

THE COMMUNIST

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

"A Communist should have largeness of mind and he should be staunch and active, looking upon the interests of the revolution as his very life and subordinating his personal interests to those of the revolution; always and everywhere he should adhere to principle and wage a tireless struggle against all incorrect ideas and actions so as to



consolidate the collective life of the Party and strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses; he should be more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any individual and more concerned about others than about himself. Only thus can he be considered a Communist." Mao Tsetung

VOLUME IV, no.20 WORKERS CONGRESS (MARXIST-LENINIST) POB 248 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60690 September 11, 1978 25¢

NATIONAL PROPOSAL TO BUILD THE ANTI-BAKKE MOVEMENT

Which way forward for the anti-Bakke movement?

This is a decisive question for those active in the movement, many who have dropped out, and others concerned about the Bakke attack on equal rights who have not yet found a way to take up work.

Wide publicity around the Supreme Court decision upholding Bakke's claim of 'reverse discrimination' and legal challenges to affirmative action in one place after another since the decision this summer have made more and more people conscious of the impact of the decision and of its importance. Bakke is not a dead issue. It is on people's minds, people want to know how it will affect them, and they want leadership in the struggle to oppose it.

The potential for broadening

and deepening the struggle to defend and expand affirmative action programs, therefore, is definitely good. This should be a period of rapid growth. More than ever the conditions exist for drawing together broad masses of people throughout the country and a wide variety of democratic minded organizations in order to build one powerful nationwide campaign.

Unfortunately, however, since the Supreme Court's decision in the Bakke case, the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition (ABDC) has been paralyzed by lack of a national plan to take advantage of this situation and draw new forces and energy into the struggle.

This situation must come to an end. Now is the time to build upon the good work the

ABDC has done, to go deeply into the issue of affirmative action, to expand our outlook and outreach and to build a single nationwide coalition, as broadly based as possible, in order to unite all who can be united to defend and expand affirmative action programs.

A TENDENCY TO ABANDON THE DEFENSE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

However, at this time a tendency has come forward in the ABDC which seeks to abandon affirmative action as the focus of coalition work. This tendency argues that the essence of the Bakke case is national oppression. Therefore, to continue to focus on affirmative action would narrow the work of the coalition and be too legalistic; it would hold back the work of the ABDC and lead it up a dead alley. Affirmative action, the argument goes on, is just one part of national oppression. What is required, then, claim the friends who hold this view, is a coalition which focuses broadly on all issues of national oppression.

THE ABDC "NATIONAL PLAN"

This appears to be the general thrust of the 'national plan' which has begun to come forward from the national office of the ABDC as reported by local chapter leaders. The national office has specifically called for a nationwide week of resistance November 6-12 to commemorate the strikes of "third world" students ten years ago. These particular dates were chosen because they are the 10th anniversary of the San Francisco State strike. Under this plan each local should take up a major campaign in their area such as the Jarvis-Gann initiative. But the national ABDC would not determine what campaign should be taken up in any area because that would depend on what the masses of people were involved in locally. Jarvis-Gann is good in California, for example, because everyone there is taking it up. But in another region or locality police brutality or busing or housing or a student campaign such as the

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DENOUNCE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT MEETING

Palestinians in the US have joined with the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) and Palestinian mayors throughout the occupied West Bank to denounce the current summit meeting between President Carter, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. In Israel the PLO has begun a new wave of guerrilla attacks to show that the armed struggle for Palestinian self-determination continues unaffected by the US orchestrated meeting at Camp David.

No peace can be made at Camp David. Carter is no neutral peacemaker. He does not oppose Israeli occupation of Palestine or Zionist expansionism. He does not recognize Palestinian self-determination and the right of the Palestinian people to their homeland. He does not recognize the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. He does not oppose massive US military aid to sustain Zionist aggression.

On what basis, then, does Carter pose as a "peacemaker" between Begin and Sadat when the only thing he can offer, we learn, is a willingness to

commit US troops to the Middle East as a "security presence."

As we have stated before in THE COMMUNIST, the US has no legitimate role in the Middle East negotiations -- not at Camp David, not in Jerusalem or Cairo, and not at Geneva. In speaking to the US role, the PLO said last winter: "The US has lost its role as a neutral arbiter in the Middle East with its support for Israeli occupation and expansion against Palestinian self-determination." The official Palestinian press service pointed out that US strategy was aimed at "exterminating the Palestinian presence, annihilating the Palestinian national identity and consecrating the occupation of Palestine and other occupied Arab territories."

The Middle East is a sharp focus of superpower aggression and contention in the world. It stands to reason that under these circumstances peace in the Middle East cannot come by relying on either superpower.

Sadat is wrong to agree to come to Camp David because of US assurances to become a "full partner" to the negotiations. There can be no partnership between a third world country and the US superpower. The US interest in the Middle East is for oppression and the extension of hegemony. "Peace" is the unrestricted right of exploitation for US imperialism.

The same is true for the Soviet Union which has responded to the Camp David meeting with a new call for reconvening the Geneva conference. The Soviet Union poses as a "natural ally" of the Arab people, but behind the scenes it has consistently attempted to better its relations with Israel.

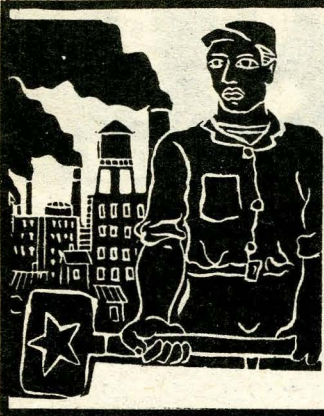
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September 9th marks the second anniversary of the death of Chairman Mao Tsetung, leader of the international proletariat and the oppressed nations and peoples throughout the world and the greatest Marxist-Leninist of the contemporary era. Chairman Mao throughout his life dedicated all his energies to the liberation of the Chinese people, to the emancipation of the oppressed nations and oppressed people the world over, and to communism. His revolutionary optimism and unrestricted confidence in the limitless power of the masses of people is a profound example to us. It is with renewed determination that we take up the banner of Mao Tsetung Thought in our struggle against imperialism, social imperialism, revisionism and all reaction.

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FACTORY EXPOSURES

FACTORY EXPOSURES is a regular column of THE COMMUNIST. We encourage all workers and Marxist-Leninists to send in articles concerning trade union struggles, local grievances, health and safety issues and other forms of workplace abuse.

WOMAN STRUGGLES AGAINST CHAUVINISM

I was recently hired as a journeyman welder in a large fabrication plant. The company had won a government contract in May, and had been forced to hire women in production for the first time since World War II. I was the first woman welder that anyone working there could remember. There were seven other women in my shop, out of 105 workers, but they were all hired as welder helpers. My experience in this shop illustrates some of the contradictions among the people that face the working class as women are integrated into heavy industry: male chauvinist attitudes among workers, great nation chauvinism, and the divisive tactics of the company that perpetuate and aggravate them.

HIRING PRACTICES PROMOTE CHAUVINISM

First, that I passed the welding test and was hired as a skilled worker brought out several issues. There were a number of male workers who had failed the test and consequently been hired as helpers. The test itself was an appearance test, meaning it was totally subjective and gave the

company a free hand to hire whoever they wanted. It didn't depend on the weld bending or being x-rayed, only on whether the guy giving the test wanted to see the person hired or not. I tried to always make this subjectivity clear in my conversations with other workers. It was true that I was a good welder, but they had probably hired me because they needed a woman welder for their affirmative action statistics. Many men who had been welding for up to 25 years failed the test, probably because at the time they took it the company needed more helpers, not welders.

The women generally expressed pride that a woman passed the test and represented women in the skilled trades. However, I met one black woman who had failed the test and was hired as a helper. Regardless of either of our abilities, the fact that I, a white woman, was passed, was an example of how the company uses affirmative action programs to maintain and increase the national divisions that exist in the working class. As long as the company had to hire women, they managed to use it to divide workers by encouraging national chauvinist and male

chauvinist sentiments. They could continue Jim Crow by hiring white women into the skilled trades and keeping minority women in the low paying positions. They also created contradictions by assigning a male helper who had been welding for 20 years to help a woman welder who had much less experience. Although these situations weren't usually treated antagonistically by the workers, the injustice of them was obvious.

AGITATING FOR EQUALITY FOR WOMEN IN INDUSTRY

One result of male chauvinism is that women in these jobs draw a lot of attention no matter what they do. They are often treated like freaks, curiosities. The first time I welded, I looked up to change my rod and found a circle of men gathered behind me with their hoods to watch me weld. If they thought it was a good weld, I heard comments about how women make better welders because they have steadier hands, or more patience. If they thought it was bad, or if they were against women on the job, my performance was again generalized to say I was a woman and women just can't handle the job.

