

Forward to the Party! Struggle for the Party!

No. 2

This is the second of several issues of the special journal on the programme of the party. The purpose of this journal is to provide an important form for discussion and struggle around the programme, among members of the RU and all potential party members.

None of these articles represents the line of the RU; none has been approved (or disapproved) by leadership-bodies of the RU on any levels. Instead, these articles represent the summations of particular RU comrades based on their study of these specific points of the draft programme and their own summa-

tion around them.

Carrying out the task of forming the party now, and actually building the party "from the bottom up," means that ALL potential party members must actively take part in the discussion and struggle around the draft programme that will establish the basis of unity for the party. This journal is one important form for broadening and deepening that process, and we urge readers of the journal to make full use of it in that light. Forward to the Party! Struggle for the Party! (We have left space in the journal for writing notes.)

Lessons of the May 1st Workers Movement

Clarify Role Of IWOs

The draft programme states that "throughout the country workers are coming forward in greater numbers to lead struggles not only in the shops and unions, but also in many other battle-fronts against the bourgeoisie—for example, against police repression or imperialist aggression and war.... These workers are the backbone of working class organization that is built on a more permanent basis and on a higher political level than caucuses—directing its spearhead squarely at the ruling class." (p. 31)

In the San Francisco Bay Area an area-wide organization of this kind has existed for nearly a year. The May 1st Workers Movement (M1WM) grew out of last year's May Day events in the Bay Area, but its roots go back several years. Ever since the publication of *Red Papers 2* in 1969, the RU has seen developing workers' organizations that are intermediate between communist organizations and the trade unions as a key aspect of building the revolutionary workers' movement.

In the Bay Area, in addition to work in particular industries and the development of caucuses and other forms of organization there, the RU played a leading role in developing area-wide workers' organizations to support the Farah strikers and the farmworkers and to build the fight against wage controls.

The Workers Committee Against Wage Controls (WCAWC) developed in 1973, after a successful campaign in defense of three workers who were busted at a demonstration against the Pay Board. With the contracts of about five million workers coming up against the government's wage-increase ceiling in 1973, it was clear to the communists and advanced workers who had been active in the campaign to free the "Payboard 3" that our activity couldn't stop with their acquittal.

In fact, the campaign to acquit them had been linked from the very beginning with the demand to abolish the Pay Board and all wage controls, and on this basis it had gotten a very favorable response from rank and file workers, local unions, and even several county labor federations.

Building the Committee

Coming off this campaign, the RU and a number of advanced workers got together and decided to build the Workers Committee Against Wage Controls. Right away the question arose: how do we present the question of wage controls to the broad masses of workers? The workers on the Committee readily agreed that the system of imperialism and its deepening crisis must be identified as the source of wage controls and all other attacks on the working class. At the same time, members of the Committee agreed that every effort must be made to unite with *all* workers who were open to building a rank and file fight against wage controls.

The Committee published a widely-used pamphlet and also led a mass march against wage controls that involved a significant number of workers. But, thanks to the treachery of the top union officials in industries like rubber and auto, and to the relatively low level of organization among rank and file workers in these industries, the necessary sparks of struggle did not really

develop around wage controls in 1973.

In auto, for example, Woodcock forced a 3% wage increase on the workers. One contract after another fell safely within the bourgeoisie's 5.5% guidelines, in spite of the explosive anger of the workers that broke through in such struggles as the Detroit auto wildcats and the massive farmworkers' strikes of the summer of '73.

The lack of struggle against wage controls, especially around key contracts, slowed the development of the WCAWC, and it gradually became clear that an organization based on a single issue subject to ebbs and flows was no substitute for a more permanent working class organization. This became especially clear during the Shell strike of 1973, when workers and supporters at the Shell refinery in Martinez, Calif. were engaging in sharp confrontations with scabs at the refinery gates. When the WCAWC was asked to participate in efforts to stop the scabs, everyone was for it, but some of the workers raised the question: how can we, as a committee against *wage controls*, get deeply involved in a strike where the main issue is health and safety?

Of course, it was necessary for class conscious workers to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Shell strikers and to mobilize other workers to do the same. Members of the Committee did take up this task, and later threw themselves wholeheartedly into building support for the farmworkers' upsurge in the San Joaquin Valley. But the WCAWC as an organization could not develop further, because the conditions for its development did not exist, and it is not the task of communists to concoct struggle out of the air.

On the other hand, the WCAWC did accumulate some valuable experience in leading mass struggle and it helped to move a number of advanced workers toward becoming communists. Together with the work of the Farah Strike Support Committees, the Committee Against the Energy Freeze, the ad hoc farmworker support committees, and the shop organizations, it helped to lay the basis for the development of the May 1st Workers Movement.

May Day 1974

The immediate experience that triggered the formation of the M1WM was May Day 1974. From the beginning, at a meeting of a good number of workers, the RU proposed building May Day not only as an event in itself, but as a stepping stone toward the development of a political workers' organization as part of a broader revolutionary workers' movement that would take up and lead the fight against all oppression. This idea was received with great enthusiasm by the workers, and the May Day march and rally of 1000 people became a living example of the developing revolutionary workers' movement.

From its beginning the May 1st Workers Movement has been actively involved in a number of important struggles, including the Rucker electronics strike, the struggles of Asian immigrant workers in San Francisco's Chinatown, and the campaign against police repression. The main strength of the M1WM has been that it has

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People should reread the draft programme, pp. 30-31, particularly on caucuses and the IWO.

When our organization first began, it put forth the five spearheads of anti-imperialist struggle as the program for building the revolutionary workers' movement and the united front under proletarian leadership. This formulation has been replaced by a more scientific, concrete programme based upon six years of practice and summing up of this practice using the tool of Marxism-Leninism.

One of the key weaknesses in the five spearheads was relegating the fifth, "unite the proletariat to resist the attack on living standards by the monopoly capitalists," to a subordinate position. The first four spearheads were considered to be the "revolutionary" ones, while the fifth was around *just* day-to-day shop issues. This led to general right errors in our shop work, to organizing around grievances in the plant in a reformist way, as summed up in many national bulletins and in the first NCC report.

In essence, this line comes down to not seeing that the fundamental contradiction, and now also the principal contradiction, in America today is between the working class and the bourgeoisie. It is precisely because of this fundamental contradiction that struggle around shop issues is *potentially* revolutionary struggle.

The working class moves into struggle based upon objective conditions in the real world and based upon its real needs. This is clearly stated in the opening section of "Build the Revolutionary Workers' Movement." Talking about the struggles of workers against individual employers, the draft programme says: "In these struggles, the workers begin to throw off the foot of the employer from their necks, to raise their heads. And in raising their heads they are able to see farther and more clearly. The face of the enemy and the forces fighting him begin to come into sharper focus.... Through all this the workers begin to see themselves as more than mere individuals, but as members of a class, locked in warfare with the opposing class of employers." (p. 29)

The draft programme goes on to quote Lenin, who says, "From individual strikes the workers can and must go over, as indeed they are actually doing in all countries, to a struggle of the entire working class for the emancipation of all who labor." The way the draft programme puts it here is to clearly link the struggle against the individual employer, struggle around "wages and benefits, working conditions, against speed-up and lay-offs, against discrimination," to the struggle of "the entire working class for the emancipation of labor." (p. 29)

However, the formulation of the workers' organizations, as laid out on pp. 30-31, leads to separating the day-to-day shop struggles from the broader campaigns of the class against all exploitation and oppression, both politically and organizationally. Only the

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M1WM...

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brought together a solid core of advanced workers from a number of different industries. These workers have united with communists to take important issues and struggles to the whole working class.

The work of the M1WM around the Rucker and Chinatown struggles helped to raise the class-consciousness of the strikers by showing them the reality of working class unity and of the growing revolutionary workers' movement. Auto, electronics, and postal workers, warehousemen, bus drivers, and many others walked the picket lines at Rucker, Lee Mah, and Jung Sai, often under the banner of the M1WM.

These workers came out not simply on the basis of trade union solidarity (although this was the starting point for some), but because they understood that the fight against the oppression of women, minority peoples, and immigrants was a crucial part of these strikes. Together with the M1WM, Rucker strikers marched through a barrio in the Bay Area to protest the murder of a young Chicano, and stood on crowded street corners in San Francisco's Chinatown passing out leaflets about the Jung Sai and Lee Mah struggles.

On one unforgettable day auto, electronics, garment, and postal workers sat down and spent a full evening talking politics and strike strategy with a good number of Jung Sai strikers. The Jung Sai strikers were all older Chinese women. None of them spoke English. The workers from the May 1st Workers Movement were all young men and women; only one of them spoke Chinese.

But for a full evening they shared experience and ideas and struggled about how to move the strike forward. At one point one of the strikers blurted out: "How can we unite with you? We are old and you are young, and we don't even speak the same language." But the warm exchange of handshakes at the end of the evening was evidence of a growing sense of class solidarity, and that unity was strengthened on the picket lines the very next day as we stood shoulder to shoulder and chanted together in English and Chinese.

As the draft programme states, "the method of the proletariat and its party is...to seize on every spark of struggle, fan and spread it as broadly as possible throughout the working class and among its allies. To build every possible struggle and build off of it to launch new struggles. And through the course of this to fan every spark of consciousness, to identify and isolate the bourgeoisie and its agents, and unite all struggles against this enemy." (p. 30)

Back Into the Shops

In applying the "single spark method," it is important for communists and active workers to take the main political lessons of key struggles back into the shops and to apply these lessons to the struggles developing there. On the whole the M1WM has *not* done this consistently.

Around the Rucker strike, for example, there were a number of mass mobilizations where large numbers of workers came out to the picket lines. The same was true at Lee Mah and Jung Sai. But the M1WM did not consistently find the ways to take the main issues and the key lessons of these struggles out to the many thousands of workers in the shops and hiring halls who did not yet actively support these strikes.

There was some definite improvement on this front in the preparation for a "Defend the Right to Strike—Smash the E.N.A.!" picket line and rally held in Concord, Calif. recently when labor traitor I.W. Abel showed his ugly face there. The M1WM called the demonstration and united with a number of caucuses and other organizations to build it. A general leaflet was widely distributed at plants throughout the Bay Area, and also door to door and at shopping centers in a local area where U.S. Steel has a large mill. In addition, some of the caucuses put out their own leaflets or newspaper articles linking the E.N.A. in steel with the particularities of the right to strike in their own industry.

In building for the Abel/E.N.A. demonstration, the M1WM strengthened its ties with the various caucuses and intermediate organizations that have been developing in a number of industries and unions. For a while there had been a lot of confusion about the relationship between the M1WM and these organizations. Even for workers and cadres who had been relating actively to both this had been a problem.

To some degree this confusion developed because of a tendency to view things organizationally rather than politically. The question of political line, and of viewing organizations from the standpoint of building the revolutionary workers' movement within the concrete conditions in each area and industry, was sometimes

organization within a particular industry was seen in contradiction to building the M1WM.

This question is still in the process of being resolved. But it is becoming much clearer that when organizations are viewed from the standpoint of political line—winning the active workers to an anti-imperialist understanding and program and then taking this boldly back to the masses of workers—then the question of organizational relationships becomes less complicated. It is correct and necessary to build intermediate organizations within particular industries, but in the course of building these it is also necessary to strengthen their ties with the M1WM.

Of course, this can't be done in the real world by issuing charters or by formal declarations of affiliation. The M1WM is not some kind of left-wing "central labor council." In fact, it has had to fight against the dual unionist tendencies that spontaneously develop among workers and others who are disillusioned by the miserable, treacherous record of the trade union leadership.

Line and Leadership

It is not the name of an organization that is crucial. It is its political line and its leadership in struggle. If postal workers at this point are more familiar with Up-rising (a rank and file postal workers organization and newsletter) than with the M1WM, and if auto workers are more familiar with On the Line, this is no problem as long as these organizations work closely with the M1WM to strengthen their ties through common work around key campaigns and to take a unified political line to the broad masses of workers.

This process took a big step forward with the work around the recent Abel/E.N.A. demonstration, but it's an area where there is much work to be done. Only by doing this, and by helping to develop intermediate forms in key industries where they don't yet exist, will the M1WM be able to develop deep ties with the working class.

Another important question that has been struggled out within the M1WM from its very beginning is that of the correct mass line, particularly the question of whether the revolutionary overthrow of the system and the building of a *revolutionary* workers' movement, should be projected as the organization's level of unity. Of course, within the M1WM RU cadre and others have put forward the necessity of building a revolutionary workers' movement that will lead the broad united front in overthrowing imperialism and establishing socialism, the rule of the working class. And just about all of the workers who are active

on the M1WM steering committee would agree that "revolution is the only solution" and that our goal in making revolution is establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But it's not just a question of what a relatively small number of communists and advanced workers can agree on in someone's living room. Our task is to take this political line and program out to the masses of workers and to continually bring forward new activists in the course of struggle.

This means that the M1WM and other intermediate workers' organizations must be "open at both ends." They must grasp the dialectic of putting forward a Marxist-Leninist mass line and at the same time reaching out to and involving the broadest numbers of workers in the struggles they take up. Through this process advanced workers will be developed as communists (and are now being developed as communists) and through them the Party's leadership of the class struggle will be strengthened and deepened. This is at least part of what the draft programme means when it calls intermediate workers' organizations "conveyor belts linking the party with the class as a whole." (p. 31)

Level of Unity

The communists and advanced workers relating actively to the M1WM have agreed that the correct level of unity in our concrete conditions is to project the M1WM as a *political* workers' organization which clearly, sharply, and consistently identifies the imperialists and their system as the source of all oppression and the common enemy of workers and all oppressed people. As a recent statement by the M1WM puts it, "the May 1st Workers Movement is a *political* workers' organization. Its goal is to build a movement of the whole working class against all the oppression rooted in the profit system. We see that problems like layoffs, police repression against minority peoples, and hysteria campaigns against immigrant workers come from one source—the capitalists and their system.... It's time for workers from all industries and unions to get together as a class and take the offensive against our common enemy."

The May 1st Workers Movement is still a young organization. We have much to learn. But the basic direction is forward. With the sharpening of the imperialist crisis and the class struggle, with the formation of the proletariat's revolutionary communist party on the near horizon, we are confident that the growing revolutionary workers' movement will be making great advances in the coming period. FORWARD TO THE PARTY! ■

Clarify...

