. 3rd. It should be understood that this bulletin is open to all members from the point of view of contributions and is distributed to all members through the branches. The time elapsed between production, in Detroit, and distribution in the branches will be reduced after this edition as the postal service will become more reliable again after Xmas.

We are attempting, and have succeeded so far, to publish all contributions in the next bulletin that comes out after the date we receive them. If there is a flood of contributions in the new year this may not remain possible. In that situation editorial decisions will be made by the national secretary on the basis of an attempt to maintain each bulletin as a politically balanced edition. It would help prevent this situation arising if all comrades kept their articles as short as possible.

Although there will always be the partial circulation of some documents in preparation for open publication, it should be made clear that all documents with a bearing on this debate should be submitted to the bulletin so that all members can read them. It is part of our democratic structure to have centralised and equal production of documents, and faction documents for any side must be distributed through these special bulletins once the final draft is completed.

Finally, a note should be added on the contents of this particular bulletin. The article on Canadian industrialisation was submitted to us by the leaders of the minority, who also informed us that although they were in the process of preparing written material there would be nothing else completed until the next bulletin. The article from the EC on the corrections to the minority document should be viewed as an addendum to the major reply to the minority which appeared in the last special bulletin.

Glenn Wolfe,
National Secretary.

Please Note...This faction fight has already generated over 180 pages of written material. It would be nice to get to the end of it without doubling that figure!

AN ANSWER TO SOME SLANDERS BY THE MINORITY

The E.C.'s "Corrections of Some Facts in the Minority Document" has dealt with the numerous slanders and distortions in the minority document itself. But the minority has been spreading a whole series of rumors and slanders they didn't put in their document.

We are printing and answering the main rumors we have heard. There may be others we don't know about. Comrades can judge how true they are by comparing the rumors we print here with reality.

RUMOR 1) "People have been forced to pick up and move from city to city and leave their base and work where they have contacts and good work going." When asked for specifics, Dennis from Philly was given as an example.

REALITY Reality is that Dennis was recruited as an autoworker. His plant had been shut down for one and a half years. He wanted to leave and probably would have requested the EC to reassign him anyway. He is now working in the largest steel mill in the Gary area, and is glad for the change.

RUMOR 2) Glen Wolfe told the Cincinnati branch that they should not have recruited a woman electrical worker.

REALITY Glen explained the difficulties of keeping and holding this member-- he did not say the branch shouldn't have recruited her, and already agreed there should be a fraction in the branch around her work.

RUMOR 3) Mel (Pitt) was threatened with expulsion for not staying on a branch exec when requested.

REALITY When Mel resigned from the exec he was urged by the EC to withdraw his resignation. Mel himself said he had been wrong, and that the EC was right to take him on. At no time did the EC threaten to expell him.

RUMOR 4) The Philadelphia branch was dissolved -- supposedly against the will of the people involved.

Reality The Philly branch requested the EC to dissolve it and reassign comrades to other cities given the lack of real work and the small size of the branch.

RUMOR 5) The EC has been supressing documents from the membership

REALITY The documents in question were letters from the ISGB to the Natl. Committee of the IS. These have now all been distributed to the membership. They were not distributed to the whole membership immediately because they were adressed to the NC -- to whom they were distributed. One letter from ISGB was never received through the mail, but was given to the EC by Cal. The EC did not receive this letter until the beginning of November, even though it was dated Oct 17.

RUMOR 6) Jack W told Sharon in Gary that she could not discuss the Sadlowski campaign, even in her own livingroom.

REALITY At a meeting of the Gary exec, Jack W stated to the comrades who opposed the line that discussion on the implementation of the perspective was in order, but that they

could not raise a systematic campaign to change the perspective until after the Feb 8 election. When asked if this extended to private conversations in her living room, Jack replied that it made no difference where conversations occurred, but whether it was part of a systematic campaign to change the overall perspective in the immediate pre-election period when comrades were trying to put the perspective into practice.

RUMOR 7) Glen W was a member of the Socialist Labor League -- the British counterpart of the Workers League.

REALITY Glen was never a member of the SLL. Before joining the ISGB in 1967 at age 18, he was a member of the Labor Party. He served as organizer of the Manchester District, largest in the ISGB from 1972 until the time he left Britain to come to the States. He was a member of the ISGB INC from 1972-1974

We have presented and refuted seven rumors. If there are more they too can be answered. The method of spreading distortions only makes it more difficult to discuss the real political issues before the organization. Worse, it creates an atmosphere of hostility and distrust that could make resumption of common political work difficult after the issues are settled. We ask the minority to stop spreading rumors and to get on with the debate.

Marilyn D. and Sandy B.

THE LEFT FACTION'S SOLUTION TO OUR "CONSERVATIVE" STEEL WORK:
"FIND THE MASSES AND THEN HEAD IN THE OTHER DIRECTION"

(This answer to the Left Faction's criticisms of our steel work was written by Candy from Pittsburgh. It has the unanimous endorsement of the Pittsburgh Steel Fraction, and of the local Branch Exec.)

It is impossible for most members of the organization living in different cities and involved in their own areas of work, to be familiar with the concrete conditions in each fraction and branch. We provide the concretes of the steel work here so that these members can form political judgements based on the reality of the conditions our comrades face in steel.

The Left Faction tells us that "[It believes,] with Lenin, that without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice."

We are happy to hear it. Unfortunately there is an equally important Marxist principle of which the Left Faction shows it understands nothing. Without an examination of the *concrete* aspects of a given situation, there can be no Marxist analysis. In leaving a trail of one condemnation after another, the Left Faction surpasses itself in only one respect: it shows a total ignorance, or simple disregard, for any of the *concrete* conditions on which it passes judgement.

Thus we are told that in steel "We have even gone so far as to condemn the Communist Party as 'sectarian' because they will not disband their steel workers newspaper."

And in one sentence, we are treated to the devastating conclusion that the IS is therefore to the right of the CP.

One would think that such a serious charge would be based on one or two *specifics* of the actual situation. Since the Lefts do not include any such bothersome details, we'd like to provide them here.

Effective Tactics - A Right-wing Orientation?

Our criticisms of the CP operation at Clairton USSteel is that it is highly sectarian. The reason however is not *because they continue their newspaper*. If this were the case, we would have to apply the same criteria to ourselves - and face the fact that we must also be sectarians *for the reason that we continue our own independent rank and file newspaper, Steelworkers Stand Up (SSU)*.

In fact, we were faced with a situation that was far more *complex* (as is often the case when one is dealing with reality) than the Left Document assumes.

We began a rank and file newspaper in the mill (SSU). A CP'er, who had been coming out with an irregular and shoddy newsletter, but who had more of a base, began baiting us with the worst sectarianism, anti-Trotskyist, and personal attacks. He began dividing our contacts, alienating new people who came around, and turning his group (which included a couple of important black militants) against us. A serious conflict arose between the two rank and file papers in the plant.

We were faced with the question of how to respond. If in return we dumped on him to new people coming around, they would only be confused and turned off. The CP'er, who is a grievanceman, had more credibility than we. We knew that the sectarianism could only hurt us; it would severely set back both Sadlowski work and any attempts at local organization in the mill.

So we proposed to the other group that we merge and work together on a joint paper. We wrote up a unity statement of political principles for working together (which they agreed to). We offered to bend over backwards - give up our own paper's name, format, etc. - in order to end the conflict and come out with a publication, including as broad a base as possible, that carried our rank and file politics on local issues and on the Sadlowski campaign.

We believed it would be to our advantage if his group agreed to work with us. But

if they refused, after a series of approaches, *we* would be in the position of standing for the broadest unity, and *he* would be seen as sectarian, divisive, and more concerned with petty squabbles than building an honest rank and file movement.

He refused, because he "did not like" our key comrade. We were in fact successful in causing one of the main black leaders of his group to break ranks with him on this issue, to neutralize others, and to have our paper be viewed more broadly in the mill as the one standing for unity.

So the question of merging papers was, first of all, one of tactics. Those tactics made us the builders of broad principled unity who put the rank and file movement above all petty squabbles; while he came off like a petty ego-tripper - *to the people around us*. And secondly, the question had nothing to do with the CP folding its paper into the Fight Back movement, but whether they would agree to work with *IS militants* in the mill.

We should be clear, however: We do not maintain SSU at this point merely to have a formal "independent" presence. We have proposed to the CP, to the local Sadlowski support committee, and to everyone else we can, that we produce a joint publication with our rank and file strategy, which takes up local issues and the Sadlowski campaign. We have offered time and again to suspend publication of SSU as soon as a joint newsletter with a similar political orientation, but broader base, can be launched. We have been refused; no one else wants to take that job on. SSU now has a clear field to become *the* rank and file Sadlowski organ in the mill that also organizes around key local issues.

We have gone into such detail on this particular issue for one reason: to show that the facile criticisms of the Left Faction Document (and being to the right of the CP is one of their most serious) have nothing to do with Marxist method, because they have nothing to do with "facing real facts in the real world."

Unconditional AND Critical Support

Our support for Sadlowski is characterized in the Left Document as "unconditional." And so it is. We place no conditions on Sadlowski before he can gain our support for election. We believe that a victory for Sadlowski will be a genuine and significant step forward for the Steelworkers' rank and file. Smashing the existing corrupt and powerful machine will break up current apathy. A Sadlowski victory will mean that issues that would otherwise seem abstract or unattainable, like the shorter work week and especially the right to strike, will be seen as winnable. And most important, a successful bid will very likely spark the beginnings of militant rank and file organization.

We base our position, then, upon objective conditions, the state of mind of the rank and file, and the possibilities for mass organization that are opened up by such a campaign. We cannot as Marxists, determine our position by the criteria implied in the Left Document - to what degree Sadlowski *as an individual* is "better" than his opponent or predecessor.

That our support is unconditional, unembarrassed, and non-vacillating, however, is hardly to say that it is *uncritical*. The Steel Fraction Perspectives, passed by an overwhelming majority of the fraction after thorough debate, are quite clear on this point. Since the authors of the Left Document have presumably read the perspective that they criticize, their characterization of our support as *merely* "unconditional," without any mention of our politics of critical support, can only be seen as dishonest.

Perhaps, some will say, their contention is not with the perspective, but with our practice. Indeed, our steel comrades are characterized as simply attending smorgasbords (and we all know that social events have no place in a workers' movement) and running their a-political asses off as errand boys and girl-Fridays for the bureaucrats. It is added that political influence is supposed to follow later.

It makes no difference to the Left Faction that we are under attack from the

bureaucrat who head the Fight Back operation in Pittsburgh for being troublemakers, for being too critical, for being socialists, and for "asking all those fucking questions at rallies."

No matter that those public questions we ask, pointing up key issues and pushing Sadlowski to take harder stands, have gained us credibility with people from other mills we could meet and influence in no other way.

No matter that we are the *only* ones who bring up political questions like Sadlowski's support for the Democratic Party in those same public meetings. No matter that we are being red-baited for our open (unlike any other left groups in the mills) association with, and sales and discussion of, WP.

And no matter that we have been the ones to argue for and organize rank and file initiative at every tiny step in the local campaign (against the consistent opposition by the way, of the CP).

(In case any illusions still remain within the "Left" Faction as to whether we are to the "right" of the CP; they should be aware that at every turn the CP has defended the Fight Back bureaucrats against our opposition.)

The Politics of Mass Work vs. Irrelevancy

The real problem, for us, is *how* do we raise critical support *in a way that makes a difference*. That is, how do we bring our politics to influence as many people as possible?

Our conception of work in the Sadlowski campaign is that here is an issue arousing mass involvement, unlike any other in the USWA has for years and years. It is a campaign that has the real possibility of sparking a rank and file steelworkers' movement. It is a campaign that is at the heart of the union, and the center of attention for the rank and file. And it is a campaign that opens up and gives credibility to all the issues of class struggle unionism.

Our conception has been the following: To *organizationally* fold our tiny rank and file groups into the Fight Back activity in order to enormously expand the arena in which the groups' independent rank and file *political* views can have influence. That is, we took the decision not to maintain tiny rank and file groups of 3-6 people in which we had a sure majority. Instead we chose to convince the few solid militants around us to go into Fight Back, and to bring the best political content into that movement, *by fighting for our rank and file politics with a much greater number of steelworker activists in the course of joint work*.

As Trotsky put it, in arguing against those who were for abandoning work in the trade unions because of the reactionary bureaucracy, "It is not enough to offer the masses a new address. It is necessary to seek out the masses where they are and to lead them." We cannot affect the masses of steelworkers who are excited by the Sadlowski campaign by carping from the sidelines, as we stand outside the Fight Back campaign and allow the world to pass us by.

The Left Document condemns the IS because, according to them, "more and more the organization takes on the characteristics of a sect, in its isolated existence...its big talk, to no listeners."

This description in fact fits nothing but the Left Document's own conclusions. Their position on the steel work should be sufficient proof. For what is the meaning of calling it "right-wing" to enter a broad, real, living movement in order to give our politics influence...if not a prescription for isolation, big talk, and no audience?

We have made gains in the weeks of this campaign it might have otherwise taken years to achieve:

Our militants have gained credibility. It is a limited credibility, in that we are not well-known by the majority of steelworkers in the mill, but a degree of credibility nevertheless out of proportion with our limited seniority.

Our work has helped enormously in making both rank and file and IS contacts: it has

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made us known to militants not only within our own workplaces, but activists from other mills as well.