These attitudes have to be patiently contradicted by explaining that there is nothing inherent in the job or in women that makes me do well or poorly. Anyone can learn the skill with a little training and practice. It is only a question of whether the industry needs more workers and will call on the reserve labor supply of women, as it did in World War II, or is forced to hire women because of the mass struggles of women to demand jobs and equality that led to affirmative action for women.

In any case, the attention I drew gave me a lot of opportunity to agitate around the issues of equality for women in industry, and for the most part my male co-workers were responsible and supportive. There were those who expressed the attitude that women shouldn't be in the trades because they were taking a job away from a man. This argument can be countered by reminding them of the high percentage of women workers who are single heads of households, and also that women have to eat and pay the rent just as much as men do. But there were others who came up

and congratulated me, saying they thought it was a good thing that women were able to get better paying jobs now, and that it was obvious that women were equal to men in their ability to do the work.

INADEQUATE, FILTHY AND UNSAFE CONDITIONS

Since the company hadn't hired women before, the facilities for women were makeshift and inadequate. This is a good issue to take up in the struggle for equality. For instance, the men's locker room had enough showers so that they could all take showers at the end of each shift. The women had one shower, usually with only cold water, and one toilet, in a locker room that was also used as a lounge for inspectors. If the inspectors were in there, a woman would have to ask them to leave so that she could use the bathroom. The men had cold water fountains in their locker rooms, but the women didn't. We had to either get a man to go to the locker room and bring us a drink, or drink warm water from the outside faucet. These inequities were obvious to everyone, and there was a lot of support from the men to force the company to improve conditions for us.

Connected with this struggle were health and safety issues that affect all workers, the filthy conditions of all the locker rooms and toilets, and the generally dirty, disorganized and unsafe conditions around the plant. The struggle for safe and healthy working conditions for women is part of the broader struggle for genuine health and safety reforms under imperialism, and shouldn't be taken up in an isolated way that could be construed as "privileges for women". All health and safety issues are the concern of all workers. Some particular issues may affect one section of workers more directly, but each struggle should be taken up and supported by all workers, as our strength lies in building our unity.

TAKE UP THE STRUGGLE AGAINST NATIONAL CHAUVINISM

National chauvinism also presented contradictions. There were tensions between the black and white women, in

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CHICANOS RALLY TO FIGHT REPRESSION

On August 27th, 500 people gathered in the Ysleta community of El Paso, Texas to protest the violent repression of Chicanos and other oppressed nationalities by law enforcement agencies in the Southwest. Demanding an end to this repression, the demonstration brings to national attention the brutality and violence that has led to at least 30 known cases in the last year of Chicanos who have been killed "accidentally" by police agencies in the state of Texas alone.

The rally began with a march through the primarily Chicano community of Ysleta. The mass support for this struggle against national oppression was apparent in the numerous small businesses draped with banners demanding an end to police repression, and the people in residential areas who cheered and joined the march.

ORGANIZING AGAINST POLICE REPRESSION

Organized as a "National Rally Against Police Repression" the demonstration was successful in bringing together activists in the Chicano movement from every state in the Southwest. Speakers from the Chicano organizations in El Paso that organized the rally--Chicanos Unidos, La Compañía Por La Preservación Del Barrio and the Danny Vasquez Justice Committee--declared that this was only the first of a series of actions which would be used to mobilize mass resistance to

police repression on a national scale. The next rally is planned for November 26 (the Sunday after Thanksgiving) in Phoenix, Arizona.

Also a main speaker at the rally was Ricardo Vasquez, father of Danny Vasquez. 17 year old Danny Vasquez was "accidentally" murdered last January by a policeman. His "crime" was protesting the arrest of a friend involved in an insignificant fist-fight among youths. Representing eleven other families present at the rally, Ricardo Vasquez read from a joint "Statement by Families of Victims of Police Murder". This statement called for building a mass organization to educate and lead the people in mass resistance to police repression. The statement also asserted the right of self-defense and called for building for a national demonstration against police terror and for developing a national committee that would send members of families which have become victims of police terror to the United Nations to build links with our allies in the third world.

Appropriately, the spirited rally ended with a statement of international solidarity by revolutionaries from neighboring Juarez, Mexico. In expressing their support for Chicanos and their struggle against police repression these Mexican third world allies pointed clearly to the imperialist system as our

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MIDDLE EAST

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For these reasons, Sadat was profoundly wrong in Israel last November when he told the Israeli parliament, "we accept all the guarantees you want from the two superpowers or from either of them. . . because in return we shall receive the same guarantees."

The problems of the Middle East can only be resolved by the people of that region without outside interference by the world's largest imperialist powers. Only by relying on the people of Palestine and the Arab world, as well as on the solidarity of the peoples and countries of the third world, can Egypt face up to Zionist aggression without turning to one superpower or the other.

The Zionist policy of aggression and expansion has benefited the two superpowers, and especially US imperialism, not the majority of Jewish settlers in Israel. Militarization of the economy and unjust wars have led to constant hardship and increasing disension among the Israeli people themselves. On the day prior to Begin's visit, 100,000 Israelis demonstrated under such slogans as 'Better a land of peace than a piece of land.'

The establishment of a secular Palestinian state, which would be the result of self-determination for the Palestinian people, would be in the best interests of all the masses in the area. As Yassar Arafat, head of the PLO, made clear in his speech to the UN in 1974, future Palestine would be open to all Jews now living there "who chose to live with us there in peace and without discrimination."

In meeting with a delegation of the PLO last summer, Chairman Hua Kuofeng of the Chinese Communist Party extended his warm greetings and support for the Palestinian people, expressing the feelings of freedom loving people everywhere: "The Palestinian brothers' struggle is very arduous. Because of superpower aggression and contention in the Middle East, the struggle of the Palestinian and Arab people is protracted. But we must not lose sight of the fact that the Palestinian and Arab peoples struggle is just, and a just struggle is bound to triumph. The Palestinian and Arab people are bound to win final victory as long as they persevere in armed struggle and uphold unity."

STEELWORKERS DEMAND RIGHT-TO-RATIFY

September 18th, the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) will open their 19th Constitutional Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. One of the main issues to be debated will be a "right-to-ratify" resolution. If passed, this resolution would amend the union constitution to give all members of the USWA the power to ratify all bargaining agreements. Approximately 400,000, one third of all USWA members, primarily those in basic steel industries, presently do not have this right.

Since 1974 steelworkers in basic steel have worked under the Experimental Negotiating Agreement (ENA). The ENA puts ratification of contracts into the hands of an industry-wide conference composed of the presidents of each local representing basic steel. This method allows for a great numerical disparity in representation. For example, a local president representing 2,000 workers has the same vote as one representing 18,000.

Even more important, the leadership in these locals in almost every case never represents the interests of the workers. Thus the process of ratification set up under the ENA has only served to fortify the wall between the rank and file which must work under the contract and the international "leadership" of the USWA that negotiates it.

It is only under such a structure that the bureaucracy under the control of USWA Lloyd McBride can maintain control over the union. In a period when profits are growing for the monopolies, the real income of steelworkers

is being slashed yearly, working conditions, especially health and safety, are deteriorating, and overall job security is being threatened as the number of jobs in basic steel is constantly reduced. In the face of this attack on steelworkers by the capitalists who own the steel monopolies, McBride openly defends and implements policies of class-collaborationism and calls for "labor-management cooperation."

The "right-to-ratify" movement is part of the growing opposition on the shop floors of basic steel to these policies of class collaboration by the national USWA leadership. Local 1010, at Inland Steel in East Chicago, Indiana, and one of the largest locals in basic steel with a membership of 18,000, has taken the lead in the "right-to-ratify" movement. Thousands of steelworkers all across the country have signed shop-floor petitions demanding the right to ratify their contracts. The demand clearly reflects a consciousness among steelworkers that the USWA leadership has sold out to the steel monopolies.

For their part, McBride and the USWA leadership clearly understand the essence of the "right-to-ratify" movement, and they have used their control over the trade union apparatus to try and squash it.

Recently they blocked the nationwide mailing of a letter in support of the "right-to-ratify". The East Chicago local 1010 planned to send the letter to the 5400 locals of the USWA. It included a resolution on the right to ratify

contracts for the upcoming Constitutional Convention. The local membership had approved both this resolution and the mailing.

Supporters of International President McBride first charged that the Local 1010 mailing list had been illegally obtained. The International's investigation team couldn't come up with any evidence, but the bureaucrats stopped the mailing anyway claiming it was "improper". According to spokesmen for the International leadership of the USWA, "There will be ample time at the convention to promulgate, advocate, and work for passage" of resolutions. With almost the same breath, however, McBride has vowed to crush all "disorder" at the convention.