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broad campaigns of the working class are seen as potentially revolutionary.

This formulation, while vague in many points, contradicts our practice and sumup over the past four years. The draft programme puts forth, on p. 30, that the caucuses fight around the day-to-day shop issues: "In these organizations, as well as caucuses and other forms they do initiate, members of the Revolutionary Communist Party put forward the policy of relying on the rank and file, and mobilizing it to fight around its own grievances in the plant and union and to link up with struggles outside the plant."

In contrast to these caucuses, the draft programme puts forth the IWO as organizations of the advanced which take up the broader struggles of the working class and other sections of the people. Again, the draft programme is vague, but the thrust is clear. "But as this movement develops and increasingly takes up the fight against all exploitation and oppression, there is more and more a need for forms of working class organization that can consolidate and build on this. Throughout the country workers are coming forward in greater numbers to lead not only in the shops and unions, but also in many other battle-fronts." (p. 31)

While this is a generally correct characterization, the draft programme goes on to say that these workers with a higher level of understanding are the backbone of organizations "directing its spearhead squarely at the ruling class." "While these organizations must be based mainly in plants and other work places, their overall role is to apply the 'single spark' method to take up every major struggle of all sections of the people against the ruling class." To sum up: caucuses to lead the struggle around the working class' grievances in the plants and unions, and IWOs made up of advanced workers, to lead the broader struggles aimed directly at the ruling class.

Our practice leads to the conclusion that the struggles of the working class around shop issues and around the broader campaigns must be linked both politically and organizationally, not separated as suggested by the draft programme.

Service Industry

One workers' organization (IWO) in our area is based in a large service industry. The IWO in industry X is not limited to just the shop floor struggles. It tries to take up all the major struggles of the class. Most workers come around our organization because they see that we fight around the burning issues on the shop floor—harassment, better stewards, for a good contract.

Comrades and advanced workers constantly point out how these struggles come from the very nature of capitalism, that they are all part of the struggles of the working class against the ruling class. At the same time, we involve workers in other struggles of the class, for instance against police repression, or recently we involved many workers from the shop struggle in building for May Day. In the course of this practice, fighters for one become fighters for all.

Sometimes workers come to us through our work around the broader campaigns. This is particularly true about our work around vets, because there are many veterans in our industry. Here, we struggle with these workers to also take up the shop struggles, showing how these struggles are linked up, in the real world, with the broader campaigns.

The point is *not* to separate off workers who are making leaps in understanding into an organization of the advanced, but to be open-ended, to involve workers who come forward just to fight around any one issue as well as advanced workers.

The organization in industry X is an IWO. And what the draft programme says about the caucuses, that "the size and activity of these organizations will ebb and flow," is true of our IWO. When we are involved in a big struggle on the shop floor we sometimes have 30-35 people at meetings, who come mainly off this particular struggle. However, we also try to get these workers involved in other struggles. In this way we consolidate them to hard core members. Again, our organization is basically open at both ends. Anyone can join who wants to fight the boss, but the organization has a fighting program around all of the day-to-day struggles of the class. There is a certain number of hard core members, and another four times as many or so who see themselves as members but don't come to every meeting. So far, we have recruited a number of workers into the RU.

This is not to say that we don't build caucuses around single issues. Our practice has shown us that the best way to do this is for the workers' organiza-

tion to call for xyz committee for a good contract. In this way, many of the relatively less advanced workers who want to fight for a good contract, but have reservations about the IWO, unite with us around this particular struggle and are often won over to joining the IWO.

But practice has also shown us that to "work to develop the life of these organizations," beyond the time the issue itself is alive, is incorrect. We have formed many of these committees around a particular issue like contract, short hours, better representation. But once the particular struggle is over, we kill the committee (caucus).

In one plant in our area, we did try to prolong the life of the caucus, which led to damaging results. In this plant there was a union organizing drive, and a committee formed around it. Instead of consolidating the advanced members of this committee to develop an IWO that saw the struggle as a more protracted one against the capitalists, and not just for a union, and saw the need for taking on broader issues, the comrades just built the committee as a union organizing committee. When the union drive was over, the committee died and the advanced forces were *not* consolidated to continue the struggle on a firmer basis.

The point here isn't to always build a committee—sometimes the workers' organization itself can build the struggle without doing that—but to involve as many

workers as possible in an organization that takes up the struggle on the shop floor, builds this struggle as a revolutionary struggle, and, at the same time, takes up other major struggles of the whole class. In this way workers see how their shop floor struggles and broad, class-wide struggles are aimed at the same enemy.

Building the IWO as an open-ended organization with a fighting program around the shop issues and the broader campaigns is also crucial in forming area-wide IWOs encompassing many industries. At present our area is building such an area-wide IWO and the view is that the various industrial "sections" of the IWO be firmly rooted in, and leading, the day-to-day shop struggles.

It is not enough to say, as the draft programme does, that the IWO "must be based mainly in the plants and other work places." They must lead the struggles in the plant. If they do not, then they are, or will inevitably become, paper organizations which rip advanced workers out of the daily shop battles of the working class.

The IWOs proposed in the draft programme make them into organizations which unite people ideologically around an understanding of imperialism, and not programmatically on the basis of a fighting program, a program which is not static, but develops and grows as the level of struggle intensifies. ■

Using Single Spark Method in Steel

We want to sum up recent experiences that comrades working in a rank and file caucus have had, as these experiences have broadened our understanding of building the revolutionary workers' movement in a large basic steel mill.

How to understand that the working class learns through its day-to-day struggle and apply the single spark method to "mobilize the masses of workers to take matters into their own hands and wage a blow for blow struggle against the enemy, inside and outside the unions"? How do we develop rank and file caucuses, unite with the advanced forces and consolidate them? How do we use Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought as a living science which helps us develop and apply the mass line so that it becomes a "tremendous material force" that workers take as their own to transform history? These are questions we want to deal with.

Within the mill, the workers' movement has not been developed, most of the struggle in the last two decades arising spontaneously during the Black liberation movement of the late '60s and directed against discrimination in the mill. The last layoff of any size was during the 1958 recession. The local union leadership is firmly in the hands of hacks, and most workers see that neither the international nor local serves their interests, although this has led to a lot of cynicism.

Communists had worked in the plant for two years. A loose caucus had developed around fighting discrimination and company attacks. Initially a national form, it was broadened to include all who could be united with. The work of this caucus had been sporadic and no on-going workers organization had been built. The caucus had led struggle in the plant, such as getting a grievance man in one department. Some agitation had been done around the USWA Convention in Atlantic City (Defend the Right to Strike) in Sept. '74. A leaflet was put out in Dec. supporting the miners' strike and exposing the lies of media, government and company (over 400 workers were laid off at that time). And support was given to a fight against police repression in a local community.

Three Sharpest Issues

In Jan. '75 we began to more consistently try to develop and apply the mass line to our work in order to build struggle and consolidate advanced workers in the caucus. We understood in theory that the working class learns through its day-to-day struggles and that we should use the single spark method. At this time, the three sharpest issues were: layoffs; the Consent Decree; and an enormous increase in monthly union dues.

We spent several weeks refining the mass line around these issues: pointing to the system and class collaboration as the root of the problems, and stressing the need for the rank and file to unite and fight these attacks and make the union fight for us. We put out a newsletter laying out the "mass lines." This did an excellent job of exposing the company, government and sell-out international, of raising consciousness and developing a sense of organization among the workers.

It was really well-received and generated tremendous discussion with many workers saying they wanted to relate to the caucus. Workers said, "Hey, this is right," but we lacked a concrete program of struggle that mobilized workers in an on-going way. Because we just laid the line out there without a fighting program, the struggle became one of getting workers to agree with our line instead of getting them to put it into practice.

Work around the Consent Decree is a good example. During the period from Nov. to Jan., this was the sharpest issue because the actual implementation of the Decree was unfolding (with resultant righteous anger as guys were losing jobs, etc.) and because a nation-wide group was organizing (and going around to locals) to oppose the Decree through legal channels which would undo it and return things to the way they had been.

Our line was that the Decree was the result of the just struggle against discrimination, but that the three-headed monster of company, government and international collaborated to make the workers pay for the discrimination of the company and pitted worker against worker, whereas we had to unite to fight for real plant-wide seniority, with the company paying for any losses. Guys said, "This makes sense," and at a special Consent Decree meeting of several hundred workers, nearly a hundred came behind our line, ready

to fight and looking for leadership. But we didn't have a program of action. All we could do was take names and set up a meeting.

Our program as stated in the newsletter was: "We've got to unite and fight the three-headed monster that's attacking us. We say: Fight for real plant-wide seniority; Fight discrimination...; The companies are responsible for discrimination and they must pay the costs. We've got to rely on ourselves, and force the union to act in our interests. Where there's a case of discrimination, we've got to organize workers around it. All persons who lose money because of changes in seniority should come forward and fight!"

It was important to lay this out. But the fight against the Decree would have been strengthened if we could have coupled this with actual struggles against implementation to take up specific cases of workers being ripped off and build struggle around these. The proletariat is ready to fight, not just in the abstract, but rather by building "every possible struggle and building off of it to launch new struggles...to fan every spark of consciousness, to identify and isolate the bourgeoisie and its agents." A major problem we faced was that the caucus was concentrated in areas of the mill not as affected as other parts by the Decree. Through this period, we more firmly grasped what it means to "walk on two legs": to lay out and build the broader, longer-range struggle, linking it to immediate, concrete battles by the single spark method.

We also learned the power of the mass line. The company was using the Decree to increase divisions in the class, especially to pit Black against white. ("I didn't get that job I bid on cause some Black with less seniority got it!") We would show how the Decree functioned and link it up with the general system and the divide and rule tactics of the bosses. (We also related the Decree to the Boston busing struggle very successfully—the line of our organization was the only one that cut any mustard in explaining what was going on and building unity.)

Whether in shop discussions or at union meetings, whenever forces have used the Decree to divide the class, laying out the correct line would always completely isolate the backward elements and weaken the attacks by any of the three-headed monsters. Through this we were stimulating much discussion, workers were taking sides and lining up, and some were coming forward to relate more consistently with the caucus.

Dues Increase

At this time (Feb. '75), the dues increase became a particularly sharp issue. A national dues protest movement was developing because of the anger of the rank and file. For a month we channeled our efforts into trying to mobilize the rank and file to take the leadership of this protest, linking it up with the ENA (No-strike Deal), the Consent Decree, "productivity drives" and general lack of democracy and rank and file control in the union.

We were able to win many workers to the need for the rank and file to re-take control of the unions and combatted the cynicism that "we can't do anything." At one local meeting the local hack tried to red-bait a member of the caucus, but workers supported him and a fight almost broke out. Through this we more clearly exposed the role of the local hacks, the need for the rank and file to get organized, and gained experience on the role of communists in particular and the proletariat in general in the unions.

As this struggle was being waged, massive layoffs were announced in the mill. We had laid out a good line around layoffs in our first newsletter, pointing to the system and to the fact that us workers won't pay for the crisis of the day. But because layoffs were not a sharp issue among workers (until the massive ones were announced), we had concentrated our efforts on the Consent Decree and dues protest. Given developments in society, especially in auto and increased costs of energy, a firmer grounding in Marxism-Leninism and the total crisis of capitalism would have helped us to concentrate more on building the fight against the layoffs. What ended up was bowing to spontaneity, running from one thing to the next.

There were important struggles being waged against job eliminations, speedup and productivity drives, struggles we were close to or led, and these could have been summed up and fanned as sparks in the overall fight against company attacks, especially layoffs. For example, one advanced worker in the caucus was involved in

a struggle where a dozen guys refused to do a job (fighting speedup and job safety). This was during this period. Recently, in discussing the draft programme with him, especially the single spark method, he said: "Yeh, guys were talking about what we did for two weeks after. We should have put up a sheet explaining what happened and the lessons learned and spread it all over the mill."

In another struggle, 20 workers got sent home for refusing to do a job another department had done (but because of layoffs they didn't have the personnel). This was a key battle and victory, based on the unity and militancy of workers refusing to work at the risk of losing their jobs, and the bosses trying to turn it into defeat and union officials trying to funnel it into reformist channels. Discussion about this walk-off continued for months, and communists did a good job *in that shop*, using it as a spark to show the way forward and defeat the defeatist lines coming out.

Several Struggles

In another shop the company over a several month period had been trying to implement a "productivity drive." Several struggles against job eliminations and speedup had been going on in this shop, and these were linked up by communists and advanced workers to the productivity drive, raising the broader questions about the jive of "labor peace," the overall crisis in the system, the role of the bourgeoisie and its agents in the unions, and the need to unite and fight a tit-for-tat battle to protect every gain.

A good percentage of the shop was mobilized to attend a special shop meeting to reject the "drive" and bring out a lot of other issues that were affecting them (previously only a handful would attend shop meetings). Workers built their unity by letting the company and union leadership know clearly where they stood, taking on the jive lines fed out and even taking matters into their own hands, calling for a vote when the union official wouldn't.

After the meeting, the company pulled out all the stops, offering deals, pleading, making threats, even having a big boss come down and meet with workers in small groups, all to get the plan accepted. But the more they did, the more they were exposed. "In these struggles, the workers begin to throw off the foot of the employer from their necks, to raise their heads. And in raising their heads they are able to see farther and more clearly. The face of the enemy and the forces fighting him begin to come into sharper focus. This gives rise to vigorous discussion among the workers...Through all this the workers begin to see themselves as more than mere individuals, but as members of a class, locked in warfare with the opposing class of employers." (p. 29)

At the time of the massive layoffs, we discussed in the caucus how we would fight them. We said: "Let the bosses take the losses, we'll fight for our jobs!" We decided to take the issue of layoffs to the shops, to make it a political question, agitate to build consciousness and through this develop struggle (we weren't sure what).

One advanced worker wrote in big magic marker letters on a locker room wall, "We've got a right to work." All hell broke loose. There was intense discussion, with goons writing counter-crap and workers backing our line. Organized by the caucus, workers started putting stickers up with "Slow Down"; "No foremen working"; "They say layoff, we say organize and fight"; "Let the bosses bite the bullet"; "No outside contractors"; "Fight for every job"; etc.

