

## INSPIRED PROPHETS AND IGNORANT ASSES

To address the working man without a strictly scientific idea and a positive doctrine is to engage in an empty and dishonest preaching game, which assumes an inspired prophet on the one hand, and nothing but asses listening to him with gaping mouths on the other... Ignorance has never yet helped anyone.

K. Marx

In September of 1973 the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC) was forced to expel two of its former members for consistently and incorrigibly advocating an opportunist line in our organization. We decided upon this course of action only after devoting fully eighteen months of our organization's attention in trying to win over these individuals. Some twenty meetings, two study programs, and many special programs were established precisely with this goal in mind. When it became clear to us that these things would be of no avail, we reluctantly decided that we had no other course but to expel them.

The actual expulsion was not carried out hastily. A great deal of time was spent in weighing the advantages and disadvantages of such a course of action. On the one hand these individuals were dedicated, serious people who were willing to take on difficult tasks for the organization. It was, of course, possible that we would eventually be able to win them over. On the other hand, during their entire presence in our organization these individuals consistently opposed every attempt to advance and consolidate the PWOC. Every step forward that the PWOC made in the 1½ years of their membership had to be made by stepping over them. The disruptive and harmful effects of such actions should be obvious. For if there is one thing that the proletarian movement demands in order to advance, it is unity! The weight, therefore, lay solidly on the side of the expulsion.

Nevertheless, as we have said, it was not an act that we carried out without reluctance - reluctance which stemmed not only from hesitancy to admit our failure with these individuals but also hesitancy to face the torrent of criticism that we knew they would heap upon our heads. We knew that there are many sworn enemies of Marxism who would positively relish this expulsion and who would encourage the expelled to slander the PWOC and all that is positive in it. We also knew that in all probability these individuals would degenerate into extreme factionalism and objective anti-communism (and so they have), and we knew that they would play to the backward elements in the movement. However, we realized that not only the incipient communist movement but the cause of Marxism would eventually be served by the expulsion. Not only would the PWOC make itself stronger by purging itself of this opportunist element but also the entire movement would benefit by a principled discussion of the differences involved. Little by little, the various currents of opportunism which dominate the views of the expelled would be clarified and then defeated, not only locally but in the entire movement. The cause of the proletariat would therefore be served.

It is with this perspective that we present our discussion of the expulsion of two opportunists from the PWOC. We are not interested in presenting the particular incidents around which the struggle was waged in the PWOC, nor in slandering the two individuals whom we were forced to expel. We do not think that either the particulars or the personalities involved are of much interest to the movement, nor do we think they should be. But what is of interest (and positively demands clarification) is principled discussion of the two lines that clashed in the PWOC and a discussion of their essence. And it is for this that this paper is designed. It is only with the knowledge of the objective tasks of the workers' movement that our actions in expelling these individuals become understandable. It is only within the context of the broad and fundamental tasks of the workers' movement and its communist vanguard that the necessity of purging opportunism - of a rigorous, vigilant, all-sided struggle against opportunism - becomes clear. It is only within such a context that real errors will stand in relief and false accusations will be exposed - that the two opposing viewpoints manifest their real essence.

We will proceed first to an examination of the general tasks of the communist movement, where we will set out our principled understanding of the nature of these tasks. Then we will describe the nature of opportunism in this period and its salient features. From there we will proceed to an examination of the expelled's position paper "The Split in the PWOC". Showing this paper to be devoid of expressed principle, we will examine another document which displays the essence of these individuals' opportunist views and we will proceed to

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expand this essence into the concrete forms that it took in the PWOC.

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The working class movement in the United States continues to develop and expand. More and more workers are shaking off the deep sleep of the fifties and becoming involved in sharpening struggles against imperialism. Daily the forces arrayed against imperialism grow stronger. Students, intellectuals, farmers, national liberation movements, oppressed minorities are joining with the proletariat in the struggles against imperialism. But these forces, the proletariat and its allies, are without revolutionary leadership, they have no political party through which they can speak and which will represent their interests in the struggle against imperialism. The movement has been left to develop spontaneously, veering now to the right into reformism and now to the 'left' into frustrated adventurism. The proletariat's struggle is at present sporadic, disorganized and underdeveloped. The allies of the proletariat have been left to themselves to determine the substance and the durability of their alliance with the working class. There is no political force which is capable of shaping, broadening and developing the sporadic, segmented, and disorganized struggles of the working class and its allies into a durable and determined movement for the overthrow of imperialism. The fundamental feature of the movement is its attack on imperialism and capitalist exploitation; its chief defect is that this feature remains submerged in spontaneity, its conscious aspect has yet to be developed.

If the fundamental thrust of the workers' movement is ever to be successful in its great goal - the overthrow of monopoly capitalism - it must have experienced and trained leadership which will guide it through all the inevitable twists and turns that the movement must take, twists and turns foisted upon it by the contradictions inherent in capitalist production relations. It must have a determined and capable leadership which is farsighted and yet practical, principled and yet capable of compromise, dedicated and yet humane. This leadership must be capable of leading the movement through periods of advance and of retreat, of intense revolutionary activity and of slow and peaceful development, changing and adapting its tactics to the material conditions extant at the time, never losing sight of its ultimate goal. And in order to maximise its effect this leadership must be united in ideology, in program, in organization, and in tactics. The concrete form such unity must take can be none other than a political party - a party of the working class. This party must be a vanguard party, a communist party.

The principle and fundamental task of all those who have the interests of the proletariat at heart is therefore the construction of a revolutionary communist party. How should this party be formed? Should we not assemble all those interested in such a development, elect leadership, draft a constitution, rules, etc. and begin to work? No, such a course would be incorrect; it would not reflect the objective state of the working class movement. First, we do not have sufficient cadre to form such a party, and what cadre we do have are relatively inexperienced. Second, if we are truly to be a vanguard party and a party of the working class, we will have to demonstrate our ability to lead the working class. We will have to have established organic links with the proletariat. But most significantly, we lack the ideology to achieve even the first two things we have identified above. For we must not only have cadre but they must be communist cadre - schooled in the knowledge and practice of Marxism-Leninism. Finally, we must not only prove our ability to lead the working class, but to lead it somewhere - namely towards socialist revolution. Neither of these two things can be done without revolutionary ideology, which is formed on the basis of revolutionary theory.

Moreover, in order to maximise the effects of such a party, as we said above, we must have unity on the critical questions facing the working class movement. At present that unity does not exist; there is a serious lack of clarity on the fundamental questions facing the proletariat. While most 'communists' agree on the thrust of this movement against imperialism, and many on the need for a vanguard party, the agreement very often stops there. The level of agreement expressed here is an insufficient basis for ideological unity. For example, take the question of the road to power in the United States. Do we have unity on even the basic features of the proletariat's struggle for power? Certainly most of us would agree on the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat. All of us have also rejected the parliamentary reform approach of the CPUSA. But we do not know the general features of the revolutionary transition. In addition, we may know that the working class needs allies, but that does not mean we have sufficient clarity on who these allies are and the substance of their alliance with the proletariat. An additional example is the Trade Union Question. It is hard to

imagine a question which is so central to the present state of the workers' movement, and yet many communists have yet to take the question up in a serious way.

This is not to say that no progress is being made on the basic questions facing our movement. A great number of organizations (among which the PWOC is but one) are working hard to develop real answers to these problems. While it would certainly be utopian to expect that we could have clear answers to each and every aspect of the basic questions, it is equally utopian to think that the present level of understanding is a sufficient basis for any but a most tenuous ideological unity. And it is upon ideology which the foundation of our party will be laid.

Given, then, the existing confusion in the left on these fundamental questions, it is the position of the PWOC that a principle task of communists in this period is to wage a theoretical struggle for the answers to the main tasks facing the workers' movement. As Lenin wrote in 1900, "Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite we must first draw firm and definite lines of demarcation. Otherwise, our unity will be purely fictitious, it will conceal the prevailing confusion and hinder its radical elimination." (Italics added, Col. Wks. Vol. IV, p. 354) That is, we as communists must draw sharp distinctions between those lines which tend to support and aid the development of the concrete application of Marxist-Leninist theory to the present situation, lines which will aid in advancing the workers' movement, and those which tend towards opportunism (the sacrifice of the long run interests of the proletariat to the petty concerns of the moment). The sharpest possible clash between the Marxist or proletarian trend and the opportunist or bourgeois trend will contribute most to the development of a revolutionary communist party.

At present opportunism dominates the workers' movement. This is an irrefutable fact. Wherever spontaneity reigns, there reigns also opportunism, the bourgeois trend in the labor movement. Opportunism means the sacrifice of the interests of the proletariat to the interests of the bourgeoisie because it means sacrificing the overthrow of the bourgeoisie to temporary improvements in the workers' indentured existence under capitalism. Opportunism means the sacrifice of principle, of consciousness, to spontaneity. To defend opportunism is therefore to defend the domination of the workers by the bourgeoisie.

The revolutionary movement must be forged in an uncompromising struggle against opportunism. Those, then, who stand for peace with opportunism, for a one-sided, academic, "gentlemanly" struggle against it, and therefore "hinder its radical elimination" objectively side with opportunism against Marxism. Regardless of intentions, to preach unity with opportunism is to advocate opportunism over and against Marxism. For as the bourgeoisie and the proletariat stand in antagonistic contradiction to one another, so do their ideologies. There can be no peace with the bourgeoisie which does not mean resignation of the proletariat to bourgeois domination and there can be no peace with the bourgeois trend that does not submit to bourgeois ideological domination.

Since the fundamental task of communists in this period is an uncompromising struggle for Marxism-Leninism which takes shape in the form of ideological clashes with opportunism, one would expect that opportunism would most centrally confront Marxism around theoretical questions. Opportunism in the present period must objectively defend the existing confusion in the incipient communist movement. That it cannot do so outright but must veil and cloak its attitudes by advancing a 'soft' line on theoretical questions is hardly to the point. Opportunism will always cloak its real attitudes in numerous forms, accommodating to whichever form it thinks will bring it the most allies. Opportunism will raise a howl at the 'dogmatism' and 'sectarianism' of all those who strive to carry out an all-sided struggle in defense of the essence of Marxism-Leninism. It will play to all manners of bourgeois prejudice, all the bourgeois ideological currents that presently have a deathgrip on the proletariat. Opportunism will picture the struggle for Marxism in all the Hitleresque images of the Second World War and the Truman cold war mythology. Opportunism will even stoop to anti-communism in order to win allies. And yet opportunism will express itself in the most innocent of terms as a legitimate, yes communist, ideology. All this and more opportunism will do to maintain hegemony for confusion over clarity.