The response of the bureaucrats to the rank and file demand for greater democracy and control over their union has been to counterattack. They have used their decision on the mailing to attempt to enforce even greater bureaucratic control and restrictions on the initiative and control of the rank and file over the union. Their ruling on the Local 1010 mailing did not stop with just that particular mailing, but declared that all such mailings by local unions were improper use of union funds. Not only do the local unions have to send the bulk of dues money directly to the International, now the USWA leadership is trying to take over the control that the rank and file has over the money allotted to them locally.

The McBride bureaucrats

justified this by saying that, if the mailing were encouraged, it would open a "Pandora's Box" of mailings on issues and causes which the International doesn't want to get involved with!

Nevertheless, the bureaucrats are unable to keep a lid on the growing demand among the rank and file for control over their union. At least four USWA districts and many locals have independently forwarded "right-to-ratify" motions to the convention committee.

SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO RATIFY

The fight that will be waged in Atlantic City over the right to ratify demands the support of all class-conscious workers and communists. The McBride led opposition to the right to ratify represents the most bought off sector of the trade union bureaucracy. Any expansion in democracy can only undermine the tight control they need over the labor force, if they are to serve well their real masters, the steel company owners.

This is because trade union democracy is a framework under which the revolutionary interests of the working class flourish and come to the fore. The greater the democracy, the stronger the working class becomes and the more sharp and direct its struggle against the capitalist exploiters. In such a framework McBride's open defense of the capitalist system must increasingly come into sharp conflict with the inherently revolutionary fundamental interests of the working class. In this conflict without bureaucratic and non-democratic methods no opportunist can maintain control for long.

IRANIAN STUDENTS BUILD FOR MASS STRUGGLE

In support of the massive struggle the people of Iran continue to wage against the fascist regime of the Shah to establish a democratic state which is independent and free, the Iranian Students Association in the US is actively working to educate and mobilize public opinion in support of the popular uprising. The ISA, a member organization of the International Confederation of Iranian Students, is part of a world wide network of Iranians opposed to the US dominated dictatorship in Iran. They are currently playing a key role in the US and Europe in exposing the bourgeois coverage of the situation in Iran as a backward religious movement.

The popular sentiment was expressed this past week as thousands protested against the declaration of martial law by the Shah as he attempts to control the growing militance and determination of the Iranian people to overthrow him. Hundreds have been killed and thousands more injured in clashes with Army troops firing sub-machine guns.

Contrary to newspaper reports in the US, the opposition is not calling for a return to feudal rule by traditional Moslem clergy. And they are not opposed to the gains made by women in support of equality. Instead it is a struggle of all Iranians--men, women, minority nationalities--demanding genuine liberation for the Iranian people. The movement demands an end to the Shah's rule and a new

independent government that will insure political freedom--freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, an end to political prisoners and torture, an end to the ever present secret police SAVAK. It is a struggle that demands the needs of the people be addressed--inflation, unemployment, housing shortage and corruption.

In August, the ISA held its 26th Congress in Washington, DC. The Congress took concrete steps to plan its activities for the coming year to support the heroic struggle being waged by the masses in Iran. The militancy and commitment expressed by the over 700 participants in the Congress was extremely high, showing their eagerness to meet the demands placed on them by the courage and determination of the Iranian people at this time.

The Workers Congress (M-L) was proud to attend this Congress and extends greetings and support for the work of the ISA and the Iranian people.

WC-ML SOLIDARITY STATEMENT

Comrades and Friends,

On the occasion of the Twenty Sixth Congress of the Iranian Students Association in the United States (ISAUS) the Workers Congress (Marxist-Leninist) extends its warmest fraternal greetings. We welcome the presence here of the delegation of the leadership of the Con-

federation of Iranian Students from Europe to take part in the Congress.

In the past year the whole world has followed the tremendous popular upsurge of the people of Iran against US imperialism and the reactionary role of the Shah. These struggles have been growing for several years, steadily increasing in amplitude and depth, involving broader and broader segments of the population and broader and broader economic, social and political issues. Street battles, attacks on government offices and heroic mass resistance to ruthless government attack shows the widespread defiance of the people of Iran for the present regime.

What is it then that supports the Shah? It is the same thing that brought him to power in the first place--the greedy hand of the US superpower, one of the world's two chief international exploiters and oppressors. It is the bloody hand of US imperialism which is behind the organized terror, the counter-revolutionary violence, the suppression of all political and social freedom and the grinding poverty of the working and oppressed masses of Iran.

No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations. It is the special duty of US revolutionaries to give concrete aid and support to the struggle of the Iranian people for democracy, freedom and independence against US imperialist domination and the Shah's fascist regime.

Today the age old threat posed by the Russian tsars on the northern borders of Iran has been renewed by the social imperialist Brezhnev clique. Without a doubt struggle against US imperialism and the US client regime of the Shah would be meaningless without mobilizing the people of Iran also against the Soviet superpower. The people of Iran will never throw off one yoke to embrace another.

We warmly support the role your organization has played in exposing the history of imperialist domination in Iran and the inspiring record of mass resistance to it,

for exposing the present situation and the scope of popular struggle, in exposing the role of US imperialism specifically and the threat posed by both superpowers. We welcome the leadership you have given to mobilizing support for the democratic, anti-imperialist struggle of the people of Iran as an integral part of the struggles of the people throughout the world, especially the oppressed peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, against imperialism, particularly the two superpowers.

Faced as we are with the danger of a new world war, the struggle of the people of Iran teaches that we can certainly place our confidence in the popular masses world wide. As the Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China said in his speech to the UN last year, "Every victory in the revolutionary struggle of the people of all countries helps to weaken the superpowers, thwart their aggressive and expansionist ambitions, upset their war plans and deployments, and put off the outbreak of a new world war." The victories of your people bring closer the day when the fires of revolution will engulf the heartland of imperialism here in the US. Truly we are joined in common struggle!

DOWN WITH THE SHAH!
DOWN WITH US IMPERIALISM!
DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM AND ESPECIALLY
THE TWO SUPERPOWERS!
VICTORY FOR THE STRUGGLES FOR
INDEPENDENCE, LIBERATION AND
REVOLUTION!

STATEMENT GIVEN AT THE 26th ANNUAL CONGRESS OF ISAUS



OPEN LETTER ON CRITICISM-SELF CRITICISM

by FRIENDS FROM THE EAST COAST

What our friends on the East Coast take up in the following article are deviations by national communist organizations from the norms of Marxist-Leninist standards of criticism, self-criticism. It is an excellent example of the contribution a local collective can make to the nationwide development of our movement. National organizations sometimes suppose that errors made in work go unnoticed or encourage the passivity of comrades engaged in local work in the face of errors or think that the views of local collectives are unimportant. But Mao says this attitude is bound to fail:

"Shirking responsibility, fearing to shoulder it and forbidding people to speak out as if one were a tiger whose backside no one dares touch--ten out of ten who adopt this attitude will fail. People always speak out sooner or later. You think that people really won't dare to touch the backsides of tigers like you? They bloody well will!"

We have fought to make THE COMMUNIST a newspaper modeled after Lenin's ISKRA which local collectives can use in order to participate actively in the affairs of the national communist movement. Through the pages of such a newspaper a local collective in the Southwest,

for example, shares common experience, views and activity with a local collective on the Eastern Seaboard. In one instance, local or national events are the subject of political exposure; in another, like this one, burning questions in the communist movement are taken up. Common activity can unfold and common tasks and goals be developed in a step by step way. In so doing we foster mutual links, gather resources around a common center and provide a framework for our struggle to unite.

The criticisms raised of the WORKERS CONGRESS (MARXIST-LENINIST) in the article are justified. It is over 18 months since our retraction of the criticism of the October League's views on regional autonomy for the Southwest, yet we have not spoken again to the question as we had promised. We have not explained our errors or said what was correct or incorrect in our discussion. This was caused by our failure to plan in an effective way to carry out the task or to take the necessary organizational steps to ensure that it was carried out. It was an example of amateurishness in the organization of work. We took on publicly the responsibility to speak to this question, and then took no steps to follow through. Regardless of our intentions, this reflects a

The use of criticism-self-criticism is widely recognized in the Marxist-Leninist movement as a tool that is vital to improving our work. Two and a half years ago THE COMMUNIST published an excellent article on Communist Criticism (Vol. II no. 6, Feb. 23, 1976), explaining its importance, its use and misuse, and calling attention to Lenin's words: The attitude of a political party to its mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of the party and of its fulfillment in practice of its obligations to its class and the masses of working people. Openly to admit error, to reveal its causes, to analyse the situation that gave rise to it, attentively to discuss the means of correcting the error--this is the sign of a serious Party, this is the fulfillment by it of its obligations, this is training and educating the class and then the masses.

While many groups in theory extol the process of criticism-self-criticism, in practice our movement has been plagued by serious misuse of this process. It is essential to improve our practice of criticism, to seriously take up this obligation to the class and to the masses of working people. In the interest of improving our use of the method of criticism, we would like to point out several deviations from correct practice.