Lines began to be drawn, with the backward attacking us as nigger commie bastards, the intermediate asking many honest questions, and the advanced looking for other ways to fight. We called it "graffiti warfare" because the goons would pull the stickers down, but they'd go back just as fast. And whenever we were bold in discussions about the slogans (of course avoiding the goons trying to red-bait and trap us), laying out the issues, whenever we did this there was sharp ideological struggle, eventually leading to the nature of the system, of class against class, and the need for revolution and a new system.

We put out a special leaflet dealing just with layoffs, and workers really dug it. (One guy said he took it home and his mother liked it!) We had *Slow Down* by Prairie Fire on the back, and guys were seen chanting the words. (This shows the strength of proletarian culture.) We clearly put it across that slowing down was one way to fight layoffs. One tractor operator read the leaflet and immediately cut his speed in half.

Our program in this leaflet consisted of raising demands (SUB for all, no foremen working, no outside contractors), and calling for people to go to the next union meeting to try to form an employed/unemployed committee (blocked by the local hack and our own inexperience). The single spark method could have been used in this newsletter by describing the struggles that were going on against job elimination, productivity drives, and speedup (mentioned earlier), and taking the graffiti warfare (which we had started) and

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Steel...

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using it as a spark to fan all throughout the mill.

Our failure to do this was based on a tendency to look at things plant-wide and make the major focus of struggle that within the union, trying to get the local to take action, instead of linking the broader issues to the day-to-day struggles being waged via the single spark method.

Day-to-Day Struggles

Through these struggles, we have begun to "win as much as can be won in the immediate battle and weaken the enemy and to raise the general level of consciousness and sense of organization of the struggling masses." We have much to learn about consolidating advanced workers, but some have come forward to fight consistently in the shops and to participate in broader political activities (such as May Day). And the caucus has definitely become a force which workers look towards. Our last leaflet was handed out at the gates and for the first time in such a handout, hundreds of workers stopped to take it. Responses included, "You've got to get this wider distribution," many took extra copies in with them, and one worker came off the leaflet to his first union meeting in ten years working at the mill!

Through all this we are learning how communists lead the working class in learning through its day-to-day struggles. We've seen the mass line be a force that workers take as their own and use to change reality. We more clearly see that the mass line must be used to mobilize the rank and file around a *fighting* program representing its interests.

Workers are looking for and demanding leadership—leadership which provides a concrete program of action and which helps take that action. And we've learned the necessity of walking on two legs: of bringing out issues like the ENA and Consent Decree and layoffs on a plant-wide basis and fighting plant-wide, while at the same time unfolding these struggles through the single spark method around the day-to-day battles being waged in the shops, either spontaneously or led by communists! Forward to the Party! Struggle for the Party! ■

Defining The Working Class

A lot of questions and confusion have grown up over the section of the draft programme on classes, especially the working class. The criticism here isn't about who is in the working class, but more about how the class defines itself.

The first two paragraphs are fine. But then the draft programme raises "productive labor" as some kind of key characteristic of the proletariat, and gets off the track.

What's the problem? First, it's a confusing distinction, and one that doesn't really make much difference in terms of the class struggle. What, for instance, is the difference between a typist employed by the government, one employed by a large merchandising firm, and one employed by Gulf Oil? Not very much at all in terms of social being, conditions, and the consciousness and kinds of struggle growing up out of that. But the draft programme gets all hung up in separating them on the basis of whether their wages are paid out of revenue, whether they create or just make possible the realization of surplus value, etc. No matter where the wages come from, the key thing is their conditions of life, which are basically the same.

Or take it from another angle. A worker in a small machine shop of eight or ten workers engages in productive labor—that is, creates surplus value—and is paid out of the value he creates. A postal worker at a large bulk mail sorting facility does not create surplus value, and is paid out of revenues. The draft programme as now written elevates this to a very important and significant point. But the really important and significant point is which worker is in a job where the socialization, need for unity, and sense of the collective power of the working class is more likely to come out.

It would be much better to use this section—which appears in the chapter of the draft programme on united front—to help people grasp *why* the proletariat *leads* the united front. The polemics in *Red Papers 4* bring this out real clearly, especially in the whole debate over "largeness of mind." Let me quote at length from *Red Papers 4*, since I think it does a good job of showing *why* "the backbone of the working class are the workers in large-scale enterprises, engaging in highly socialized work."

"By proletariat we mean, first and foremost, the workers in large-scale industry, who are concentrated in the factories of the monopoly capitalists. These workers must be developed as the leadership of the entire working class—which includes all those who own no means of production, who are forced to sell their labor power to live and whose condition of life is similar to that of the industrial proletariat. Many of this last group of workers, especially those whose work is highly socialized, will play an extremely important role in the revolutionary movement. Many of them already

are—the hospital workers are a very important example...

"The conditions of the proletariat and its historical experience as a class demonstrate the necessity of cooperation, of collective rather than individual struggle; and they also make clear the relations of class forces in society—who is the main enemy and who are the potential allies...

"In addition to its socialization, the proletariat, because of its relation to large-scale means of production, is more able than any other group in society—even more than other sections of the working class—to recognize the tremendous potential of the productive forces, once they can be liberated from the capitalist exploiters. These workers are best able to grasp the fact that revolution is not only a process of tearing down the old society—destroying the state machinery of the capitalist class and its control over the means of production—but of building the new society, based on the workers' collective ownership of the means of production and control of the state...

"The point is that in the experience of the working class lies the greatest material basis for revolutionary understanding and organization. Where else, but in the large factories are thousands of oppressed and exploited people—white and Third World, male and female—concentrated together?...And where but in factory life can the discipline necessary to carry through struggle be developed so thoroughly?"

We now know that some of these formulations are wrong—but the overall thrust is still correct, and represents the ideas that we want to crystallize in this section. In reading Mao's *Analysis of Classes In Chinese Society* the emphasis is on the conditions of production of the different classes, and the consciousness and forms of struggle that these give rise to. By focusing on the question of "productive labor"—which was fairly obscure to myself and other comrades before the draft programme came out—we don't focus on what's really important—how the different classes will line up in struggle and *especially* why and how the proletariat will lead. In fact, making it all hang on "productive labor" could even leave the door open to "new working class" crap—after all, engineers, computer programmers and even professional baseball players do "productive labor."

One final point—over two years ago I helped to lead a workers' study group, and in this group a debate arose over who would lead the revolution—the "brothers off the block," since they were angriest, or the industrial proletariat. We read and discussed this section of *Red Papers 4*, and the more advanced workers in the group used the ideas in it to combat and defeat the other line.

(Lastly, a related question on the classes section: what is the dividing line between non-monopoly bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie who own small shops? Amount of capital? Amount of workers employed? Please clarify.) ■

Focusing Struggle In UWOC Work

Explaining the single spark method, our organization's draft programme states: "To seize on every spark of struggle, fan and spread it as broadly as possible throughout the working class and among its allies. To build every possible struggle and build off it to launch new struggles. And through the course of this to fan every spark of consciousness, to identify and isolate the bourgeoisie and its agents, and unite all struggles against this enemy." (p. 30) But how do we do this? How do we implement this method in practice? The local UWOC chapter, both through its work in organizing against a utility rate hike and in its work organizing the Jobs or Income campaign, has gained some insights into the implementation of the single spark method.

In both of these campaigns—one against the energy freeze and the other against unemployment—we found that it was only when these "broad issues" were made real through concrete struggle against specific targets that the masses came forward to fight, and that therefore lessons could be learned. In other words, in raising these issues we found that it was when we "put a face on the enemy" that masses could be moved into action, into struggle. And it is only through struggle that the masses will learn about the nature of the system, and the need to smash it.

Fight the Energy Freeze—Stop the Rate Hike!

When the UWOC chapter launched a fight against a proposed 25% utility rate hike last fall, it raised the level of class-wide struggle in this small industrial town to its highest level in years. Although we have since summed up that it was incorrect for UWOC to relate to this fight as its major campaign for a several month period (more on this later), important lessons were learned during the course of the campaign.

When attempts had been made during the winter of '74 to expose what was going on around the energy freeze, we had been frustrated, to a large extent, in our attempts to mobilize the masses to fight what was going down. We put out pretty good propaganda around the issue, and distributed it widely—the gas lines were miles long, and issues of the local anti-imperialist paper sold like hotcakes—but the masses just didn't come forward. As the comrade put it in the first issue of "Forward to the Party! Struggle for the Party!" "...people got a few good ideas...but that's where it was left."

The fight against the rate hike provided a focus for the struggle around the energy freeze, and beyond just "energy related" attacks, the struggle was built as a symbol for the many attacks coming down on our standard of living. In fact, we found that limiting our agitational raps to running down this or that bit of dirt on the power company and its hanky-panky with the local politicians and business interests would make workers angry, but just didn't provide the spark that would swing them into action.

However, when we put the attack forward as a real glaring example of the attacks of the bourgeoisie on the working class in the deepening crisis; put it forward as a point at which we should turn and fight these attacks on our standard of living, workers came forward enthusiastically. Furthermore, we pointed out that this fight was just one part of a huge battle going on against the same system throughout the country and around the world, and the masses drew real strength from seeing that we were in fact part of a growing anti-imperialist workers' movement.

It was through this struggle that communists working on the committee against the rate hike were able to draw out revolutionary lessons: the role of the state, the depth of the crisis and the desperation of the bourgeoisie, and the growing strength of the working class—a strength that must be built on to achieve what we pointed to as the only way of ever ending these increasing attacks on our class: revolution led by the workers.

Of course, not all of the people who came forward during the fight grasped or agreed with what we were saying. But it was because these lessons were drawn from the concrete struggle that revolutionaries did, in fact, develop amongst the most advanced fighters, and why the committee as a whole could summarize at the winding down of the struggle, "...they didn't scare us, and they didn't fool us, and they aren't about to stop us. This fight is a part of a growing movement all over the country to turn this whole thing around. Through people getting organized against this increase, some real solid groundwork has been laid for building that movement here in this city!"

It was with the understanding of the need to parti-

cularize the broad demand—to "put a face on the enemy," that we went into the campaign for Jobs or Income Now!

A word should be said here about how we have summed up UWOC's involvement in the struggle against the rate increase. There is no question but that the work against the rate hike has moved the mass movement—and the work of communists within that movement—forward in this city. However, we have summed up that it was not correct for UWOC to submerge itself in the anti-rate hike committee.

The error was not primarily that UWOC didn't maintain its organizational identity, but, more importantly, that this struggle was not in any way seen as a part of the Jobs or Income campaign. This doesn't mean that the rate hike committee should have been building the fight to stop the rate hike as part of the movement of the unemployed—but UWOC should have been, and should have been relating it to our main demand for Jobs or Income at the same time.

As the draft programme points out, "The main demand of the unemployed today is 'Jobs or Income!' The crisis is the product of capitalism, and the capitalists, not the workers, must pay... Union jobs at union wages—and the same income for those without jobs—this is the uncompromising stand of the working class." (p. 32) We feel that all of the new Party's work around unemployment should be tied to this demand. All of our struggles against unemployment are strengthened by uniting them under this banner, and, because the demands in all of these struggles are aimed at the same enemy, it serves to further expose the bourgeoisie and make it the focus of the struggle.

We feel that in our work around the rate hike it was not correct for us to ignore what is the fundamental demand of the class around unemployment. And so, with the experience of the rate hike fight, and beginning to grasp the importance of rallying all of our struggles against unemployment under the banner of Jobs or

Income Now!, we launched our work around that demand.

Applying the lesson of the rate hike—concretizing the broad demand—is of particular importance in fighting unemployment. Because unemployment is an integral part of this rotten system, because workers do not spontaneously grasp the inevitability of revolution which will wipe out unemployment by wiping out its source, and because our rich history of struggle and victory has been hidden from us, an attitude has developed among many workers that this attack on our class is much like any other natural disaster—like earthquakes and floods. It's a disaster, many feel, and not much can be done about it. So we set about "putting a face"—a face that could be hit—"on the enemy."

"Left" and Right Errors

Not to do this would have been a "left" error. To run around demanding Jobs or Income without focusing that demand on particular targets would not draw workers into struggle. However, as we learned, building the struggle around one focus and emphasizing that aspect of the struggle to the exclusion of other aspects—especially demands on the government—led very easily to right errors.

That is, losing sight of using the particular focus as a spark, but rather relating to it as an end in itself, we could get into trying to tell the government how to make a particular program work; how to cut the pie more equitably. But, as the draft programme points out, "The working class has no interest in helping the capitalists figure out how to make an unworkable system 'work,' for its very working is based on the exploitation and misery of the working class." (p. 32) We don't want to be helping them cut up the pie—we want the whole damn thing, and we want them out of the kitchen. That's the direction our work should be heading in.

So with the lessons of the rate hike struggle, and with some grasp of both the right and "left" errors, our UWOC chapter began organizing for a march for Jobs or Income Now! We built for the march by building actions and doing agitation around particular aspects of the attack of unemployment on the working class. We staged an action demanding that the government back off from its threat to hike the food stamp prices. We staged a picket line at the local Manpower Planning Office (the outfit which is supposed to be making jobs out of federal money) to demand jobs from the

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A Question About Overtime Demand

Like all over the country, our industry has been hit hard by layoffs. In discussing how we should lead the fight against layoffs and to get everyone back to work, our group studied the draft programme and the first issue of the journal.

The journal sumup, "Build The Revolutionary Workers' Movement," was a big help. But there was a part that some of us disagreed with. The struggle that developed was good because it is both deepening and giving life to our understanding of how to build the struggle against unemployment and for building the revolutionary workers' movement. We hope our position may be a spark for struggle around the country.

In the next to last paragraph of page 4 of the first journal, it says: "Our first action was to put out a leaflet detailing our demands—No more overtime during layoffs and honor the seniority system in the layoffs." We are assuming that these demands were to the company.

Overtime benefits the capitalist class. As the real wages of the working class are driven down, the only alternative to militant struggles to defend the standard of living is for individual workers to work longer hours. During times of crisis with massive layoffs, forced overtime becomes an even more heavy club against the working class. While many of us are out the gate, others are forced to double over. We are forced in two ways—either by the contract, or by economic necessity.

