

FOR A WORKERS' COMBAT ORGANIZATION - THE BOLSHEVIZATION OF THE I.S.

Introduction

This document is intended to bring together all the different elements of the present turn we are making in the organization into an integrated strategy for the next period. It is the first time we have attempted comprehensive elaboration of this kind and in a very real sense it is long overdue. But comrades should be aware that the lack of this document in the initial period of the turn was not the result of our apathy or neglect, rather the situation arose out our lack of experience as a leadership, out of the need to launch certain sections of the turn and judge their effectiveness before seeing where the next steps should be taken, and most important of all, we had to ensure that an orientation which followed from our theory could be demonstrated successfully in practise. In a real sense this approach is a new one for the revolutionary movement in the USA because for the first time in decades we can return to the Leninist method of judging the strenght of our political analysis from its success in practise and not the level of eloquence of the winning side of an abstract debate.

As far as is possible, this should be the political method of the whole organization from now on. We will judge ourselves by results. We are aware that this transition will not be achieved overnight. We understand the difficulty we will have in developing a concrete application in all areas of work of the bolshevization of I.S. We know that for a long period ahead the solutions we offer will still be partial and imperfect. Given the fact that the revolutionary movement has been out off from the working class for 2 generations, it could not be any other way. But we are going back into the class with a determination to give concrete revolutionary leadership and this demands that we leave the methods of the Marxist discussion group far behind us.

If we are to understand the process of turning the I.S. into a workers' combat group we need an acute sense of what we were and what we must become. There is no room for the glorification of our past or the minimization of our future problems. Until the immediate past period we were largely a middle class discussion and commentary group. We did not make propaganda in the marxist sense of bringing small sections of the class to the full understanding of the revolutionary socialist perspective on the world. Given the level of class struggle and the isolation of the revolutionary left we were equally incapable of intervening in workers' struggle, of seriously leading any fight at the point of production. In short, we were neither a propaganda nor an agitational group. We make no apologies for that because it was not possible to be anything else. As a discussion and commentary group we kept alive the ideas of socialism from below, we seriously prepared ourselves for the tasks we are now facing. We need only apologize for our past if it continues into the present, fundamentally different situation. If the inevitable lag in development of consciousness in the class and our inexperience in speeding that development leads us to act as if there has been no objective change in our situation.

We are now engaged in becoming an agitational group and for the first time creating a working class audience for real socialist propaganda. We are killing off the discussion group because it is now historically redundant and we do not intend to die with it. The turn we are making is summed up by the title of this document, it is a turn of gigantic proportions and no-one should underestimate the difficulties of successfully executing such a turn. It is a turn which took the British I.S. 3 years to partly achieve. It is a turn we have already stated which largely to complete over the next year. Such a timetable is possible because we can learn from the hard-won experience of Lenin's Bolshevik party and the more contemporary experience of our British comrades. It is possible because we are attempting the turn during the opening stages of a prolonged capitalist crisis, the best possible objective conditions for our success are already present. It is possible because over the years we have developed a strong cadre at every level of the organization, because thru our industrialization policy we have been with the class, though not until recently of the class, for a number of years. We will achieve the turn in a year because the overwhelming majority of our members are serious revolutionaries who intend to take part in the coming American revolution and will not allow the organization they are building to be left behind by the increasing rapid pace of events.

2. The Beginning of the Turn To Agitation

Becoming an agitational organization, a fighting group of revolutionary workers lies at the very foundation of what we are seeking to do in this period. Of course it is true that IS worker militants have conducted some agitation for a number of years. Much of our union and shop floor work was based on struggles around immediate issues. Nevertheless, our past work differed from the proposed perspectives in several important ways. Underlying many of these differences, of course, is the change in objective conditions. The crisis has hit hard, and with real wages still falling and massive lay-offs growing it is recognizable as a crisis to everyone.

The lack of a response from the labor bureaucracy strong enough to have any real effect on living standards is also relatively obvious. At the same time, the pressures created by depression have sharpened the internal in-fighting within the bureaucracy. The political "sorting out" process described in last years "State of the Unions" document has moved forward a political faction fight. In this fight it appears that the IUD, UAW, DSOC wing has consistently defeated the Mezny-Shanker wing - first at Kansas City, then over the April 26 rally. In at least 2 major unions, UAW and USW, succession crisis are emerging.