Why does opportunism play to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas and prejudices? Because opportunism cannot stand up to a discussion of principle. An ideological trend which is based on the sacrifice of principle to the petty concerns of the moment could hardly be expected to be stalwart in defense of principle. An ideological trend whose first principle is no principles could hardly be expected to behave in a principled manner. Since at present fear, prejudice and irrationality pervade the movement, one could hardly expect anything more from opportunism than playing these things over and against Marxism-Leninism. If oppor-

portunism is to be successful in hindering its own elimination from the movement it must utilize all that is backward in the movement to defeat the positive, principled and Marxist trend.

All this is not to say that opportunism will never yield to a discussion of principle. True, it will not yield easily, but yield it will if the opportunity demands it. Just as it masquerades as Marxism-Leninism, it will masquerade as a most principled trend. For the more sophisticated our movement becomes the more sophisticated opportunism will have to become in order to maintain its place in the movement. The harder we struggle against it the more dogged will it become in its resistance, in its attempts to confuse and gloss over the issues. This is fundamental to the nature of opportunism - it will accommodate itself to whatever forms are necessary to mask its intentions (short, of course, of the essence of Marxism-Leninism).

An additional feature of opportunism in this period is that it does not show its essence as boldly as it does in other periods, a fact which makes it easier for it to coexist with the Marxist trend in our movement. This has both a general and a particular side. First the particular side. Given the narrowness of our practical activity where so much is focused on the economic struggle and our movement is so diffuse and ill-defined and our tasks are of such a basic nature, a little opportunism may seem to be tolerable. After all, we are a very young movement and all of us have a great deal to learn. In addition our practice is hardly at the level where one can say conclusively that such and such is "opportunist". Shouldn't we allow more time to prove out our theories? After all we are bound to make mistakes. There is, of course, an element of truth to all this. We have indeed a long way to go and must realize that we have much to learn. But this fact makes the struggle against opportunism all the more urgent, because the narrowness of our practice speaks of the dominance of opportunism over our movement. Yes, our knowledge is narrow, the level of our practice is low and our movement is ill-defined, but our tasks are expanded, not diminished by these facts - we have all the more ground to cover, all the more opportunism to root out of our movement. To argue that we have need of great care in the struggle against opportunism is one thing; but to argue that the urgency of that struggle is diminished thereby is something else: tailism - to tail after our diffuse and narrow practice.

The more general aspect is that opportunism always shows itself less in conflict with the Marxist trend in periods of slow and relatively peaceful development of the movement. It cannot be denied that we are in such a period - that our progress will be made mostly through 'evolutionary' methods of struggle rather than revolutionary methods. It is in times of revolution that opportunism really reveals its service to the bourgeoisie. Anyone who has studied the history of the Bolshevik party knows that. But what they should also know, as was proven in the German Social Democratic Party, is that to hold back the struggle against opportunism until such a period is to effectively doom the revolution. If the struggle against opportunism is not initiated in the very early days of the movement and carried out continually through and after the revolution, there can be no revolution. A revolutionary situation, when it does develop, will be turned into a massacre and the opportunists will be aiming their guns at the workers.

None of what we have said so far explains how certain individuals come to embrace opportunism, to nourish its presence in the workers' movement. How could any individual who sincerely believes himself to be fighting for the cause of the proletariat defend opportunism? The answer to this question comes from two basic facts. First, the dominant ideas of any age are the ideas of its ruling class. This is so because the economic and social supremacy of the ruling class gives it access to both the scientific knowledge of the era and the means of communicating that knowledge. By virtue of its economic dominance of the society the ruling class determines not only what is to be investigated but what that investigation should prove and what parts of it should be communicated to the masses of oppressed and exploited. Secondly, in the modern era, the development of the concentration and centralization of capital into monopolies has forced many small independent producers (petty capitalists) into the working class by driving them out of business. This segment of the petty-bourgeoisie becomes part of the proletariat economically but brings with it the ideology which reflected their former social position. This petty-bourgeois ideology which is a product of their former class status reflects the contradictory nature of that status. On the one hand the petty-bourgeoisie is constantly being squeezed out by the larger capitalists, but on the other it constantly wants to be accepted into the ranks of the capitalists themselves. This it can only do by becoming an exploiter of labor power. Thus the petty-bourgeoisie has no independent ideology of its own and constantly vacillates between the proletarian and the bourgeois standpoint.

It is the entrance of the petty-bourgeois element into the ranks of the proletariat which provides the basis for the ideological waverings characteristic of opportunism.

In addition to the sector of the petty-bourgeoisie that is forced into the working class by economic consequences of monopolization, there is another segment which deserts the petty-bourgeoisie of its own choice. This segment is predominantly intellectual and sees in the proletariat the only possibility for a decent existence for mankind. And here again these individuals do not always leave behind their petty-bourgeois ideology. It is this particular basis of petty-bourgeois ideology in the proletarian movement that most concerns us here, for it is the "new" left which most explicitly expressed these ideological waverings which have been carried over into the present state of the movement. It is also the new left which provides the main base for the incipient communist movement today (new left should not be taken to exclude its Black leadership). Given that this "new" left was itself a product of the crisis of imperialism on the one hand, and the bankruptcy of the existing revolutionary movement on the other, one could quite naturally expect it to be dominated by petty-bourgeois leftist ideology. It was generally contemptuous of theory, holding what it called "practice" up as the sole arbiter of revolutionary activity. He who did the most "practice" was the most revolutionary. It also held the petty-bourgeois anarchist position on organization, being morally opposed to real centralism and leadership. An extremely personalist and individualist approach to politics, holding that the primary task of the left was the transformation of the individual into a "revolutionary" with a capital R, was predominant. It held to frenzied conceptions of struggle and made no systematic attempts to determine the difference between struggles that were beneficial and those that were destructive. Struggle by definition was good. All this is characteristic of the petty-bourgeois intellectual driven to despair.

It is this particular species of opportunism which provides a particular danger in our movement today. Overall, of course, the main danger is the right forms of opportunism, because they are more prevalent and widespread in the proletarian movement. But in the segment of that movement which has now set for itself the task of building a new communist party, it is infantile leftism which prevails. And this infantile leftism takes the particular form of carrying over the dogma of the "new" left.

That individuals must be perpetrators of opportunism in the workers' movement is obvious. But what is really unfortunate is that these perpetrators are quite often (and this is the case of our particular experience in PWOC) dedicated individuals who are unconscious of their role. These individuals often do not realize that they are allying themselves with opportunism and many times sincerely believe that their ideology serves the working class. It is this sincere belief and their ability to rationalize and deny their objective role which makes these individuals so difficult to transform. It is, in addition, much easier to defend and advance this "new" left ideological dogma than to come to grips with the real and present tasks of the workers' movement. It is a great deal easier to advance the old assumptions, than to take the time and energy to develop a theory which more completely reflects the real conditions in the proletariat and its consequent tasks. It is, of course, much easier to obtain "leadership" in the movement by playing to the rearguard trend. It is certainly easier to be an opportunist than to set oneself squarely against the present spontaneity and diffuseness in our movement.

This is not to say that as soon as one recognizes an opportunist in one's organization one must throw up one's hands and advocate his or her expulsion. The organization's ability to tolerate advocates of opportunism depends on the objective state of the movement and objective nature of the particular brand of opportunism that is being advanced. But whatever the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves, opportunism itself cannot be tolerated. A vigorous and thorough struggle must be waged against it. And if after a period of intense struggle the perpetrators of opportunism cannot be transformed, refuse to come to grips with their opportunism in principle, they must be expelled. This is unfortunate but absolutely necessary. Not to do so is to sacrifice the long run interests of the proletariat in its struggle for clarity in its movements to the petty concerns of generosity and goodwill towards a few mistaken individuals.

To say that the fundamental task of the present period is the theoretical struggle in defense of Marxism-Leninism is not to say that this struggle can be carried out abstractly in study groups, the theoretical journals, etc. Certainly these forms are useful and necessary vehicles for this struggle, but they are not sufficient. For our real burning questions come not from the writings of Marx,

Engels, Lenin and Mao but from the class struggle in this period in this country. The revolutionary genuises of bygone eras have much to contribute to our knowledge and to debunk their vital contributions is criminal. It is just that they can neither identify the central questions facing our movement nor can they answer these questions. Both the identification of the central questions and their answers rest upon our shoulders alone. These genuises can, of course, aid in the process of identification and answering but if we make mistakes it will not be because they are wrong. It will be we who are in error and we must pay a great deal more attention not so much to what they wrote but to the methodology which they applied to do what they did. We must pay a great deal more attention to developing the Marxism-Leninism of our epoch and in our time.

Theory, therefore, which is abstract, is not theory worthy of the name. The only theory which can truly be called "communist" theory is theory which can directly intervene in the workers' movement and guide its development. This is why Marxists have always held that practice is the criterion of truth. In order for theory to be termed "truth" it must be confirmed in practice. This is not to say that any theory can be confirmed to the point that everyone will immediately grasp it as truth. Reality is much too complex, and the minds of mankind much too simple for such an eventuality. Theory can be confirmed in practice only by drawing out the main features of the development of the concrete situation and examining the extent to which the particular theory conforms with these features. To be able to do so with any amount of certainty takes a great deal of experience. But experience of this kind itself can only be obtained in practice.

The really critical weakness in our movement is not so much the lack of theory in general as it is ideology, real ideology. Our movement lacks theory which is capable of leading the proletarian movement. It is not so much that we have insufficient knowledge of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao as it is that we have insufficient knowledge of how to apply what knowledge we have already acquired. It is not so much that we lack theory, but that we have not given that theory a living form - we have yet to construct the real ideology which will serve as a basis for a revolutionary communist party.