As the draft programme says: "...the capitalists, especially in times of crisis, do everything they can to pit the employed and unemployed against each other..." (p. 32)

It is the job of communists to stop these divide and conquer schemes and to unite employed and unemployed in struggle against our common enemy. We feel that the demand "no more overtime during layoffs" doesn't do this. This demand implies that the workers cannot be won to seeing their interests as a class and cannot be won over to the refusal of overtime as a tactic to force the company to hire back. And if some workers cannot be won over to refuse overtime, then the only thing we can do is force the company from "giving" it. This demand tends to pit the unemployed, who need their jobs back, against those working, who may need to work overtime to make ends meet.

We are convinced that workers can be won to seeing their interests as a class, that they can be won over to voluntarily refuse overtime.

Our demand should be: *No Forced Overtime, at Any Time*. But it must be coupled with the demand, *A Decent, Livable Wage Without Overtime*. Mass refusal of overtime is a strong weapon in the hands of the working class in its fight against layoffs. But we must win the class over to this fight. And we most certainly can.

FORWARD TO THE PARTY!
STRUGGLE FOR THE PARTY! ■

UWOC...

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government.

We also united with state workers in their building for their strike, while at the same time organizing support for the strike among the unemployed. We put forward that—while the potential strike would objectively mean that we would not be getting our unemployment checks, our food stamps, or our welfare checks—our interest lay in supporting the state workers' demands, not siding with the government to crush the strike.

We went out to vets and students at local community colleges and vocational schools who were going to school either to pick up skills in hope of finding work, or, in the case of most veterans, going to school to collect benefits because there were no jobs.

In all of these cases we tied the struggles—the particular struggles—with the general demand of our class for Jobs or Income Now!, and pointed to the greater strength that all of our struggles would gain by uniting with other members of the class against unemployment. Furthermore, we pointed out that the key link between these struggles was the need of workers for Jobs or Income Now, and pointed to the importance of laying the burden of the crisis on the shoulders of the bosses.

A Success

The march was definitely a success and a real solid step in our building the movement of the unemployed here. Over 60 people took to the streets, we have drawn new workers into the struggle, and there is a growing awareness of and respect for the struggle and UWOC amongst the masses.

However, some important weaknesses have been summed up—the most important of these, we feel, are tied to our lack of a really firm grasp of the rate hike fight's lessons. That is—unlike the rate hike campaign—we had not developed the struggle around any one of the particular issues thoroughly enough. We had called actions, we staged picket lines, and we put out a good deal of literature. However, had we built a real campaign around any one of these particular issues (while of course not ignoring the other fronts of the struggle) rather than limiting ourselves to "one-shot deals," the workers who came forward would have been provided the basis from which revolutionary lessons could have been drawn more clearly.

As it was, we feel that our ties with the workers who did come forward during the campaign would be much stronger, and that their consciousness would definitely be at a higher level, had we built systematic struggle around any one of the aspects of the working class' fight against unemployment, drawing out the need for revolution while building concrete struggle for immediate gains.

Coming off the march, building on our gains while working to overcome errors, we are building a campaign for JOBS—NOT PROMISES! Initially, we did in fact fall into the right errors which we had recognized as a danger, but which we did not grasp when they stared us in the face—we directed the campaign *against* the CETA program, and got into telling the government how to make it work "like it should." But this was a temporary step back—we feel that we have grasped the error and are moving forward again.

We do feel that it is correct to build the Jobs or Income campaign in the particular, and we also feel that the demand for jobs is the primary aspect of the demand at this point here—the massive layoffs in this area are recent enough, and the extensions on unemployment compensation are adequate enough that income is not yet the overriding concern of the masses. People want work, and that is what we are focusing on.

Of course, we expose CETA—and any other phony program that the government comes up with—as either a band-aid or an outright attack. However, we don't mobilize the masses to pressure Congress (as the CLP does) to make their little schemes work better.

Our objectives in carrying out our central task are, as the draft programme states, "...to win as much as can be won in the immediate battle and weaken the enemy; to raise the general level of consciousness and sense of organization of the struggling masses and instill in them the revolutionary outlook of the proletariat; and to develop the most active and advanced in these struggles into communists, recruit them into the party and train them as revolutionary leaders." (p. 33) These objectives will not be fulfilled by dabbling in struggles—nor will they be achieved by sloganeering and talking a good fight.

"In carrying out its central task today, the Revolutionary Communist Party takes part in, learns from, and brings leadership to the struggles of the working class and its allies, unites all who can be united, consistently exposes the enemy and points to the final aim of overthrowing imperialism and building socialism." (p. 32) ■

Using the Slogan 'Jobs or Income'

"Unemployment is built into the capitalist system, and is an open sore revealing the fundamental sickness of the system—a sickness that is with it from its birth but becomes all the more malignant as it grows to old age.

"Even in the temporary periods of economic 'boom' capitalism cannot provide full employment." (p. 31) Every day that capitalism exists the working class faces the reality of unemployment. For all those who own nothing but their labor power unemployment is a daily threat. Thus it is "a crucial question for the working class in both its immediate battles and long-term struggle..." (p. 31)

The working class does not fight unemployment because it has largeness of mind and it fights all oppression. The working class fights unemployment because it is one of the most basic contradictions of wage-slavery. Unemployment is one of the most telling signs of the bankruptcy of capitalism and the necessity of socialist revolution.

This is important for us to understand. This is the lesson we are bringing to the working class. In this period of economic crisis many broad questions are raised—unemployment, capitalist rationalization, the bosses' attack on our standard of living. Communists bring forward the reality of socialism by uniting with the struggle of the workers against all attacks and in that struggle showing the nature of the system and the road forward.

Every struggle the workers wage as a class is in essence revolutionary. In every struggle, as communists we must bring this forward. The way we do this is by paying attention to the *specifics* of each fight and programmatically moving that forward.

The draft programme correctly states that the main demand of the unemployed today is "Jobs or Income," but it does not draw this out as to how this is put in practice. It does not give us a basis to sum up what has been correct and incorrect in our work up to this point.

We must sum up because an incorrect line has emerged in our work which will be disastrous is left unchecked. Specifically, a line has come forward which would raise the slogan "Jobs or Income" wherever jobs or income is involved.

In this area the incorrect line has brought forward the slogan "Jobs or Income" as the demand for the workers at a chain bakery which was closing, and as the demand against layoffs at the phone company. In the April 1975 issue of *Revolution* the comrades at International Harvester raised "Jobs or Income" as the slogan for the fight against a permanent plant shutdown.

These are serious errors that make us look very silly. If workers are facing layoffs or a plant closing and we say fight for jobs or income, what are we saying but—"well, this fight is lost, catch you on the unemployment line and we'll fight for jobs or income." Pretty lame.

As communists our role is to unite with the class and help lead the struggle forward. This line leads to defeat. Capitalist crisis is not planned by the monopolists and thus it cannot be routed by our struggle. However, victories can and have been won against layoffs and even shutdowns. When workers want to fight at a plant around these things it is to save their jobs—the ones they have—not for some jobs that don't now exist and certainly not for unemployment insurance. To raise jobs or income is to fail to give concrete leadership and to make a mockery of the real and important struggle for jobs or income.

Jobs or income is not a propaganda slogan. It does not sum up anything about unemployment or the system that causes it. It is an action slogan. It sums up the main demand rising from the unemployed. Jobs or income is not an abstract slogan. We aim to fight to win jobs now from industry or government and unemployment insurance for all periods of unemployment to cover the cost of living. This is our demand now, not sometime in the future. This both summarizes and focuses the movement of the unemployed.

But what does this slogan mean when we raise it in these other cases? Nothing. We have a job we want to save—so we say we want jobs or income. No—that could mean jobs with paycuts, part-timing, etc. In the case of layoffs it means no layoffs. In the case of plant closing it means either no layoffs—no shutdown or specific demands about severance pay, benefits, pensions, etc. that make it clear that if the bosses are going to leave us without jobs we are going to take every penny we can wring from them.

In this period of economic crisis our overall slogan is "We won't take the losses for the bosses—Fight, Don't Starve" and "Employed, Unemployed, Same Crisis, Same Fight." These agitational slogans point to the problem and our answer. Then we have specific demands—Jobs or Income, the slogan of the class arising from the unemployed, and No Layoffs, No Speedup, No Paycuts, etc., the slogans of the class arising from the employed.

To shove everything under the Jobs or Income demand is a right error. It is not to educate the masses and show that the class should be united because we face the same imperialist enemy and its economic crisis, and not because we have the same demand. And it leads to defeat in the fight against layoffs because it does not lend sharpness and clarity to the struggle but just makes a mush of things.

This does not mean that we do not take the fight for jobs or income to workers in the shops. Of course we do. Feb. 1975 *Revolution* has a good example of how we bring this campaign in Employed/Unemployed Committees and to the unions. Unemployment is the fight of the entire working class in its battle against wage slavery and for socialist revolution. This is what we bring to the workers. ■

Student Organizing In the New Period

From its formation, the RU has actively taken up the task of building a revolutionary student movement, correctly recognizing the contributions students can make to the fight of the proletariat—contributions that have been made in the U.S. and in revolutionary struggles throughout the world.

Given the rapidly developing new conditions—the formation of a single proletarian vanguard—a revolutionary communist party, the rising revolutionary workers' movement, along with the ever-deepening economic crisis of U.S. imperialism, it is now time to critically sum up and re-evaluate our work among students.

How can we best unite with students, build revolutionary struggle, and contribute to proletarian revolution? How can we best train young Marxist-Leninists who come out of the revolutionary struggles students wage into being the fighting representatives for the furthest interests of the working class?

This paper is written by a few comrades who have actively worked in building the struggle of students for quite a while. Through study and discussion of the draft programme, and summation of several years of student work, we have come to the conclusion that the revolutionary communist party must boldly lead the future struggles of youth and students, linking them up clearly with the fight of the proletariat.

A crucially important part of this task is the creation of an organization that will enable the proletariat to tap the store of energy and initiative that youth hold, and help the Party of the working class lead the growing struggles of youth and students. We have summed up that the present form of student organization that is the main area of the RU's student work—the RSB—a mass anti-imperialist student organization, does not meet the needs of the proletariat in terms of campus work at this time.

Young Communist League

While the RSB has certainly made contributions to revolutionary struggles, it cannot make any more advances forward. In fact, the continuation of the present form of the RSB can only be a brake on the proletariat. The road ahead lies with the Party launching a youth group—a Young Communist League—that takes up the struggles of youth and the overall major struggles of the day, and which, with its Party, develop the mass organizations needed to further these struggles. The Young Communist League (YCL) would unite youth wanting to apply Marxism-Leninism to the struggles of the people and sees the need for the leadership of the working class and its Party.

We recognize that work amongst youth is crucial and that a YCL in the future must be primarily based among working class youth. But presently, there is the basis for the Party to launch such an organization among students and start making significant advances in its work among this potentially strong ally of the working class.

This article will speak to the need for a YCL for the immediate student work of the Party. We are convinced that the road ahead demands the formation of a YCL and that this direction should be clearly stated in the programme of the Party. The formation of a YCL will not immediately abolish other problems which exist in student work, and it is critical to root them out. But it will be the basis to make real advances in the work.

The student movement of the '60s was one of the most important characteristics of the old period. It arose at a time when there was no party of the working class, when the struggle of the masses of Black people against the bourgeoisie was "the main force pushing ahead all other struggles against the capitalist rulers" and when the struggles of Third World countries, particularly Vietnam, against U. S. imperialism was the main contradiction in the world. Hundreds of thousands of students spontaneously rose up either as part of or in support of the Black liberation struggle and against the war of aggression in Vietnam.

Masses of students in all parts of the country participated in some sort of struggle against the capitalists—helping to expose to the masses of American people the rottenness of the system, and all the while gaining consciousness of the need for revolution. Students gave their "all" in this movement. They marched in the millions, closed down hundreds of campuses in the country, burned down ROTC buildings, defied the bullets, tear gas, and billy clubs of the ruling class.

Like all the recent battles launched by the Ameri-

can people, the student movement was severely weakened without the leadership of a genuine proletarian vanguard. The victories, defeats, and lessons of that period were not properly brought back to the masses of students, and the revolutionary struggles that were launched by the students were not linked up properly to the different struggles of the American people, particularly the working class, often making a principle of its independence from the proletariat—with ideas such as white workers were bought off.

The lack of a genuine Party, along with the tendencies of students and intellectuals to subjectivism, vacillation, etc. due to their material isolation from production, enabled a number of utopian "get rich quick schemes" to gain credence among progressive and revolutionary minded youth—from the ideas of "student power" to the concept of youth and students going the revolutionary route alone and being the vanguard force.

All of these factors helped contribute to a number of people becoming confused as to what were the effects of waging mass struggle after the storm of student protests in the late '60s had not brought the ruling class down. The student movement ebbed.

Of course, during the course of this, a number of people moved forward to Marxism-Leninism—making the leap to an understanding that it was proletarian ideology and the working class that was the vanguard that would lead the fight against imperialism to its successful conclusion. Many of these people left the campuses and went to the class—many of whom joined the RU—and in a relatively short period of time they came to see the importance of the student movement as part of the United Front with proletarian leadership.

Formation of RSB

In this context, the RU took up as one of its tasks rebuilding the student movement. We summed up the old student movement, trying to weed out a number of weaknesses that existed in it and to take what was best from it. Off of this we published the pamphlet "Build the Anti-Imperialist Student Movement," and we launched the Attica Brigade, and similar anti-imperialist organizations in other parts of the country.

Ultimately, most of these organizations merged at the founding convention of the RSB last year in Iowa City. The RSB was based on two loose and vague principles: 1) support for national liberation struggles abroad and 2) support for oppressed people at home.

But before we go deeply into the strengths and weaknesses of the Brigade as a form of organization, let's look at the basis of building the struggle of students as an ally of the proletariat.

Students are a part of youth. As a part of youth it is necessary to review the characteristics of youth and the particular character of students. Chairman Mao once said, "You young people are full of vitality and

at a stage of vigorous growth; you are like the sun at 8 or 9 in the morning. We put our hopes in you."

Historically youth have waged strong revolutionary struggles against capitalism. Young people see their whole lives before them as they start to gain responsibilities and enter society on their own. They want their lives to be productive and to make contributions to society. They are looking for a life with a purpose. They're innovative and enthusiastic and often quick to rebel against things they don't like.