It has created openings for political discussions, in which we are taken more seriously, with almost everyone we work with and meet. Those discussions frequently and naturally extend to WP. And it has created a wider readership for WP than we could otherwise build.

But just as important, our work in the campaign, the Fight Back office, the union, and with other militants, has given us training and an opportunity for learning about the politics of the union and the industry that as new people who are still all to raw, we could have learned in no other way, or in so short a time.

No Independent Presence?

As we said before, our reason for *organizationally* dissolving our independent rank and file groups has been to *expand* the arena in which we can have *political* influence for our rank and file views. We chose influence and content over form. The Left Faction is horrified by this "dissolving of independent presence." But what the Left Document conveniently fails to mention is that a *central* part of the steel perspectives is maintaining and using our *independent presence as Workers' Power* within the campaign.

We remind them of a few examples from the Perspectives:

"We want our comrades to put very high premium on being openly associated with WP and the IS. . ."

"Central to our involvement in the campaign is to sell the pamphlet and to sell WP."

"To the extent we are able to develop influence in the campaign, we want to make ourselves a trend in Fight Back, directly in the name of the IS and WP."

"We want our members in steel to establish reputations as important militants in the Sadlowski campaign and we want the IS and WP to be identified as a left current in that campaign."

For us, then, entering a broader rank and file movement is not rushing into a murky and overpowering swamp, in which we lose our political identities because we left them somewhere at home on the shelf. Our independent *revolutionary* politics are the critical pole we establish within the current left opposition in the USWA.

We will discuss inside sales of WP and our independent IS presence somewhat more later. We are well aware that to build the campaign and put forward our rank and file politics is useless if out of that work we have not laid the basis for a periphery for our revolutionary politics and for recruitment to the IS. We believe our practice - our open association with WP, aggressive discussions of IS politics, fraction agendas that take WP as a key part of the work, and wherever possible pushing contacts to attend branch events - are proof enough that we take the problem seriously.

WP Coverage

"Sadlowski, of course, is far better than his opponent, Lloyd McBride, and far better than the current President, I.W. Abel, the author of the union's no-strike pledge (the ENA). And he deserves support, though hardly 'unconditional support,' not the praise that Workers' Power lavishes on him. He is still a bureaucrat, though a reforming, left one. His faults are not simply, as WP would have us believe, that he is 'vague,' 'cautious,' and has a shortage of 'boldness and daring.' (WP, Nov. 29, 1976) Sadlowski is by no means a Debs, nor is he a class-struggle unionist." (Left Faction Document, p.7)

It is somewhat annoying when the level of this argument must be reduced to asking comrades to simply re-read our own newspaper's coverage. The context of this paragraph implies that part of the "praise Workers' Power lavishes" on Sadlowski is that he is a Debs. The whole focus of the article on Debs was in fact, as a simple re-reading will show, to prove that Sadlowski, despite his claims, is not a socialist in the Debsian tradition.

Nor anywhere, in any article, do we "lavish praise."

And because we criticized Sadlowski in one particular article for being "vague" and "cautious" has not meant that those have been our *only* criticisms.

We have tried to find the ways to raise critical support in WP that are the most effective in moving people, the same as we have tried to do in our work, as we explained before. We have tried to hit on the key issues of the campaign for the rank and file. We have maintained the line that the only, and the key, importance the campaign has for us is our rank and file strategy. We have maintained that only an aggressive and organized rank and file movement can win the gains Sadlowski supports, and only that movement can keep him accountable to the ranks after the election.

Our coverage on steel in Workers' Power needs to be greatly improved. In many ways, it reflects the inexperience of our steel fraction itself. The fraction has begun a very serious effort to make that coverage better.

But the weaknesses of our coverage are not those the Left Faction points to.

The important thing about the tone we adopt toward Sadlowski is not his shortage of boldness and daring. Nor are his own personal politics the decisive element in the tone we adopt in Workers' Power. What's most important in determining our tone toward Sadlowski is the political assessment that a Sadlowski victory would be *progressive* relative to the class struggle and its real, current level of development. Our articles in WP are not written to impress sociology students with the intricacies of our analysis, but rather to convince worker militants that the opportunities presented by the Sadlowski campaign reflect the chance of a lifetime.

Women

The Left Document contains one other criticism of our steel work that must be taken up. Like the "more-right-than-the-CP" argument, the critique of our work with women includes no analysis of our actual work.

The Left Document tells us that:

"...it is the 'mass work' perspective itself...that makes 'mass work' a disaster for the fight for women's liberation in industry."

and that the present IS strategy means

"Women IS members cannot relate to the struggles of women workers."

The women steel comrades communicated regularly with Barbara W., the Women's Commissioner, on the work done with women in the mills. So she, more than anyone, should know that these statements do not fit with reality.

In both Gary and Pittsburgh, the *first* issue we began a campaign on was dissatisfaction with women's washrooms. Our analysis was that this work with steel women was an important example and *confirmation of our mass work perspective*, and a confirmation of our belief that women can in fact lead women in basic industry. Barbara agreed with that analysis, and asked us to expand it for an internal bulletin.

In Pittsburgh, we were forced to discontinue the women's group for specific tactical reasons ²⁵ before the Sadlowski perspectives were ever developed. But again, less than a month ago, we were doing work with an organized group of women from another mill who were fighting the discriminatory layoffs and firings.

But in spite of the knowledge that the Women's Commissioner ought to have of the women comrades' work, she and the Left Faction tell us:

"Finally, women steelworkers are now told that the best thing they can do for themselves 'as women' is to support Sadlowski, and that an independent women's group, for example, would not do."

In Gary, part of our plan for implementation of the Sadlowski perspective was to build women's committees in various locals in the district! We wanted these independent women's formations to participate in the Fight Back campaign, as independent formations, and to force the Sadlowski slate to take harder positions on the question of women's issues.

We approached an CP'er who had a women's committee in her local. We were told that she could not suggest to the group that it become involved in the Sadlowski campaign. The reason was that her women's group was based on its own particular independent interests - they put on fashion shows! At that time, we were told by one member who is now in the Left Faction that we were against the politics of independent women's organization: After all, we had pressed an independent women's group not to confine itself to the burning issue of the latest designs in ladies' fashion wear!

Women must be organized independently to take up our own specific interests as women. But the issues that affect us are not confined to maternity leave, childcare, etc. It should come as no surprise that health and safety, the right to strike, the grievance procedure - also affect those workers in the mills who happen to be women.

And as we organize our independent women's groups, we cannot be asked, "as women," to ignore those critical questions which affect our daily lives. . . simply because they do not fit the Left's conception of what a "woman's" issue is.

The Left Faction might re-read the Women's Commissioner's document on "Building the Working Class Women's Movement":

"However, and to repeat, this motion by working class women will come about as a result of the general motion of the working class, and in particular of a rank and file workers' movement."

Just as a working class women's movement cannot and will not be built *outside* of the general class struggle, so women organized into an independent group cannot be independent of the world of their workplace.

*We could not carry the plan to organize women's committees, for 2 reasons. The first was that we have been hard-pressed for resources. Second was the sectarianism by other left groups that had originally destroyed the Gary women's group around washrooms.

We are now in the planning stages of a district-wide women steelworkers' conference for Gary. Hopefully we will be able to push Fight Back to help initiate this effort.

The Left Faction: "We Have A Way Forward, But Ask Someone Else For Directions"

But the Left Faction believes that it has unquestionably "proven" the right-wing nature of our current steel perspective. What alternative do they offer?

We should be "bold and audacious" and "honest and realistic." We should "aggressively push our politics and aggressively strive to recruit workers." And we are told we should continue current inside work in steel, "but this work will only be successful if we can build our own base and build the IS."

Now, that is fine advice. Except that it's a little like telling a carpenter that the way to build a house is with hard work, a lot of 2x4's, and a bit of flair. Nowhere do they expand or refine these general, nice-sounding words to explain just *how* we should go about building a base.

Giving the Lefts the maximum conceivable credit, we can only guess at what their alternative for inside work in steel would be. We do not wish to be accused of putting words in their mouths; unfortunately, we are forced to guess since nowhere do they provide us with a clue as to *their* secret "master plan" (and they cannot continue to hide their helpless lack of any concrete perspectives behind sarcastic references to "master plans"). But we assume their alternative would run something like this:

"You have to build a base in the mill. Since you have little time in, and no real

base of your own yet, you cannot participate in any campaigns that involve left bureaucrats or officials. Therefore you must take the key local issues in the plant which concern people, make propoganda around these issues, and try to involve the best militants around them."

But we would have to answer that there are only two or three issues of any importance in the mill today: the right to strike, the right to vote (on contracts), and the Consent Decree (racist and sexist discrimination). *All three* are tied inextricably to the Sadlowski campaign for steelworkers. There is *no* issue in the mill - for us at Clairton, at least - at the present time that *everyone* is moving around, except the Sadlowski campaign. And that is something that *everyone* is concerned with.

In fact, it was part of our perspective to link the Sadlowski campaign to the key issues of local importance in each mill, particularly during December. We made a serious effort to do this at Clairton. We talked to people, investigated various possible issues, and looked into local bargaining, which comes up after the election. Unfortunately, there is no such issue beyond or in addition to Sadlowski that is *alive* right now.

So we are faced, when we go into the mill each day, with the following problem: our one comrade has much less than a year in this mill. Our other operative has just gotten off probation. How, dear left comrades please tell us, do we begin to build a base *without being actively involved in the only issue, an issue of far-reaching significance, that everyone else in the mill is concerned with?*

The Way Backward

Perhaps, since no local issues are generating interest at the present time, and since the "masses" are now interested only in Sadlowski, the Left Faction would have us escape contamination by doing "outside" work until some inside issue that is not "dangerous" to revolutionaries arises. (Much like their argument that since revolutionary comrades will be contaminated by the racism, sexism, and conservatism of our fellow workers, it is dangerous for us to attempt to lead non-revolutionary workers.)

For us in Pittsburgh, (and we believe our experience to be the general rule) there is a problem with an "outside work" perspective for steel.

Our experience as a branch has been that in consistent WP sales at various mills (with workforces of 2-8,000) we averaged sales of 2-4 copies outside the gates each week (in spite of experimentation with different sellers, buddies, promotional leaflets, and so on). In the course of the Sadlowski campaign, our inside sales (begun only a few months ago, at one mill of 4,000) have ranged from 12-20 papers. We are in no way satisfied with these numbers. But they are a far cry from the couple of copies we sold before. (To gauge these sales by numbers alone neglects the important difference in *quality* of sales: we know that we are selling regularly to key militants, political discussion about WP occur with the sales - and because we are inside, we can hold these discussions about the paper *between* sales.)

At the beginning of this branch's existence, we began an outside campaign at the mills in connection with RAFT (Rank and File Team - a semi-network within the USW located in Youngstown, Ohio). We regularly distributed a series of leaflets on key issues in the union. We held IS forums, including one connecting issues in the USWA to the miners' strike, which we publicized and mass-leafleted for at the mill gates. We managed to eke out one or two names and phone numbers which we could not maintain because we had no consistent ongoing work. We got no response to our leaflets.

Later the Women's Caucus did hard and serious strike support work with women steelworkers. We took WP to the picket line every other day. We ended up with nothing to show for weeks and months of hard work.

This is not to say that we should give up on strike support work. It *is* to say

that strike support and outside sales is not a *perspective* for steel that can *substitute* for hard, consistent inside work. As the Left Document so aptly puts it, there is no short-cut to building a base.

Conclusion

Given our limitations, we have made important strides toward building a rank and file base and toward bringing the politics of WP and the IS to that base. We have a long way to go in learning how to better politicize our work. We have pushed ourselves to be as aggressive as possible, but we are new. And because we are new, we know that we have not always found the *best* ways to bring in WP and revolutionary politics.

While making use of the right levers, the key links, the *most effective way* of posing political questions - to take people *from where they are* and *move* them toward our full political understanding - is one of the most important lessons we are learning from this campaign, it is also the area we have yet to learn the most about.

And that is the most destructive thing about this debate. Because there is only one way we can learn those lessons now, in the middle of a campaign that will soon be over. And that is by *applying* to our work and testing out the suggestions and decisions of the local fractions and the center. That is, in practice - and not by taking away energy and resources - *in the course* of a short campaign in which our resources are already slim - to debate the problem on the worst level of abstraction with comrades who have failed to understand the concrete and actual conditions of the work, the mills, and the world.

As we've said, there may so far have been no adequate way for many comrades to test the information they've been given. We hope that in the area of the steel work, this document has provided sufficient detail for them to do so.

THE BRITISH I.S. AND "PRIORITIES"

Fritz N. (Detroit)

In the American I.S. we prioritize work in the working class over work among students, blue collar work over white collar work, and work in key industrial sectors over work in marginal industrial sectors. In the British I.S. letter to the ISUS of September 3, 1976, the distinct impression is given that they do not share these priorities. Rather it is implied that where the ISGB pours its resources at any given time is primarily a function of the immediate gains which can be made in that area, and is relatively independent of the industry's centrality to British capitalism or the union's centrality within the British labor movement.

My first-hand impressions of the ISGB are completely different. I know a British I.S. whose priorities are just the same as ours.

I was a member of the ISGB from June 1973 to June 1974. I spent the entire year in the Edinburgh, Scotland branch, whose total membership fluctuated between 40 and 75 in that period. The workforce in Edinburgh is largely white collar, the city being a government, banking, insurance, and tourist center. It is also the site of a major university. Industry in the city consists of two electronics factories, a brewery, relatively unimportant docks and related industries, and, of course, construction. Within a 20 mile radius are some of Britain's most important coal mines.