It is when the general principle which we have identified is made concrete that we find the real test of our ability to really be "communists" in this period. It is only when our practice shows that in understanding the primary task we have not negated the secondary tasks that we can be proven correct. When we say that the primary task in the present period is the development of theoretical clarity we are not saying that the secondary tasks are not important. When we say that the theoretical struggle is primary we do not mean that it is not absolutely essential that we pay attention to the task of developing capable cadre. It is indisputably true that real ideology can only take shape in the process of an all-sided development of the class struggle. The ideological foundation of the party can only be laid by direct and active participation in the workers' movement, by carrying out real practical steps to fulfill not just the primary tasks but also the secondary ones.

The PWOC's practice speaks starkly and clearly for our understanding of how to carry out the struggle for a vanguard party. First and foremost, what ideology we have developed has been molded in the crucible of the class struggle. Every member of the PWOC participates actively in daily activity in different factories in the city. Our entire structure was built around those forms which we felt would most aid in the development of this activity. Our basic organizational unit is the industrial club where individuals in each factory meet regularly to discuss their work. The very first question which we developed was the trade union question, because it confronted us most centrally in our practical work. There is nothing that has dominated the history of the PWOC so pervasively as our efforts to build a presence for ourselves as communists in the workers' mass movement. And it was our efforts in this endeavor which taught us the critical need for the development of real ideology - a concrete application of Marxism-Leninism to the situation which we faced in the factories.

Thus, the fundamental task of the present period is the struggle for "a strictly scientific idea and a positive doctrine" and against "an empty and dishonest preaching game". The essence of this struggle is the theoretical and ideological struggle against opportunism. Does this mean the struggle for program, organization and tactics are not important? Certainly not! It is just that the cutting edge of the present movement is fundamentally theoretical. For it is primarily theory which will serve as the bedrock foundation of program, tactics, and organization. It is only the correct grasp of Marxist-Leninist theory that will show us the most rapid and orderly way to achieve a party. For as a great revolutionary has taught, "without revolutionary theory, there can be no

revolutionary movement."

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If we were to cease our argument at this point we would have done no great service to those who want to come to an understanding of who was right and who was wrong in the recent expulsion. True, we may have provided some clarity on the PWOC's position on the fundamental tasks of the period, and in addition some of our knowledge on the deleterious practice of opportunism. But we have failed to provide an analysis of the split which would enable sincere individuals to come to an understanding of the nature of the split. Our detractors have said that we are miserable scalywags who have perpetrated horrors upon them. We say that this is not the case. They have listed examples which we say are distorted and factional. Charges and counter-charges, where is the reader left to go? Surely he or she must make some effort to form an opinion as to who is in the main correct in this dispute (the circumstances, in fact, demand that this be done). But on what is the reader to base the decision? Both sides say that they are right and the other wrong. Both have contrary interpretations of events which are of direct knowledge to them alone. On what can the decision be based? On personal knowledge of the people involved? On the eloquence of the argumentation? On the grasp displayed in the two positions of Marxism and its finepoints? No, none of these should provide the basis of his or her position. Any reader has the right to demand much more of the parties involved in this dispute.

The only way that any reader could hope to make a principled judgement of which side is mainly correct is by knowledge of the positions that each side takes in regard to the fundamental questions facing the communist movement. If this is not provided there is no guide so that the reader can find his or her way through the morass of charges and countercharges and come up with a proper understanding of the real development of the split and real points at issue. That is, without a concrete (and here the word is used in the Marxist sense) presentation of the principles which guide the practice of the two sides in this dispute, no one could make any sense of the muddle heretofore presented.

In addition, a principled exposition of the two lines in the organization which produced the split conforms most closely to the needs of the communist movement at this time. We said above that it is extremely important that "sharp and definite lines of demarcation" be drawn between the Marxist trend and the opportunist trend in our movement. The PWOC is an organization within that movement which has had a split that developed into an expulsion. It is quite obvious that the split was over differences of principle concerning the primary tasks of such an organization in this period. The only way, therefore, to serve the communist movement, to advance its understanding, is to lay out the two conflicting trends and "draw the lines of demarcation" between the two.

Moreover, to present a treatment of serious differences which developed into an expulsion in the abstract form of the "Split in the PWOC" (the expelled's paper attacking the PWOC) is to do a positive disservice to our movement. In what sense is our opponents' treatment abstract? First in that it makes no attempt whatever to explain the context of an incident as it interprets it. It makes statements as if to say "such and such is true" and leaves it at that. There is no attempt to treat the development of the split historically, no attempt to explain how the particular example fits in with the general problem that they purport to prove, no attempt to document their interpretation. But most importantly, they fail to present any coherent treatment of their principled approach to a particular question - the principled approach which guided their practice and is implicit in their interpretation. Not to do so and to present one's criticisms of an organization totally in negative terms (i.e. without offering a more correct approach) is to fall into anti-communism and prejudice. It's quite easy to list criticisms and weaknesses of any organization and to identify problems that it has. The point, however, is to identify the principles that guided the practice of this organization and identify how they deviate from Marxism-Leninism. Then one must set forward the correct approach. To do otherwise is to say to the reader, "see how foolish these 'communists' are" as if everyone was a communist and already understood the correct approach. To do as our detractors have done is to play to the backward elements in our movement.

For example, take the following quote which sets out their entire argument as to the main and dominant trend in the PWOC which they perceive to be in error:

Through the whole struggle with the majority, and with our own errors (?!) we came to see that PWOC's majority had, from the beginning to end, tended in a sectarian direction. That is, they "elevated" certain prin-

ciples of Marxism-Leninism to the level of dogma, so that, in an increasing number of cases, the majority, and especially the leadership of FWOC had only to say "this is a correct M-L position" to stifle discussion and debate, or any collective decisions on how a position was to be concretely applied. By taking the principles of Marxism-Leninism out of their historical concrete context and applying them mechanically to a current situation, sectarianism leads to dogmatism and opportunism. It leads to dogmatism because in its attempt to come up with a neat, easy formulation of a question, based on surface appearances, FWOC often takes one aspect of the situation, and treats that aspect as if it were the whole question. Thus, any consideration of other aspects or of contradictions with even one aspect of a situation is made impossible. Sectarianism leads to opportunism, because once the need for a concrete examination of concrete situations is denied it is easier, in the name of "theoretical clarity" to apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism in a self-serving manner, not letting "mere facts" get in the way. So (?) it was that FWOC's majority consistently put their own narrow self-interest as petty-bourgeois intellectuals and as a grouping within FWOC, ahead of the needs and struggles of the working class, and the developing communist movement. (p. 3)

In the name of "theoretical clarity" and a self-serving application of principles which do not let "mere facts" (we would like to know why "mere facts" was put in quotation marks) get in the way, allow us to make some comments on the "theoretical clarity" of this fine statement. In the first place, elevating certain principles to the level of dogma, removing them from their "concrete" and "historical" context and applying them mechanically "to a current situation" is generally understood to be dogmatism, not sectarianism. Sectarianism is commonly understood to be characteristic of the practice of a sect that puts the interests of its own little dogma ahead of the interests of the proletariat. It is therefore dogmatism which generally leads to sectarianism and not as our former members state. In addition, sectarianism could hardly lead to opportunism since it is a species of opportunism. To say that sectarianism leads to opportunism is tantamount to saying "opportunism leads to opportunism". Sectarianism, in common Marxist parlance is understood to be a "left" form of opportunism, which sacrifices the proletariat's interests to the interests of a small sect. The sacrifice of the proletariat's interests to the interests of a small group is a characteristic feature of opportunism in general. Thus what we have here is a muddle - a theoretical muddle. Well, at least it has one redeeming virtue: it is a very uncommon theoretical muddle!

Secondly, we would like to inquire of the author(s) of this document for specific (dare we say "concrete") examples of our lapse into sectarianism (or dogmatism in common parlance). Just where, when, and on what questions did the FWOC remove a principle from its concrete context and elevate it to the position of a dogma? Where, when and how did we maintain that an abstracted principle over-rode "mere facts"?

Thirdly, since you maintain that the main and dominate trend in the FWOC is sectarianism (or dogmatism?), will you be so kind as to show us in your treatment of the "concrete" examples just how and why and where we manifested our sectarianism (and what we should have done)? Incidentally, would you be so kind as to document your interpretations of these events?

Just a minute, now, maybe we are being a little harsh, you tell us. After all, we have picked out one little paragraph in a paper of ten pages. Admittedly the paragraph has a few weaknesses but maybe they are strengthened further on. All right, we're convinced. Let's look at three other sections of the paper, which break up this sectarian tendency into three parts: 1) Methods of ideological struggle and development; 2) criticism-self-criticism; and 3) FWOC's separation of practical and theoretical work.

Now, let's take each question one by one as they presented them, and quote their expressed positions on these questions. The first question is "Methods of Ideological struggle and development". This is divided into two parts: part a) "Ideological struggle"; part b) "Ideological development". Now part a) is presented in one long paragraph which makes no attempt whatever to set out a principled position on the role ideological struggle is to play in the communist movement. All it does is to make explicit criticisms of "errors" made by the FWOC in this area. Just how we fell down and what our theoretical errors were, the author will not (or cannot) tell. One does get some sense of an implicit position by way of extrapolating from the different specific examples. But these positions are not developed and amount to such platitudes as "it is necessary to have inves-



tigation and struggle on either theoretical principles or their application" or "struggles and differences should be turned into an education" and other such statements on this level. Part b) yields more of the same with one significant addition which we shall quote:

But in the future, when workers begin to enter communist organizations, we will find that this (ideological development) will be an even greater test of those groups' potential. For only the greatest attention to giving workers tools of M-L theory and its application will insure that the workers' class consciousness and experience in struggle and their (?) links with the masses of workers will be used to their greatest extent, not ignored because a few people in the group hold "monopoly" (in quotation marks, no less!!) on M-L theory, and use that "monopoly" to hold power.

Of course no communist could disagree with this. It is part of the grade school wisdom of the communist movement. That the workers must be schooled in Marxist theory and practice is equivalent to saying that the workers must desire and know how to make a revolution in order for there to be one.