"LET'S HOPE NOBODY FINDS OUT"

One common problem is that groups and individuals commit serious errors in their work, but do not criticize themselves publicly for these errors. This amounts basically to a coverup, in that often the original mistake is known to a relatively small number of people, not to the movement as a whole. The attitude seems to be "Let's hope nobody finds out". For example, several years ago the October League made two very serious mistakes in security matters, but never said anything about

them in its newspaper, THE CALL. In June, 1975, Congressman Larry MacDonald of Georgia, a member of the John Birch Society, published in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD parts of a strictly internal OL document called "October League Manual on Open and Secret Work, May 1975". Then in March, 1976, the same reactionary published in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a long list of the names of people who attended the National Fight Back Conference, held in Chicago in December 1975. People are entitled to ask: How did the state get these documents? Are measures being taken to prevent similar mistakes? What are the lessons to be learned from these experiences? People should further ask: How does covering up such mistakes help prevent such errors in the future? Should we encourage gathering lists of names at public meetings? A thorough self-criticism, summing up the attitudes which led to errors and stressing the importance of correct security would have been, and still would be, a great help to our movement.

"WHY BOTHER REPLYING?"

A second type of error is that of ignoring criticism from other Marxist-Leninists and from the masses. Many groups are guilty of this, the thinking apparently being "Why bother replying, they're just opportunists anyway." In this way, legitimate criticisms are not accepted, incorrect criticisms are not refuted, and the ideological and political struggle is not advanced in the proper way. The pitiful manner in which most polemics are carried out in our movement is partly the result of this tendency.

CRITICISM WITHOUT THOROUGH INVESTIGATION

Another error stems from raising criticisms before making a thorough investiga-

tendency to belittle the national question in the Southwest.

What was correct in our discussion of regional autonomy in the December 26, 1976 issue of THE COMMUNIST was to show that regional autonomy can be applied to a nation. What was incorrect was to conclude that regional autonomy could only apply to a nation. We said:

"They (OL) say that regional autonomy is a solution for the national question for national minorities. But according to the principles developed by the Bolshevik Party, regional autonomy, like political secession, is the political choice of a definite people on a definite territory which constitutes a nation. It is a solution for the national question for a nation that does not want to secede but chooses to remain within the framework of a multinational state. It is not the solution for the national question for a national minority. In other words, in order to call for regional autonomy, OL must adopt the position that Chicano people in the Southwest constitute a nation. This however they refuse to do."

A more thorough study of Marxism Leninism showed us that this position was dogmatic. Regional autonomy, according to Lenin and Stalin, can apply whenever a region is distinct because of its economic and social conditions and the na-

tion. The results of this error are demonstrated in THE COMMUNIST in December 1976 when the paper carried a polemic criticizing OL's Party Congress. One criticism the Workers Congress raised in attacking OL's opportunism at that time was OL's line on the Chicano national question. In particular, WC pointed out that since the OL does not consider the Chicanos in the Southwest US a nation, it is incorrect to raise the slogan of regional autonomy for Chicanos. WC emphasized that the correct slogan for a national minority is the demand for equal rights. However in the following issue (Vol. III, no. 2, Jan 27, 1977), THE COMMUNIST carried a brief retraction of that discussion. The retraction read:

The WC (ML) withdraws the discussion of regional autonomy in the last issue of THE COMMUNIST and our criticism of OL on that point. While some aspects of this discussion are correct, others seem to us to be wrong, misleading and based on inadequate study. The question of regional autonomy has not been satisfactorily discussed or explained in our movement. We intend to make a contribution to that discussion shortly.

Such criticism and retraction can only create confusion. Which aspects of the discussion were correct? Which need clarification? Should we conclude from the retraction that CPML's position may be correct? Should we further conclude that CPML's line is not chauvinist? Moreover, WC has not to our knowledge produced the promised contribution, nor has it produced a criticism of its own discussion, nor the reasons for retracting it. This not only creates confusion on the Chicano national question, it also raises questions about the nature of WC's original criticism. Attacking a line but demonstrating no principled

tional composition of its population. It is not necessary that the criteria for the existence of a nation be met.

For example, throughout the Southwest there are areas where a majority of the population is of Mexican background. Even if these areas do not fall within the boundaries of territory which would constitute a nation, regional autonomy could apply where the region is economically and socially distinct. The San Joaquin Valley in California, including the cities of Fresno and Bakersfield, for example, might constitute such a region, or the Imperial Valley in Southern California.

Because of the way we had presented the question, we could not have applied regional autonomy in such situations.

Unfortunately, in order to respond fully to the criticism of our retraction and to fully develop our views of CPML's and other communist organizations' position on regional autonomy for the Southwest, we need to complete our view of the National Question in the Southwest and speak to this matter publicly. Our full rectification will have to wait until we are able to put forward clearly our position on this question.

Our columns are open to other communist organizations named in the criticism here to respond to the criticism made of their work.

basis for disagreements is a serious misuse of criticism, and in no way advances the ideological struggle on this point. The damage this sort of deviation causes is in no way diminished by a vague retraction.

SUPPRESSION OF CRITICISM

A fourth type of deviation from the correct use of criticism-self-criticism is the suppression of criticism. Within our movement, refusing to hear criticism demonstrates extreme arrogance and a rejection of democratic centralism. It opens the door for serious errors. If our line is wrong and this is proven to us during the course of discussion, the positive effects of exposing the line to criticism are obvious. On the other hand, if indeed our line is correct and withstands challenges from others, we still have gained from the experience: first, the errors of those questioning the line are exposed and second, our understanding of and ability to put forth the line has been increased.

The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) demonstrated the dangers of suppressing criticism several years ago when it still wore the label of the Revolutionary Union (RU). Within the organization disagreement arose over the line on the Black national question. Those spearheading the criticism of the RU line questioned not only the substance of the line, but also challenged the claim of the RU leadership that the line represented the position of rank and file cadres, as according to the critics, no ideological struggle had ever taken place within the organization.

In order to voice its criticisms, a group prepared a rebuttal to the RU's National Bulletin 13. The RU leadership prevented distribution of the document, characterized the reasons for its preparation as groundless, and

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in general, suppressed criticism of its own line. Not until the adversary group was driven from the RU and subsequently able to publish and distribute its criticisms did a genuine polemic over the issue ensue.

In this instance, the criticisms of RU's line have proven to be well founded. For several years, however, the RU continued to put forward a wrong line on the national question and continued to suppress the correct line which had been raised from within its own ranks. Instead of engaging in a polemic and thereby consolidating a correct line through struggle, the RU suppressed criticism, a step which can only lead to splits and divisiveness, obviously a step backward in the critical task of party building facing our movement.

Opening ourselves to eclectic criticism is not without its own dangers. As Lenin warned us in WHAT IS TO BE DONE? we must be vigilant against those who, under the guise of "freedom of criticism" would seize the opportunity to "introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into socialism". Nevertheless, refusing to allow or even hear criticism is also incorrect as this example demonstrates. Using vigilance against opportunism as a reason to avoid or suppress principled debate is itself opportunism.

SUPERFICIAL SELF-CRITICISM

A more subtle distortion of criticism is that of making a superficial self-criticism when a deep one is required. This is dangerous because while it gives the appearance of being a genuine effort to correct errors, it does not go to the root of problems. We have noticed several forms of this error. One is to couch the criticism in terms that are confusing or poorly developed. For example, in REVOLUTIONARY CAUSE (Vol. I no.9) ATM states that it "laid out two tactical tasks to party building and that of the two, 'Marxist-Leninists Unite' and 'Win the Advanced', the former was necessarily our primary one... This was a left sectarian error on our part. In practice it led to focusing our work almost exclusively to work with other communists on the basis of struggling for unity on line (in the general sense) without concerning ourselves about the question of common work, i.e. revolutionary practice. Although we were proceeding from an honest desire for the unity of Marxist-Leninists, this 'left' position worked against our movement. Like it or not, it inevitably led us (and will lead others) to detach the question of Marxist-Leninist unity from the question of winning over the advanced in mass struggle, of the training of the advanced in an all-sided way, of training our own cadres for this work."

ATM explains the way in which this "left" error was manifested in actual practice. However they failed completely in stating why this manifestation is indeed a left sectarian error, and in explaining the damage done in our movement by "left" errors. The ML movement needs to know and understand sectarianism, not in a narrow sense (as is shown by ATM's practice) but in a general sense, so we can apply this analysis to all

practice. What gave rise to this error? How has ATM rectified the problems which led to this incorrect line so as to avoid mistakes of this type in the future? ATM states that "Like it or not, it inevitably led us (and will lead others)..." to make the same error. But is this true? When errors are properly summed up and criticized they cease to be inevitable.