A large majority of the members of the branch were white collar workers and students. During the 1973 membership drive quite a few manual workers (mainly in construction) joined. Most of these left the IS during the year, however.

Despite the nature of the city and the composition of the branch, our activity was overwhelmingly directed to blue collar workers. Our main orientation, as measured in terms of forums, contact work, Socialist Worker sales, etc., was toward miners, electronics workers, construction workers, and dockers, more or less in that order. The miners, of course, were in motion that year -- in fact their strike toppled the Tory government. But we gave nearly as much attention to the two electronics factories, despite the fact that the workers there had a history of conservatism, were not expected to move in the near future, and did not move. The reason that work around those plants was so central to the Edinburgh branch was that the union there, the AUEW, organizes in basic industry and is therefore a top priority union for the ISGB.

At the same time, there were struggles going on in non-industrial areas in the city. In November-December 1973, the teaching and research assistants at the University of Edinburgh went on strike for union recognition (the union was ASTMS). Several IS members were involved in the strike and played key roles. But the strikers received absolutely no help from the IS branch. The reason given was that it was a more important task for the branch to build a base in key industry than to devote resources to a student strike -- even one part of the regular trade union movement. All IS members involved in the strike felt that not only could we have recruited a good number of students, but we also could have brought about a victory in the strike, had the branch devoted more attention to it.

Because of the ASTMS strike and other less significant events, there

was tremendous tension in the branch all year long over the very question of priorities. Probably a majority of the branch felt that white collar work should have occupied more of the branch resources, and the question was debated informally and at several branch meetings. The branch leadership and (finally, after it intervened) the national leadership upheld the existing priorities. They argued that only when the branch was solidly rooted in the industrial working class of Edinburgh could there be a consideration of a greater emphasis on white collar work. They characterized those desiring this greater emphasis immediately as "petit bourgeois," "unserious," etc.

This prioritization was in no way confined to the Edinburgh branch. Through personal ties, I knew people all over Great Britain who were members of the union NALGO. NALGO represents white collar city employees, such as social workers. A constant topic of discussion among our comrades in NALGO was the fact that the resources devoted to the NALGO fraction by the Center were tiny compared to those devoted to industrial fractions like AUEW, NUM, TGWU, etc. Some NALGO comrades were bitter and resentful about this. Others accepted it as necessary until the industrial base of the organization became more solid.

If the ISGB did not prioritize its work, then it would at that time have built teacher branches, journalist branches, technician branches, etc. alongside of its factory branches. But it explicitly rejected this step. Steve Jefferys, in their June 1974 Internal Bulletin, wrote:

"The impact on IS delegates from 30 to 40 factory branches to Annual Conference this September...would be largely lost if they were counter-balanced by similar numbers of delegates from exclusively middle-class IS branches... [Teacher branches] should not be endorsed by the NC as an easy way out of dealing with the growing feeling on the part of many white-collar workers that IS does not take their problems seriously. Let's have a full discussion of these issues and try to resolve them at a future NC. But not at the expense of our working-class orientation and our general working-class recruitment."

The ISGB in that period, being more than ten times our size, was able to do excellent work in many unions, blue collar and white collar. But the entire year I was there, I never heard anyone who could be considered a spokesperson for the organization at the national or local level challenge the idea that when choices had to be made the work in basic industry took priority over everything else.

Recently, I have heard many American IS comrades point to different ideas about prioritization as one of the major differences between us and the ISGB. But I had always taken it for granted that our strategy of prioritizing our work was one of our greatest debts to the British I.S.

INDUSTRIALIZATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE I.S. IN CANADA

1. Industrialization and I.S. Canada

I.S. Canada was founded in February, 1975, largely as a result of the direction and support of the ISUS and the ISGB. Our proximity with America, and the integrated economic and union structures of our two countries, necessarily led us to look particularly at the experiences of the US group as an example. We were founded on many of the same strategic premises which your organization rests upon today. Particularly we drew a reliance on the industrialization of our own members into priority unions as our primary road into the class.

We devoted our first 8 - 10 months to debating "priorities" would be. By our first convention in January '76, we had arrived at the United Steelworkers and the United Autoworkers as our targets. Our aim was to industrialize our few members into these unions and to proceed to build a rank and file national movement through our leadership of mass agitational sections on the shopfloor. We saw that the pace of the class struggle was ahead of us, and time was of the essence. We implemented the approach with a passion. Women members were to seek jobs in the same priorities as men comrades. Every branch was to build in steel and auto. We were 60 members at the time.

The results, unfortunately, were no less than disastrous. Part of the approach was that we would constitute ourselves as a "workers combat group." All those who resisted the focus, pace, or authoritarian leadership norms of the group were considered incapable of relating to the working class and were conscientiously driven out. Membership by April was down by a third. But our size was only one problem. There was virtually no motion in the auto factories; also none were hiring and most were laying off. The only steel locals where we could get jobs were a potash mine in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1500 miles from the centre, and a rail car plant in Hamilton Ohio. The Saskatoon branch was told to 'build in steel or bust,' and was down to three members. The single Hamilton steel-worker off probation was fired and could not get his job back; the other was laid off. In Toronto, our centre, there were no large steel locals and there was no hiring.

We also soon discovered that the sexual division of labour in Canada was much greater than in the US. There had been no 'affirmative action' laws to pressure industrial outfits to hire women. In the steel plants and mines there were no virtually no women workers and no prospects of hiring women in the future. In auto, out of a workforce of 120,000, there were 10,000 women workers --- almost all in the offices. Where there had been lay-offs, women were of course on the streets. Women comrades were forced to take "non-priority" work or go broke.

Meanwhile our members who had jobs prior to the founding of the I.S, in

"non-priority" workplaces were desperately trying to "fit in" with the class so they could "lead" where they were. These we deemed "secondary" or local priorities. We had one nurse, and two meatpackers, all in Toronto. As the only revolutionaries in their workplaces to "fit in" meant to mold themselves to blend into the reformist consciousness which was equated with "having a feel for the class". The only way in which we could "lead", was therefore to follow the path of the union machine. We attempted to show that we were the "best militants," and to shoot for the top of the union apparatus.

Our one nurse won the presidency of her local, and one of our meatpackers became the president of his local. But while workers in these workplaces knew we were socialists and militants, the rank and file didn't know that only their own activity and organization on the shopfloor could affect the strength of our ideas. And neither did we. The pressures to adapt to the union machinery, to the reformist consciousness of the majority were the only pressures our members could equate with "fitting into the class."

There was only one way to continue the "lead"; to keep quiet about the unpopular ideas which we couldn't organize in practise, and aim for higher seats at the top. Our meatpacker president argued that we should bargain for a contract settlement within the federal wage controls. The position was to the right of the leadership of the Canadian Labor Congress. Our nurse-president ran for provincial bargaining committee on a mild left-wing programme: for a wage settlement above inflation and for open negotiations. Only the local presidents of the nurses' locals ever saw the programme, and when she was in fact, elected, only they saw her positions. In office, she proceeded to bargain under the discipline of the committee: negotiations would have to remain closed.

The group was making small gains, but not in the "priorities", either first or second. The only recruitment was drawn from a series of "women and socialism" discussion groups organized by the women comrades in Toronto. These were attracting women secretaries, unemployed women, women on welfare, women students --- any and all women we knew were invited. On the industrial front, the only areas where there was no real motion were in small, "non-priority" workplaces where we had no members. In London, Ontario, another "non-priority" branch and also the "build or bust" directive, I.S.ers successfully organized city-side defence of a group of 180 restaurant workers, mostly women, striking for a first contract. Weekly demonstrations of up to 300 workers, including some 50 local Ford auto workers, came down to the picket line and froze out business. And, in Toronto, a small, poorly organized hospital under threat of closure, was in an uproar. We were selling up to 50 papers a month, made contact with the leading shop steward, and received such a welcome response to our leaflets that workers were asking us to come into the corridors and speak to them.

But these developments were all considered peripheral to our "real work." In fact, as these events were mainly involving women contacts, and women members were taking a lead in organizing them, whether or not such work was even "political" was questioned by our national chairperson. The group was stagnating, and highly.

internalized. The position of our national chairperson was an obvious barrier to our growth. But what should have been a simple question of leadership responsibility and self discipline, instead took the proportion of a major national debate. The dispute culminated with the expulsion of the national chairperson and a split in the I.S. 15 people left --- 7 with the expelled chair, the rest through demoralisation.

2. Industrialization Abandoned

Needless to say, it was time for a serious reassessment of our work. We abandoned the conception of "super-worker-leaders" and "super-I.S.-stars". While we still maintained the necessity of industrializing as one of a series of tactics, we saw clearly the limitations of relying too heavily on the approach. This led to missing opportunities in areas we could not get jobs or considered "non-priority". We argued for more flexibility at the local level in the branches to allow us to reap gains such as the restaurant strike and the little Toronto hospital offered. We criticised our "shoot for the top" approach which sacrificed patient rank and file work. And, we argued for no compromise on the question of women's liberation, in our external and internal work. It had become blatantly clear how sexism was a barrier to working class solidarity, and a barrier to the development of I.S.

It was also at this point that we began to seek closer relations with the British I.S. A member of our E.C. was sent to the 1976 national conference in May and June, and had a series of discussions with members of their central committee. We had not received the letter Steve Jeffreys had written in response to our "Industrialization Perspectives" documents in February.

It had been sent, but we did not see it. Steve had read our recent evaluation of our trade union work and saw it as a step in the right direction. The split from their view was an obvious set back but not unpredictable. But we still hadn't hit on the real issue. Superstar styles of leadership, conservative trade union practise, inflexibility in our external work, were symptomatic of an incorrect conception of our relationship to the class. Industrialization was at the root of the illness.

The arguments fit together piece by piece. Our tiny group, with no roots in the class, no experience and no real ability to mobilize struggles, had grown dependant on the self proclaimed "leadership" of our own members to link our politics with the day to day struggles of the class. Meanwhile, where the class was in actual struggle, independent of I.S. members, independent of our narrow "priorities" we were actually able to get a hearing for our politics. The ideas of rank and file control of the union, class solidarity, the failure of the reformist politics of the trade union brass and the NDP (Canada's labour party) to do more than talk etc., made sense to workers who were hungry for ideas which could help them fight. When the struggle was sharply posed, workers against bosses, and when the small numbers of rank and file militants refused to back down or followed dead end leadership were desperate for support, then I.S. and Workers Action (our newspaper) could be seen as concrete tools

to build the struggle.

After a two month national discussion, every member was 100% convinced of the damaging effects of industrialization. We had never really "turned to the class" despite all our chest-thumping and cheering. We had turned to ourselves and our own members, and had crossed our fingers hoping the class would follow. It didn't take more than a glance to realize they weren't behind us. But the masses of Canadian workers were indeed in motion.

The institution of federal wage controls in October 1975 had generalized the class struggle. Increasingly, economic battles over wages and working conditions were head-up against the federal government in direct confrontation with the state. The labour brass had, in bold rhetoric called for militant action against the controls. The bureaucracy was hoping to win a position for itself in a "tripartite" government. The rank and file were given the go-ahead.

Nationally a record strike wave had swept the country in 1975, with over 11 million strike days lost, and in 1976 the record was even higher. Locally, in every city where I.S. had branches and beyond, the squeeze of small businesses on small locals, sweatshops and poorly organized workplaces was hitting hard with wage freezes, lay-offs and speed-ups. The social service cutbacks were becoming increasingly vicious, as hospital workers, teachers and public sector workers threatened strike action. Some locals were prepared to walk out against the direction of their official leaderships and the threats of the government.

The situation was excellent for revolutionaries to gain a hearing inside the working class. But for the I.S. to reap the potential, we had to stop staring at our own members and open our eyes to the real struggles of the working class. We realized that industrialization far from turning us "towards agitation," had in fact turned us away from our agitational tasks, away from relating our politics to the immediate struggles of workers. Industrialization assumed, above all else, that workers were broken from reformist consciousness only by the example of individual militants who happened to also be in the I.S. Somehow this was a progression of stages: first follow the militant activities of the self-proclaimed leader, second become a Bolshevik. Self activity, independent collective class action had nothing to do with the development of socialist consciousness. The strategy, even if assumed was only one "tactic" was incorrect. It didn't work in practise.

Workers, forced by the objective relations of their work are forced to fight against the property relations of capitalism if they are to fight for themselves as a class. And in this period they are forced up against capitalism in changing and uneven ways, every day. It is the responsibility of revolutionaries to relate Marxist, class struggle ideas to these struggles and to thereby reach and organize the minority of workers who are the most prepared to build and fight for the working class as a whole. This is what an agitational conception of party-building is all about.

I.S. in Canada abandoned industrialization formally at our national meeting in August 1976. As a small group in a period of rising class struggle, we could not afford to self-destruct testing out a failing strategy in order to "gain experience." It was time for us to really "turn to the class"

3. Our new perspective: Responding to Struggles, Using our Paper and Recruiting to our politics.

The next task was to put ourselves back on the ground. We had to develop a real sense of what our immediate tasks were, of what we could actually achieve in the class given our small size. We could not build on what we did not have, purely on the basis of will. We were not, and could not instantly become real "leaders" in the class. No one but us would know it if we said we were. There was not a single workplace in Canada where I.S.ers could honestly claim to represent the chosen alternative leadership to the trade union bureaucracy if we thought it, the rank and file didn't. We didn't have the size or muscle in the class to organize class wide actions. Not because we were conservative, lacked confidence or lacked the will to "lead", but simply because we were tiny and as yet unknown and insignificant in the class. We could not actually win victories for rank and file workers because we couldn't organize the kind of forces necessary to win them.