As we move into the next section "criticism-self criticism" we find similar contributions to theoretical clarity. Besides learning of further heinous crimes on the part of the FWOOC we have the following tidbit:

This is a long way away from the Leninist conception of c-s-c- as a very important component of insuring that work is carried out, and carried out correctly, and that only in the context of constant and relentless struggle and criticism can the masses have confidence that communists have no interests other than the working class, and therefore no stake in hiding their mistakes. (p.8)

Here again, no insight is contributed as to the role c-s-c should play in the communist movement. Here again we have a revolutionary platitude which is a "long way from the Leninist conception" of principled ideological struggle.

Now, at last we come to the final section which is to put the finishing touches on the exposure of the central weakness of the FWOOC: sectarianism. Here we are treated to a "concrete" examination of the relationship of theory to practice. A whole page boils down to this: separation of theory from practice is bad. No great harm would be done to our movement if this author were to attempt to monopolize his theory!!

This sums up the whole paper "The Split in the FWOOC" insofar as it makes any attempt to present a principled discussion of the split (that became an expulsion) in the FWOOC. In our view it was not just fortuitous that our opponents shyed away from any presentation of principle; a refusal to discuss any question on a principled level was characteristic of their tendency in the FWOOC. Lenin explains, somewhat posthumously:

When we speak of fighting opportunism, we must never forget a characteristic feature of present-day opportunism in every sphere, namely, its vagueness, amorphousness, elusiveness. An opportunist by his very nature, will always evade taking a clear and decisive stand, he will always seek a middle course, he will always wriggle like a snake between two mutually exclusive points of view and try to "agree" with both and reduce his differences of opinion to petty amendments, doubts, innocent and pious suggestions, and so on and so forth. (Col. Wks., Vol VII, p. 404)

There is, of course, an element of truth in this paper in spite of the fact that this truth is mired in an attempt to play on the emotionalism and the prevailing anti-communism of the movement. But that truth is neither profound nor enlightening. It is quite true that the FWOOC has a long way to go in the development of theory, the development of ideological struggle, cadre, criticism-self-criticism, program, tactics, organization, etc. The FWOOC has many weaknesses that we have been struggling to overcome. But this fact we have never denied. And contrary to the impressions that these comrades would like to perpetrate, they were not expelled for their constant and relentless criticism of the leadership, the organization, its cadre (excepting themselves, of course) and its established tasks. Nor were they expelled for their dishonest and unprincipled struggles and their continued disruption through factionalism of the organization's work. Nor were they expelled for taking back with one hand the "unity" they had given with the other. These comrades were expelled for consistently and incorrigibly advocating for over a year and a half an opportunist approach to the fundamental

questions facing the communist movement, for maintaining these attitudes in spite of two study programs devised precisely with them in mind (one of which they opportunely forgot to mention in their attack - the Unity Study Group, whose central topic was the essence of petty-bourgeois leftism and consisted of five sessions of 2 to 3 hours each), for maintaining these positions in spite of approximately 20 meetings that we had with them which in one way or another revolved around them and their mistakes, for maintaining these positions in spite of a 22 page paper and numerous resolutions and other assorted documents explaining their errors. And all this is a matter of record, a matter of hard, palpable, documented fact.

\* \* \* \*

It therefore remains for us to set forward a principled interpretation of the theoretical differences on which the initial split and the subsequent expulsion were based. Because these expelled comrades will not be so kind (in reality it is not a matter of kindness, as opportunism is in principle opposed to discussion of principle) as to set forward their positions for us, we will have to do it for them. This we will do on the basis of quotations from documents written by them immediately prior to and since the expulsion, so as not to be prejudiced against their "self-criticism". While it would be quite easy to expose them by using the earlier documents because here their opportunism appears in more naked form, we will proceed as if their self-criticism was as thorough as they would have us believe.

Before we begin our examination of the theoretical differences between the two lines on the nature of the split and expulsion from the PWOC, we must emphasize that it is only with great difficulty that one elicits any sense of principle in the writings of our erstwhile members. First because any mention of principle by them is either of the platitude sort as shown above, or so vague and ill-defined as to be nearly useless. Second, because they have never systematized their ideas, always being willing to drop this or that surface manifestation of opportunism in favor of maintaining opportunism itself. In the course of the long and bitter struggle in the PWOC the expelled raised many attitudes to a particular question, which we were able to demonstrate to them as incorrect. These attitudes would then be dropped (and sometimes they would even deny that they ever held them) only to appear in another form - more sophisticated opportunism, yes, but opportunism nevertheless. Every attempt to connect the various incidents met with the characteristic response as exhibited in the very first page of the "Split in the PWOC" paper: we would be accused of "driving the minority ... into extreme forms" of their tendency, of "manipulating for factional purposes" or, as written in a paper called "Four Questions" (from which we will hear more later on) "of trying to build in order to destroy" their faction. All of which manifested not only their paranoia but their utter reluctance to examine the roots of their errors. (Needless to say, it was intensely frustrating to have to wage essentially the same struggles over and over and over again.) And finally, the main content of their activity in the PWOC was criticism of cadre, the organization and its work. Their entire work in the PWOC produced only one proposal of any substance: the much heralded "Trade Union Agitational Program" (which we will supply to anyone interested). This proposal was not a bad idea in the abstract but lacked any foresight, definiteness or clarity; it is a mere jumble of possible trade union demands to which no order was given whatsoever. Given that the content of their practice in the PWOC was confined to criticism, and unprincipled criticism at that, their "principles" were only expressed negatively. And that it is extremely difficult to extract "principles" from their criticism can be seen by anyone who tries to do so in "The Split in the PWOC". All this is, of course, characteristic of opportunist "vagueness, amorphousness, elusiveness", and, we might add, vacillation.

In spite of these facts, what we are able to extract from their various writings will show, we think incontestably (except to an opportunist), that they stood for a lack of clarity on theoretical questions, for practice to be the guide to theory, for an individualistic and personalist approach to criticism, for organizational diffuseness, narrow practicalism, and general ideological confusion. While all this is certainly a mouthful, it amounts to saying that they stood for opportunism and reconciliation between opportunism and Marxism: their line (regardless of intentions) encouraged the PWOC to engage in "an empty and dishonest preaching game".

We have said that the primary arena of struggle in the present period is the theoretical struggle for Marxism, that the cutting edge of the proletarian vanguard's struggle for a Marxist-Leninist party is first and foremost ideological. We further maintain that to belittle this struggle, to narrow it and dull its

cutting edge is the main feature of opportunism in the present period. To argue for the narrowing of our theoretical tasks is to defend opportunism - is to defend the spontaneity in the movement against consciousness.

For our detractors' position on this question (the role of theory in the present period) we will have to turn to a document aptly entitled "Four Questions". The author (the leading ideologue of the expelled) in the very first paragraph writes:

The focus of this paper will be on which principles, and what concrete struggles have served to advance the cause of "party" or Marxist-Leninist organizational ideas and practice (both internal and external) in PWOC, and which have perpetuated "circle" ideas and practice.

We see, therefore, that the author holds forth the promise of a principled treatment of which ideas and principles have served to advance the cause of Marxism-Leninism in the PWOC. We cannot, then, be accused of taking unfair advantage of a basically "concrete" presentation.

The first question which the author purports to examine in a principled fashion is "the role of correct ideas in communist work", which roughly corresponds to the role of theory and the tasks related to it in the present period. Our author contributes the following:

The role of correct ideas in communist work is to illuminate practice, to put empirical facts into the framework of Marxism-Leninism and thus enable us to lead the struggle. With correct ideas (Marxist-Leninist) as our guide, we are able to determine:

- 1) What historical period are we (U.S. Proletariat) in, what tasks are most demanding of solution, what errors are to be anticipated, what successes are to be expected.
- 2) What are the programmatic, tactical, and organizational forms appropriate for this period of history, dangers and successes to be expected.

Fine. There is little anyone could disagree with here, apart from some inept and potentially misleading phrasing (especially: "to put empirical facts into the framework of Marxism-Leninism"). However, the essential point is stated - theory is needed to guide our practice in this period. One would expect that the author would proceed to at least outline the answers to the two questions he correctly identifies. Instead, we have the following, entitled "Correct Ideas and Proletarianization":

Marxism understands "personality" and "politics" to be both concrete emanations from the basis of society - that is the objective economic and historical state of things. "Politics" is the conscious reflection of a particular individual or group's position in society and their attempt to formulate it. "Personality traits" also reflect the objective position and consciousness of the individual - qualities like "discipline", "selfishness", "initiative", or even "courage" and "ability to lead" in communist or proletarian are reflections of the extent to which correct ideas actually lead the individual in his/her day-to-day actions. As such, the question of "proletarianization" becomes one which can guide our evaluation of an individual's overall practice of Marxism-Leninism.

"Correct ideas come from practice", "correct ideas come from the masses". Are these statements a denial of the leading role of theory in communist work? No; theory is simply the condensed abstraction of earlier practice, of the experience of the masses in earlier times. But these two dictums are counter to a narrow interpretation of the application of correct ideas. For they say that principles or abstractions, in order to lead our work, must be tested in practice, tested in mass struggle. In this period of history, in a small circle like PWOC, our ability to test the principles of Marxism-Leninism in practice (even internal practice) is limited. Does this mean that we should not attempt to struggle out organizational principles? No, for we must proceed as best we can, and can struggle out much simply by trying to see what certain ideas and principles would lead to in practice. I am simply saying that the theory-practice dialectic, recognized by all Marxist-Leninists as the key to developing correct ideas, leaves a lot to be desired in this period - this in turn leads me to conclude that our line on the development of correct ideas should be: The principles of Marxism-Leninism are the basis of unity (combat ultra-leftism); historical study of program and

tactics is of great importance; external practice is the key to the development of program and tactics; developed program, tactics, and organizational forms must be linked with development to practice (combat sectarianism).

We have subjected the reader to this long and disorganized quote because it represents the closest that any member of the expelled minority tendency got to a statement of principle. And in it is couched subtle hints of the real position that these individuals were struggling for in the PWOC, relating to our theoretical tasks. These hints are especially visible to those of us who were in the opposing tendency, as they manifested themselves more clearly in the practical activity of these individuals in our organization. We will therefore draw out for the reader the mistaken views of the author on the relationship of theory to practice in the present period (leaving aside the question of "proletarianization" for subsequent treatment).