Sharpening crisis and dissary in the labor bureaucracy are opening up the possibilities for rank and file struggle. As a result, agitational work is beginning to meet with a more consistent, positive response than in the past.

At the local level, a number of caucuses have grown during the past year. While those caucuses continue to experience crisis-as they always will -and retreats, the general trend forward is unmistakable. Most notable is the development of the Chevy Gear and Axle Justice Committee. From a delegates election slate in early Spring of 1974, the Justice Comm. has grown into a fighting, influential R&F organization. The proof of its strength is precisely its ability to withstand a number of crises, including in its leadership, and to come thru with a sizable core intact. The Justice Comm. has been able to intervene in the politics of the local #235, UAW, and win on a number of important issues. The Justice Co. was able to force and win twice a vote to preserve the 2 year term for committeeman. This victory was the result of mobilizing significant numbers of workers. Though the issue may be small, this was an example of successful agitation by worker militants.

Another example of the growing response to agitation is the birth and continuous growth of United Action(UA) caucus in CWA in Louisville. Founded around the contract sell-out of last July, Local UA has grown steadily by engaging in a series of agitational actions in the local. UA successfully defeated the local union leadership 3 times in a move to increase the dues of that local -each time by out mobilizing the leadership. Its reputation as an active interventionist R&F caucus has attracted more and more militants to it.

Not all R&F groups we are familiar with have experienced steady growth, of course. New York UA grew in numbers and influence for a few months following the contract period, but was unable to consolidate those gains. UA's candidate for Business Agent drew a disappointing vote -in large part because one of the other candidates was a militant who was, in many respects, close to UA, but who refused to run on a real program.

In spite of organizational instability, however, a growing number of agitational actions have received a good response. A small R&F group in IBT Local 407 in Cleveland, called Membership Voice, helped to turn out a large number of members to a union meeting in an attempt to win elected stewards. The response to a MV leaflet calling on workers to attend the meeting was substantial. The meeting was well attended. MV and the other oppositionists were not strong enough, or well organized enough to prevent the local leadership from "adjourning" the meeting, but the incident was an example that workers will respond to agitational calls.

Similarly, a leaflet about the strike at the Campbell Youngstown Sheet and Tube Plant, netted some 40 phone responses for RAFT. Additionally, RAFT's demonstration in Pittsburg received a good response.

The Concerned Truckers for a Democratic Union in Chicago, were able to uncover a semi-secret meeting ~~xxx~~ called by the leaders of the Chicago Truck Drivers Union, and thru an agitational leaflet to turn out large numbers of union embers. The R&F CTDU followed this with a

successful agitational campaign around loss of jobs that resulted from the buying of one freight company by another.

On a national and regional scale, we have seen the growth and spreading of the UNC and RAFT. For the first time since the late 1960's the UNC has begun to become national once again. Now UNC groups have formed in Indiana and Michigan. Some existing groups in New Jersey have affiliated with UNC. These were the result of a more aggressive approach and the change in the objective conditions.

The examples of successful activities, organization, and agitation could be multiplied, but the point would be the same. Agitation now works. Workers do respond. Thus, even though we continue to confront some set backs, a million problems, and tactical dilemmas, the fact is our work can become and is becoming more consistently agitational than in the past. This has given rise to a number of changes. Changes we must understand and deepen if the turn to agitation is to be carried thru.

3. Completing the Turn to Agitation

In the past, leaflets, papers, and bulletins tended to comment. Even on issues that were agitational in nature - shop floor struggles, union tactics, walkouts - our literature tended to comment rather than agitate. For example, we were not able to take the agitational lead during the 1973 auto-wildcats in Detroit. UNC and other caucus literature commented on these strikes after the fact. Similarly, during the 1971-72 telephone strike in New York. UA presented a number of strategic and tactical ideas, but not in agitational form. Typically, they were represented a program to be carried out by the union. It was not possible to additionally present tactics that UA itself could lead workers around.