But this hardly meant that we should fold up shop. Developing a sense of proportion meant not only recognizing what we could not do, but also being able to take maximum advantage of the small gains in the class we could make. We had a set of ideas, class struggle ideas, a rank and file strategy, and an excellent workers' agitational newspaper, which workers in this period needed in order to organize themselves to win victories. We had a newspaper which articulated revolutionary politics in the concrete struggles and experiences of workers in Canada today. It was a newspaper which, if we used it aggressively, workers could use as their own voice among their fellow militants. The paper carried mostly agitational articles, expressing ideas and issues which militants could fight for on the shopfloor. Our newspaper carried the ideas of I.S. into the class. It was our best organizer, if we decided to put it to use.

Workers' Action, not I.S. ex-students in the "priorities," was our connecting link with the struggles of workers. Our task was not to abstractly choose priorities and try "to get something going" on the basis of our will, but to respond to struggles where the class was in motion, and open to the ideas in our newspaper which could help them win. Essentially, I.S. was and is a propaganda group, but with a clearly agitational focus. We could not recruit to I.S. because we were the best fighters in the class, because we simply weren't. But we could recruit in the ones and twos the militants who could be brought around our full revolutionary programme. We were a propaganda group not because we held to study group norms, nor because we wanted to be, but only by virtue of our small numbers. The working class was our audience and our central ideas were agitational ideas - but with our limited roots, they were in truth ideas, not actions.

At our August national meeting, our new perspective was hammered out. By responding to struggles, by using our paper to pose class struggle ideas to workers in action, we would be able to identify the few, the ones and twos, who could be recruited to a revolutionary organization of our size. Workers would join the I.S. not because we were the group which could transform them into heroes and heroines, nor because if they were in I.S. they could win things they had never won before. They would join because they agreed with our politics and were committed to implementing those politics in the class.

Revolutionaries were and are a tiny minority of the class. The workers who joined would also be in a minority. Inside or outside the plant, the task of I.S. members was to use our ideas to intervene in and build workers' struggles, and to use our paper to make the links between those struggles and revolutionary politics. The entire group was turned outwards towards the class, to "go to school in the class" in a real way. Every member had to learn how workers fight, how they argue, and how to make our politics a concrete weapon to build with.

The limited recruitment we had done was through our "women and socialism" discussion groups and small scale contact work. The women who joined did not have any illusions that we had the strength to build or lead a mass working class women's movement, but understood that we had a set of politics which women needed in order to organize against their oppression and fight for socialism. The lessons were clear. And so we set about building.

4. Our Current Practise

The results of our new perspective have been admittedly modest, but there have been real gains. In a number of workplaces where we have branches, the I.S. has become known as a revolutionary socialist organization which has something to say to worker militants. In Toronto, a bitter strike of 300 textile workers, mostly women, opened our first door. The local leadership was weak and inexperienced, and the women militants were angry and frustrated at their inaction. Workers Action reporters, I.S. members came to the picket lines every day. We argued that the strike would be lost unless they broadened their base of support beyond the small local. I.S. members and some of the women strikers organized a series of plant gate collections in the city. We set up a strike committee of I.S. contacts and planned a benefit showing of the movie "Blow for Blow" to support the strikers. Workers Action was read on every picket line and workers translated the articles into different languages so that the ones who couldn't read English could understand what we had to say. We were called up several times by the picket captains to help support the lines when trucks were being moved. When the long awaited settlement came down, after 6 weeks, I.S. was the only force which explained what the contract offer meant and argued for the women to reject it. The contract was accepted by a narrow majority.

Workers' Action was known, and we kept up our presence at the plant and among our close contacts. Lay-offs of a third of the plant followed the ending of the strike, but Workers' Action was still selling 20-30 papers each month. The paper is known and the ideas we fight for express the sentiments of a layer of the militants. We have continued to meet with a number of contacts, helped them to write leaflets and to prepare a strategy to save the

union from being virtually driven out of the plant. In time, we may have one or two members in the plant.

This is only one small example. Others are written up in detail in the pages of Workers' Action. At a Kresge's warehouse in Toronto, 80 Teamsters have been fighting for over 20 weeks for a first contract. The leading militant sells 50 Workers' Actions a month outside a Kresge's store in downtown Toronto. We have organized leafletting for support among other units in the local, and have had a series of meetings with the strikers about the strike and the role of Workers' Action. In Ottawa, a single student has now built an I.S. branch, largely as a result of an intervention among the Ottawa busdrivers. In Hamilton, a group of Bell operators who read and support Workers' Action are being drawn around the contract struggle in their local and simultaneously around the I.S.

There are other examples, none of them grandiose and magnificent, but significant beginnings for a new group of our size. The group is slowly growing once again. We have made up and surpassed the losses of the split. Workers' Action circulation is over 1000, and morale is good. The group is using and learning its politics, not in abstract lectures, but by fighting to convince workers of our ideas in concrete terms. At last I.S. in Canada is on a firm footing. We are confident that we are now laying the basis for larger gains in the future, and that I.S. politics will continue to grow, slowly, in the Canadian working class.

5. The Warnings of ISUS - 'A Road to Disaster.'

The leadership of the I.S.U.S. has firmly and consistently opposed our abandonment of industrialization. While claiming that the approach should be seen only as a tactic, it has also been heralded as the only way for a small group to resist the apparently magnetic pressures of becoming a permanent "outsiders group." We were warned that to abandon industrialization and a focus on strategic "priorities" would inevitably lead us to adapt to a 'petit-bourgeois milieu' and to "wallow in the student left," and to seek a cozy position among 'middle class radicals, teachers, and so forth.' Further, we would have no stable and consistent work, simply "chasing up exciting strikes," naively assuming workers to be spontaneously revolutionary and giving up on them when we saw they weren't.

These predictions, we agreed, would be tested in practice. But since then there has been no concerted attempt, to our knowledge, to assess whether or not I.S. Canada has in fact become a doomed, petit-bourgeois swamp. The best expression of our practice is our newspaper. Since our turn from industrialization, the paper has steadily improved. Far from reflecting a turn towards the "university left," or carrying our politics "on the level of abstract generalizations," it is precisely the agitational coverage and the working class appeal of Workers' Action which has shown the greatest improvement. In fact, when Dave F. represented the ISUS at our national meeting in August, Workers' Action was commended as a newspaper which "any group of 50 should be proud of." Where is the evidence of our petit-bourgeois

orientation? How could a group which "wallows in the student left" publish an effective workers' paper? We would argue that, at this early date, the predictions show no signs of realization.

Nor does the logic of the arguments hold water. "By industrializing ex-students, we will become a proletarian organization and a force in the Canadian working class; if we don't, we will inevitably become an irrelevant talk shop, forever on the campuses and outside of the class." But industrializing ex-students does not change the class composition of the group. Nor does proclaiming one's organization to be a "workers' combat group" make it a force which can actually mobilize workers in class combat. And where is this inevitable pressure to swim in the new left? "Middle class radicals" were never much of a force in Canada, even in the '60s on the campuses, and now they are far fewer and less effective than fighting worker militants.

Revolutionaries test their politics on the receptivity of the working class, not by showing, or hiding, their birth certificates. For serious revolutionaries, the pull, the pressures, come from where one's politics are oriented, not where one's friends happen to be. Further, to equate teachers and white-collar workers with students and intellectuals, and then to dismiss the lot as a "petit-bourgeois milieu" is blatantly unscientific. Teachers and white collar workers are part; a very large part, of the working class, newly entering the world of industrial struggle and trade union politics. For the I.S. in Canada to become a large and significant force in a white collar union would be a tremendous and welcome gain, not a reflection of an anti-working class bias.

Students on the other hand are objectively removed from the relations of production. Students who want to fight for socialism are dependent upon the motion of the working class, outside the campus, to change the course of history. Students are welcome in I.S., as fully respected members, but their activity and politics are not oriented to student life. Students who join are trained in the class, trained to use the newspaper as an agitational tool, trained to listen to workers and help build their struggles. To ignore, neglect, or disdain the contribution which socialist students can make in a revolutionary organization is to dismiss out of hand a part of the slim resources revolutionaries in this period have to draw from.

The other foreboding call was that we would be all over the globe, without "focus" to our work. The question is what defines "focus." Industrialization meant the group was very, very focussed - on itself. Nationally, there were priority branches, upon which the the whole organization was to be focussed; within the branches, there were priority members, and priority contacts; and everything that wasn't "priority" - branches workplaces, contacts - was given virtually no political attention at any level. On paper, the group was "focussed" - but in practice, the larger part of the group had no direction, no role, and apparently no contribution to make to I.S.

The organization now is far more focussed - on the working class - than ever before. The practice of the branches varies, because the class struggle varies, but every branch and every member, defends the same set of politics, carried through our newspaper, and recruits and builds on the same set of

ideas. What determines the "priorities" of the branches is not our designs, but where the class is most receptive to our politics - where we have the greatest reception to our paper, the closest contacts, members with chances of extending their influence, and the best opportunities to gain a hearing for our ideas. We are indeed an "outsiders group" now, but not because we want to be. The only way to get inside the class is to be ready to respond with our politics when workers are the most receptive to revolutionary ideas. We want to be inside the class before, during, and after strikes. Strikes offer an open door for revolutionaries in this period - not because they are easy or exciting times to intervene, because that is hardly the case, but because the class struggle is sharply posed. The union bureaucracy again and again shows itself for what it is when workers are fighting for their lives, and workers are eager for explanations, support, new ideas. If I.S. can get a hearing, and we don't always and it's never easy, then we will be in a position to build when the strike is over.

The exchange on industrialization which I.S. in Canada, the U.S. and Britain has carried on has taken on such proportions because it involves far more than the question of an isolated tactic. It has to do with how revolutionaries determine and measure the impact of small organizations in the class in this period.

And what is at stake is far more important than debating points. The issue is whether or not revolutionaries, in a period of internationally intensifying class struggle, can afford to miss opportunities to bring their ideas to the class. Industrialization is an approach which leads to internalization - a most dangerous tendency for small groups to become victims of. I.S. in Canada lost numerous opportunities to carry our politics among workers over our first year of existence - the opportunities were largely outside our "priorities" and weren't given adequate political attention if any.

The ISUS, we believe, has similarly suffered from losing opportunities. One of the most obvious examples is the strike of the Rubber workers this year. A massive, bitter, six month strike, involving the organization of flying pickets and demonstrations of several thousands, swept past the I.S. with hardly a glance. Workers' Power featured an interview with an I.S. auto worker stating "I support the Rubber workers," but did the striking militants know it?

It could be argued that the place to build solidarity with the Rubber workers was in the auto plants. But even on this level, were motions of support argued for by I.S. auto workers? Was any attempt made to send union delegations to the picket lines? In fact, a Local 51 Detroit auto factory newsletter, which I.S. members play a large role in producing, stated that scab tires were coming into the plant. But was there a call to black [refuse to handle] the tires? No - the line of argument was that the tires would have to run out before the Rubber workers could hurt the companies. Meanwhile, all eyes in the auto work were on building the great Coalition for a Good Contract - the grand scheme, which failed to capture the sentiment of rank and file auto workers, was deemed the "priority" task. The ground level work of building solidarity with striking workers in another industry would have to wait.

We raise this example cautiously. If an aggressive intervention was organized in support of the strike, we have heard nothing of it nor seen it reflected in the pages of Workers' Power. The Canadian I.S. has not an ounce of proven experience or authority with which to throw our weight around, drawing extensive lessons for other groups in other countries. But the ISUS has only slightly more, the ISGB significantly more but it hardly represents the leadership of the Comintern. With our limited experiences, however, we were forced to draw political conclusions for our work. We abandoned industrialization because we had to in order to build I.S. in the class. We share the fears of the British I.S. has expressed to you on the danger of relying too heavily on your priorities, to the exclusion of struggles elsewhere. In America and in Canada, it is an excellent period for revolutionaries. Our concern is that both our organizations are able to realistically assess how we can most effectively relate our politics to the struggles of workers, and build the influence of our politics in the class. If this exchange has brought this question to the forefront, it has been most constructive.

Executive Committee
I.S. Canada

6th Dec., '76

A DETAILED CORRECTION OF SOME "FACTS" IN THE MINORITY DOCUMENT

The political debate about to take place is serious and based on real political differences within the organization. In general we believe the debate should focus around those differences and not on who said what to who and where.

However, the document "The New Course for the IS," in which the left faction lays out its political ideas is dotted with specific incidents and implied charges concerning the IS and our work which are more often than not half-truths, misquotes and out and out errors. These distortions are the justification for the faction's political positions, and as we will show, their case is built on a house of cards.

We cannot answer all of the errors, nor is that our intent. However, unless they are answered in the main, they spread throughout the organization and are taken as fact. This has already happened. Now the truth:

1. Throughout the document phrases or words have quote marks around them, with no other purpose than to imply that the leadership was lying. One such example is found on page 3, where in talking about the CWA, the document states that "a letter was sent to 'dissident' local union presidents." Why is the word 'dissident' in quotes? The only explanation is to imply that they were not dissidents. The truth, however, is that they were. All the CWA members to which the letter was sent had in one way or another come out against the international.