Given the objective confusion in our movement, and the predominant homage to spontaneity, there is no error so serious as to objectively deny theory its role in developing the communist movement. As we have said before, it is primarily upon theory which the foundation of our new revolutionary party will be laid, and it is primarily theory which will guide us to the most orderly and effective method of constructing our future party. Without theory as our guide we cannot and will not be successful in this effort - to this the historical experience of the working class will attest. Therefore, to narrow the role of theory is to doom the working class to eternal subservience to the bourgeoisie.

And it is precisely the narrowing of the role of theory which the expelled individuals urged on the PWOC and are still urging in the communist movement. It was in addition the narrow understanding of the importance of theory to the practice of our movement that runs like a golden thread through all the various opportunist positions that these individuals advanced in the PWOC and are still advancing now that they have been placed outside it. But what really makes this kink of opportunism so dangerous at present is that the attitude of these individuals finds so many supporters among those who claim that they are fighting to found a communist party. And it is this which makes an examination of the expelled's views on this question so important, in spite of the fact that they never set forward a systematic presentation of those views. So if it seems to the reader that we focus entirely too much attention on these few paragraphs, we ask for patience on your part. It is only through such an examination that we can really draw out the central and guiding conception of their brand of opportunism.

Let's take the first few sentences of the last paragraph we quoted:

"Correct ideas come from practice", "correct ideas come from the masses". Are these statements a denial of the leading role of theory in communist work? No; theory is the condensed abstraction of earlier practice, of the experience of the masses in earlier times.

With this we are in whole-hearted agreement, as long as one understands that the word "practice" and the word "experience" mean a great deal more to the Marxist than what is commonly spoken of as the "practice" of an organization. When a Marxist uses the word "practice" in this context he means not only activity in class struggle but also in material production, social life, artistic and cultural pursuits, etc., and then not only of the working class but of all former classes and of mankind in general prior to the origin of classes. We want to be clear on this because we have reason to believe (as we shall show) that the author of this piece does not understand this when he uses the word "practice".

Moving on to the next two sentences we have:

But these two dictums are counter to a narrow interpretation of the application of correct ideas. For they say that principles or abstractions, in order to lead our work, must be tested in practice, tested in mass struggle.

In general we would agree with what is being said here also. In spite of the fact that the two quoted dictums say nothing about the application of correct ideas, just about their source, we are in agreement with the author that correct ideas must be tested in practice. Marxists have always held, in common with with all real materialists, that the proof of the pudding is practice. This is an indisputable truth - practice is the criterion of truth.

Thus we are so far in general agreement with this author. But as in the

Marxist theory of knowledge, so with this particular paper: the relative truth of the author's knowledge is shown in his practice. Here is the practice which he advocates:

In this period of history, in a small circle like FWOC, our ability to test the principles of Marxism-Leninism in practice (even internal practice) is limited. Does this mean that we should not attempt to struggle our organizational principles?\* No, for we must proceed as best we can, and can struggle out much simply by trying to see what certain ideas and principles would lead to in practice. I am simply saying that the theory-practice dialectic, recognized by all Marxist-Leninists as the key to developing correct ideas, leaves a lot to be desired in this period (!!).

\*(not that he identifies only organizational principles here)

Here we have the inversion of the generally correct relationship of theory to practice identified by this author in the beginning of the paragraph. Here the author implies that the "principles" of Marxism-Leninism have not only to be capable of being tested in the present period, but also capable of being tested by the FWOC itself. In addition, we find that our present principles have to be derived from our present practice! This means in the former case throwing out the window all the historical experience of the "masses", and in the latter, following after our practice. In a word, it means tailism.

Take the former assertion implied by this paragraph. If we were to maintain, as the author objectively does (and this is especially clear in his practice), that we cannot hold a proposition up as "truth" or as a "principle" which we cannot directly test in our admittedly narrow practice, then we might as well forget about studying Capital, or for that matter any of Marx's works, or the entire Bolshevik experience. How on earth can we "test" Capital, or the dictatorship of the proletariat? We cannot. But does this then mean that we cannot hold Marx's Capital as truth, or the dictatorship of the proletariat as a principle of our movement? True, we cannot "test" either in our practice, as it is too narrow and backward. But these things have been tested over and over again in the history of the class struggle. They have been demonstrated as truths for their time and are predominantly true for our time also. Certainly we can affirm them as truth in our movement in spite of the fact that we cannot presently "test" them.

None of this is to say that this author urged that we disregard such well established principles as these (they are part of his accepted dogma - dogma in that his espousal of them is objectively contradicted by his practice on the relationship of theory to practice). What we are trying to establish is that the line that the author is expressing implicitly here, and practiced explicitly in our organization, leads to such absurdities.

The latter assertion, ie. that our theory must be totally derived from our present practice, is implied in his assertion around organizational principles. He says, "we must proceed as best we can and can struggle out much simply by trying to see what certain ideas and principles would lead to in practice". We must, therefore, base our "principles" on what these would lead to in practice. And if our practice is not advanced enough to test these principles then we should not embrace them, because they have to be tested in "practice". Many of the principles of communist organization have already been tested, and have shown themselves to be correct. If we have to wait until they can be retested in our practice, then we will never make any progress in history.

Thus we see that this individual (and the same attitude pervades "The Split in the FWOC", though more carefully submerged) takes a dogmatic position on the relationship of theory to practice. Not only does theory have to come from practice, but it has to be entirely based on the present practice of the movement. Not only does theory have to be tested in practice, but it has to be entirely tested in our present practice. Therefore, in order to develop theory which will guide our movement we will have to (if we follow the course suggested by this author) begin anew and discard out of hand all the theory which has been previously developed.

The tailism inherent in this author's views is further exhibited in his comments on the theory-practice dialectic in this period, and on the program he presents. Saying that the theory-practice dialectic leaves a lot to be desired in this period "leads" him to put forward a "line" on the development of correct ideas in this period which also leaves a lot to be desired (and he criticizes us for an abstract approach!). The line that he advances is the characteristic "dialectical" combination of grade school Marxism and rhetoric. But what is

really noxious is that the argument that he is advancing on the basis of the theory-practice dialectic leaving "a lot to be desired in this period" leads objectively to a narrowing of our theoretical tasks. In the first place, the theory-practice dialectic leaves no more to be desired in this period than in any other. In reality, it is a great deal more advanced than it has ever been in the history of mankind. What revolutionary movement in the entire history of the world has had as much to draw upon as we have presently? Lenin did not have the Bolshevik revolution to draw on, Mao did not have the Chinese revolution to learn from, and Ho Chi Minh did not even live to see victory over the greatest imperialist power known to man. Our revolutionary heritage in this country is incredibly rich, if we are only willing to make use of it.

There is, of course, an element of truth in the statement that the narrowness of the PWOC leads to a weakness in our ability to test certain theories in practice. But this element of truth is neither enlightening nor profound. Certainly our narrow practical activity puts objective limits on our ability to develop theory, but this puts no constraints upon our theoretical tasks. Quite the contrary, it enlarges them. Our practice is indeed narrow, but it is not so narrow as our theoretical understanding. The narrowness of our practice is in fact a function of our theoretical weaknesses. For it is only theoretical knowledge which can lead to a qualitative leap in the development of our practice, to a real broadening and deepening of the workers' mass movement. The narrowness which prevails in our movement doubles the urgency of our theoretical tasks!

To argue, as this individual does, that the narrowness of our practical activity entails a narrowing of our theoretical tasks is to defend the backwardness in our movement, to argue for confusion over and against clarity, for the prevailing opportunism over and against Marxism-Leninism. The more confusion and spontaneity prevail, the greater the urgency for the development of the theory which alone can lead us forward and advance the movement as a whole. To argue against the objective urgency of our theoretical tasks is to argue for the prevailing confusion and therefore for continued supremacy of the bourgeoisie.

If our readers think we are trying to build too much from this paragraph, we would like to remind them of the characteristics of opportunism in this period. First, opportunism will defend spontaneity, confusion and backwardness, by arguing against consciousness, clarity and the vanguard trend in the movement. Secondly, opportunism will show itself most clearly in confrontation with the theoretical tasks of our movement. Thirdly, opportunism always takes the form of "agreeing" with Marxism but adding ammenments which argue against its essence. Opportunism advances its antagonism to Marxism-Leninism behind such phrases as "I am simply saying", so as to appear innocent. What the author is "simply saying" is that theory should tail practice, and that is precisely the essence of the opportunist view.

To identify the essence of a trend, however, is not to identify its forms or manifestation. And it was not in the form of a straightforward confrontation over the relationship of theory to practice in this period that the PWOC was split into factions which made an eventual expulsion necessary. The confrontation between the two trends in the PWOC was in all essentials determined by the differing views on the role of theory in our movement. It is indeed their mistaken views on the relationship of theory to practice which forced us to expel them. However, if they had held these views abstractly and their activity in the PWOC had not been so completely determined by these views, we would not have expelled them, they would have been tolerated. What forced the expulsion was not an academic dispute over the relationship of theory to practice, or any other question, but their consistent application of their mistaken views in such a way as to force every step forward that the organization took in their 1½ years of membership into a step over them. Every advance that the PWOC made had to be made over their more or less insistent opposition. It was, then, not so much their incorrect views on the relationship of theory to practice which forced us to expel them as it was their consistent application of these views to practical problems facing the PWOC.

In the next section of this paper we will take up the most salient forms or manifestations of their incorrect views in the PWOC, and show how these views pervaded their proposals and arguments, and how they objectively block the development of communist organization in this period. First we will take up their attitude to organizational consolidation in terms of its political content in this period.

In the initial period of their participation in the PWOC, the expelled opposed the formal aspects of communist organizational consolidation. Division of labor, centralism, subordination of minority to majority were all held to be

functionally elitist. For many months the organization struggled over these things in principle, discussing the objective necessity of division of labor, centralism and especially of the subordination of the minority to the majority. Finally we began to make progress and those who were eventually expelled came to understand that we were correct to urge the implementation of these things on the PWOC. The minority in the organization realized that their positions had indeed been incorrect. They were self-critical of their struggle in defense of objectively anarchist and ultra-democratic positions. This is the self-criticism that appears in the "Split in the PWOC".