More recently ATM(ML) joined the CP(ML) and IWK in a committee to Unite Marxist-Leninists. Previously, ATM(ML) had criticized the OL fairly severely and had certain line differences with them, especially on the Chicano national question. In the May 1978 issue of REVOLUTIONARY CAUSE ATM(ML) states:

"In the past our organizations have had many disagreements, some quite sharp. In fact the ATM(ML) characterized the OL, the leading group which formed the CP(ML), as 'right opportunist'. This was a serious error. We believe that the OL did make certain rightist errors. However, these deviations did not warrant declaring CP(ML) as right opportunists. We incorrectly placed them in the camp of the enemy. when in fact they were in the camp of the people. Looking back over the 1970's the OL (and now the CP-ML) have held consistently to a Marxist-Leninist general line. They repudiated certain incorrect lines. While certain disagreements remain, we are confident that these questions will be struggled out within the Committee to Unite Marxist-Leninists."

This self-criticism is even

more vague than the first and doesn't really tell us anything about why and how ATM(ML) changed its assessment of the OL or the CP(ML), what their differences were and are, or the difference between committing rightist errors and being right opportunist. While we support the effort to unite Marxist-Leninists, this unity must be based on principled struggle. Mistakes, and the reasons for them, must be thoroughly examined and carefully summed up. Only in this way can we "turn a bad thing into a good thing" and overcome our mistakes. Setting aside old quarrels may solve immediate differences, but without studying and correcting the reasons for quarreling, we cannot build lasting unity.

LINES CHANGE WITHOUT EXPLANATION

Still another misuse of the process of criticism, one that our movement is unfortunately all too used to, is that of changing lines without repudiating the old one. For instance, in its early months the Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee (MLOC) took these two positions: 1) They based themselves on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, and 2) Romania is a socialist country. Nowadays, MLOC has dropped all mention of Mao Tsetung Thought and says it bases itself on Marxism-Leninism, as well as saying that Albania is the only socialist country in Europe. These are not mere oversights but manifestations of MLOC's current line. We can't help but ask Whatever happened to Mao Tsetung Thought? At what point did Romania become revisionist? Instead of summing

up why its old formulations are no longer correct, MLOC simply presents new ones, giving us no reason to believe that these new positions are any more correct than the previous ones.

CORRECT CRITICISM-SELF-CRITICISM FORGES UNITY

We do not wish to imply in this article that all errors are errors of criticism-self-criticism. The examples we have chosen represent errors of many types; what they have in common is that they were not properly summed up, nor were the reasons for them exposed. This backwards attitude toward mistakes must be corrected, in order to resolve the contradictions which foster disunity in our movement. Disunity can be overcome by

"starting from a desire for unity, distinguishing right from wrong through criticism or struggle, and arriving at a new unity on a new basis... Criticism and self-criticism is a method; it is the method of resolving contradictions among the people and indeed the only method. There is no other method." (Chairman Mao Tsetung's Talk, Jan.30, 1962. See Peking Review #27, July 7, 1978)

Unity does not fall from the sky. We call upon all Marxist-Leninists who are sincere in their desire for unity to seriously examine their use of criticism and self-criticism and to respond to this article, describing their experiences. It is through correct use of this method that genuine unity will be forged and that the movement will advance.

CRITICISM OF TC NAZI COVERAGE

In the July 17, 1978 issue of The Communist (Vol. IV, no. 16) we printed an article: "Masses Protest Nazis." The following letter by a correspondent raises a correct criticism of this article.

An investigation of the facts substantiates that there were considerably more than the "...only 22 Nazis and supporters who numbered less than that..." who openly voiced pro-Nazi sentiment. The incorrect figures quoted in this article as well as the rest of the analysis presented tends to belittle the seriousness of the fascist threat.

At the same time we uphold that the strength of the anti-Nazi resistance was the main aspect of the rally. This point is correctly emphasized by the article.

THE COMMUNIST encourages other readers to submit their criticism of articles in the newspaper.

Comrades:

As a close observer of the Nazi rally in Chicago's Marquette Park on July 9, I have disagreements with some points of THE COMMUNIST's article, "Masses Protest Nazis", in the July 17 issue. In particular, I feel that it seriously underestimates the influence, and potential influence, Frank Collin and his fellow fascists represent in the Marquette Park community.

Briefly, the article says that Collin's supporters at the rally numbered less than the 22 open uniformed Nazis. This might be true if you were only counting actual Nazi members who weren't in uniform. But among the hundreds of young white people who were closest to the "action", there were at

least 50 to 100 who openly voiced pro-Nazi sentiments. At least that many applauded him at one point in the rally. And despite the "barely audible" sound system, Collin managed to infect these working class youth with his disgusting anti-Jewish and anti-Black lies and slogans, so that the most rabid racist slogans were repeated by young teenagers.

In addition, I and a friend had a number of discussions with older residents who watched from further away. We consistently found that, while few actively supported the Nazis, they tacitly accepted their presence because it would "help to keep the Blacks out of the neighborhood." This is only to be expected, given the long dominance of segregationist policies and chauvinist ideas which continue to be spread by the capitalist through petty-bourgeois "community" (landlord) organizations (as mentioned by THE COMMUNIST), and through other means.

It is important to bring these facts out. Communists and others who want to overcome national-chauvinist and fascist influences in the working class have to be clear about the nature of the enemy. We mustn't picture Collin as an ineffectual "buffoon", as the bourgeois media does. This media itself, and other organs of the monopoly capitalists, have helped prepare fertile ground for the Nazis through the perpetuation of national chauvinism and racism. In addition there is a basis for these ideas in the material disunity and segregation of the people. In our work in the factories, communities, and schools, it's valuable to point out to workers who harbor segregationist

and other national-chauvinist ideas, how the fascists develop and capitalize on these reactionary ideas to win supporters, particularly among the youth. In this way anti-Nazi workers may be won to be anti-chauvinist in general.

In frankly discussing the extent of Nazi support in Marquette Park or elsewhere, we shouldn't ignore the anti-Nazi forces that live there. As TC's article pointed out, one failure of anti-Nazi organizations was to mobilize these forces against Collin's rally. Nor are we "putting down" the residents who fell victim to his influence. But we must recognize that under imperialism, what Lenin said of bourgeois policies is true: "The policy of oppressing nationalities is one of dividing nations. At the same time it is a policy of systematic corruption of the people's minds. The plans of reactionaries are designed to foment antagonism among the different nations, to poison the minds of the ignorant and downtrodden masses..." (LCW Vol. 20, p. 237)

By "ignorant" he meant ignorance of the importance of unity and equality between nations and nationalities. He meant ignorance of the ideas of proletarian internationalism that it is the special responsibility of communists to bring to the class. If we underestimate the potential influence of fascism, we underestimate the actual disunity in our class. In particular, we minimize the weaknesses of our own movement and the importance of the task we have before us in spreading communist ideas to counter bourgeois ideas within working class communities and organizations.

BAKKE

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struggle at Atlanta Jr. College might be the focus of work. While there would be no specific connection between these different local campaigns, according to the national plan, they would be linked because they would all focus on national oppression.

THE WORKER CONGRESS (M-L) NATIONAL PROPOSAL FOR ABDC WORK

Our organization has serious differences with this plan. We think it turns its back on the main sentiments and aims which brought people together around the Bakke case—to defend and expand affirmative action programs. We don't think the job taken up by the anti-Bakke movement has been completed. We're against abandoning it. As a result, we consider it important to put forward an alternative proposal that more accurately reflects the common goals that drew people together in ABDC and in anti-Bakke work generally.

The essence of our proposal is to unite all who can be united to build one big nationwide campaign to defend and expand affirmative action programs.

The main points of our proposal are as follows:

1. ABDC should provide the impetus nationally for organizing and mobilizing a broad mass movement to defend and expand all affirmative action programs.

2. In the immediate period, the focus of ABDC work nationwide should be on affirmative action in the field of employment rights as typified by the WEBER case. Attacks on affirmative action in hiring, firing, promotions, apprentice programs, skills training, tenure, etc. would be the main, though not exclusive, focus of the work of every local chapter.

3. The ABDC should take the initiative to mobilize national forces, including groups such as the National Committee to Overturn the Bakke Decision (if it still intends to do affirmative action work), the National Lawyers Guild, the Black American Law Students Association, the Student National Medical Association, and other national organizations and local committees such as the Milwaukee Affirmative Action Coalition, into a single broad based coalition to defend and expand affirmative action programs. It is extremely important for every organization to put aside the sectarianism that has fragmented and limited anti-Bakke work in the past and develop a good style of mass work.

4. The ABDC should emphasize mobilizing the direct action of the masses of people in the schools, communities, and workplaces to defend and expand affirmative action programs.

5. While making affirmative action the main emphasis of its work, the coalition should play a good role in defending other democratic rights of the masses from attack and give firm support to the struggle for the equal rights of women and oppressed nationalities in every way possible.

There are a number of points that make clear the significance of the difference between this proposal and the plan for a coalition against national oppression.

1. WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE "BAKKE ATTACK"?

In many chapters of the ABDC it is taken for granted that the essence of the Bakke case is national oppression. But this position narrows our defense against the Bakke attack. It is a position we have disagreed with from the beginning of our work in the coalition.

The Workers Congress (M-L) has consistently put forward that the essence of the Bakke case is an attack on the equal rights of women and oppressed nationalities. The particular form of this attack is an attack on affirmative action programs. The ideological weapon used to justify it is the myth of "reverse discrimination".

What is the practical difference between these two views?

To say that national oppression is the essence of the Bakke case is

objectively chauvinist. The decision also attacks women's rights. The position which argues that national oppression is the main thing pre-tends that women are less affected by the decision or that women's rights are of lesser importance.

To counterpose the struggle for women's equality with the struggle against national oppression and to belittle women's oppression has been a weakness of the work of the ABDC. The source of this weakness lies in the view that the essence of the Bakke case is national oppression rather than an attack on the equal rights of both women and oppressed nationalities. Unless this is acknowledged, the errors the coalition has made on the woman question will reoccur.

Of course to call for a coalition against national oppression is not in itself chauvinist. What is chauvinist is to treat the Bakke case, which attacks the equal rights of both women and oppressed nationalities, as being primarily an attack on one and only secondarily an attack on the other. This divides two great democratic movements instead of uniting them in common resistance. By the same logic we would have to say that the Bakke case was primarily an attack on Afro-Americans, for example, rather than other oppressed nationalities and we would never come to the end of dividing our struggle.

In this or that situation it may be tactically important to emphasize an attack on Black students, for example, or women workers in another. But this is a secondary and partial aspect of the question. Overall what is decisive is the unity of women and all oppressed nationalities in the struggle against the attack on equal rights.

2. SHOULD WE DILUTE OR CONCENTRATE OUR ATTACK ON "REVERSE DISCRIMINATION"?

The Bakke decision has given

legal sanctification to the myth of reverse discrimination. A recent Harris and Gallop poll indicates a growing feeling among whites that Blacks, for example, have achieved enough. A recent Carnegie corporation study shows that "many whites believe that the nation's debt to black people has been so fully paid that whites themselves are becoming the victims of reverse discrimination."

After more than 450 years of robbery and slavewhipping barbarism against oppressed nationalities in the US, after centuries of women's oppression which have still not led to a simple, formal statement of women's equality in bourgeois law, the handful of males from "good white society" who run this country think that 14 years of a Civil Rights Act and 24 years of the BROWN decision have gone too far!

But no one is against "equality" anymore. With the "deceptive liberal gesture of a sly slave owner", the bourgeoisie attacks equal rights under the guise of defending equality. Democratic gains of women and oppressed nationalities are curtailed because they result in "reverse discrimination".

Reverse discrimination is an essential aspect of the policy of exacerbating national contradictions and contradictions between the sexes in preparation for imperialist war. It is an essential tool in dealing with the consequences of deepening domestic crisis. It is a policy which attempts to get the white sector of the people to divert their attention away from those who oppress us all and to see women and oppressed nationalities, who are supposed to be getting "special favors", as the source of their misery.

It is a policy which must be thoroughly combatted. The proposal to build one nationwide campaign to defend and expand affirmative action allows us to concentrate our attack on the myth of reverse discrimination. However, if according to the national plan, the ABDC takes on a variety of different campaigns,

not all of them involving "reverse discrimination" as a central issue (Jarvis-Gann or police brutality for example), this focus will be lost

3. IS A CAMPAIGN TO DEFEND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TOO LEGALISTIC?

The argument that affirmative action is "too legalistic" has been made in the ABDC in order to avoid taking up the WEBER case. After all, the argument goes, it is just another court decision.

Friends who make this argument are confused. What makes a campaign legalistic is not what the ruling class attacks us with (they are pretty frequently "legalistic" in that respect), but how we respond! That is why our national proposal insists on mobilizing the direct action of the masses in schools, communities and workplaces to defend and expand affirmative action programs.

Was the Scottsboro defense in the 1930's "too legalistic" because it concerned a criminal trial? For the NAACP it was, because they relied on the courts. But for the millions of people who went to the streets not only nationwide but also internationally under the leadership of the old CPUSA in order to support the Scottsboro boys, the campaign was anything but "legalistic".

4. IS A COALITION FOCUSED ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TOO NARROW?

Everybody agrees that the work of the ABDC has been too narrow. But there are two fundamentally different views on how to broaden the work of the coalition.

The "national plan" wants to "broaden" the work of the coalition by taking up more issues that the masses are involved in relating to national oppression, such as police brutality, Jarvis-Gann, etc.

Obviously such a proposal does not broaden our work except in the most superficial sense. If our work

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A SERIOUS MISTAKE IN MASS WORK

It is our understanding that the National Office of the ABDC has directed every local chapter of the coalition to immediately place on its agenda a discussion of our article "Response to ATM & IWK" which appeared in the last issue of THE COMMUNIST, v. IV, #19, August 28, 1978.

According to the principles which should guide mass work, this directive is certainly incorrect.

Therefore, by letter on September 11, we have requested that the ABDC National Office withdraw the instruction and urging local chapters to join with us in opposing it.

Our basic reason for opposing a discussion of this article is that it is a Marxist-Leninist polemic with two fraternal communist organizations. In our view, polemics among communist organizations have no place being discussed on the floor of a mass organization. It is inconceivable that this would happen on the floor of a trade union, for example. People come to ABDC meetings in order to deal with affirmative action, not "economism" or "right vs. 'left' opportunism within the communist movement.

Of course we encourage every local chapter as well as the National Office to take up the shortcomings in ABDC work which were identified in the article. However, this should be done in an orderly way in relation to actual work and not for the reason that they appear in our newspaper article.

The differences that we have with the ATM and IWK and with other Marxist-Leninists active in the ABDC should be reflected in our competing views of the concrete issues before the coalition rather than in the context of a polemic among our organizations.

For example, we have raised openly since the National Founding Conference of the ABDC that we do not

believe that the present principles of unity are adequate to expand the work of the coalition. If the ATM and IWK believe these principles should be defended as is, they should say so in open discussion of the matter in the chapters of the ABDC where the membership as a whole

can decide. But the fact that we have polemicized against them on the point in the pages of our newspaper is not in itself a suitable agenda topic. To make it one is to confuse the ABDC with a communist organization.

The principles of unity which should guide our work are a matter of concern to every member of the ABDC, regardless of his or her political views. What the WC (M-L) thinks of the role ATM and IWK have played as communists giving leadership to the ABDC is not. Local chapter meetings of the ABDC should not be a substitute for bilateral or tri-lateral meetings to resolve differences among communist organizations. The ATM and IWK obviously can use the pages of their newspaper to respond, or, if they choose, of our own.

Of course, if our organization has made errors in ABDC work, this is a suitable topic for agenda discussion. However, there is no basis whatsoever for saying that the newspaper article proposed for discussion in itself represents such an error. The shortcomings of ABDC work which we identify in the article have been spoken to openly by us before. Our criticisms of the principles of unity were presented to the National Founding Conference of the ABDC and published in our newspaper over six months ago (see THE COMMUNIST, v. IV, #9, March 8, 1978). The only thing new is the analysis, from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, of the economist and right opportunist errors of the ATM and IWK. It

would be incorrect for the chapters of a mass organization to take a position on the correctness or the incorrectness of this analysis.

It goes without saying that differences over work are legitimate and commonplace in a mass organization. In this connection, it is important to emphasize that any forward motion of the ABDC now, since the Bakke case itself is a settled matter, requires that the principles of unity be changed to some degree. Obviously the work of the coalition will be strengthened most to the extent that the discussion over the modification of these principles is full and free.

Of course we hope every comrade and friend concerned with the Anti-Bakke movement will study our views as presented in the last issue. At Also, we will discuss these views anytime, anywhere with anyone interested. What we are concerned with in opposing local chapter discussion is a matter of principle in the conduct of mass work.

If despite our opposition, discussion of the article is carried out, our comrades are certainly eager to see that it is carried out fully. In order to do so, we hope every local chapter where we have not taken up work will make arrangements for a member of our organization to present our point of view.

NEW PO BOX

THE COMMUNIST HAS A NEW POST OFFICE BOX NUMBER. PLEASE SEND ALL ARTICLES, LETTERS, CRITICISMS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS ADDRESS.

THE COMMUNIST
POB 248
Chicago, Illinois 60690

CONSENT DECREE QUOTAS ENDANGERED WEBER ATTACKS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN EMPLOYMENT

The US Supreme Court has not yet decided to hear the Weber case. Like all cases, the Court first reads the petitions written for and against hearing, and then it decides to hear the case. If the Court decides not to hear the case, then the decision of November 17, 1977 by the US 5th Circuit Court of Appeals will stand.