2. Again on page 3, we are quoted as giving "unconditional support" to Ed Sadlowski. What are the authors trying to imply? That we would support Sadlowski no matter what, that we are totally uncritical? The actual document of the convention for the steel meeting they quote from says: "Our support (for Sadlowski) is unconditional. That is, we put no conditions on Sadlowski to win our political support. But our support is also critical. That not only means that we frankly state our criticisms of Sadlowski's actions, lack of program, or whatever, but also that we put forward our class struggle views."

We do plead guilty to the charge of unconditional support. We support Sadlowski because of the role he is playing in the USW—without conditions. That, however, does not mean we are uncritical of Sadlowski.

3. Another trick of the document is to list difficult decisions taken by the EC as atrocities without offering alternatives. For example on page 3 the document says "the W. Va. UMW perspective was abandoned altogether," and on page 4 the document states that "the IS has abandoned its Philadelphia and Sacramento branches." No reasons are given for any of this--it is just stated in tones of horror.

What's the real story? The Sacramento branch was a total of 3 people. Two of whom had been sent from Oakland to back up a third, a worker in the sugar industry (Note--2 members were sent to help build work around a member in a non-priority industry) But the resources sent were not enough. The Sacramento branch was not big enough to get off the ground.

WE were told by the Sacramento branch that to make it work would require sending more resources from Oakland. But the Oakland branch was already stretched too thin--and it needed more resources for its Teamster work.

The EC had to make a hard choice--we closed down Sacramento--as had been the recommendation of the Oakland Exec.

The truth behind this supposed atrocity only argues against the factions general case. Whenever you get involved in real work--real resources are needed. We are very small and must jealously guard our resources. In

attempting to go beyond the priorities we were stretched too thin. An organization that attempts to relate to everything that moves--if it is able to make real connections--will immediately be overwhelmed by the demands made on it. It will have to prioritize--but its priorities would be chosen for it by accidents of history. Not which sections are the most strategically located and thus have the most power.

What does the left faction believe we should have done? Cose down Sacramento sugar work or the Oakland Teamster work?

A similar story lies behind the closing down of the Philadelphia branch. After doing good work in Post Office, (in fact beginning our postal work before it even was a priority) much of the branch leadership left Phila. for a variety of personal and political reasons. The branch was too small and after months of trying was unable to recruit and thus build up a critical mass around which to build a real branch again. The branch collapsed, and its members asked us to close down the branch--so they could help build strong branches.

We had two choices--both hard. Send additional cadres to Phila--or close it down. We did not have the people to send, and other branches, in particular Chicago needed help. We closed down Phila.

What would the faction have done?

In the UMW work, industrialization proved extremely difficult. Jobs were hard to come by and once in it took a long time to build a base. The extreme anti-communism of miners made any sort of political work from the outside absolutely impossible. It also meant that those inside would not be able to function as socialists for some time. Our few members became extremely demoralized. Again the only solution would have been to send more cadres into W. Va. We did not have the people to send.

Cal was in charge of the work. He was against abandoning the UMW perspective--but he was for closing down W. Va. Cal's position at the time was to send people to the mines near Pitts., so they could relate to the Pitts. branch. This would have meant up-rooting people once more and industrializing them in a priority. All positions the minority now opposes.

What do the writers of the faction propose as an alternative to closing down the UMW perspective? Further industrialization elsewhere? Or working from the outside in the most anti-communist union in the country. It is not enough to just rant against what the EC did--an opposition seriously contending for leadership has to show what they would have done differently, why it would have been better, and how these decisions flow from their politics

4. It is when it discusses our industrial work that the document is most dishonest. Here, both the specifics and the bigger picture painted by those specifics are a thoroughgoing misrepresentation.

AUTO: (a) On page 6, the document states that at the national convention, the National Secretary said, "the IS might find itself supporting Doug Fraser." This is untrue. What was said is that if there is a split in the UAW bureaucracy and Fraser runs for President, many of the people we are now involved with will end up supporting Fraser. We will have to have a relationship with these militants. That does not mean that the IS would support Fraser.

(b) Again on page 6, we are treated to a list of political horrors about UAW local 122 President Bob Weissman. In the next paragraph we are told how Weissman was pushed

as a leader of the CGC, implying for those reasons. No comrades, we did not push Weissman because he was Republican Mayor Perk's chief labor advisor.

Weissman was a leader of the CGC because he was willing to openly go against the International and organize for a good contract. In fact, it was money from his local that helped launch CGC.

The document states that the IS paid for and organized a CGC rally in which Weissman was the featured speaker and no ISer spoke. Yes, the IS helped organize the rally, and yet the IS did put some money into the CGC—although not really that much. And yes, Weissman was one of the featured speakers. But, so was Jane.

(c) WP is criticized for running an interview with Weissman without comment about the possibility of a local strike in his plant. It then discusses a wildcat at Twinsburg that did happen and calls Weissman a strike breaker. It is unclear what the faction wanted WP to comment on. Should we have predicted the wildcat—and his role in trying to end it? Let's be clear—the wildcat had not yet happened.

Let's also be clear as to why WP ran the interview without comment. The interview was not done because we were pushing Weissman—it was run because we were pushing the notion of fighting for a good contract. Weissman for all his problems (which we freely admit) was willing to try and lead that fight. That was what the interview was about, that was why we ran it and that was why it was run without comment.

The faction implies that running an uncritical interview with Weissman marks a shift to the right for the organization. It is an implication that comes out of a thoroughly sectarian method—(we participate in broader formations only to be left critics of the leadership) and distorts the history of the IS. The interview with Weissman is not the first interview with a left bureaucrat run in WP without comment.

To name just one other case, close to three years ago, WP ran an interview with Eliseo Medina, a member of the executive committee of the UFW. The interview dealt with the need to build support for the UFW. The interview was run while the IS was heavily involved in doing UFW support work. We were also quite critical of the UFW leadership for placing most of its focus on the boycott instead of the strike.

The interview did not take up that question and was run without critical comment. At the time it cause quite a stir in our UFW faction. Many comrades felt that the interview should have been critical about the political weaknesses of the UFW leadership.

The EC and the WP editorial board stated that it was correct to run it without comment because we agreed with what Medina had to say on the issues covered. We pointed out that other coverage, in other issues of WP, had specifically taken on the question of the strike vs. the boycott and that all UFW coverage could not be seen as a vehicle for criticism of the UFW leadership.

We also said that our ability to get the interview was a step forward for the IS. It reflected the seriousness of our work, our real involvement in the struggle. We had gone from being a commentary group to an activist one. It was because of our work that Medina gave us the interview.

(d) There are other specific distortions of our auto work which we will not take up here, as it just becomes repetitive. However, the most important distortion is not the description of any specific event, but the overall false picture painted of our auto work.

The impression given by the faction document is that the IS threw everything into the CGC, "discarding class struggle unionism with a vengeance," (pg 7)

The truth is that the CGC, which was clearly a failure, was only one aspect of our work. At the same time we

continued, with some success, our local work, especially around the local contracts. In 235 a Coalition for a Good Local Contract was formed, which included people from the old Justice Committee and new people. In 51, the United Coalition continued to grow during that time becoming a major force in the local. In 15, the local bulletin continued to come out and a wildcat took place in which we played an important role. Work continued in the other plants as well.

WP was sold during that time to hundreds of auto workers, and special mobilizations were organized to sell WP to striking Ford workers.

Last Grave at Dimbaza was seen by over 60 auto workers at small showings after shift changes.

Over the last year our auto work has not been an unqualified success, but neither has it been an "unqualified defeat," (page 3), nor "just another obituary for Detroit auto work." (page 6)

STEEL The distortions of the auto work are even surpassed by the distortions of the steel work.

(a) The document states that it is our policy to dissolve existing rank and file organizations into Sadlowski's official campaign. What organizations? What is their history. Why was it done?

Let's start with Gary. In Gary we were involved in a woman's group fairly early on. The group was torn apart by the sectarianism of the OL and the RSL.

In Pitts., we work on a rank and file newspaper SSU. The paper still comes out. There is also a paper the CP supports in the plant. We proposed to them a merging of the 2 papers as there was no political disagreement on general line. In fact we offered to drop our paper and work on theirs if we could have representation on the editorial board.

The CP turned us down and has been extremely sectarian towards us, they have trot baited us throughout the plant. That is why we called them sectarian - not because they would not dissolve their newspaper as the faction document implies.

(B) The document claims that we told women steelworkers that "the best thing they can do for themselves 'as women' is to support Sadlowski," and that an independent women's group would be a mistake.

The facts, again are quite different. In both Gary and Pittsburgh we had helped build independent womens groups. Both had gone out of existence before our work on Fight Back began. In neither place has there been any visible opportunity for again organizing these groups. In Gary we have discussed with other women in the District who are Sadlowski supporters the possibility of going together in a woman for Sadlowski group.

(c) On page 7 the document criticizes the November 29 WP article comparing Sadlowski to Debs. The faction states "Sادلowski is by no means a Debs, nor is he a "class struggle Unionist" implying that WP said he was both. In fact the article said just the opposite—that Sadlowski is not another Debs, nor is he a class struggle unionist no matter what he himself claims - and why he is not. Comrades should check out WP#186 for the truth.

5. On page 8 the document states that "already, we have seen that it is very difficult to get a plank supporting the UFW into the TDU program." The political point behind this statement is that by trying to lead workers that are more conservative than ourselves we become conservatized.

Yes, it is difficult to get a UFW plank into the TDU program - but not for political reasons. There has been much talk about support to the UFW within TDU, and with only one exception there has been no opposition to support of the UFW. The problem has first technical, and then one of democracy. When the resolution for the TDU convention were typed up the one on the UFW was

accidentally left out. This was not noticed by anyone until the convention was over. It became one of the first orders of business for the new TDU steering committee. There it was felt that it would be undemocratic for the steering committee, as one of its first acts, to add a plank to the TDU program that the membership had never voted on. It was tabled to a later point when the membership would be able to pass it.

(6.) In the very next sentence on page 8 the document says "already, the IS has insisted that there can be no special demands for blacks and women in the 'broad mass campaign' that it organizes." Bullshit! The IS never said that. In fact, it is mass work that is the key to ending or at least limiting racism on the shop floor.

IS members have been involved in campaigns around racism and sexism, whether it has been the firing of a racist forman in auto or demanding bath houses for women in steel. The key to our work has been fighting the real demands that speak to where people live, the specific conditions they work under and can move them. In other words, agitation and mass work.

This is not to say that we don't also propagandize around broader issues of racism and sexism, like equal pay for equal work, equal access to all jobs, unity of the class, etc. For years and years, in the shop bulletins, rank and file papers and talking to people one to one, the questions of racism and sexism have been an important part of our work.

The one thing we have said which might vaguely resemble the charge made by the faction is that during this contract round, when the class has been on the defensive, demands dealing only with racism and sexism were not demands that the class, including blacks and women, see as possible and are thus willing to fight for, and our perspectives for the bargaining round was to pull together a fighting program, one that workers would be willing to strike over.

Many of these demands had special interpretations for blacks and women. For example, questions dealing with job security are of particular importance because it is blacks and women who are the first fired or laid off.

(7.) The first paragraph under the section titled Unrealistic Priorities, on page 10 is chock full of distortions. We will answer just two. The document says "the present IS strategy makes it impossible for NY IS to relate to city workers. At various points in the last year and a half the branches in NYC have launched campaigns toward city workers, in particular, the most militant sections - sanitation and transportation. We got nowhere. NYC workers, tragically are a beaten group. Tens of thousands have been laid off permanently and none see a way forward. In case the faction document writers have not yet noticed - the last 1½ years in NYC has seen the ruling class launch an incredible offensive. Part of their offensive was the busting of NYC unions. There was almost no resistance.

In the same paragraph on page 10 the document says "IS as an organization could not relate to the rubber workers strike." That proved to be true - but not because we didn't try. At the beginning of the strike we sent Cal down to Akron, to check out if there was anything for us to do. He reported back that there was not.

In Detroit when the strike began we sent members to the lines to sell papers. They got a good response the first couple of days - but very quickly the lines dwindled and we were left out in the cold.

In Chicago, Dan regularly stopped at 2 different plants. He would stop his truck, tell people about the Teamster strike and give them WP. By and large people were friendly but he never made contact with more than 8 guys at a time. He got little more than a friendly nod.

When the picket lines dwindled to 2 or 3 within the first couple of days, the possibility of doing outside work came to a complete halt, due to no fault of our own.

If we had had people inside we might have been able to do something.

(8.) On page 12 the document paints a rather hysterical picture of the Detroit district, claiming the district to be almost always in crisis and constantly re-organized. Neither is true in the hysterical way it is stated. The truth is that the Detroit district has many problems - but so does any branch in any revolutionary organization at almost any given point.

The point is not that there are problems but the nature of the problems. Here the document is completely off-base. It describes the Detroit district as "among the most isolated, the most conservative, the most apolitical district with little or no consistent work." Nonsense.

What does the faction mean by "isolated?" From who and what? The district has better roots in industry than almost any other IS branch anywhere else in the country. The RT has given us a connection into the black community that the IS has never had before.

What do they mean by conservative? In what work, with what politics?

And the branch certainly has consistent work in 5 or 6 auto plants, in TDU, with the RT and Gary Tyler and is now beginning the South Africa campaign.

9.) The New York City branch is not begin written off as is stated on page 12.

10.) Also on page 12 the document accuses the IS of having priorities within priorities. And in a certain sense that is true. But not because we are hell-bent on writing off as much of the working class as possible.