As the draft programme states, "Imperialism is unable to offer them life with a purpose. Years in a factory or some other job making some capitalist richer, or devoting their life to raising a family and keeping house, fighting to stay ahead of debt and with nothing to offer their children except life in a system based on exploitation and oppression—this is the future the bourgeoisie offers the youth." (p. 48)

The proletariat applauds and wants to tap youth's innovativeness, rebelliousness and enthusiasm. At the same time, the vigor and rebelliousness of youth must be anchored by the maturity, experience, and materialism of the proletariat. "There is only one path that offers youth a genuine opportunity to put to use its enthusiasm, its innovativeness, its daring and determination to change the world—proletarian revolution. Here and only here will they genuinely find a life with a purpose." (p. 48) The Party must develop an organization that boldly takes up the struggle that youth wage, while showing the bright road forward to proletarian revolution.

Serving the Proletariat

Students, a part of youth, come from many different class backgrounds, principally the petty bourgeoisie. Many of them fit into the category of the intelligentsia—trained to serve the bourgeoisie, but if given proper leadership, can serve the proletariat. As the Chinese say, "Although they were not free to choose their class origin, they are certainly free to chart their own future."

Students go to many different kinds of schools which have different purposes for the ruling class. Schools provide the means of socializing young people into capitalism—promoting bourgeois ideology. Schools also train youth to take positions in society—all the way from lab technicians, physical therapists, and teachers, to lawyers, doctors, and businessmen.

While primarily attended by youth from the petty bourgeoisie struggling to maintain their position in a crumbling society, schools are also attended by millions of sons and daughters of the working class, from all nationalities. This has been particularly true in the last 10 years. These working class youth go to college in hopes that they will not have to suffer the same exploitation and misery their parents did. Their parents work hard and sacrifice to send them to school—and these youth have hopes of "making it," leaving their class.

Under increasingly hard attack from the capitalists, the working class kids and increasingly those of the petty bourgeoisie are having a harder and harder time affording education. This is especially true with larger cutbacks in financial aid combined with sharp tuition hikes. When these students graduate, many face unemployment. More than ever before, students feel they really have to grind down to their books and study hard. This is because they are trying to make a future, find a job, and have some security.

On the other hand, students see beyond the lies of

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the bourgeois educational system and see the rotteness of this system. They know that it's not only their education that's bankrupt, but the whole society. Lenin spoke of a similar situation among students back in 1902: "...the students...are beginning to understand the 'senselessness of the dream' of academic freedom amidst the gloom of enslavement shrouding the people."

Rise of Reformism

It is in this setting, students seeing that they are approaching a bankrupt society, that students can be a base for a number of different social movements. Already we have seen the rise of social democratic and militant reformism in a number of recent struggles around cutbacks and tuition hikes. At Brown U., Brandeis, and Harvard (all upper petty-bourgeois colleges), where some of the largest and sharpest struggles of the school year took place, involving thousands of students fighting tuition hikes and cutbacks of "Third World" programs—groups led the struggles with demands around student power or the re-ordering of priorities.

Also, seeing the time is ripe, fascist organizations are making their slimy pitch on the campuses. So far, they have made little headway, but they're getting out there—speaking at schools like Akron U., S.F. State, and U. of North Carolina, as well as attempting to leaflet and organize at high schools in a number of cities around the country.

In short, the bourgeoisie is starting to step up its moves on the campuses in an attempt to lead or direct a social movement that, whether consciously or not, will objectively serve its interests.

It is in this situation that the Party of the working class must dare to go onto the campuses, must develop a program of struggle that students will fight around and develop mass organizations to serve those struggles.

It is only the Party of the working class that can bring the enthusiasm and vigor of youth into full play. It is only the Party of the working class that can answer the questioning of youth about the whole of society with full, complete, and correct answers. And it is only the Party of the working class that can unite revolutionary-minded youth into a youth organization based on Marxism-Leninism; an organization that is loose enough to allow youth and students who are just beginning to take up the banner of the working class to join, and yet an organization that is disciplined enough to apply Marxism-Leninism to the pressing tasks of building struggle on the campuses.

Lenin notes that there are two tasks of communists on the campuses. "Firstly, spreading social democratic (communist) ideas among the students and combatting ideas, which, though called 'Socialist Revolutionary' have nothing in common with Revolutionary Socialism; and secondly, endeavoring to broaden every democratic student movement, the academic kind included, and make it more conscious and determined."

Only the open leadership of the new Party can do this, and the Party's youth group is an integral aid in this task, actively getting out among the students developing a fighting program and mass organizations; and while in the course of these battles, giving an all-rounded view of what it will take to get rid of this system of misery and exploitation, and actively seeking out and training new fighters for the proletariat.

Program of Struggle

To do this, the YCL must have a program of struggle which speaks to both the rising problems of youth and students and also develops them into fighters around the major struggles of the day. Out of the experience of the last few years of student work, we have come up with what can only be considered a beginning program of struggle that the Party and its youth group would boldly unite students around.

A program of struggle must be built around the attacks on students coming down because of the sharpening economic crisis. This is not an abstract question of "interest" in the economy—although the interest and curiosity certainly is there. Tuition hikes, cutbacks in financial aid and student programs and even the closing of whole colleges, especially Black colleges, are hitting students squarely and sharply. Spontaneous struggles have jumped off. The YCL must actively build this fight, uniting students in broad mass organizations, directing their fire at the capitalists and linking the struggle up with the working class.

Along with this, the YCL must begin to take up the question of unemployment among youth, and on the campuses, among graduating students as well as drop-outs. As students head toward graduation, they are faced with the prospect of unemployment. Two, four,

and more years spent gaining skills are wasted because there just isn't enough work.

This crisis faces all students, but the largest burden falls on working class students. Many are pushed back into the working class, and many face unemployment. Unemployment lays bare all the ugly and irrational features of capitalism. Properly led, these students can be strong allies of the proletariat. But without correct leadership, without the leadership of the proletariat and its Party, the masses of unemployed, disillusioned college graduates, can be a base for the fascists and the social democrats.

Also, the YCL must build struggle around opposition to imperialist war. Today, that concretely means education and struggle around the Mideast, exposing the reactionary character of Zionism, raising support for the Palestinian people, and opposing the super-powers' moves towards war. There must be battles waged against ROTC and campus war research. In the course of this struggle, the YCL must unite with the progressive sentiments of the masses of youth—"We won't fight in any rich man's war"—and turn that into "We'll fight all right—for the working class!"

Training Ground

Again the form of mass organization built by the YCL and its Party at any particular time depends on the needs of the struggle. The YCL itself is a training ground for activists who step forward in the course of the struggle, aspiring to join the fight of the working class. The YCL steels them in the course of struggle, helping them become thorough-going proletarian revolutionaries, and in time, bringing the best of them into the Party. This would have the effect of helping to correct some errors which have been made about recruiting students into the RU before they were ready to dedicate their whole lives to proletarian revolution and transform their class stand. The YCL must be an open enough organization to bring in youth who want to apply Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought to building mass struggle, but it must also have a good amount of discipline.

It is the proletariat, the only thoroughly revolutionary class, the only class which stands in opposition to all exploitation, which fights in the interests of the vast majority of people. "It (the Party of the working class) will best be able to establish the 'conveyor belts', the various kinds and forms of mass organizations that will link it with the mass struggles, and direct these struggles toward the unified goal of overthrowing imperialism." (RP6, p. 19)

It is only the Party of the working class and its youth group, which can, from a scientific outlook, best programmatically unite the masses of students, direct their fire at the capitalists and link it up with the overall fight for proletarian revolution. What better organization than the Party and its YCL can develop a program of struggle for students around cutbacks, tuition hikes, or in opposition to imperialist war?

Inadequacies of RSB

It is in this context—what is the best way to build the struggle among students as a component part of proletarian revolution—that we have to examine why the RSB is inadequate at this time.

Through the RSB, we were trying to add a few things to the best of SDS and carefully build a student movement and revolutionary organization in-

dependent of the leadership of the proletariat. The Brigade and not the Party was seen as the main organization to build and lead the struggles students launch, and "anti-imperialists," not communists, were to be its leadership. Thinking that masses of students were waiting, or wanting, to join a general revolutionary student organization, we launched the Brigade and other organizations like it with the call of "rebuilding the anti-imperialist student movement" on a "higher level" than before.

We understood, and tried from the very beginning, to overcome some of the weaknesses of the old student movement. We understood that the enemy, monopoly capitalism, had to be clearly identified—not some vague system with an evil foreign policy. We understood, and tried from the beginning, to build this student movement based on multinational unity. We understood that the student movement had to be a fighting movement, but with some analysis of how to build the fight. And we somewhat understood that communists, including our organization, had to play a leading role in building that movement.

What we did not understand was that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was now the sharpest struggle in society—affecting and determining all other struggles—including the student movement, and that the embryo of a revolutionary workers' movement was emerging. That the masses of students had a general understanding that students in no way change the world alone and that the broad masses of American people must carry out this task. And that the basis for a new Party of the working class was being laid.

And that this Party, while developing the overall leadership of the proletariat, also leads and unites all the struggles of the American people—while always bringing out the furthest interests of the working class. And that the struggles that students launch must openly have proletarian leadership, not some sort of vague or "independent" anti-imperialist leadership. "No, he is a stranger to the very idea that differing class interests are bound to be reflected in the political grouping too, that the students cannot be an exception to society as a whole, however unselfish, pure, idealistic, etc. they may be, and that the task of the socialist is not to gloss over this difference, but on the contrary to explain it as widely as possible and to embody it in a political organization." (Lenin, "On Tasks of Revolutionary Youth", Vol. 7, p. 53)

We continued on with building the "independent" student movement—with the Brigade and anti-imperialism the main vehicles to doing just that. Holding back proletarian leadership in our work among students (or anywhere) is a mistake at all times, but it becomes especially dangerous at a time when U.S. imperialism is falling into deeper economic problems—for as the petty bourgeoisie faces ruin it can fight against the source of its oppression, compromise with it or even be mobilized against the proletariat.

Watering Down Ideology

In its determination to build an independent student revolutionary organization and movement, the RSB waters down the ideology of proletarian revolution and blunts the sword of Marxism. It won't really give a scientific view of revolution, so it gives some half science. On the other hand, we have not wanted it to fall into errors of reformism, so we made sure

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that the Brigade directed its fire at the capitalist enemy as sharply as it could—squeezing it within the Brigade's rather uncomfortable principles of unity. This demanded a well-rounded and integrated view of imperialism to be a Brigade member—as work over the course of the school year varies from cutbacks, Indochina, Zionism to strike support. In fact, at this time, the RSB is made up of many hundreds of students, most of whom are dedicated revolutionaries, but it doesn't include masses of students beyond that.

The RSB is neither a scientific Marxist-Leninist organization nor is it a mass organization that involves masses of students in struggle. Instead, the RSB tries to combine the two into one, and fails at both. It puts forward some science, but not in an all-rounded and dialectical way. It programmatically unites with students, but the unity demands a well-developed understanding of the workings of imperialism, way above the general understanding of the masses of students. Thus the Brigade winds up uniting with students around a half scientific view of revolution, that pretends ignorance of the working class and Marxism-Leninism, while also being too high level an organization for the masses of students to be involved in.

No doubt this 2 into 1-ism of the Brigade was at least part of the reason for problems the Brigade had that we were never able to totally root out. Both in terms of how it went out and united students in struggle and the revolutionary ideas that it would bring out, study, and sum up. For in going out and developing struggle among students—whether around cutbacks, police repression, etc.—Brigade members often saw themselves as cadres of vague "anti-imperialist" ideology.

Some of the best examples of the problems of the Brigade's "independent" character came out whenever the Brigade tried to organize a study group among the students it was bringing into motion and struggle, something it never could do no matter how many times comrades summed them up. "Problems" developed because Brigade members wanted to study Marxism-Leninism and not Felix Greene's "The Enemy." The futility of trying to lead "independent" revolutionary study groups was probably best (or worst) shown by a Brigade study group of *Red Papers 5* once held. The members were not allowed to discuss the pages dealing with Stalin's formulations on the national question.

And, of course, because we saw the Brigade and anti-imperialism as the leadership of the student movement, and not proletarian leadership, the work of communists was hidden within the Brigade—and the masses of students learned nothing of Marxism-Leninism and the fact that it was communists who were the driving force in building struggles on the campuses. This also left the campuses wide open for phony communists to promote their hackneyed version of Marxism—like the Trots, revisionists, social democrats, etc.—because in reality, there was no one promoting real Marxism.

Significant Contributions

The way out is for the Party to develop a Young Communist League open to the revolutionary-minded students wanting to apply Marxism-Leninism to the struggles of the masses of people. And with the Party and its youth group developing a fighting program and mass organizations to unite students and unfold revolution.

Given our level of understanding when we took up building the Brigade, it was certainly correct to build it. And the Attica Brigade and the RSB made significant contributions to the revolutionary struggles of the American people. It built important struggles on the campuses—particularly during the Throw the Bum Out Campaign and in cutback struggles. It brought to hundreds of thousands of students revolutionary ideas, while leading struggles that involved tens of thousands of students against the capitalist enemy. And through the course of these struggles, many revolutionary-minded students "leaped" to Marxism-Leninism and the ideology of the proletariat. Finally, it has given us a strong basis to form a youth group of the Party on the campuses.

There is no social movement which is "independent" of class leadership. The proletariat and its Party must go out, build, and lead every battle, every movement. And it must do so openly and boldly. It must bring the answer of proletarian revolution to youth's quest for life with a purpose. It must actively show youth the way out of the capitalist mess. And that way is for youth to use its muscle, its powerful muscle, for the working class. Let's take the fetters off, and build a mass student and youth movement led by the proletariat, as an ally of the proletariat. On to the Party! On to the YCL! On to the new period! ■

A Rewrite Of 'Life Under Socialism'

In our discussion of the draft programme, we felt that the subsection "Life Under Socialism" (pp. 9-12), in the section "Socialism and Communism" (pp. 7-14), did not reflect the strong class stand of the draft programme as a whole. This shortcoming had the effect of weakening the entire section.