But that they had not understood the essence of their opportunist error on these questions is also exhibited in their paper. On the very first page, by way of criticism of the majority tendency of our organization, they display the real essence of their opposition to organizational consolidation. What they opposed was not so much the principles - division of labor, centralism, subordination of minority to majority - but the use to which those forms would be put. Here is their criticism of our "sectarian" course of struggle:

O This course was to win the majority of the group to a rejection of our criticisms through polarizing the group, driving the minority (3 people at that time) into extreme forms of the tendency which we had represented in the group, (thus trying to force the minority to consolidate as a clearly defined faction, which we had not done up until that time) consolidating the majority against the minority (not for a clearly defined program, except rejection of the minority's positions) and then applying organizational sanctions (organizational repudiation of our positions, expulsion) to deal with the minority.

If one removes the paranoid distortions (e.g. we do not believe that these individuals really feel that they were so foolish as to allow us to drive them "to extreme forms" which they did not really agree with) which are characteristic of those who play to petty-bourgeois sympathies, one can see here that these individuals stand opposed to organizational consolidation against opportunism.

It is true that we did try to consolidate a majority of the organization against their opportunist line and that we did force them to define themselves as a principled faction. But this was done only after they had shown that they were willing to go to the point of factionalism in pursuit of their incorrect ideas. It was not until they had actually engaged in several extremely divisive factional maneuvers that we found ourselves forced to consolidate a majority in defense of the Marxist trend in the PWOC. There are two incidents worthy of mention, where the minority exhibited their factionalism.

In the initial incident the minority tried to block the entrance of a new member into the PWOC because they felt that she would side against their trend. However, since they were a minority trend in the organization and realized that the organization would never accept the fact that this applicant should be denied membership because she would tend to side with the majority trend, they raised the specious argument that she did not "have sufficient woman's consciousness", hoping to split the organization along sexual lines and intimidate the males into passivity. Thus an innocent woman (she had no knowledge of the internal division in our organization) became a pawn in the minority's factional power play (a fact that they admitted in writing some eight months later).

The second incident where our minority exhibited factionalism was at a conference the PWOC attended. After the initial day of the conference it was clear that things were not going too well. We called a meeting of PWOC members to discuss what action we should take to rectify the situation. A course was suggested, fully discussed, and adopted without dissent. And yet the very next day our minority, all of whom participated in the meeting the night before, lead a struggle in the conference in the direct opposite direction than the one decided upon, consciously (this too was admitted later) violating organizational discipline.

It was only after these and similar incidents that we attempted to consolidate a majority in opposition to the minority faction in the PWOC. It was only after the minority had demonstrated quite sharply that they were willing to carry their incorrect ideas to the point of factionalism that the majority was forced to consolidate the Marxist trend in opposition to their trend. This is not to say that the Marxist trend should not have been consolidated sooner; it was just that in these particular circumstances it was consolidated after the consolidation of the opportunist trend.

The first step in the process of the consolidation of the majority of the

Marxist elements in the PWOC was an attempt to discuss the differences, which the minority had taken to the point of factionalism, as differences in principle. This attempt met with the characteristic response as exhibited in the "Split in the PWOC", where we are accused of trying to drive them into extreme forms of their tendency, and also in "Four Questions", where we were accused of trying to "build in order to destroy" their faction. Every attempt to force these individuals into a discussion of principle was called "theoretical difference hunting" and "manipulation" or making sure "that struggle is always on a 'high theoretical plane', where ... (we) can confuse and mystify ... (our) opposition" (The Split p. 4). It was not until some six months after these incidents and related struggles that these minority individuals would admit to any differences in principle at all.

It was only after continued failings to force these individuals onto principled ground that we began to really consolidate the majority and the organization. As our demands for principled discussion of the differences in the PWOC were rejected every single time, we began to take the necessary steps to force clarification of the principled differences and to draw "sharp and clear lines of demarcation" between Marxism and their brand of (admitted) opportunism. Yes, we began to take every possible step to force the minority out into the open, to force them to state honestly and openly the real principles that guided their factional activity. And in order to achieve this we had to make use of educational and organizational (the bane of all opportunists) forms. We strived to carry out an all-sided struggle against opportunism in principle, and to force our minority to admit that their opportunism in principle was responsible for their factional behavior. We attempted to follow Lasalle's prophetic words to Marx: "Party struggles lend a party strength and vitality; the greatest proof of a party's weakness is its diffuseness and the blurring of clear demarcations; a party becomes stronger by purging itself."

Yes, we did try to purge the PWOC of the tendency which they represented. But we made every effort to purge them of their opportunism in order to reunify the PWOC. Our main goal was to drive opportunism out of the PWOC, but we nevertheless tried to win these mistaken individuals over to aiding us in this effort. It was only when, after repeated attempts, we failed to win these individuals over, that we realized that we would have to expel them if we were to truly succeed in freeing ourselves of their brand of opportunism.

What is really galling, though, about the presentation in the "Split in the PWOC" is that we can be accused of sectarianism by those who admit that they held an incorrect tendency. We are being accused of sectarianism because we carried out an all-sided struggle against admitted opportunism. This can be nothing but a defense of "diffuseness and the blurring of clear demarcations", a defense of the tolerance of opportunism!

This, then, raises a larger and more fundamental question to those of us who are trying hard to build communist organizations in this period. The question is, is it sectarian to consolidate a line in this period and to demand that the entire organization carry out that line, test it in practice. In the paper "Four Questions" and implicitly in the "Split in the PWOC" the author(s) holds that it is in fact sectarian. We disagree.

The PWOC holds that no theoretical advances can be made in this period if they are not consolidated into a line. After a sufficient amount of study, discussion it is absolutely critical that the results of this activity - theory - be consolidated into a line in order that it may be tested. This means that the theory becomes the organization's position on the concrete situation or aspects of that situation, and conscious attempts are made by the organization as a whole (including those who may disagree with the line developed by the majority) to test that line in its practice, insofar as it is possible. We cannot afford to adopt the attitude that because our practical activity is narrow we should allow the minority in the organization to dissent from the majority's views and to test their opposing view. One of the basic principles of Leninist organization is centralism - which is based on the subordination of the minority to the majority. Centralism is not just a principle to be applied to one or selective aspects of an organization's work; it must be applied to all areas of our work, including our theoretical work. This means that theory, when sufficiently developed, must become a line that is tested by the entire organization. It means, in addition, that a sufficient period of time has to be devoted to the testing of this theory, and that during this period of time the theory itself is not open to question. It becomes open to question again only if it is consciously decided by the organization to reopen the question. This is the Marxist theory of centralism on ideological questions.



If we do not right at this moment adopt this attitude, we as communists will make no progress to our goal of a revolutionary party guided by the most advanced theory. What theory that is developed will remain abstract, in the heads of individuals, and will not be subjected to the criterion of truth. There will be no collective practice which will enable us to evaluate and draw lines of demarcation between "an empty and dishonest preaching game" and real Marxist-Leninist theory of our time.

How would this work in practice in this period? First, we must recognize that some questions are more central to our work than others, and we must focus upon them. Secondly, we must recognize that there is a great deal that we have to learn and we will of necessity make errors. But this is not an argument against rigorous implementation of centralism to theoretical questions; it is just an argument for careful implementation of this centralism. Thirdly, we must spend sufficient time in developing that theory. But once we have sufficiently taken into consideration these questions we are ready to consolidate a line. For example, let us suppose that we have studied the trade union question and the majority of those in the organization feel that our line must be the revolutionization of the existing unions. This, then, becomes the line of the organization and it is to be tested in practice. During the period of time designated for its testing there is no further discussion of the correctness of the line unless the majority of the organization decides that the line is an open question again. Eventually the line is tested, and its grip on the organization is more or less secure. The organization has thereby taken a step forward; it has come to a collective understanding of the generally correct approach to the trade union question; it has advanced its ability to lead the class struggle.

For example, in the PWOC we have annual retreats which chart the course of our organization for the coming year. Before those retreats the entire organization is engaged in a discussion of the coming year's activity, on the basis of reports from the Executive Committee. The retreat is an open forum for discussion, amendment, opposition, etc. After this discussion the majority of the organization endorses a line for the coming year. That line becomes the organization's line and every member is bound to put it into practice. Then, immediately prior to the next retreat the line again becomes open for discussion. But during the year and before the open period, the line itself is not open to discussion. Discussion is focused on the method of implementation of the line and the practice of the organization in carrying out that line. If any member of the organization seeks revision of the line, he or she would have to present the reasons for doing so to the organization and ask that the discussion be opened. The majority of the organization can decide to do so at any time. If, however, this individual's request is rejected, he would have to await the regularly scheduled open period before raising his points for discussion. In this period any individual is free to present his or her views.

Our discussion of the consolidation of a line is intentionally schematic. The process never happens in quite this way, for reality is much too complex. Practice can never show something to be 'truth' completely to the satisfaction of all involved. What does happen, though, is that reality more or less confirms the correctness of one or another approach; it more or less sides with one line or another. While we must demand that a line be tested, it would be utopian to demand that it be tested to the degree that it is convincing for all involved. The necessities of our objective tasks demand that we proceed faster than this would allow; we must base ourselves on the judgement of a majority. The majority may, of course, be wrong, but democratic centralism teaches us that a majority in an organization of reasonably homogeneous political attitudes is more often correct than the minority.