Our priorities are a strategic conception. We understand that certain sections of the working class are more strategically placed than others. That their strategic location gives them greater power—and thus, in the long run, greater militancy. When they move, they affect what happens to the whole class. The truth is that what Teamsters covered by Master Freight can win affects what other working people, especially other Teamsters, will win. What workers in less central industries—even those under Teamster contracts—win, will not.

If we have limited resources to send into industry we want to send them where they will do the most good—if we have the choice. Surely that makes sense. That does not mean, however, that we ignore other workers in the same industry. For example, although we focus on the Big 3, we sent people in to International Harvester. And although we focus on freight we sent people in to UPS. And although TDU oriented mainly toward freight, that did not stop us from relating to the car haulers, etc. etc.

11.) Again on page 12 the document says that we told an electrical worker in Cincinnati "you don't fit in." We did not—unless members of the Cincinnati branch said that, which we know nothing about.

It also says on page 12 that we told 15 new recruits in Louisville they did not fit in. Again we did not. Why would we have attempted to recruit those 15 if we did not think they could fit in. The history of the rapid increase and then rapid loss of members in Louisville is far too complicated to go into here. The truth, however, is that the problem was not at all the same for all 15, and the problem was never that we said to anyone, "You do not fit in."

12.) Again on page 12 the document states that "the I.S., with few exceptions, has virtually no women contacts in its industrial work. This is simply wrong. In steel our first recruit is a woman and our best contacts are women. In Teamsters, several of our first recruits were women, and there are two live and health women's groups connected to TDU. Through them many women have come into the IS periphery.

In telephone most of our contacts are women, and that has always been the case. In fact this is the only one of our priorities in which we do not have many women contacts.

13.) On page 14 the document paints a gloomy picture of ISers sticking their necks out, trying to lead and getting their heads chopped off. Again the truth is quite different. The list of firings of ISers attempting to lead is, considering the business we are in, extremely short. Very few ISers have been fired because of a lead they gave.

14.) Perhaps the most telling remark in the whole document occurs on page 15, where it is stated "there may still be many contributions to be made by industrialized comrades" (emphasis added). The words are not "there still are many contributions" but "there may still be." In other words if the minority document is passed the confirmed political contribution to the IS of industrialized comrades would be in question.

It should be clearly understood that passage of the minority document would mean a mass exodus of IS members from industry whether or not that is the intent of the faction. Why pursue a job in industry when it is of no use to the organization?

The priority for a job would clearly be its cushiness, not its strategic position in the work force.

15.) On page 15, under the heading of voluntarism, the document quotes a passage from an NC letter to the ISGB. In it the dedication of the IS membership is proven by showing the sacrifices 25% are willing to make. The document then goes on to imply some hidden meaning to the letter by paraphrasing it and then saying, "But none of this is the meaning of the EC statement." On this, we confess confusion—if we didn't mean what we said, what did we mean?" We implore the minority faction to let us in on the secret.

We should also point out that the letter quoted is labeled "EC letter to British IS, Oct. 15, 1976." The letter was an NC response, not just an EC response. After drafting it the EC circulated it for approval to the NC. No one, including leading members of the minority, raised a single objection.

There is more to this particular distortion. Further down page 16, under the heading, "A Real Workers Organization," the document quotes the same paragraph and says, "Can anyone really believe that today, workers will join (and stay in) an organization that expects them to 'pull up roots,' 'break with family and friends,' and 'live in poverty.'"

The writers of the faction document know that the IS has not asked workers to do the above. In fact the IS seeks just the opposite. We want to keep working class members connected with their roots. We want them to bring their families and friends around the organization, not break with them.

In becoming a working class organization it is precisely those roots in the working class that we need to nourish, develop and spread.

It is our middle class members that we ask to break from their backgrounds, if they are to play a leading role in a workers' organization. But even here, moving, breaking ties and industrializing are all voluntary, and even then asked mainly of younger members. The IS has not asked members with dependents or established careers to change lifestyles midstream.

We also ask a greater degree of sacrifice from leaders of the organization than from the rank and file. And that has meant for many moving to the midwest, leaving the much nicer West Coast cities and New York City. We could have stayed on either coast and studied revolution or we could move to the Midwest and help make it. The organization chose the latter.

There will be times when working class members will be asked to move and leave jobs as well. This will not be the

norm but will happen when they are playing such important leadership roles that they are needed to do a particular task. This will mean sacrifice. But we do not believe working class members less capable of sacrifice. We look forward to the day when the organization's roots in the industrial work are deep enough that the organization can afford to bring some of its industrial leaders into the fulltime political leadership.

(16.) The paragraph under the heading "Blacks" is a particularly disgusting bit of distortion. The second sentence says the IS "discouraged a genuine black leadership." That's garbage and designed only to confuse and upset members who do not know the truth.

In the last year the IS hired a national black organizer and put the four emerging black leaders on the NC. Black members have been encouraged to assume leadership roles, at times before they had the advantage of a thorough political education. This is not discouraging black leadership—it is just the opposite. And yes, the IS has asked black members to speak in different cities. They were never "dragged," however, as the document states. In fact all of the black members who have spoken in other cities stated that they were more than willing to travel (at least at the time), and understood that a large part of the burden of recruiting other blacks would fall on them.

Speaking in other cities, in fact, is part of the process of political training and learning about theory. We are sure that if black members had not been asked to travel, the minority document would accuse the leadership of hiding the organization from the black members as it accuses us of purposely keeping the Detroit Teamster branch separate from the organization (page 20).

Traveling is also part of doing contact work and recruiting to the IS. In branches that are still all white, having black members visit the branch, speak with black contacts, or give a lead as to how the branch can do black work is particularly important.

The IS is still a majority white organization. We would be foolish to pretend otherwise. The profound racism of this country makes finding bridges between whites and blacks particularly difficult. There are no easy answers and we do not pretend to have them. But neither does the minority document.

What is disgusting about this set of distortions is that rather than speak to the question or offer any road forward, the document speaks to the legitimate mistrust blacks have of whites and their specific fears of being misused and tokenized by the IS. We are sure that we have not done everything perfectly. In particular we have fallen down in the department of training and educating new members—not just black members. But the last two years have seen a tremendous change in the IS's relationship to blacks and the black community. It is only since the turn to agitation, that the IS has had the self-confidence to attempt to recruit blacks to what was a totally white organization. In those two years we have recruited over 20 black adults (not counting the SC). Admittedly, we lost almost half. We also built a youth group which is 75% black.

In the last year and a half we took many political initiatives around issues that appealed mainly to blacks: busing, Women Against Racism, racism in the schools, Gary Tyler, Marquette Park and now South Africa. Some of these initiatives failed; others, like Gary Tyler, did quite well.

We have had certain problems of stability in the work. But this is one of the problems with outside work or community work. It is by its nature unstable. Issues rise and fall. People come and go. It is particularly difficult when there is no ongoing black movement to give these initiatives stability.

Although we don't have a clear perspective yet, we do

have black work. We are still experimenting, the work is new for us—and there is no movement. In the absence of a movement, no one else has a perspective either—not other left groups and not the minority faction.

And as the faction leadership well knows, with all the difficulties we are in the process of developing a perspective. The last NC mandated the black commission to write a perspective document for the January NC. It is now being written.

(17.) Immediately following the section on blacks is another outrageous section on discipline. In this section the EC is charged with threatening comrades with "suspension, expulsion, and destruction" for disagreeing. This, like the section on blacks, is designed to appeal to the worst fears of new members.

The facts are just the opposite. Expulsion is not at all an everyday occurrence in the IS. In fact since the 1973 split it has occurred on only two occasions. The first involved the Socialist Collective—a group who was planning to split at a public forum while denouncing the organization. We found out about it in advance and expelled them first. They were expelled because they were no longer loyal members.

A second expulsion occurred in the Oakland branch. This was done by the Oakland exec and backed up by the EC. The comrades involved were expelled because they refused to do the minimum work required of membership in the IS. Instead, they spent their political time endlessly questioning the work of the organization and destroying branch meetings.

There have been no other expulsions in the IS. Instead we believe an hysterical paranoid atmosphere has been built up in the corridors of the organization. Any attempt by the leadership to convince minority faction members to carry out assignments has been heralded in the gossip mill as a threat. There have been no threats of expulsion.

The next statement says "everyone knows there is no democracy in the IS." No, everyone does not know that. The IS is an extremely democratic organization. In fact even the faction leadership seems to understand that. In its opening letter to the organization dated 12/8/76, the faction states that it wants all the democratic rights entitled a faction in a revolutionary Marxist organization. The letter goes on to list these rights including financial resources which the letter argues were granted the convention opposition.

That is correct, the convention opposition was given financial assistance to organize for its point of view. And in fact the convention opposition came very close to winning the vote on the question in controversy. After they lost, there were no reprisals taken, no threats of expulsion. This would not have happened if there were "no democracy," as the faction states.

The document continues by stating that when "genuine controversy breaks out the leadership attempts to suppress it." Again, the truth is quite different. There has been genuine controversy over the question of Portugal within the organization. In fact Barbara W. submitted an opposition document to the last NC. It was thoroughly discussed within the organization. Literature from the ISGB, from which BW's position has been drawn, has been distributed within the ISUS. Barbara herself has been administrator for the International Subcommittee. She was not removed from this position because she held a minority point of view. Nor was she muzzled, threatened with suspension or expulsion or any of the other crimes the EC is accused of doing to political oppositionists.

(18.) On page 18 is a one-paragraph description of the Red Tide which is completely wrong. Here is not the place to go into a thorough description of the RT. However, it is not burning out its leaders, other than Michael who was burned out before the current Midwest RT ever got off the

ground. It is not bogged down in bureaucratic structures. Nor is it steadily turning inward. A far more accurate report on the Red Tide can be found in the Workers' Power and Red Tide centerfolds on the RT Convention. The RT is not without problems—but the minority faction description is nowhere near the truth.

The RT has the problem of being a majority black youth group of a majority white adult group. It has the problem of a new layer of leadership cadre. It has the problems of all youth groups—the instability of youth. It has the problems of parents, of repressive school administrations, of harassment by the cops. It has the problems of being young and predominantly black in a racist, ageist society.

And with all the problems it has, it is an extremely healthy, dynamic, inspiring group. If RTers exaggerate their importance. . . well, so does the left faction.

(19.) On the top of page 19 is another paragraph just chock full of misleading statements. The first is the notion that our work on the April 26, 1975 March for Jobs was an accident. Although it is true that we could not have predicted that the labor bureaucracy would have called for such a demonstration the truth is we would not have been able to intervene at all without our industrial strategy. Our successful intervention was based on organizing a coalition of rank and file groups. In most cases these rank and file groups had been organized by the IS. In all cases our ability to bring these groups together was the fact that IS members were members of the groups. The coalition was the product of industrialization—we could not have intervened from outside. Without our policy of industrialization we would have been like so many other left groups—leafletting the workers. Instead, we organized a highly visible, militant rank and file contingent.

Only two sentences later is the statement, "We came upon UPS by accident." Nonsense. We went into UPS because we had Teamsters as a priority. UPS was a way of getting into the Teamsters. We would not have sent people in without Teamsters as a priority. We even made UPS one of our two priorities within the Teamsters. A few words later it says, "A few comrades organized a real movement." That's right. And they were able to do it because they were inside.

Later on in the same paragraph the document refers to our successful intervention in CLUW. We agree. But again we were able to intervene because we had women in industry. We could not have intervened without industrialization.

But more important is the method behind our involvement in CLUW. CLUW was an organization led and controlled by women bureaucrats. And they were not left wing bureaucrats, either. Olga Madar, CLUW's Chairwoman, was from the right wing of the UAW bureaucracy. CLUW was not particularly democratic. In fact, the CLUW leadership trounced most rank and file initiative.

Yet we were extremely active members, continually trying to build CLUW and bring rank and file women into it. In the end we were unable to bring enough rank and file women in to alter its bureaucratic do-nothing character. CLUW remained a bureaucratic shell and the radicals were driven out. Were we wrong to have participated? No, we were not. We understood CLUW's potential in opening up the question of women's liberation in the labor movement. It didn't work. But we were correct to have tried it until we were totally frozen out.

The CLUW leadership was 100 times worse than Sadlowski. Yet we were in a common organization with them that we continually tried to build. We staffed offices, licked envelopes and did all the administrative work that made us legitimate members. There were many women in the CLUW fraction who disagreed with the line. They were part of fraction discussions and convention discussion. When a line was taken they carried it out as disciplined

members.

And, discussion on the CLUW perspective was silenced in the organization for a period of time. Because although there were sharp differences a line had been taken and continued discussion would have been destructive to those carrying out the work.

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The above is only a partial list of distortions—there were others, but we believe a case has already been made against the method of the document. We urge all comrades to judge this debate on the merit of the politics and not on the series of atrocity stories they have been told in the minority document and the corridors of the organization.

Executive Committee

The Militant Minority: or A Case of Wish Fulfillment
A Reply to the Left Faction
By Harry from Chicago

This paper will discuss only one political position put forward in "A New Course for the IS".

I believe the attitude against industrialization and national priorities, but more importantly their disdain for what amounts to the most important theoretical and practical development the IS has attained in 8 years. The theory called mass work, is based on an illusion created by their pens, which they call the "militant minority".

The "Left" Faction's dreams of a clean "militant minority" run counter to what all our experience tells us about militants in industry and can only be characterized as wish fulfillment.