The criticism focused on two closely related errors. First, socialism tends to be portrayed as a static opposite of capitalism. In fact, as Chairman Mao Tsetung has pointed out, socialism has a great deal in common with capitalism, since its starting point is no more than the old capitalist society in its entirety. Socialism is a *transition period*, characterized not only by class struggle (which is dealt with on the ideological level in the subsection "The Struggle for Communist Society"), but also by the struggle with nature to constantly transform society and move it to a higher level.

Second, and more important, the section does not sufficiently reflect that it is the efforts of the working class and its allies that actually build socialism. "The masses have a potentially inexhaustible enthusiasm for socialism." To turn this potential into reality, we must avoid the tendency to present socialism as an abstract thing ("Socialism will...") and show the workers that it is precisely they who will build socialism by turning their dreams and aspirations into plans and their plans into reality.

Among the people who discussed this sub-section, two lines arose. One upheld the original version of the subsection as essentially fine. This line said that the whole section (pp.7-14) emphasized struggle and change enough, and that the task of "Life Under Socialism" was to present a *vision* of socialism. This line characterized itself as upholding "struggle-vision-struggle" and characterized our line as wanting the whole section to be "struggle-struggle-struggle."

We felt that this was a distortion and that what we were struggling for was in fact an improved vision that would show readers of the draft programme more clearly the *role* of the working class in the *process* of building socialism.

We decided that the best way to make this point was to submit a rewritten "Life Under Socialism" subsection. In doing this we have altered only that subsection and attempted not to include material from the preceding and following sections. We have stuck as closely as possible to the content of the original, changing only the order in which it is written, the presentation of the various aspects according to our criticisms, and a few minor unrelated points we felt were inexact or inaccurate in the original.

As a method of study, we suggest reading carefully the entire section of the draft programme "Socialism and Communism," checking the original "Life Under Socialism" subsection to evaluate the criticisms made of it. Then read the new version of the subsection below to evaluate whether shortcomings in the original have been rectified. We hope and are confident that our comrades will be able to come up with further criticisms and suggestions in the course of study, discussion and struggle.

The working class in making revolution keeps always in mind its final goal—to transform all of society, to wipe out all of the ulcers left over from capitalism, to create the community of workers. When this has been done, *communism*, classless society, will have been achieved, and humanity will enter a whole new stage of history. There will no longer be the need for the state, since there will no longer be any class to suppress, and the state will be replaced with common administration by all of society.

But the advance from capitalism to communism requires a long period of transition. This transition period is socialism, which is the first, and lower, stage of communism. This period begins with everything just as the bourgeoisie has left it in its death throes. The only difference from the capitalist system just overthrown is that now the oppressed and downtrodden are the masters. But this is all the difference that is required. The working class, with its allies, is free of the chains of capital and private ownership, free to rebuild society as it should be.

Capitalist society is built in the image of the cold-hearted, grasping parasites who rule it. Socialist society will be constructed by the proletariat in its own image—creative and cooperative. The power to create and the ability to cooperate will permit the working class to collectively plan, through its state, society's development. This will eliminate the anarchy of capitalism and

its crises.

Although socialism is not yet full communism, it is a tremendous advance over capitalism; it is the road to communism. The key to this transition period is the dictatorship of the proletariat which must be defended and strengthened by the working class.

Under socialism, there will be jobs for all. The reason for unemployment has never been that there is no work to be done! People need enough food, decent housing, new roads and transportation systems, better social services, good clothing and furniture, all the necessities of life. Everyone's labor is needed to produce these. And as the working class develops new machinery and scientific methods to expand output, workers will not be thrown into the streets. Instead they will be transferred to other jobs according to an overall plan, and gradually the length of the work day for all workers will be reduced.

Nor will working be the boring, grinding hell it is under capitalism. Workers need no longer slave endlessly to keep their heads above water—only to wind up enriching capital so it can further enslave the working class. Under socialism every drop of sweat will go to make a better life and a better future for the workers, their kids, and all of society. Knowing that they cannot work themselves or someone else out of a job, that their work is not filling the pockets of some moneybags, will let workers feel pride in their work without hindrance. This will be enhanced because workers will not be performing some isolated task—all workers will understand the whole production process of which they are a part and how the work they are doing fits into society as a whole.

With this knowledge, which is the summation of the direct experience of the working class in production, workers will be able themselves to organize production rationally and constantly improve it. Under capitalism workers hesitate to suggest changes in production. If an idea would cost the capitalists money, they'll ignore it. If they adopt it, it's only because it permits speedup or layoffs to increase their profits. Under socialism workers, who know the production processes best, will be free to revolutionize them.

Machines will no longer be weapons in the hands of the capitalists to grind down the working class, and workers will no longer be a mere extension of the machine, as they are under capitalism. Instead machines will become weapons in the hands of the working class in its own struggle to revolutionize society and conquer nature.

In fact, workers will redesign the old work places, and as soon as possible help plan and run new ones. These will be designed to give maximum output—but not at the expense of workers being injured or made sick, nor of precious materials, which themselves represent the labor of other workers, being turned to scrap by bad planning or speedup, nor of shoddy products designed to fall apart. Plants will

not pump poison into the air and water to save a few pennies of production costs.

In short, free of the fetters of capitalism, the proletariat will be inspired to unleash its vast knowledge in organizing and improving production. No longer will work be a miserable means to sustain existence—it will become a joy and enrichment of the lives of all.

These dramatic changes in the very purpose and nature of work under proletarian state power will make possible changes from the ground up in every part of life. One of the new government's first steps will be to free workers from the chains of debt that capitalist financial institutions have on them. Loans and credit for cars and other personal property, massive medical debt, mortgages and other housing debt will be cancelled.

Under capitalism housing constantly decays, since there is little profit in solid, careful construction and long-term maintenance. There are millions of skilled construction workers in this country and millions of others who would like to be trained. Under socialism, the first task of these workers will be to renovate all the houses that landlords, banks and government agencies have let run down.

But once everyone is decently housed, working people will continue the struggle to build a new society. New housing will be constructed as part of the overall blueprint of the working class for the future. Construction will no longer be at the mercy of land speculators, construction firms and corrupt zoning boards. Whole communities will be constructed so that homes are built near work places, with easy access to stores, clinics, nurseries and day care centers for children, schools, parks and recreational facilities. Under capitalism with its distorted development and decay, this seems like a dream, but it is a dream that working people can make into a plan, a plan they will make into a reality.

Another example of the changes socialism will mean for those who are building it is health care. Today any serious illness or injury is a tremendous blow to all but the richest families, rapidly throwing the family deep into debt. Working people, who produce society's great wealth, are left to die when their money runs out—it is cheaper for the capitalists to hire a new worker. Meanwhile wealthy bloodsuckers who produce nothing are given every attention—even transplants of the very organs of dead working people—to keep them going. Through it all the drug companies and hospitals make profits off people's suffering.

Under socialism, medicine will serve the working class and the masses, not capital. The emphasis will be on the prevention of both disease and accidents, and on rehabilitating victims of both so they can live socially productive lives. New medical workers will be drawn from the masses, and all medical workers, including doctors, will take their turns working in plants and other work places so they will know the health problems of the masses. Like all experts and specialists, they will be politically educated and supervised by the working class to keep foremost the principle that the lives of workers are the most valuable of all society's resources.

A crucial part of building the new life of socialism will be ending inequalities between nationalities. Special attention will be paid to overcoming the depressed conditions in the regions, areas and communities where capitalism has concentrated and subjugated minority nationalities. Discrimination in work and all

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areas of society will be wiped out. Unlike the capitalists, the proletariat has no interest in preserving national oppression and inequality. Under socialism, it will wipe them out as a key part of strengthening its rule continuing to revolutionize society and advancing to communism.

Education in any society serves the interests of the class that rules the society. Monopoly capitalism requires a working class generally able to read, write and figure to operate the bourgeoisie's machinery and handle its paperwork, so that is what its schools are geared to turn out. It also needs some experts, specialists and managers and trains these from the youth of the petit bourgeoisie. Only the children of the ruling class itself get a full opportunity to study the scientific and cultural accomplishments of society thus far. Under capitalism, therefore, education is a vital part of reproducing class society—making sure the children of workers are workers and the children of capitalists are capitalists.

The bourgeoisie also uses its educational system to instill in the masses its values and view of the world. Students are taught that history is made by the "brilliant ideas" and individual heroism of a handful of "geniuses," kings, politicians, generals, industrialists and other representatives of the exploiting classes throughout history. Children are urged to compete against each other and that "individual competition is what makes this country great." Reality is stood on its head, so that it seems that capital, not labor, is the source of all progress and that the workers live by the grace of the capitalists.

Under socialism, too, education will serve the interests of the class that holds state power—the proletariat. Education will be available to all, through schools and also workers' classes in every factory and community. At the same time, no special privileges will go to those who have been given particular training or skills, so they will not be set above the mass of laboring men and women.

Socialist education will set reality back on its feet, teaching that the laboring people have always been the backbone of society and the makers of history. It will promote cooperation in place of competition, and equality between nationalities, between countries and peoples, and between men and women, in place of the bourgeois garbage that one nation should be over another, that men are superior and women inferior, etc.

Young people will learn that knowledge comes from three main related areas: the struggle for production—to master nature and create an ever-improving life for society—the class struggle—to remove exploitation, exploiters and would be exploiters from the stage of history—and scientific experiment—to grasp the laws of nature. They will learn that history has been determined by the struggle of classes and how to determine the class outlook behind every idea. Education will be based on the scientific principle that all knowledge comes from summing up practice and that it is worthless unless it is used to guide further practice. Thus kids will not just be crammed full of facts in school, but will engage in productive labor and experimentation as part of their education. Veteran workers will help to educate school children and young workers, drawing on their own experience to build hatred of the old class society and determination to build a new classless one.

The bourgeoisie mystifies knowledge and learning—making fields like natural science, philosophy and economics seem complex and impossible to comprehend. But these are just ways of describing and summing up how nature and society work. Workers will study and understand them in this light, because knowledge in the hands of the working class is a tool that will change the world.

Thus, education is vital to building socialism and moving to classless society. New generations will be trained as communists, eager and able to build the future and to combat old and backward trends holding back progress. Socialist education will break down the differences between mental and manual labor, training all workers and particularly the youth to combine them.

Working people have always hated the way things are under capitalism and have always dreamed of and aspired to a better life. Many religions have held out the promise of such a better life—not here and now on this earth—but in some realm and time beyond man's ability to comprehend. Capitalism promotes religion as one way of controlling the masses—blaming the ills of class society on human sinfulness or "divine will," telling people to put their faith in some all-powerful god and threatening those who don't with hellfire and damnation. All this serves to hide the class roots of the oppression of the masses and particularly

that the only way to change things is to put faith in the masses of people.

Under socialism, the working class will protect freedom of religion. But it will also put an end to the robbery of the masses by "holy men"—whether the fat leeches who control big organized religions or the "miracle working preachers" who hustle in every community. The party of the working class will at the same time lead a consistent political and ideological struggle against the basis of religious belief. The working class will have no need to believe in made-up supernatural beings, because its scientific outlook teaches that the true causes of things lie in the living struggle of opposing forces in nature and society. There will always be things which are not yet understood, but there is nothing that cannot be known, whose laws cannot be grasped through practice, thought and experimentation. And once the laws governing it are known, anything in the universe can be harnessed and transformed by the masses of people in their own interests.

Culture is a term used to describe the manner in which people live, and more particularly the various ways in which they express to each other their ideas and aspirations. But in every class society, among every people, there are two very distinct cultures, that of the masses of people, especially the working class, and that of the ruling class. These two cultures exist in every nation because the bourgeoisie lives, thinks and acts differently from the masses.

The culture of the monopoly capitalists is so sterile and lifeless they are reduced to paying each other tens of thousands of dollars for pictures of soup cans. But they also use culture as they use education, to spread their corrupt and rotting values and outlook among the masses. They take the culture that the masses of people develop—the music, clothing, even the way people talk—and twist it to their own ends, profit and pushing their propaganda.

Through their mass media—newspapers, magazines, books, radio, television, recordings, movies, etc.—the ruling class pumps out backward and divisive ideas. They glorify lackeys like cops, and parasites whether big business tycoons or superfly pimps. They promote cynicism—"nothing will ever change"—and the belief that problems are basically personal—"it's your own fault." All of this is intended to deflect the people's anger away from the ruling class back onto themselves—hate people of another nationality, or the other sex, hate yourself, hate people in general, hate anything but the bourgeoisie.

Proletarian culture is the exact opposite of bourgeois culture. It takes all that is vibrant and alive from the culture of the masses and infuses it with the revolutionary stand and outlook of the proletariat. Because the proletariat is the main productive class and because it has the historic mission of advancing society to a qualitatively new stage, proletarian culture presents, in place of the glitter "glory" of capitalist promoted superstars, the true glory of working people in moving society forward. It points to the bright future. It shines a spotlight on the crimes of the bourgeoisie, illuminates the real reasons for the suffering of the people in present day society—capitalist exploitation—and portrays the joy of the working class in uniting to smash down the rule of capital and eliminate all exploiting classes. Proletarian culture is a great weapon for teaching and inspiration in the long, hard struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie.

The chains of capitalism bind culture, just as they

bind production itself. When these chains are broken then the culture of the working class will truly flourish and there will be no trace left of the pornography and glorified brutality the bourgeoisie surrounds the masses with today. Millions of working people have great abilities to act and draw and compose and write. Under socialism their creative powers will be unleashed and they will be given training to sharpen their skills.

People whose main work is in the field of culture will come forward from the masses and will continue to spend time working alongside other workers at their jobs to maintain the closest ties with the broad masses. This is necessary, for their job will be to express in its most developed form the culture of the workers themselves and to assist the masses in creating new things in the field of culture to reflect the other advances the working class is making and to inspire the masses to forge ahead on the path to communism.

This country is made up of people of many different nationalities, from all parts of the world. This provides a great potential wealth of culture. The attacks of the ruling class on the languages and cultures of minority nationalities will be no more, and the proletariat will devote great effort to assisting the development of those cultures and languages.

The proletariat and its socialist society will unlock this great treasure so that workers of all nationalities can learn from each other's cultures and, through many different forms, stress the common class bond and the common content of revolutionary struggle. This will make possible both great diversity and great unity, and will tremendously enrich society.