In its decision the 5th Circuit Court upheld Brian Weber's claim that he had been the victim of reverse discrimination when a black employee with less seniority than he was selected under the provisions of an affirmative action program for training leading to promotion into skilled jobs at the Kaiser plant.

What are the facts and what is the meaning of the 5th Circuit Court decision in favor of Weber?

Kaiser Aluminum opened its Gramercy, Louisiana plant in 1958. The surrounding parish (as counties are called in Louisiana) is in the Black Belt south and located 50 miles northwest of New Orleans. Its population is 43% black. Yet in 1969 the Kaiser plant work force was only 10% black.

In that year under pressure from the federal government's Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC), Kaiser instituted a one for one hiring program at the gate: one black hired for every white hired. Four years later the percent of black workers was 14%.

A four percentage point rise in black employment is an improvement, however small; but nonetheless, the small percentage of black employees to the total work force does not measure the even more entrenched discrimination at the Gramercy plant. For skilled workers, 5 of 290 or less than 2% were black.

Advancement into the skilled trades was denied to blacks because applicants for training for entry level jobs for these positions were selected primarily on the basis of previous craft experience. This method, used throughout industry and promoted by the skilled trade unions, blatantly discriminates against oppressed nationalities and women who are never given the chance to get the experience. In 1976 women were 40% of the work force nationwide but only 5% of the craft workers.

Fearing pressure from the OFCC and especially the possibility of losing government contracts if they could not demonstrate a plan to correct their blatant discrimination, in 1974 Kaiser proposed that itself and the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) agree to change the method of selecting applicants for promotion into the skilled trades. Kaiser was to set up an on-the-job training program and the work force was to be divided into two seniority groups, a black group and a white group. Promotion into job training programs for skilled jobs was to be one for one between these two groups and on the basis of seniority within a group. A significant feature of this program is that it provided for all unskilled workers, white and black, to get into the skilled jobs.

This plan was adopted by the USWA and all three major aluminum companies -- ALCOA, Reynolds, Kaiser -- in their nationwide contracts in April, 1974.

Kaiser and the USWA agreed to this plan in an attempt to

show compliance to Executive Order 11246 issued in 1968. This order requires all institutions and businesses receiving federal funds to take affirmative action in the employment of women and national minorities. It has been interpreted that an employer like Kaiser must have an equivalent percentage of blacks in their work force as live in the general area around the plant. This puts the burden on the employer in such a case to show they have not discriminated, and not on a woman or national minority to show that they have been discriminated against.



NATION WIDE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WEBER CASE

The Supreme Court explicitly excluded consent decrees from coming under the scope of their Bakke decision. With Weber the bourgeoisie is shoe-horning their myth of reverse discrimination into the work place.

The affirmative action program agreed to by the aluminum producers is similar to the Consent Decree signed by the nine major steel producers also in April, 1974. An important provision of the Decree provides that:

All permanent vacancies in apprenticeships and in entry level jobs in lines of promotion containing occupations which in fact lead to craft jobs, shall be filled on a plant-wide basis from among qualified bidding employees. ... In order to meet the implementing ratio (50%), seniority factors shall be applied separately to each group for whom timetables are established (minorities and women, Ed) ...

COURT RULED KAISER DID NOT DISCRIMINATE

When 43% of the population is black but only 10% of the Kaiser work force at Gramercy is black, does this not prove discrimination? When less than 2% of the skilled workers are black does this not also prove discrimination?

"No," said Judge Gee in the 5th Circuit Court majority decision. Kaiser had actively advertised in the local newspaper and this was sufficient proof that Kaiser had not discriminated against blacks!

In typical bourgeois fashion he used Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to rule "reverse discrimination" and to override Executive Order 11246, the very order that was issued to implement the Civil Rights Act.

This is a blatant attack on equal rights. For years the Afro-American people of the Black Belt Nation have been denied employment in industry or restricted to the lowest paid and most dangerous jobs.

This is part of the national oppression of the Black Belt which grants privileges to the nationals of the oppressor nation. This national oppression is clearly revealed in the statistics of blacks employed at Kaiser. Kaiser's policy and the policy of the union bureaucracy in choosing only people with previous craft experience insured that no blacks would ever get the experience to be eligible for the higher paid craft positions.

This blatant racist policy has been carried out in every major industry in the US. Would the justices like to tour the coke ovens in any of the major steel mills, or the foundaries and spray paint departments of any major auto plant to see if the bourgeoisie has committed any past discrimination of black workers who have been there 20, 30, and sometimes 40 years! They have been there because until 1974 there was no plant wide seniority in the steel mills and because they had no craft experience.

The blatant chauvinism of the majority decision of the Circuit Court is clearly exposed in their seeing seniority as the principal issue when historically previous craft experience has been the principal criteria in selection to promotion into skilled jobs.

WEBER CASE UNDERMINES AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN HIRING AND PROMOTION

As Judge Wisdom, the dissenting judge of the 5th Circuit Court pointed out, the Weber decision will be interpreted to end all consent decrees and any type of affirmative action programs having guide lines, quotas, and timetables.

This serious consequence of the Weber case cannot be belittled. In fact in a case now before Federal District Judge Sam C. Pointer in Birmingham, Alabama, a group of white workers from the Ashland, Kentucky Armco Steel Corporation are demanding the elimination of apprenticeship quotas for minorities and women established in the steel industry Consent Decree on the grounds of seniority and reverse discrimination.

It is encouraging to note that rank-and-file steel workers are preparing to propose a resolution at the upcoming USWA convention in Atlanta City to defend the quotas of the Consent Decrees. This type of activity must be taken up nation wide in every union for the Weber case clearly has the potential for eliminating the affirmative action programs for half a million steel and aluminum workers. It threatens affirmative action in every mine, mill, factory, farm, and office in this country.

It is clear that since the Bakke decision the focus of the bourgeoisie's attack on equal rights has been directed

at affirmative action in hiring and promotion.

DEFEND & EXPAND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/FOCUS ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION IN HIRING & PROMOTION

In factories, farms, mills, mines, and offices across the nation women and national minorities are stepping up their struggle for equality in promotion and hiring. Where is there an important factory, farm, etc., where women and national minorities are proportionately represented in all levels of production? In the great majority of work places bids by women and national minorities for upgrading are not seriously considered and often are systematically rejected. In plants that have affirmative action it is in danger of being the next great take-away.

All of us know that the gains made as a result of affirmative action are inadequate. In every plant across the country there are printed signs talking about "We do not discriminate against minorities and women in hiring and promotion". Every major plant that does more than \$50,000 of business with the federal government or receives that much in federal contracts is supposed to have an affirmative action program. However, the bourgeoisie has rarely enforced these written words on equal rights. Discrimination in hiring and promotions is still blatant.

In taking Weber to the plants we must show how the Bakke decision forged the myth of reverse discrimination into a weapon that is now being used in the work place. We must show concretely that every attack on affirmative action is not an isolated happening but part of a systematic anti-democratic attack of the bourgeoisie on equality. We must identify systematic discrimination and show to the entire work force how this divides our struggle. Our activity must be directed towards defending and expanding affirmative action programs in hiring and promotion and we must rely on the pressure of the masses to enforce these programs.

In building this activity we can expect to have to intensify our struggle against the trade union bureaucracy. These bribed agents of the bourgeoisie play a central role in promoting chauvinism in the working class. It is they who whip up national chauvinism and chauvinism against women on the shop floor and in the union meetings. We must direct our main blow at them.

Through our activity on the shop floor we should move to form affirmative action caucuses or struggle within existing civil rights and women's caucuses to force the TU bureaucrats to adopt specific proposals to take specific actions to enforce and expand affirmative action programs.



The plan of the Workers Congress (Marxist-Leninist) is to fight for a newspaper modeled on Lenin's ISKRA as the main link in the fight to prepare the conditions for a new Communist party. While we discuss questions from our own definite point of view, our columns are open to all Marxist-Leninists and revolutionary workers for topical exposures, polemics and reports on their work.

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BAKKE

CONTINUED FROM P.6

on affirmative action is narrow, we do not broaden it by adding other campaigns where we reproduce the same methods of work and take them up narrowly also.

There is a confusion in the "national plan" on the relationship between local work and national campaigns. Refusing to give specific national focus to the work of the coalition will weaken local work, not promote it. A nationwide campaign shows the broad significance of local work. At the same time, local work developed nationally helps move common nationwide activity forward.

Taking WEBER to the steel mills in Chicago, for example, would have a good effect on moving forward the struggle in those mills around affirmative action, if we do our work well. Also to develop a campaign in steel in that local area would have a big impact on moving forward nationwide work around attacks on affirmative action in the field of employment.

The main way to broaden the work of the coalition is by expanding our outreach and extending our influence in the schools, communities and work places on the issue we have taken up -- affirmative action. Without improving our methods of mobilizing democratic and community organizations, trade union caucuses and the broad masses of people, we cannot broaden our work no matter how many issues we take up.