We have said that to require that our theory be entirely tested in our present practice and entirely produced by our present practice is to advocate tailism. But now we have urged that this theory, if it is to be ideology, must be consolidated into a line precisely so that it may be subjected to practice as the criterion of its truth. The contradiction here is only apparent. That this is so can be seen as soon as one takes up a concrete question. Take the trade union question, for example. In the process of developing theory on the trade union question, we draw our knowledge partly from the present situation and partly from the historical experience of the proletariat. The theory then comes from both our present practice and from theoretical abstractions of earlier times. These two components are woven together in the ideology that one develops. Now this ideology must, of course, be tested if we are to confirm it as not only true for others but true for us in our time. But it can neither be tested comprehensively, nor, as we said above, to the satisfaction of everyone. The most that can be expected is that it will be more or less confirmed, more or less

tested. And since some aspects of any question, especially the most immediate, are more capable of confirmation than other, the testing will necessarily be uneven. It is of course also possible that any ideology will contain both correct and incorrect components. But here again, we have no argument against the consolidation of a line, just an argument for a certain degree of caution. And here again, when that caution is translated into the position that only theory capable of absolutely positive confirmation in our present practice is to be developed, one slips into tailism. While we communists certainly risk falling into error by trying to precede our practice, we also "risk" advancing to the proletarian revolution.

We have gone into all this because it is necessary in order to contrast our position with that of the expelled. The expelled never argued (except implicitly) against the principles we are advancing here. What they did was to argue against their implementation. In the early period this took the form of arguing against centralism, division of labor, subordination of minority to majority. When this more crude opportunism was negated, it took the form of charging that we had been sectarian in struggling so rigorously with their admittedly incorrect views. It was not so much the forms or principles themselves that they objected to, as it was our filling these forms with political content - ie. organizationally struggling against opportunism.

Incidentally, this explains not only the sectarian charge, but also the final position that they advanced in our organization before they were expelled. They told us that while we felt that their opportunist views were the source of factionalism, disruption and the split in our organization, and they argued that our "sectarian" methods of struggle (consolidating the struggle against opportunism) were the root of the problem, that there was no reason for us to expel them. In spite of the fact that they would be bound to struggle against our "sectarian" attitudes to ideological struggle, they promised that they would keep quiet for a few months. What they offered us was peace between two principledly opposed groups, one of which called for a rigorous struggle against opportunism and the other which called for peace between opportunism and Marxism. And all this under the threat of disruption of our trade union work! The position that they advanced in this last month of the internal struggle was that peace with their opportunism in the PWOC would be less disruptive to our work than public struggle against this opportunism outside the PWOC.

Objectively, the expelled oppose the consolidation of communist organization in this period. While after their "self-criticism" they no longer opposed this consolidation on the crude level of opposing democratic centralism, division of labor, discipline and the like, they continued to oppose the critical component of organizational consolidation - ideological unity. They agreed with the forms of communist organization but could not accept the essence. In the "Four Questions" the opportunist author holds that the low level of development of our movement entails "special solutions". One of these special solutions, he argues, (in this paper implicitly and in his practice explicitly) is to not require ideological unity. Now, ideological unity around real ideology (the Marxism-Leninism of our time) is the critical component of the consolidation of communist organization in this period. For if there is one thing that separates the communist trend from the bourgeois trend, it is not so much that it practices democratic centralism, etc., but that its ideology is distinct. To argue, as the expelled do, that ideological unity can wait, is to oppose any real consolidation in this period. To argue that it is sectarian, as do our expelled opportunists, to demand ideological unity against opportunism, and that it is sectarian to implement this demand in all-sided struggle, is to set oneself against the consolidation of Marxism-Leninism in this period.

Given that these particular opportunists opposed the really critical consolidation of a Marxist-Leninist ideology in our organization, it was quite natural that the central point of clash between our trend and theirs would be on this question. This proves not only that the clash came out over practical questions but also demonstrates the really destructive nature of their tendency. Because these individuals opposed the consolidation of Marxism-Leninism in our time, they objectively blocked every attempt that the Marxist trend in our organization tried to make in order to advance the PWOC. It was their opposition to an all-sided consolidation of the force of Marxism that really made these individuals intolerable in the PWOC. (Note: While in their paper "The Split in the PWOC" these opportunists mention the words "ideological struggle" repeatedly, there is not one instance where the words "ideological unity" appear.)

Their opposition to implementation of ideological unity is integrally bound up with their attitude to the relationship of theory to practice in this period. In the latter instance they make use of the narrowness of our practice to debunk our theoretical tasks. Practice becomes the guide to all theory in this period.

Since practice is the guide to theory and theory serves as the basis of ideological unity, then practice also takes the place of ideological unity. What ideology we do need, the opportunists objectively argue, will be produced by our practice. Given that our practice is so narrow and diffuse, one could expect that its ideological product would be narrow and diffuse also. If one accepted such an idea one would certainly be justified in calling the PWOC sectarian for demanding an all-sided struggle against admitted opportunism. If one accepts that we need only the ideological rigor demanded by our present practice at its low level of development, then certainly it would be sectarian to expel those who oppose advancing that ideology to a higher level. If practice is to be the guide to theory - and therefore to the consolidation of communist organization - then the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the ideology of opportunism can coexist, for practice will point the way. If one believes practice to be the guide to theory, one really has no need for ideology at all!!!

Three more issues of the split and eventual expulsion are worthy of note, all of which demonstrate and corroborate our analysis. They are: our practice of the theory-practice dialectic, "proletarianization", and criticism-self criticism. We will take them one at a time.

The expelled held in their paper "The Split in the PWOC" that we devoted little attention to linking theory to practice and that we strived to "preserve the purity of our politics" by isolating our theory from the day-to-day leadership of the mass struggles. As they are stated here, these two propositions are false - they are fabrications to cover opposition in principle to our line on the relationship of theory to practice in this period.

What is true, however, about their criticisms they will not dare to expose for it would do more to expose them than us. It is true that we attempted to develop "pure" politics, and refused in certain cases to link theory to practice as they understand that. It is, however, a truth which they attempt to turn into its opposite because of their objective inversion of the correct relationship of theory to practice. It is true in the following sense: We consistently emphasized that we must address the working class with a "scientific idea and a positive doctrine" which had been purified to the extent possible from bourgeois ideology. We did demand that before we made attempts to "link theory to practice" we must develop the theory which we would be attempting to link to practice. We refused to pretend in our mass work that we knew something that we did not in fact really know. This is why we rejected the "Trade Union Agitational Program", the only substantive proposal made by these opportunists in 18 months of membership in PWOC. We rejected it, not because it was a bad idea in the abstract, nor because it was so poorly defined and disorganized. The fact that it read somewhat like the list of begats in the Bible only manifested its weakness. We refused to present the workers with a "Trade Union Agitational Program" which would not be truly programmatic and would not represent any scientific knowledge on our part. And we were not at that time capable of developing one which would have really filled our needs in this regard, because what we needed was not a program in the formal written sense, but a programmatic sense of how to approach our trade union work. This programmatic sense was being developed at that time in our organization through the drafting of a Trade Union Position Paper, monthly meetings (at the very least) of industrial clubs whose purpose from their inception was carrying out our shop work, and quarterly trade union work reviews which were intirely devoted to discussing tactical work in the various shops.

It is in this sense that we refused to "engage in an empty and dishonest preaching game" that we were then and are still striving to preserve the "purity" of the PWOC's politics - not in the sense that we were not actively involved in leading mass struggles in our work places. It was in reality our demands for a real living scientific doctrine that our expelled minority opposed. Their opposition was not based merely on a question of standards; it is integrally related to their attitude toward the tasks of the period. If we have no need of theory to guide our practice, and our practice is too narrow to really test our theory, then the point becomes not the quality of our work but the quantity. If there is no need for a "positive doctrine", then any "Trade Union Agitational Program" will be as good as any other; it makes no difference whether it is correct or incorrect or that it have no programmatic sense whatsoever. The point is, from this perspective, to have an AGITATIONAL program; to demand an agitational PROGRAM is to be "afraid of subjecting one's theory to practice". If there is no need for a real theoretical understanding of the present period based on real scientific investigation, then, of course, one can claim the "knowledge" capable of filling "out, even generally, the question of what historical stage the world of U.S. struggle is at" (The Split, p. 9). If one does not recognize the real theoretical weakness in our movement (and historically in the entire history of

the left in this country) and consequently the urgency of the development of the Marxist-Leninist theory of our time, then one would certainly see the practice of the PWOC as overly theoretical when in fact historically the opposite is the case. If one feels that our practical tasks are our only tasks, then there is no functional difference between "a scientific idea and a positive doctrine" and "an empty and dishonest preaching game". (Note: the PWOC is on the verge of publishing its Trade Union Program, which sets forward not only our theoretical attitude to the trade unions but also our program for the present period.)

The second issue which exposes the anti-theoretical bias of the expelled is the "proletarianization" one. In the "Split in the PWOC" our opportunists criticize us (and it is the very first criticism under "PWOC's Separation of Theoretical and Practical Work") for "almost entirely ignoring the question of how to integrate its cadre with the masses". This criticism was raised in the "Four Questions" and their attitude is exhibited in the long mishmash which we already quoted. Whenever the relationship of theory to practice comes up for the expelled, it always boils down to the question of how to achieve "the ideological and personal transformation of cadre" (Four Questions, p.4). It would seem from their repeated raising of this question that they must feel that it is a central question in our movement, though characteristically they have never said as much.

We in the PWOC do not see the "question of how to integrate ... cadre with the masses" as a central question in this period. First, because we make no separation between the PWOC from the workers movement. We feel that we are an integral part of this movement in the city of Philadelphia. The problem, as we see it, is how to develop a communist current in the workers' movement. Secondly, we see that our ability to create such a current is not centered upon our ability to "transform ourselves as individuals" but on our ability to develop a political line which will enable us to provide real communist leadership (not just the form but essence of this leadership) to the spontaneous mass struggles that the workers are presently engaged in. To us the question comes down to this: how do we develop organic links between the communist movement and the mass workers' movement, and on what basis? What will be most critical towards answering this question will not be our ability to transform ourselves (into perfect "proletarians", we assume) but our political line. One's political line is primarily dependent upon one's ideology, which has as its foundation - here it is again - theory.

But here again, what really was harmful about the attitude of the expelled around this question was not their explicit position that we should focus on this, but the kind of focus they advanced in practice. Their focus was purely and entirely a stylistic one. What was important to them was not our ability to provide communist leadership to the working class (that is, leadership which moves the workers toward communism), but where people lived, how much they socialized with "workers", and whether they lived a "proletarian" life style. Needless to say, nobody in the PWOC lives in the suburbs, owns two cars and a swimming pool.