Like other aspects of culture, sports is big business under capitalism. Most people are reduced to "spectators" and decent facilities for the youth and working people as a whole are very few. Socialism will build sports as a mass activity and, not bound by the laws of private profit, will construct facilities for sports in all neighborhoods. And sports will promote the bonds between working people, above competition among them.

Strengthening the revolution in the field of culture is extremely important—culture will be a major battlefield between new socialist things and old, outdated remnants of capitalism. There will be individuals who seek a return to the old society—with themselves on top—and try to use culture to sneak their views across, disguised as socialist ideas. But the masses hate the old society and by mobilizing them to defend and develop proletarian culture, all such attempts to turn society off the road to communism will be thwarted.

Socialist society will wipe out the decadence of capitalism in all spheres. Prostitution, drug addiction, homosexuality and other practices which bourgeois society breeds and the bourgeoisie promotes to degrade and enslave the masses of people, will be abolished. The prostitutes, drug addicts, homosexuals and others who are caught up in these things will be re-educated to become productive members of society, with working class consciousness. The shame connected with these practices will be taken from the shoulders of these victims and the guilt will be placed where it belongs—on the bourgeoisie.

Capitalist society, which is based on the robbery of the working class by the bourgeoisie, breeds crime on all levels. The capitalists themselves are the greatest criminals and murderers of all time, and there is no way they can eliminate crime. Socialist society will eliminate crime, along with eliminating the criminal

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capitalist class.

Those who, in capitalist society, are forced into crime for survival, because they cannot find work—at least not at a living wage—will no longer have the need to do so. They, too, will be re-educated and will take their place in the ranks of the revolutionary working class. Those who have made crime their business and have built whole criminal syndicates, like the Mafia, will be ruthlessly punished. Their organizations will be smashed by the armed power of the working class.

All these thorough-going changes in society will be possible under socialism because, and only because, the laboring masses have the power, the knowledge and imagination, and the will to do them. None of this, however, will take place instantly or by magic, just because the monopoly capitalists have been overthrown.

To insure its success, the working class will have a variety of organizations to involve the masses of people in the process of ruling and remaking society. The revolutionary party of the working class will be the leading organized force within the government and every aspect of society, but other forms will be developed to involve the maximum number of non-party fighters.

The government will have responsibility for keeping social order—mainly keeping the old ruling class down—and handling relations with other nations, but its most important task will be planning and coordinating the development of the economy and society as a whole. It will draw up its plans based on reports sent up from the masses around the country—what they need, what their ideas are, what they can produce. The government will then come up with a broad plan of what can and must be done. This will be sent down to the local levels with guidelines for each industry and area. The masses in every field of endeavor will study and discuss it—Is this correct? Can we meet these guidelines and how? Can we improve it?

The masses will also select committees from among their numbers to supervise the implementation of their plans. There will be no high and mighty white shirt managers—those with such responsibilities will come from among the workers and spend much of their time in the actual work in the shop. Organizations like factory committees will exist not only in every work place, but also in every community. These organs of working class power will have the vital jobs of mobilizing the masses of people in carrying out socialist revolution, maintaining order, and seeing that the workers' specific needs are met. These mass organs will function in coordination with the government under the leadership of the proletarian party.

The working class will have a regular army—but unlike those of capitalist countries, there will be no reason to keep it separated from the masses of people

because it might be called on to attack them later. Instead army units will engage in productive labor alongside their class brothers and sisters. In fact, the army will only be the first line of defense for socialist America. Millions of working men and women will belong to armed militias, sharing with the army the task of protecting the proletarian power from subversion and aggression from the overthrown bourgeoisie and its agents within the country and the bourgeoisies of remaining capitalist countries.

The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, for all that it proclaims itself "democracy," means democracy only for a tiny handful of exploiters. The dictatorship of the proletariat openly proclaims that it is a dictatorship—but it is also democratic in a whole new way. For the first time the vast majority are not the ruled, but the rulers. Through participation in factory and neighborhood organizations and militias, through being tied directly into the up and down process of socialist planning, the masses learn to govern themselves, impelling them further down the road to communism where the state is no longer necessary at all.

The changes in society will bring about equally great changes in social relations, which will be based on cooperation, equality and mutual respect. In particular, these changes will strengthen and transform the family which is already a fighting unit in the battles of working people, both for day-to-day survival and to end forever exploitation and oppression.

The construction of socialism will put an end to capitalism's "generation gap." Young people will be taught to respect, not have contempt for, the work their parents do and the struggles they have been through. Under capitalism, contradictions arise because of the tendency of young people to ignore the barriers that capitalism places on changing things and the tendency of their elders to assume that struggle can only keep their heads above water, not fundamentally change things. Under socialism, the experience of older workers and the enthusiasm of youth will be harnessed together for greater driving force in accomplishing the tasks of the working class.

Equality between husband and wife will take the form of mutual support in contributing to the revolution and in raising new generations of fighters. This will be possible because the working class will smash the chains that bind women in the home, providing public laundries, inexpensive cafeterias, child care centers and other facilities near work places and homes.

Thus women—and men as well—will be freed up to take further part in production, enriching their lives and increasing the ability of the whole class to build socialism and communism. With children no longer a burden to their parents, as well as a joy, parents' relations with their kids are bound to be even closer. The right of divorce will remain, but as these new proletarian relations are fully developed in the family, and society as a whole is transformed, marriage will more and more be based on a voluntary union, free of economic compulsion, and combining genuine feelings of love with the joy of the proletariat in building a new world. ■

Learning Through Day-to-Day Struggle

"The working class learns through its day to day struggle." The above statement heads the section of the draft programme that deals with how the working class, which is primarily engaged in struggle against individual employers, begins through the course of struggle to confront the state and learns through its own experience who the enemy is and what their historical mission is.

A few years ago a few cadres were involved in an organizing drive at a hospital. All of us had previously been students and were accustomed to the discussion of "ideas"—many times completely abstracted from any social practice. When we first engaged in working class organizing we carried much of this baggage with us. We thought we could organize the working class through "rap sessions." We essentially thought we could cultivate an understanding of the nature of the imperialist system and Marxism-Leninism completely divorced from struggle.

We would sit down with workers after work or at lunch and rap to people about imperialism, capitalism and "the five spearheads of struggle." There is nothing wrong with rapping with people about political questions; in fact it is *one* of the essential tasks we have to do in the course of the struggle. But we incorrectly raised "rap sessions" to a strategy to organize the working class.

This stands the real world on its head, putting consciousness before being, and completely negates that the material base for the working class' broad world view and grasp of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought is their contact with production and daily antagonism and struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Holding Back Struggle

Of course our upside down approach led us not only to tail the spontaneous struggles but actually to objectively hold back the mass struggle. We felt that we could not engage in the spontaneous struggles that were jumping off in our place until we had a "core" of people who were united around "higher level ideas." We discouraged workers from engaging in struggle until we had "gotten our heads together."

Completely divorced from struggle, our discussions of socialism and Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought became nothing more than abstractions and the workers could see no reason to believe our "idea" anymore than any other "idea." At best, we gave a few workers a petty bourgeois understanding of socialism—a "better" idea of a system (utopian as all hell).

In the end we had nothing more than a few contacts with a shallow understanding of a few political points. But our *substituting* rap sessions, exhortations and discussions for mass struggle would never lead to revolution. We called this method "one to one" organizing at that time—but organizing the whole working class one by one like a horde of preachers armed with "The Faith" cuts the heart out of Marxism-Leninism (which was born out of class struggle and is a guide to action) and in the end objectively holds back the struggle.

Conditions in our struggle forced us to mobilize our contacts into an organizing committee. Out of the original contacts who formed our committee's first meeting only one third stayed with the committee through the organizing drive—but a good number of new, hard fighting workers came forward *in the course of struggle* to join and help lead the struggle. These workers for the most part were the truly active workers who were respected by everyone and led the drive to victory.

In the course of the struggle people learn who their friends and who their enemies are and why revolution and not reforms is the answer. It is our job, as the advanced detachment of the class, to help focus the blow of spontaneous struggles jumping off. It is our task to clearly and correctly sum up the political lessons being learned through these struggles in order to raise the level of struggle to a conscious struggle against the bourgeoisie and for the seizure of state power. If we turn our backs on the struggles of the masses, and not demonstrate how Marxism-Leninism is a guide to working class struggle for emancipation, the workers will tell us to "get lost" and pay no attention to our abstract political summation.

A couple of years later we came face to face with the same error, only this time it was cloaked in a super-left cover. In the process of trying to build an

independent political organization of hospital workers, the same struggle fell out. BWC and PRRWO put out the position that "all trade union struggle was economist and spontaneous." They put forward that the emerging hospital workers' organization should not "bow to spontaneity" but instead concentrate its efforts on establishing "core groups" in each individual hospital. That each "core group's" main task would be to study Marxism-Leninism.

At the time this struggle was being waged within the hospital workers' organization, the largest strike in our industry in U.S. history jumped off. Thirty-five thousand workers from nearly 50 different work places had forced the 1199 (Drug and Hospital Workers Union, known as 1199) "progressive" union officials to call a strike. This was a significant strike, not only because of its size, but because it was the first strike in the country explicitly called to fight the COLC (Cost of Living Council) and pitting the workers not just against an individual employer but the state apparatus right from jump street.

The workers fought militantly from the very first day. While the "progressive" union head had breakfast with the bourgeoisie, the workers forced the bosses to use helicopters to bring in scabs and supplies. The 1199 officials talked tough but worked double time to undercut the workers' strength, ever helping the police break through picket lines.

Workers' militance and determination was short-lived as it was attacked from every side first by the bourgeoisie and its state agencies and then stabbed in the back by the union hacks. It was clear that our role should have been to mobilize the workers' rank and file strength and build unity with other class organizations (this struggle was a spearhead for the whole class against the COLC) and community organizations.

The emerging workers' organization would have filled a vacuum of leadership and in the course of the struggle would have drawn many active workers to our ranks and would have been able to take up the struggle both within the union (to make it a fighting instrument of this struggle) and to take up the struggle independently of the union apparatus when the officials paralyzed it with their bureaucracy.

Paralyzing the Organization

In the course of this struggle the imperialist system's monstrous face was exposed—for example, the role of the state, the system's responsibility for the economic crisis, the fact that health care under capitalism is based on profit, not on people's needs, and the real nature of trade unions and the particular social democratic treachery of the 1199 officials.

But the PRRWO-BWC dogmatists made sure that this would not happen by successfully paralyzing the hospital organization. By raising the banner of dogmatism they objectively aided the bourgeoisie in sabotaging the mass struggle.

Throughout the struggle all PRRWO did was to join the picket lines in order to drag people off them into study groups. They confused people and spread cynicism by focusing all of their attacks on the union officials. They essentially chastized the trade union officials for not being good "Marxist-Leninists," which they had never intended to be. Instead of the hospital organization becoming a key force in giving leadership to the mass struggle, it was reduced to a small sect yapping at the heels of the hacks.

"Strikes," as Lenin states, "are schools of warfare." We could have revealed many political lessons around the struggles the masses had already begun to wage. But no, our BWC-PRRWO dogmatists did not want to lower themselves to such a "spontaneous" uprising. Unfortunately, our dogmatic friends read Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought but cut the heart out of it. "As Lenin, and life itself, teaches us, it is indispensable for the masses to become convinced through their own practical experience." (6th Party Congress, Enver Hoxha) In our earlier struggles we had made the error of belittling the role of the conscious element and bowing to spontaneity.

The draft programme points out: "Each battle where the workers begin to exercise their power in this way, not only brings a sense of strength and common cause...The workers begin to throw the foot of the employer from their necks, to raise their heads. And in raising their heads they are able to see farther and more clearly...This gives rise to vigorous discussion among the workers not only about every question of the immediate

struggle but also about the events throughout society and the world." (p. 29)

In our union drive, which took place a few years ago, once thrown into the middle of the spontaneous class struggle raging around us we tailed it. We submerged our politics and cleared the way for the union hacks.

We learned quickly that in each battle workers wage, it "brings a sense of strength and common cause." We were engaged in countless actions, sometimes two and three times a week. Each concession that the workers won sparked further struggle. Workers who had been forced to suffer countless abuses and a subsistence living standard were rising up and flexing their muscles.

But this is nothing new for workers, their lives truly are made up of constant class struggle and class antagonism but we "radicalized petty bourgeoisie" engaged in this struggle were hypnotized by it. While tactically leading it to many "successes," we reduced it to a fight for concessions. This took the form of seeing the struggle in "stages."

So as not to "confuse" the workers during the union drive or risk "turning them off" to trade unionism, we became trade unionists in the truest sense of the word. The social democrats were not in contradiction with our line "so long as the fight for concessions is not conducted as a by-product of the fight to overthrow capitalism."

We felt that first we'd win people to trade unionism (actually portraying it as the savior and solution to all our problems—100% support a la OL) and then maybe we'd win people to anti-imperialism, and then we'd...and on. But the real world does not move in such mechanical ways. This stagist view denied first that workers spontaneously come to trade unionist consciousness. It also completely negated that there is uneven development in the working class and put forward the exact opposite of our original error—that experience did not have to be summed up and brought to a rational level.

Stagist View

With our line we led the workers into the waiting jaws of the trade union traitors. Instead of seeing how the spontaneous struggle was the basis for workers summing up the nature of the enemy, the state, and that it would give "rise to vigorous discussion among the workers not only about every immediate struggle but also about events throughout society and the world," we reduced everything to our stagist view and focused all of our energy on the trade union drive.

This enabled the hacks to reduce the struggle to one merely for "a few more quarters to jingle in our pockets," which is how one of the "progressive" leaders of 1199 put it out there. Instead of engaging in the drive as the best way to build the class struggle, we dragged everything down to militant trade unionism. Although there were many spontaneous and militant struggles we engaged in and helped agitate, we did nothing to help the workers see the connection between their particular struggles and all others directed against the enemy. Our trade unionist politics hid the truth from the people—that all of our problems come from our common enemy, imperialism, which is the source of all oppression and exploitation.