The "Left" Faction accurately describes the "Militant Minority" on page 8 of their document. "In the 1976 Detroit freight wildcat, a small, militant minority of teamsters kept the strike going for three days after Fitzsimmons ordered the members back to work. In the Central States UPS strike, again, it was a small militant minority that kept the pickets up an extra day in the wildcat that hit eight cities. Today the TDU represents a small politically conscious, militant minority, of the two million strong Teamsters union."

This passage describes nothing more or less than the leadership of the Teamster rank and file movement in Detroit. The TDU is the leadership of the Teamster rank and file movement nationally.

A "Militant Minority" of teamsters, revolutionaries among them, are leading their more backward brothers and sisters. Their "orientation is toward those more backward brothers and sisters and cannot be otherwise."

Yet, on page 9 we find that: "The fact is also that IS members cannot be the "best fighters, the best leaders" etc., without reflecting the politics of the class. If the class is conservative the leaders quite naturally will reflect that conservatism. Whether we like it or not, the masses of workers in the US today are quite conservative, in particular they are filled with chauvanism: racism, sexism, patriotism. There is also of course a minority which is the opposite.

The "Mass work" approach however orients to the former and strengthens the conservative tendency already strong in our industrial work."

In this paragraph we learn that: 1) IS members, who have the advantage of being organized as revolutionaries, cannot hope to try to lead backward workers without becoming hopeless conservatives, 2) There is a minority (of militants) who can! 3) that the IS has adopted a policy aimed at reactionaries.

In one short day dream the "Left" faction has created 3 very unreal dream creatures. Organized revolutionaries doomed to become conservative and a clean "militant" Minority" who are not only free of racism, sexism and patriotism but also immune to the conservative influence of their more backward brothers and sisters. But before we go on to the third creature, ask yourself a few questions: Does anybody really believe that there are not more than a few racists, sexists, and patriots among the TDU and UPSurge membership?. Ot that these militants can lead the more backward workers,

yet remain immune from their influence? Perhaps the Red Scare that went through the TDC was just a joke?

Look at another section of the "Militant Minority" the skilled trades activists in Auto. Are these workers free of chauvinism and other conservative influences? If the "Left" Factions creations were actually true, there would be no need for a Revolutionary party. The best thing we could do, including the "left" faction, would be to dissolve into the "militant minority" and patiently wait for socialism.

A third creature is created in the final sentence: An IS policy that aims at racists, sexists and patriots. This creature was made possible by the clever use of quotes from the "Mass Work" document at the beginning of the section on the militant minority.

"What characterizes mass work, is that on the issues involved, we seek support from the mass of the workers involved, not just from a self-defined radicalized or militant minority. With the radicalized and more militant workers in the lead, we actively go after support from a significant number of those who are affected by the issue. This does not mean we can necessarily achieve organization or mobility of the majority or that mass work which fails to move the majority is wasted. But it does mean that we seek to create an atmosphere among workers affected by a specific issue or problem, where large numbers of those who have an opinion, support us, both on the issue itself and on the methods used."

The authors of "A New Course" must have been stirred from their slumbers long enough to realize that if they presented an honest picture of what the mass work document says, it would disrupt their dreams. Because the picture that emerges from the section on mass work is one where revolutionaries working with a minority of militants, attempt to influence, organize and lead the larger mass of workers.

The "Left" faction's document quotes the passage about "giving a lead to the backward, reactionary, and cowardly workers," but leaves out the very next sentence which says, "It means we have to undermine the ability of any force to counter-organize against the struggle."

One basic lesson that comes from the history of struggle, including our own, is that whenever militants organize, right wingers are provoked into counter organizing. So if therevolutionaries and militants leave the more backward workers to their own devices they will be isolated and defeated.

The only thing revolutionaries or other militants are really good for is attaining a measure of active participation from a larger mass of workers. In the midst of this process is where militant workers, with the help of organized revolutionaries, develop a higher political consciousness.

This process demands an intimate knowledge of a concrete situation. It also demands the use of basic issues that effect the backward workers as well as the militants.

An alliance for action between revolutionaries, militants and backward

workers, built on a few basic issues common to all, does not mean we are barred from raising revolutionary politics. It does mean that the alliance itself is not based on revolutionary politics. The "Left" faction would have us believe this process will conservatize and water down our politics. Far from it, this method makes our politics concrete and provides us with an audience of militants for our politics.

The "Left" faction creates much confusion by their use of the term "orient toward." This term, to us, has always meant to zero in on a group, attempt to raise the political level of the group and to recruit from it.

On page 7 we find this gem:

"Mass work, then has become the name for the IS' orientation to opportunists and reformers in the trade union bureaucracy." And again on Page 8, "The hard truth is that the IS can't have it all ways. It cannot orient to the left bureaucracy and to the 'cowards and reactionaries' in the Rank and File and also to the Militant Minority."

Does anybody really believe we are out to recruit "Left bureaucrats, cowards and reactionaries?" We are accused of "orienting toward" opportunists and reformers" and no doubt pornography peddlers and other unsavory characters. But let's look at a real example: In CGC we formed an alliance with some fairly unsavory characters (Weissman, Sims, etc) The alliance was based on four basic issues, its purpose was to create a vehicle precisely to "orient toward" the Militant Minority in auto. (i.e. to try to recruit from it) Or do Cal, Barbara, and Michael think we set up CGC to try to recruit Weissman and Sims? Funny, nothing of this sort was said during the campaign.

One final comment on the "Left" faction Militant Minority. We have spent 8 years gaining the experience we needed to develop our theory of "mass work." Those 8 years have also brought many problems as the existence of the "Left" faction gives testimony to. The answers to those problems lie in the campaigns put forward by the last NC, rebuilding the internal life, periphery campaign, South Africa, etc.

Comrades, we would be worse than fools to throw out 8 years of hard work for what is basically a dishonest pipedream.

"NEW COURSE"--THE INDUSTRIAL CONSEQUENCES

The Left Faction has pointed out the conservative pressures of industrial politics during non-revolutionary periods. Of course there are also upsurges where industrial workers are a radicalizing force, even on revolutionary organizations. But it is true at present that in the UAW, USW, CNA, and IBT--taken as four undifferentiated lumps--conservative pressure on revolutionaries is the rule, radical pressure the exception.

Against this conservative pressure is that of the revolutionary organization. Not its ideas in particular, but its concrete actions in the service of ideas. One result of the turn to agitation was the idea and then the fact of revolutionaries being active in the class struggle where they work. Since it is the nature of class struggle to have its ups and downs, this activity was made possible by one sole factor: the IS as an organization was committed to standing by the work of these comrades. Priorities were a direct result of that commitment.

What happens when a small revolutionary group de-prioritizes its industrial work? First, it gains a flexibility it lacked. The IS wanted roots in the industrial working class. Now it has them. But roots work both ways. They offer a way in, but they also tie you down. True enough.

There is a second consequence: the organization can no longer furnish a continuing counter-pressure on comrades at their work place to offset the conservatizing pressures of down periods. Yet, nobody wants our roots cut off, the industrial work abandoned, the worker members dropped. What to do? There is a proven method, pioneered by the CP, SP, and SWP: It is giving lip-service to the organization's line in your "own" shop and union, while in practice accomodating to the status quo there.

Revolutionaries are no superpersons. In their union activities, either the revolutionary pressure of the organization prevails, or conservatism does. Even with the organization by your side, it is no easy task. All of the losses we have taken, for example, among auto members was so that these comrades could gain more "flexibility" in accomodating themselves to the conservatism around them at work. They wanted less politics where it counted, not more.

The CP and SWP have long held the illusion that they are political parties. They felt obliged to intervene here, there and everywhere they could, as befits a party. But they did not want to lose worker-members. So they created dual-level organizations, with the industrial section exempted from party discipline in practice. As a consequence their industrial cadre is thoroughly reformist, when not out-and-out bureaucrats, at all times and independently of whether the national "line" is on a left or a right jag.

In industry, the organization abandoning ("de-prioritizing") its own cadre means abandoning them to reformism--if they remain active in the unions. (Otherwise the job is just another job, and revolution is a spare time activity.) In time, this backfires on the organization. When a long neglected union moves again into motion, the organization is now hamstrung by its own cadre in that union. They either carry their conservatism to the organization as a whole, break discipline, or split. We have seen there ourselves. In the Bay Area during the early 70s, we had numerous worker members. But we had not yet learned that the organization as a whole must work through its members. So it was agreed that the IS could and should intervene in the unions--except in AFSCME, the one place we had numbers and influence. Rather than carry the politics of the IS into the union, the AFSCME comrades formed a faction (Reorient) and eventually split. In the atmosphere of those days, we recruited various other politically sophisticated workers as well, all with lessons to teach about organizing in the workplace. What all of them had in common was doing nothing political in their own places of work.

The lesson of history is that revolutionary workers isolated from their own organization where they work soon become useless for revolutionary work there, and eventually useless for revolutionary work anywhere. The price we pay for being small is that we must build around our members. Failing to concentrate them only increases the price enormously, the final payment being the organization itself.

Dave M., Detroit

Detroit, 12/20/76

I. The Revolutionary Left in the US was virtually destroyed in the process of World War II, the post-war boom, and the Mc Carthy witch-hunts. What survived to carry the kernel of revolutionary ideas at the end of the 1950's were a few people huddled together around the elite college campuses like the University of Chicago, California, Wisconsin.

At the same time that the core of revolutionary ideas were maintained by these small groupings, a number of distortions developed which reflected the environment of a tiny intellectual community. Discussion groups could survive precisely because they were isolated from the real class struggle. In this atmosphere debates on dialectical philosophy, the nature of stalinism, human nature were the real world. It was the working class and class struggle that were the abstractions.

In the 1960's the permanent arms economy was no longer able to stabilize capitalism and US capitalism began to suffer severe defeats abroad and serious challenges at home. Conditions now required that we make the transformation to a workers' combat organization or be doomed to irrelevancy. We went through a long hard process to throw off a lot of wrong ideas that we picked up as a campus discussion group. As obvious as some of these ideas are now, they were not always so obvious and there had to be fights to win each. One of the revolutionary ideas that had to be relearned was the conception of revolutionary democracy.

When we were just a discussion group, we had the ideas of democracy which fit a discussion group. The sharp exchange of ideas was seen as the whole point of the group, rather than as a means to something else. So all our ideas on democracy centered on how to make debates livelier and sharper. Meetings were a bore unless we were able to witness an exciting exchange of polemics. It didn't really matter what the debate was about, as long as it was exciting and stimulating. (By the way we recruited a lot of people to this kind of group. The Berkeley ISC in its heyday was over 80 members. The problem was that only a core was interested in serious ongoing activity, and an even smaller core wanted that action outside of the university community.)

As we did develop an orientation toward intervening in and leading struggles we also had to develop our conceptions about Democracy. They seem so simple, but from what the "Left" faction writes in its cover letter (Dec. 8) and from what members have said in speeches, it appears that we have to go over this all again. They seem to want us to return to this discussion group stage.

1) First and foremost, democracy must mean the right of the majority to implement its decisions. Revolutionary Democracy for the working class is not about discussion. It is about control--the right of the masses of people to decide, and to have that decision change the world. Discussion, minority rights and so forth are all important as means to achieving the real ability to make the best decisions. But the best decision which is not carried out doesn't mean very much.

In fact, the solid, unified activity of the whole organization on the decisions of the majority is the strongest guarantee of the rights of the minority. For it says that at any time the minority wants to win the organization to its point of view, that all members will carry out those policies. Without this the minority is guaranteed no rights except to talk.

Unfortunately, if the "left" faction gets its way there will be "NO democracy in the I.S." In its cover letter the faction says that it--the minority--

will decide how the organization is to handle the debate, how long it will go on, what bodies are legitimate.

Their audacity in doing this is all the more remarkable in that they never raised any of this in any channel of the organization set up to carry on debate or make the decisions. Not a word of this stuff was raised at the convention. Not a single discussion document was submitted to the discussion bulletin. Even a couple of months ago there was not a word at the National Committee meeting from the leading members.

The National Secretary is quoted as making an outrageous statement about support of Doug Frazier during a fraction meeting during the national convention. I was at this meeting and did not hear him say anything like that. Nobody else I know in the auto fraction remembers such a statement. Maybe the "left" faction source misunderstood. Maybe the National Secretary slipped but most people knew what he meant. Maybe we were all asleep when he spoke. Or possibly some other explanation. What is remarkable is that something like this that is so important to the left faction and to all the rest of us, took place 6 months ago and nothing was said about it. Was it brought to the attention of the auto fraction steering committee or the membership of the organization? Did anyone write a comment when the auto fraction steering committee put out an evaluation of the CGC experience? No. Instead this horrible political notion supposedly being put forward by as important a person as the national secretary, was allowed to exist unchallenged in the organization and saved up for 6 months with a lot of other charges of similar dubious value, to be dumped on the organization solely for making some factional points.

The "left" faction failed to make any attempt to try to deal with these issues in the normal channels of democratic procedure in the organization set up so that the organization can handle debate at the same time that it carries on work. Now it insists that it has the right to dictate to the majority on how the discussion will be handled.

2) The IS is the most democratic revolutionary group around, although that is currently being threatened by the "left" faction notion of minority rule. The IS also allows for more rights of the minority than any other significant left organization including the British IS. The IS allows factions to form and maintain themselves year round. We do not encourage this, but we do defend the right.

But to make this work in the context of an effective revolutionary combat organization we insist on the right of the organization (that is the majority) to establish the appropriate times and forms for the discussions.