This, however, was only the initial position that the expelled had on this question. We were able to convince them that to focus upon these things was incorrect. So they dropped this focus in favor of what they called "contact work" (how many people you could contact in one week), or whether people should be allowed to take vacations, and so on. The focus was still purely quantitative and formal, skirting around the real issues. And when such a focus is advanced over and against the focus on political line you have a real problem. Because here again, the importance of politics and ideology is belittled in favor of purely formal questions. Obviously to one who has no concern for theory, it makes no difference what kind of leadership we provide the working class, and one kind of leadership is as good as another.

Finally we come to criticism-self criticism. Here again one finds the same disregard for real political questions. Reading the "Split in the PWOC" we find that the PWOC's weakness was that it did not develop any forms for regular criticism-self criticism (which is untrue), that we failed to carry out assignments on time, that while we would criticize our work, we failed to identify "WHO WAS PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE". Again, we must admit that there is a certain truth here. We truly did not develop the kind of forms for criticism-self criticism that they desired. In "Four Question" the author suggested that we criticize two people every month, until we had run through the entire organization, and then begin anew; further, it was suggested that we schedule the criticism-self-criticism session of the leadership body twice a year instead of the once which we already had. The forms that we had developed (which were developed for political

reasons) like the Annual Retreat (to evaluate our work) and the Quarterly Shop Reviews they opportunely ignore. It is also true that certain assignments were not carried out, but it is not true that individuals were not criticized for their failings in this regard. We did not jump down an individual's throat for such an occasional offence, however. It is true, too, that the main focus of the criticism sessions that we did have was not on "WHO was responsible" but on what the error was and why it was made. In short, our focus was political and collective, and not personal and individual.

This is not to say that we did not and do not criticize individuals when necessary. We have done a fair amount of this type of criticism. Certainly it is important to criticize individuals when they are responsible for errors. But as with any other communist tool, we in the PWOC are more interested in the politics involved than the personalities of individuals. For the PWOC, criticism-self-criticism is a political tool, which has primarily a collective focus and secondarily an individual focus. The collective focus is to correct the organization's line and to check its implementation of its line. (The fact that the expelled do not even mention this aspect of criticism-self-criticism is evidence of their individualistic approach). That is, it is every bit as much the practice of criticism-self-criticism when it focuses on the mistakes of an entire organization or collective unit within the organization. This aspect of the use of criticism is, in fact, primary and determines the character of the individual aspect. For when we criticize an individual, we focus not on his/her personality, but upon his/her political practice and implementation of the organization's line. Here again, ideology is key.

The ideological approach of the expelled to criticism-self-criticism is also exposed in the "Four Questions" paper. Our opportunist here writes that criticism-self-criticism "is merely (!) the application of ideological struggle and principles to an individual's practice" (our emphasis, p. 10). Here the author states explicitly his understanding of the use of criticism-self-criticism in the characteristic opportunist phraseology. What our author is "merely saying" is that for him criticism is focused on the individual and does not have a collective focus. This is because our author sees no need for a line in this period, and therefore criticism could not play a role in correcting the political practice of an organization's line.

In addition, the writer exhibits his "practice is the guide to theory" approach. While he presumably thinks there is such a thing as correct and incorrect criticism, he argues:

I think that there is very little way to separate "proper" and "improper" criticism at the outset ... Therefore, the group must, by and large, judge criticism on the basis of whether they are correct or incorrect as a whole; except in extreme cases, only struggle will reveal whether or not there is a basis for a criticism. (his emphasis, Four Questions, p. 11).

Here again theory becomes some accessory after the fact to practice. The only way to separate correct from incorrect criticism, the author argues, is to take each criticism separately and STRUGGLE, STRUGGLE, STRUGGLE, with each concrete criticism. We should, then, allow a free for all for criticism, and judge each criticism on the basis of concrete struggle over it. If the struggle proves productive the criticism is correct; if not, it is incorrect. And each new criticism is to be dealt with in the same way. One must begin anew, with each particular criticism.

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We have seen that those expelled from our organization opposed the consistent application of Marxism-Leninism to the situation facing the PWOC. They belittled theory and our theoretical tasks, objectively holding that Marxism-Leninism could not be applied in the present period. They opposed systematic and rigorous struggle against admitted opportunism, objectively defending opportunism's right to peaceful coexistence with Marxism. They opposed a scientific approach to the tasks of the PWOC, encouraging us to assume that we were "inspired prophets" and the workers were nothing but "ignorant asses". And they not only opposed the development of a scientific approach, but also advanced an individualistic one in its place. In essence, given the state of our movement, these individuals opposed the development of the PWOC into a communist organization.

It is with such an understanding that we approach their attacks on the PWOC. Where they are not engaged in slander and touch upon true weaknesses in our

organization, it was precisely their ideology and their activity in our organization which served as the greatest impediment to rectifying these weaknesses. At every critical juncture, when the organization took a step forward and became more capable of fulfilling its tasks, they opposed that step. Every attempt on the part of our organization to achieve a systematic rectification of our failings found them in opposition. And yet these individuals now turn around and throw these weaknesses in our faces, when it was they, themselves, who opposed any real solutions!

This, then, is how we understand their attacks. Where they mean by the charge of sectarianism dogmatism, we were dogmatic in that we argued that a central task in this period was the development of the Marxism-Leninism of our time. We were dogmatic in demanding that this theory be developed in sharp struggle against the opportunist currents in our movement. In addition, we were dogmatic in demanding real positive scientific knowledge as a basis for action.

Where they mean by sectarian real sectarianism, we were sectarian in taking positive steps to implement our ideology in our organization. We were sectarian because we not only held that we had theoretical tasks but actually took steps to see that these tasks were carried out. In addition (and this is a real killer!), we were sectarian in implementing an all-sided struggle (using organizational measures, no less) against an admittedly opportunist trend!

We "failed to link theory to practice" because we failed (true enough!) to focus entirely upon our practical tasks, relegating the ideological and theoretical ones to a secondary status. Here also, they mean that we failed to address the workers from the standpoint of ignorance. Finally, we failed to take up what they had projected as our central task: the making of perfect proletarian, communist personalities.

Our failings with regard to criticism-self-criticism can be understood in that we failed to adopt their perspective of making the individual primary and politics secondary, that we failed to adopt their individualistic approach to criticism.

Given our understanding of the ideology of these individuals, we were not surprised that they would try to conceal their opportunism in principle behind an attack on the PWOC. We understand that their criticisms are a smokescreen for their tenacious opposition to the construction of communist organization in this period. We understand that what they are really opposing is the practice of Marxism-Leninism, especially as applied to the PWOC. And it was precisely this which made their continued participation in the PWOC intolerable.

But what was striking about the paper "The Split in the PWOC" was the lengths to which they were willing to go in order to advance their opposition to the concrete development of Marxism-Leninism in our time. In the first place, they were willing to win adherents to their cause on the basis of anti-communism. By picturing theory, ideology, communist organization, etc. in terms reminiscent of the cold war anti-Stalin propaganda, they cannot help but aid the anti-communist currents in our movement. These individuals know full well that the PWOC is not dominated by fanatics, and demonic individuals, and yet they picture us as such. These individuals know that they were not manipulated and whipped into a frenzy, and yet they would give that impression. They know full well that every member of the PWOC is directly involved in day-to-day work in the working class, and yet they would picture us as ivory-tower intellectuals. What purpose can such distortion play, other than to fawn at the feet of anti-communism?

Secondly, the expelled opportunists' approach to the split is factional. It is wrong, as these individuals have done, to shake your finger at something, saying "see how foolish these communists are" without presenting your principles and setting out a more correct approach. Not to do so is to criticize individuals and to assume that those who are listening know the correct approach and understand your principles. All those who are listening, however, may not be coming from a communist and principled understanding. To argue as they do is to seek support from anti-communists.

But what is really outrageous about this little paper is that it pretends to be the founding call for a new organization. While this founding call makes no presentation of principles whatsoever, it has as its one unifying principle opposition to the PWOC. This is factional behavior at its worst, as explained below:

When attempts are made to form a separate organization which is to have no ideological and political physiognomy, it is THE WORST form of

factionalism.

(emphasis in original, Lenin, Col. Wks. vol. XX, p. 342)

We urge these individuals to cease playing to anti-communism, to cease this "worst form" of factionalism. We urge them to define their principles and develop their organization on the basis of these principles alone. For to continue to attempt to build an organization with the two unifying principles being functional anti-communism and antagonism to the PWOC will lead these individuals up a blind ally. They will only bring dishonor upon themselves.

As for the PWOC itself, we will continue along the course that we have charted. While we have many weaknesses in every area of our organization and its work, we will continue to hold that only the application of the principles of Marxism-Leninism right here and now will serve to rectify these weaknesses. We will continue to carry out an all-sided struggle against all forms of opportunism in our movement and in our organization. Knowing that opportunism will become more sophisticated and more clever, we are confident that it will be defeated if it is not underestimated. Therefore, we are more convinced than ever of the need to apply Marxism-Leninism now, to our work and to our opportunists. And so we say to these individuals: Opportunists and fellow travelers, we will continue to advance even if it means thrusting you aside. So let go of our shirttails, you shall not hold us back!

(Note: We have expressed here our present understanding of the fundamental differences which led to the expulsion of these individuals. Needless to say, we did not come to such an understanding out of the blue; it evolved, as did some of our organizational forms, in the course of the struggle against these particular opportunists. It itself was a product of the struggle against opportunism in the PWOC. It is also true that we have written here what was not said to the expelled in so complete or comprehensive a form. Nevertheless, it was all said in one form or another. Certainly, it would have been preferable to have had the struggle take the form of a principled exchange of the different viewpoints. But the expelled made this functionally impossible. It was not until August 1973, a month before the expulsion, that our opportunists even presented anything close to a systematic exposition of their views. This was the "Four Questions" piece and we had to require (through an organizational directive) that it be written. Then, however, all attempts to discuss this paper proved futile as they refused to aid us in our attempts to extricate them from opportunism's spider web.)

PWOC March 1, 1974