For example, this error came out clearly once when after countless actions the workers, with our leadership, decided to take over the hospital cafeteria and stage a sit-in to win a particular demand. The bosses summoned the police who, armed with an injunction, threatened to arrest the leaders of the struggle. With that threat, a veteran woman laundry worker rose up in the back of the room and shouted to the pigs, "If one of them goes, all of us go!"

Countless actions in the previous weeks had brought the workers in the hospital "a sense of strength and common cause." But our role, as the workers began "to throw off the foot of the employer from their necks...and raise their heads..." should have been to aid them in summing up that struggle and connecting and linking it to the overall struggle against the bourgeoisie and the imperialist system.

In this action 137 workers were arrested. It took the police two trips, with every paddy wagon they had, to take all of us in. The workers were more infuriated than ever and the face of the enemy and who the state apparatus serves was right out there. But the hacks were not going to let this get out of hand if they could help it. They refused to sum up the struggle or even call a meeting to plan further action—in fact, true to form, they did everything possible to cool the struggle out.

Instead of us summing up the struggle independently through our own agitation or calling a rank and file meeting—we limited the whole struggle to infighting with the hacks over calling a union meeting. With no independent agitation or organization, we were playing in the hacks own backyard and when we confronted them they'd just threaten to "take their ball home."

We made other similar errors. As our struggle jumped off it gave rise to "vigorous discussion not only about

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Learning...

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every question of the immediate struggle but also about the events throughout society and the world." As our union struggle was being waged, the Vietnam war was raging on. Instead of us exposing the nature of the imperialist system around the war as well as other questions and drawing out the links between the struggles, connecting all battles against the common enemy, we limited everything to the trade union struggle.

At the same time, a young Black child had been murdered by the cops. A whole community struggle against police repression was being waged in the community surrounding the hospital. But we drew out no links and essentially ignored everything but the trade union struggle. From our stagist (Kautskyite) view, we felt the workers (especially white workers) had a stake in the imperialist system, that they in some way benefited by it and therefore had to be organized around their narrowest economic interests.

Struggle for economic concessions is just one form of struggle the working class engages in. But the class sees itself as a class in its struggle against all forms of oppression and in relation to other classes and their positions. "Indeed, how can we speak of the 'political education' of the workers, if one does not recognize the possibility of conducting political agitation and political struggle? Surely, there is not need to prove to Social Democrats [communists] that there can be no political education except through political struggle and action. Surely, it cannot be imagined that (you) can politically educate the masses of workers if they are kept away from political activity and political struggle." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 288)

In the January issue of *Revolution*, it sums up the danger of the error we made: "If the spontaneous tendency towards Kautskyism is not struggled against, not only in its more obvious forms, such as the CP (USA), and increasingly the OL, but also in its less blatant forms within the ranks of genuine communists, we will hand the leadership of the mass movement to the bourgeoisie and its social democratic front men and lackeys. We will miss the opportunity to develop the struggle and raise revolutionary consciousness among ever broader sections of the working class and people, and will contribute to demoralization and setbacks among the masses and in the ranks of revolutionaries, including in the newly formed party."

Social Democrats

With our "stagist" line we essentially tailed the hacks and handed the leadership over to the 1199 social democrats. They constantly "spread illusions among the people that the contradictions of capitalism can be somehow smoothed over..." They would put forward liberal politicians as "saviors," "Kennedys," "McGoverns," etc., parading them in front of the workers while taking swipes at the so-called "reactionary politicians" like Nixon and Ford.

This is the service the social democrats perform for the bourgeoisie. Propping up one part of the bourgeoisie and trying to cut the revolutionary heart from the workers' struggles. "American democracy" and agencies of the state are not exposed as serving the bourgeoisie but as "impartial." Things are explained in terms of "good and evil," that some capitalists are "greedy" or some politicians are corrupt, or the Vietnam war was "a tragic mistake that a few reactionaries got us into."

We could go on and on. But in none of 1199's positions do they challenge the system that causes this oppression or exploitation—in fact, they do their damndest to obscure reality. But this is the essential nature of trade unions. Yes, they fight for concessions but not as a by-product of the fight to overthrow capitalism. In fact, 1199 officials openly state that their main aim is to get a "bigger piece of the pie" and take up other questions for pragmatic reasons (political favors) or for "moralistic" reasons.

In recent years 1199 has become more and more entrenched in the camp of the bourgeoisie and finds it much more difficult to cover its actions with its "progressive" cover. As their treasury, pension and benefit funds grow and their investments in housing projects and real estate grow, their conscious interests become more unified with that of the bourgeoisie and the imperialist system. Where, originally, they gained their militant reputation in the course of hard-won strikes, they now resort to arbitration settlements at the drop of a hat.

As it states in the draft programme, "Today, in its daily battles the working class comes up against both the capitalists and their henchmen in the unions—a two-headed monster backed up by the various arms of the bourgeois state. How to deal with this is

in the U.S." (p. 30)

Our past practice bears out that we must mobilize the workers, like it says in the draft, "to take matters into their own hands and wage a blow for blow struggle against the enemy, inside and outside the unions." (p. 30)

All of the struggles we engage in, whether economic or political, serve as the basis for strengthening the development of class struggle against the capitalist system. If this is not our view, and each struggle is seen as complete in itself, there will be nothing revolutionary about it. As the draft programme states, "So long as the bourgeoisie has state power it will continue to attack and attempt to corrupt every gain by the working class—and it will sooner or later succeed... So long as the fight for concessions is not conducted as a by-product of the fight to overthrow capitalism." (p. 29)

Hard To Respond

In our earlier errors we had built a caucus-type of organization which essentially was based on "moving the trade unions to the left." Because this caucus by its very nature was mired in trade union in-fighting with the officials over every question, when other struggles came up outside the union... was always hard for the caucus to respond.

Now we have an independent political organization and newsletter in our shop that has been actively involved not only in our recent contract struggle, but also in the campaigns against police repression and defense of the foreign born and recently taking up building for May Day.

During the recent contract struggle we struggled to make our local militantly take up preparations for a strike and take up the mass demands. We were successful in mobilizing the masses of workers to jam the union officials into accepting most of our demands. When they stalled on making preparations for battle we had the organizational ability to mobilize the rank and file independently to take up the fight.

When the contract was finally sabotaged and the officials aided the bosses in throwing it into arbitration, we didn't stand on the side. We mobilized the rank and file and took actions against harassment and exposed the nature of arbitration and the whole role of the state apparatus.

The arbitrator, seeing that the workers were ready to move if their demands weren't met, was forced to give in to all but one of our demands and "apologized" to the bosses in the agreement by stating that he had to give us most of our demands "or a constant melee would have ensued!"

Besides actively taking up the campaigns of the

class, we recently took up the struggle against understaffing and attrition. The union officials refused to act, saying it was "management's rights." So we mobilized the workers independently and after some struggle won four jobs!

If we had reduced this struggle to a struggle for control of the union, and not mobilizing the rank and file, we would have won nothing and only helped breed cynicism.

Also, from our leadership in these struggles and the fighting organization these workers' groups provide, workers are drawn into struggle. Many of these workers come into these struggles at a very low level of understanding, many times agreeing with only one particular struggle the group is helping to lead. But through the course of struggle many of these active workers, through the help of communists, are able to make connections and link up their struggles with other struggles against oppression and exploitation.

An Example

One example in our struggle. In our contract fight a young white guy who was fed up with the hacks' "stall tactics" came forward and joined us in the struggle. This gave us an opportunity to wage struggle on many fronts—one of which was the national question. In early discussions it was obvious that the bourgeoisie's lies had really confused him and he was particularly backward on this question. But through the course of the struggle, with workers of all nationalities struggling for their common interests and with cadres discussing this question in depth with him, he has moved forward on the question.

When the police repression campaign work got into full swing a cadre was reluctant to approach this young guy about taking out a petition around the question—especially since it raised the question of special oppression of Blacks and Latins. When he was finally approached he took the petition, read it and had his whole floor sign it!

These organizations are fighting organizations and their program of action attracts many workers while aiding the struggle. It is the role of the communists through the course of these struggles to sum up and connect each thread of every battle and link them—constantly pointing out and focusing the blows against the imperialist enemy.

These organizations are valuable instruments in the class struggle not only in aiding our day-to-day battles or our struggles to make our trade unions fighting organizations, but in focusing all the workers' struggles against the source of oppression and exploitation in a revolutionary way. ■

Class Stand Is Shown in Practice

The Boston busing article in the first journal concentrates mainly on the question of "class stand." But while it criticizes numerous times when we didn't see this or that clearly, it doesn't get to the root of the question of class stand.

Anyone can (and many do) say "class stand, class stand, I stand with the working class," but the question in the real world is who participates in the struggles of the working class and concretely analyzes concrete conditions, applies the science of Marxism-Leninism, puts forward a program which correctly identifies the enemy and the way forward and allows the masses to "break through the middle and run for the touch-down."

The article mainly makes points about the ideological struggles between ourselves and this or that opportunist. It first sums up ROAR and the BSC, then the NAACP and the Black bourgeoisie and ourselves. In the middle we are treated to a paragraph about parents in Hyde Park. At the end of the lengthy analysis of each group of opportunists we are reassured that they were unable to achieve a base.

It correctly shows how the class interests and view of these forces lead to their isolation from the workers and is indeed reassuring. But what role are we playing in order to best enable the masses to come forward, to win victories? Otherwise, all we and the masses are left to conclude is that the Boston busing struggle is a battle between two sets of opportunists, all trying to build a base and raise their ideas.

Making this the main direction is a serious error. In our shop work it has led at times to making the point the ideological struggle between ourselves and the boss, or ourselves and the union hacks (we rely on the masses, they don't); and not on the actual struggle we are engaged in, and our programmatic differences.

In party building it would lead us to take the line of the dogmatists (as the article tends to do) by making the purpose of a party our own self-enrichment rather than to better organize the workers' fight. What this represents is turning upside down the relation of thinking to being and putting thinking first.

Floundering

From the first we correctly identified the busing plan as an attack by the bourgeoisie. From there we floundered: sometimes we thought it was an attack on white workers, sometimes on the Black people, sometimes the whole class. But we didn't see that all this turmoil which was going on had to have a base in the conditions that people faced, which was not "white racism" OR "narrow nationalism" but that people wanted education, wanted their children not to have to live like they had, and saw education as a way "out"—both Black and white. We repeatedly affirmed it was an attack on the class in almost everything we wrote—but the key was to come up with some program, and put that forward.

Instead, in the *Mass Worker*, in parts of one article in *Revolution*, and at public forums we basically put forward that the program was to fight for socialism. (By this, we don't mean saying fight for the whole pie, not for crumbs, but not putting forth any way to begin to do this.) We half-heartedly put forward community control, or maybe magnet schools (good schools that would attract people of all nationalities to them), but nothing we really wanted people to direct the struggle for.

So we flipped between trying to win over people from Southie to "it isn't really Black people, it's the bourgeoisie," to trying to win over Blacks—"it isn't really white workers, it's the bourgeoisie that's really racist."

Without a program which we put forward from jump street we were faced with the situation which the journal article itself talks about—ROAR was the only group that came forward to mobilize around something people could see was an attack. From what we understand, the parents committee for decent education (Committee for Decent Education) never coalesced, or sort of fell apart, because a program wasn't out there to fight around.

Why is this point so important? Because a program (based on the needs of the masses, etc.) is a tool to release the initiative of the masses, which is the task. The article instead ends with the conclusion, "we are releasing the initiative of the communists." But this is hardly the point! Again, we are coming from the point of view of our ideas (or at most the general

"ideas" of society) and not the struggles of the class and how to participate and learn from these.

In fact, the last word we hear on program is that we are now taking some slogans out. The slogans are all good, and do reflect a good understanding of the situation, but slogans must represent more than themselves. For example, it is not enough to say Jobs Or Income, or Fight, Don't Starve—there has to be a UWOC, Employed/Unemployed Committees, workers' organizations, a communist party, etc., to show what these slogans stand for.

Learning

This brings up the question of *how* in fact do communists learn. The journal article correctly says, quoting the draft programme, that the "workers learn in the course of...struggle." But communists also learn that way! And all the errors we talk about in the journal article (looking over our shoulders at the "roar of the old movement," or vacillating and uniting with the NAACP) would have been harder to fall into if we had consciously practiced the mass line.

In our area (and we would suppose all over the country) there has been a deepening of our understanding of this—based, of course, on time and on struggle. Sometimes comrades thought it was mirroring what the masses were saying ("the police are never there when you need them"), but even when people correctly understood it was summing up the scattered and unsystematic ideas, putting them back out in a systematized way (a program), many times people thought you just put them out, and didn't understand it also meant persevering till the masses grasp them on their own.

This is another key thing we failed to do in the Boston busing struggle. Even with the limited program we

could have had we didn't consistently persevere in putting this out and thus learn *in the course of the struggle* how to deepen and expand this program, make it more closely conform to reality. Of course we shouldn't have held back until we felt we had the perfect, fullest, finest, most proletarian program in the world. But we had to, once we had summed up to the best of our ability the way forward, consistently go out, attempt to win people to this, both in South Boston and elsewhere.

The last point is that the journal article mentions Bundism, but doesn't go into this deeply enough. The Boston busing plan is an attack on the whole class—it is an attack on Black as well as white. It involves national oppression as well as a general attack on the standard of living of the whole class. It is, in fact, an issue where the thousand threads that link the national and class struggle become clearer. To build the struggle, consciousness, and revolutionary unity of the proletariat, and its leadership of the broad anti-imperialist struggle, it is necessary for the communists, for the whole class, to take up the issue of national oppression, and to do this we must put forward demands, otherwise it is all just a question, again, of moralism and "ideas."

Concrete Analysis

We feel these points are important to raise. The article in the first journal quotes several paragraphs from the draft programme. But we feel it really misunderstands and negates the essence of the draft programme, which is that the programme of the proletariat's party proceeds from the real needs and struggles of the working class, from concrete analysis of concrete conditions, and not from our subjective desires, or *our* questions and needs to make ourselves more knowledgeable.

If we don't firmly grasp this, our errors—failing to grasp the centrality of the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, denying the exploitation and oppression of the working class, Bundism, failing to persevere, etc.—will not be corrected, and the struggle for the party will not become a real ideological, political and organizational leap forward, deepening our ties with the masses and leading the struggle forward to victory. ■