3) Discussion-Action-Evaluation The general model that we try to follow is the idea of freedom of discussion--unity in action. One of the hard lessons we had to learn over the last several years was that it must mean this: the organization at conventions or through its democratically elected leading bodies between conventions, will make decisions based on as much discussion as possible. Once we adopt the line organized discussion must stop on that question and the entire organization concentrates on how to apply the line most effectively. Afterwards, in the case of specific campaigns, or at periodic times determined by the majority, the discussion is then opened up for a full evaluation.

Why can't we carry on the discussion, some ask, while we carry on the outside

work? We learned from long hard experience that it doesn't work. It doesn't work because politics for us is not adopting a slogan, attaching it to mechanical wind-up members and pointing them in the right direction. After we adopt a line then the next task is to apply it to the thousands of different situations that exist and even alter the line as necessary to continue the politics behind the line.

Secondly, political combat for a revolutionary group is not easy. When our members carry a line in the attempt to intervene in the class struggle they are going to be faced with incredible opposition attempting to undermine their confidence. They will be attacked by the capitalist class, the trade union bureaucrats, and the sparts and their ilk. And they will be faced with the arguments of a conservative working class. It is the responsibility of the organization and all of its members to bolster the confidence of members carrying out the line. Internal meetings must be directed to helping them best answer the arguments and fight for the line--not further undermine their confidence by tearing them down.

Members should not have to be directed to build a campaign once the vote has been taken to carry it out. It should happen as part of a common understanding of what it means to be part of a Democratic Centralist combat organization. These aren't just rules. They have a specific political meaning; it is more important that the whole organization act as one and do the best possible, then it is for an individual to be proven right on this or that issue.

That these politics seem to be lacking in the "left" faction is an indictment not just of the leadership of the "left" faction, but of the organization as a whole. We should not have to go over such basics in the middle of a faction fight or a campaign, they should have been part of our normal functioning.

The most outrageous example is the "left" faction's attitude toward our steel work. When asked why they must debate the question now--indeed campaign in the organization against it, why they cannot wait until after the election in February, for an evaluation period, they answer with assorted atrocity stories. "This document wasn't fully circulated," "that person was threatened with discipline by an EC member," and so on. First of all, if some of these things happened, if there was confusion on the rights of the member during a faction fight, members should ask for a public statement from the EC or put forward one of their own to the organization. But this horror story telling and gossip isn't getting anywhere.

But more importantly it reveals a complete lack of understanding of what discipline is all about. The persons being fucked over by this internal campaign against our current steel campaign are not ECers. The persons fucked over are the other comrades working in steel. These comrades have a right to full back up from the entire organization and certainly not what amounts to (whether intended or not) effective sabotage of their work.

The faction has an elitist view of discipline--that it is all about the relations between leaders and rank and filers rather than primarily as basis for collaborative relations between comrades in a revolutionary organization. Yes, there are certainly problems in the IS including problems of internal democracy

within the organization. As we will discuss later, some of these problems are the result of the EC approaching discipline as though it were a question of the relationship of the central leadership to the ranks. Thus we have the EC's concept of EC discipline, or the organizer being the agent of the EC within the organization. Only a few months ago the main leadership of the "left" faction were the staunch defenders of the notions. It is understandable what happened. If your notion of discipline is tied up to the idea of power to the leadership and you get disillusioned with the leadership then you junk real political discipline altogether. And if you junk political discipline you don't have a political combat organization, your most important weapon in fighting the class struggle.

II. Some Steps Forward

The "left" faction has called attention to a number of serious problems. In most cases they propose no solutions or fraudulent ones. We will never move one step forward by spreading illusions that we can do everything, or that every member can be central to the organization.

Several of the negative political solutions put forth, the rejection of mass work, industrialization etc. have been answered well by the EC and others. But there are other problems which need to be addressed. The ideas here are not a fully worked out program, they are for the beginning of the discussion. Many of them came out of discussions with comrades around the organization. They are not startling or new. Actually, where ever possible I have tried to draw some of the lessons from what fractions and branches have done in the immediate past in response to the problems.

1) Community Work

We are not talking here about organizing around community issues, although this is certainly not excluded. We are talking about reaching out to the community with generalized appeals on social and political questions not linked to issues that are arising today out of our priority work places. Busing work, Gary Tyler work, South Africa have all indicated a real potential for the organization to create a political periphery in the community. In some areas there have been possibilities of work with what still remains of the independent left collectives.

This work is a natural area for members not in industrial priorities. It also gives us another handle for bringing political issues particularly about racism into our industrial work in a concrete way.

What is required now is to systematize the work in local areas. Rather than simply going from one campaign to another we have to determine some overall targets and themes of work. We should determine what communities, community groups we want to focus on and develop a periphery in these places for this work, rather than relying on last minute mobilization of IS members. We should work regularly to build media contacts to help publicize our work. Those members whose primary work is in these areas need to be organized into fractions on an ongoing and serious basis. As well as functioning local units there should be national fractions communications and regional and national fraction meetings to develop perspectives and discuss the work. The UFW fraction of a few years ago did this. It took the initiative in developing the political line and political work nationally and in each branch. It added important depth to the work of the organization and provided

important roles for members not in industrial priorities.

2) Make the Fractions (Committees) the Center of Our Political Work

However good our community work, in the long run it will mean little if the organization is not firmly based on our industrial work. Just as in the community work, the key is to build the industrial work around functional units--the fractions or committees. Over the past several months we have, in fact, been slowly moving towards this with considerable success. For example:

The national auto fraction and national telephone fraction both held successful weekend conferences (12/12). The meetings evaluated our past work and were able to go in dept in developing our work for the next period. Both contributed greatly to training and integrating our newer members in industry.

The IBT national fraction is setting up a council of Teamster members that can meet more frequently than the full fraction as a way for our new Teamster members to participate more in the leadership of the organization.

The Detroit Teamster branch has developed a good spirit and a lively internal life. It has also developed political education classes for Teamsters taking off from questions in the union and broadening to other political questions.

It is these kinds of developments which represent our future. We must have functional units within the organization that members can identify with, take responsibility for, and take initiative in.

But to make this real the fractions must have a real role with real powers. The fractions, including the nonindustrial ones, should have the responsibility for developing the political line of the fraction and directing the work. The fractions should be responsible for Workers' Power coverage and developing education programs for their new recruits and contacts. And they should be responsible for bringing other political questions into the work.

This will require a new relationship between the EC and the fractions. The fractions will develop much more of an internal life with the stress on political contact between the fraction leadership and rank and file. The fraction leadership will be elected by the fraction and will clearly have the responsibility for leading the work.

The EC will have responsibility for the general direction of the organization and assisting and training the fraction leadership to lead in the specific work. The EC, of course, has the right and responsibility to replace fraction leadership when it is not carrying out the work or the politics of the majority. Similarly, the EC can reverse a decision of the fraction leadership. But this must be seen as happening only in extraordinary circumstances, and the EC will have to politically defend its actions to the entire membership. The EC's current method of leadership--of trying to be on top of everything--tends to encourage a passive rank and file and secondary leadership, waiting for the EC to act. Since you know the EC is going to intervene, why bother working it out when the EC's going to take it up anyway. And, since the EC, of course, can not be on top of everything it means whole areas of work barely make it when the EC is occupied with something else.

We have to make it clear to the functional units that this is being changed--it is they who have to take responsibility for the work--thinking it through,

developing the perspectives, taking the initiatives, evaluating our successes and failures.

3) Broadening the Leadership

The point here is not to cut down the power of the leadership, but to expand the development of leadership. In fact, the national leadership is not just the EC, but the leaders of fractions and branches throughout the organization. More frequent meetings of the NC or other bodies to provide communications with the EC can help as long as we don't revert to bogging ourselves down in internal meetings. But this too can only work in a context of seeing the EC's role much more of coordination of leaders than of leading all the work itself.

For there to be a real national leadership there must be real collaboration. The idea of the EC as a single disciplined unit which develops its line and then "fights to win over" the other leadership must be buried. Leaders of fractions and EC members must be able to collaborate with each other in the initial development of proposals and through out the stages of discussion. Of course, there are times and questions when a leadership body must act as a single unified whole. And at all times we must demand that members of leadership bodies be disciplined in the real sense--that they place differences in context and that they subordinate the debate to carrying on the work of the organization as a whole.

But the EC version of automatic internal discipline, however valuable it might have been at one point in consolidating a leadership, has become a fetter on the organization. It prevents effective collaboration between leaders of the organization, it encourages clique relations within the organization and it tends to force criticism and opposition into hardened factions.

4) Develop Effective Branch (local) Leadership

We have to end any conception of the local organizer as the internal agent of the EC. Instead the stress must be on the organizer as part of a local collaborative leadership which sees its responsibility to collectively lead and carry out the politics of the whole organization--whether the local leadership is in the majority or minority.

Carrying out a political line is not a job for mechanical people. What is important is that the political method behind the line be applied to the specific situation. Local leadership must understand their responsibility to do just that. Where it feels that it is extremely important the EC may have to intervene. But, as in the case of fractions, it should have to defend its intervention.

For example, the issue of priorities has come up. It should go without saying that it is the responsibility of the local leadership to encourage, cajole, and apply the pressure of the organization on members so our work is focussed in the priorities. But it is also their responsibility to use their heads and apply the politics--not just reflect them. Obviously if people cannot get priority jobs, then the local leadership should consider a secondary local priority. Obviously it should try to develop political work for members not in priorities. Yet the "left" faction complains that the EC has not done something about these problems. We have to get over the idea that it is the EC which is the source and solution of all problems.

In fact during the past several months many branches have begun to take some lead in dealing with the problems in the organization. The idea of the periphery campaign and many of the ideas to carry it out originated in branches. Seattle has been using a movie series systematically, NY carried out a rank and file conference, Cleveland and Detroit IBT branch have held class series. The Detroit District took the lead in developing community work. And surely there is much more. The task is to further encourage initiative like these and to find ways of communicating them around the organization. Leadership by example is a powerful and effective form of leadership.

5) Politicizing the Organization

There are no simple recipes for doing this. What doesn't work well is for the center to simply "mandate" a discussion even if it provides reams of accompanying documents or notes. What does work best is when the political discussion stems from the work and the discussion is directed toward deciding something that will make a difference in the work.

Here is one good recent example. When the Detroit District began work on South Africa we proposed that it be linked to the auto work and the target be the GM Building with the slogan "GM out of South Africa." This came up on the Auto Fraction Steering Committee where there were differences. There was a minimum of discussion since naturally the question was going to the EC, so the Auto Fraction Steering Committee didn't even try to work out the question.

For some reason the EC rejected the slogan in favor of focussing on demands for trade union rights. There was a reaction to this and an intense political debate followed in the office and district in ones and twos, and in meetings. Because everyone knew the EC was divided the lines were not automatically drawn, "EC supporters" vs. others. Also it was clear that the EC was going to have to rediscuss it. Because the decision made an important difference to the work, and because the political discussion could have an impact on the decision, the discussion was taken very seriously. The issue raised questions of fact on South Africa as well as questions of method and theory like the relationship of Imperialism to Apartheid, or the role of the Revolutionary Party in raising transitional demands. Everyone involved learned a tremendous amount, the EC reversed its position and the organization did not collapse just because we knew the EC was divided. And the work developed.

It is unfortunate that more of the membership could not have been involved in the discussion and there are no mechanical ways to repeat the process. What we can do is to try to bring issues like South Africa, the elections, etc into our industrial work, as well as examine the issues raised in the course of shop floor struggle. When political questions come up we should attempt to draw the implications of these and build our political discussion around them.

(d) The Newspaper

The newspaper is central to a revolutionary organization and as such requires a full discussion. Changes in the organization must involve changes in the paper. It is vital that we move to break the isolation of the paperwriting and production, and correspondingly the distribution, from the ongoing external work of the organization. Fractions must take the responsibility for the content, writing and distribution of the paper in their area. The national staff must be organized around the paper. The International Committee must take direct responsibility for international coverage, the Black Commission for black coverage, etc.

The Workers' Power staff can not continue to write the bulk of the paper. Their jobs must be to organize, bug and threaten to get coverage written by people involved in the external work. This includes more theoretical articles which arise from the work, not just reports or descriptions. It is a job admittedly harder than writing all the articles in the office, but it is of critical importance if we are to advance.

7) Centralize the Politics, Decentralize the Work

The politics of the organization are centralized by having a common political analysis, method, and line in specific situations. The degree to which these are internalized by the membership is the degree to which we can function as an effective centralized organization. Centralism is NOT accomplished by the fact that everything must be done in Detroit. There is no reason that fractions and branches can not take on political or organizational responsibilities. Branches can take on the task of developing and putting out particular pamphlets. Other branches can take charge of setting up a national movie series. Still another branch can be the coordination for the South Africa campaign. And so on. Far from downplaying the role of the EC it makes it more important because it makes the organization overall more effective. It allows the EC to effectively oversee the work of the organization because it means that the work can go on and allow the EC to direct its attention to the problem areas of the organization or in leading into new areas.

For the organization to work in this way requires a strengthening of the political bonds in the organization: Agreement on the basic politics and on a revolutionary conception of democracy. These have to be discussed and developed at the same time that we examine specific proposals to deal with specific problems. We are seeking to do this by building a Majority Caucus which can develop and defend the fundamental political agreement in the IS on mass work, industrialization, priorities, and democratic centralism. Within this caucus there is wide disagreement on a number of specifics, including much of what is presented here, and these issues will be debated openly within the Caucus and the organization.