We can also broaden our work by showing the connection between the attack on affirmative action and the overall crisis, preparation for war, and by showing its connection to other forms of attack on the democratic rights of women and oppressed nationalities.

On the other hand, if we take up one issue after another, or take up only local but not nationwide issues, we will never adequately show those

connections. Adequate investigation is simply not possible if we must take up one case after another or if a small local chapter must rely on its own resources to investigate a particular issue thoroughly.

To us, the national plan appears to bow to the semi-autonomous character of local chapter life in the ABDC by emphasizing local campaigns.

By contrast, we think that the national ABDC should strive to develop a plan that would overcome this limitation. A national proposal such as the one we have put forward with a specific nationwide focus for local work is the best framework within which to do that. This is the best means to concentrate available people and resources on accomplishing what we have taken up. Obviously our resources are not adequate to do a thorough job in defense of affirmative action right now. Inadequate now; will the same resources become adequate by taking up more?!

In our view, the key to broadening the work of the ABDC is to take up the campaign around affirmative action well, to carry it through to the end, to make a breakthrough in the work, and on that basis move on to other battles.

5. SHALL WE BUILD ONE NATIONAL OR MANY LOCAL CAMPAIGNS?

We propose that the ABDC seize the initiative in drawing together national and local organizations to build one single nationwide coalition around affirmative action.

The alternative proposed in the national plan, as we have seen, is to develop local campaigns in each area which correspond to what the masses of people are involved in. In fact, this is not a national plan at all. Quite likely it will lead to passivity outside California.

Also, it is clear that you cannot join with a national organization such as the National Lawyers Guild,

for example, which has been involved in anti-Bakke work, if you are calling for work around one thing in one city, another in another city and so forth across the nation. National organizations must be mobilized around nationwide campaigns with a specific focus. The same thing is true if we are to mobilize the common activity of local groups. To call for separate local campaigns means at most that the ABDC will coordinate the participation of local ABDC chapters in various local coalitions. This is the view that will lead ABDC work to a dead end. On the other hand, to call for one nationwide campaign to defend and expand affirmative action programs is an example of a nationwide focus of work that can promote unity with other democratic organizations throughout the country.

To be frank, a proposal for a week of resistance to commemorate a student strike in the San Francisco Bay Area 10 years ago is not really a serious effort to reach the millions of working men and women across the entire country who are threatened by the attack on affirmative action which has been unleashed by the Bakke and Weber cases. To say so in no way belittles the role the San Francisco State University strike played in the development of the student movement.

6. DO WE CONTINUE OR ABANDON ANTI-BAKKE WORK?

This is the fundamental issue. Thousands of friends were drawn to

EL PASO RALLY

CONTINUED FROM P.2

common enemy.

A STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM

The El Paso rally is an inspiring event for all Marxist-Leninists. Resistance to growing police repression in the Southwest has been

the ABDC and to the NCOBD in order to defeat the Bakke decision and to turn back the attack on affirmative action programs. Do we accept defeat because we did not overturn the Bakke decision? That would be legalistic!

More than ever, since the Bakke decision we need one big coalition to mobilize a powerful nationwide movement to turn back the Bakke attack.

For that reason we have put forward a national proposal to continue ABDC work in the spirit with which it was begun and to broaden and expand the coalition in order to make it a better tool in the democratic struggle for equal rights.

We are at a turning point in the anti-Bakke movement and what we need is a full discussion now about the direction of our future work. Therefore, we submit this national proposal to the national office and the Executive Board of the ABDC with the request that it be taken up for discussion in every local chapter. We urge every member of the ABDC to examine the issues we have raised aggressively and to evaluate them thoroughly.

We also encourage other comrades and friends anxious to take up the defense of affirmative action programs against the Bakke attack to take up our proposal and to make their views known.

It is our consistent policy to make the pages of THE COMMUNIST available for your views and suggestions on these matters.

characterized by its fragmentation and spontaneity. One outrageous act after another against Chicanos and other oppressed nationalities by police agencies has bred local movements, in El Paso, Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Denver, Boulder, Albuquerque, San Diego, and Los Angeles demanding justice and retribution. The call to overcome this fragmentation and to build a mass organization for the Southwest reflects the growing consciousness that this is a struggle against imperialism.

This struggle and consciousness is sure to grow. As the worldwide economic and political crisis deepens, the imperialist oppression of nations is sure to intensify. But, this oppression will only breed greater and greater resistance and a more insistent demand for equality and full democratic rights from Chicanso in the Southwest and oppressed nationalities throughout the country. As an arm of the bourgeois state, the role of the police will be to suppress this struggle and to perpetuate the unequal treatment and super-exploitation of oppressed nationalities.

BUILD THE UNITED FRONT

The El Paso rally, however, also poses a challenge for all Marxist-leninists. We must forge the united front of the working class and oppressed nationalities that is needed to defeat our common enemy. We build this united front by showing through our practice that we are in "deed" and not just in words the most dedicated and committed fighters for democracy, and by taking up the struggle to fully integrate our revolutionary theory into the democratic struggles of the oppressed nationalities.

On the one hand we uncompromisingly support the struggle for full democratic rights. On the other hand a revolutionary united front will be built only if through our propaganda and agitation we show that genuine equality among all nationalities is possible only through proletarian revolution and the establishment of socialism.

---- by a worker correspondent

FACTORY EXPOSURE

CONTINUED FROM P.2

which it was assumed by all that because I was white, I would naturally side with the white women in every situation. I had to be aggressive in dispelling this assumption and taking up the struggle against the national chauvinist attitudes of the white women. For instance, one day in the locker room a black woman accused a white woman of flirting with her boyfriend. Both assumed that I would side with the white woman. The fact that I didn't initially caused distrust for me from both sides, and will take some time and good practice to overcome.

Another aspect of this national chauvinism came up in relating to the men. There was a common assumption expressed to me that if I talked to black men too often, seemed friendly, or took my break or lunch with them, that it must be because I wanted to make it with them. I made errors in relation to this struggle. My spontaneous response to this attitude on the part of white workers was to classify them as backwards and want to avoid them. Although it would have been wrong to bow to these attitudes, it was also wrong to make blanket judgements based on them, as backwardness on one question does not imply backwardness on all questions. It is important to continue investigation because people's progressive aspects are the basis for moving them forward and winning them away from backward ideas. It is the task of advanced white workers to stand in the vanguard of the fight against national chauvinism, and to win over other white workers to this struggle. "In the struggle for equal rights for Negroes, ... it is the duty of white workers to stand at the head of this struggle." (1930 Comintern Resolution on the Negro Ques-

tion in the US) My shop is 75% black, and I fell into hanging out more with black workers rather than taking up this struggle, and others, with the whites. This was perceived as an error by black workers as well. Some had the same male chauvinist attitude as some of the white workers that I must be motivated by sexual attraction. Others probably thought there were some other suspect reason that I didn't hang out that much with other whites, and in this they were correct. In looking for the advanced I bowed to the path of least resistance, finding those qualities more readily apparent among national minorities.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS IN THE WORKPLACE

Alcohol and drug use presented another contradiction. I am working second shift, which is notorious for having a high percentage of alcoholics, but the problem is prevalent on the other shifts as well. It was common for me to have a good conversation with someone in which they expressed progressive views on the woman question or the national question, but then later on, for instance if they had gone out at lunch and gotten loaded, their principles would vanish and they would come on in a chauvinist manner, making crude and backward comments and finding themselves very entertaining. These incidents made clear the role of alcohol and drugs in keeping workers down and divided. Drinking or taking drugs made the night seem to go by faster and made people better able to tolerate the oppressive conditions, but in reality it made work more dangerous both for the user and for those around him. Struggle couldn't be taken up

with people who were drunk or high, but the incidents provided good examples for agitation around the role of alcohol and drugs in class oppression.

STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

To sum up, the position of women in traditionally male jobs leads to extra harrassment, but it also provides good opportunities for communist agitation and propaganda around the issue of equal rights for women and the importance of integrating women into social production at every level. Since the current wave of hiring of women in heavy industry is relatively recent, there is a great deal of bourgeois ideology which has been fostered by the companies through the divisive manner in which they institute affirmative action programs. It is a crucial task for communists to take up the struggle for equality in the workplace. The recent Supreme Court decision in favor of Allan Bakke is the first step in laying the legal basis for the termination of all forms of affirmative action. The bourgeoisie is making a clear attempt to take back all democratic rights won in the mass struggles of the 1960's and early 70's as part of their preparations for imperialist war, and as a means to gain firmer control over the working class as the general crisis of imperialism deepens. We must seize the opportunities that still exist for women to work in the factories and mills, and fight to maintain and expand these opportunities in the face of increasing repression and withdrawal of democratic rights.