Another way to understand the change we are pointing is to recognize that in the past most R&F groups we are familiar with have acted as pressure groups - whether or not their posture was that of an opposition group. Now these groups more and more to a position of active opposition - in the union elections, meetings and in direct actions. In the 1974 contract period, UA was not only able to point out the correct tactics for the union, but to call demonstrations that were larger than those organized by the official union leadership. That could not have been done in 1971. Similarly, when the "oil crisis" lay-offs hit in Jan. 1974, the UNC and other auto R&F groups were only able to comment. This year, though the scale is still small, it has been possible to win unemployed committees in a couple of locals, call demonstrations, and intervene successfully in the UAW's Washington Rally.

Naturally, there were in the past a few instances of successful agitation, numbers of agitational articles and leaflets. The point is that now this character of our work is more consistent and generally more successful. Most importantly, this is the direction we must move in.

Much of our industrial work in the past 3 or 4 years has been carried out thru the medium of militants who share large parts of our labor perspectives. We have been able to gain experience and a degree of legitimacy by working thru a group of militants who, generally, have years of experience and a good deal of seniority. By sticking by the R&F struggle thru the years, these militants have won the respect of other workers - even when these other workers are not willing to be active. There is no doubt, that it would have been impossible for us to have come as far as we have in the UAW, USW, and IBT in particular, if it were not for our relationship with these more experienced militants.

But the advantages of this relationship also have certain problems. Precisely because these more experienced militants have stuck with the struggle thru a period of relative quiescence in the class, they often tend to be cynical or skeptical about the ability of the broader sections of the workers to move. Like ourselves, their agitation has often failed flat during periods of lull. One result is a toughness without which a mass movement cannot be built. But another result is a certain degree of caution. Time and defeats have taught many a militant that caution is an essential part of maintaining one's integrity when you can't depend on others to back you up. And in the period we have been thru this instinct was justified. Today however, as more and more workers become willing to fight back - even if the numbers are small at first - this caution can mean lost opportunities. It can mean that the organized R&F opposition in a union can fall behind events and the combativity

of other workers. We must be more willing than ever to combat unjustified caution in the militants we work with. Particularly as these militants are predominately white and largely incapable of leading effective struggles against racism.

Related to this is the way we have related to more experienced militants. When we were new to industry, it was correct to view ourselves as standing behind these militants and giving an occasional push, or trying to patiently win them to our politics and ideas. At best we were slightly pushy political advisors; at worst we were simply followers. But today, a number of our own militants have a good deal of experience. Our industrial cadre has absorbed much of the experience of the past. We have learned from those we work with and from our own experiences. Yet, all too often we do not act as leaders. We still act as advisors, pushers from behind.

The turn to agitation in our industrial work must mean that we too turn to agitation. That is, we must view ourselves and in fact become agitational leaders in our own right. Without in any sense breaking with or abandoning those militants we have worked with, we must step out front.

If necessary, we must pull others along, instead of pushing them ahead. In short, the turn to agitation does not just mean that we convince others to agitate, but that we too become agitational leaders in the working class. IS industrial cadre with enough time in industry must become public leaders of groups like the UNC, RAFT, UA, and the various groups in auto and IBT.

The success listed above and the many others not discussed show that what we do makes a difference. In many cases, actions, victories or campaigns we know of would not have happened if they had not been initiated, organized and even led by IS members. The very successful April 26 R&F Coalition is only one example of this. The conception that we are hanging around until "the big upsurge" comes is spontannist nonsense. We are in the working class to build a movement and to lay the basis for an upsurge. We cannot push, cajole, or trick anyone else into carrying out these essential tasks for us. Our method of approaching these tasks at this point is agitation. If we don't do it, it will not be done in such a way as to carry out those tasks.

We have never doubted that the pre-requisite for building a party that could lead the working class to state power was the existence of such a rank and file movement. However, it doesn't follow that the party will simply arise out of the movement we are building. The party too must be fought for, and at the same time. There has been a tendency until recently, for us to separate our trade union work from our political work. This has been manifested in such things as not operating on the shop floor as open socialists, being unable to sell WP in the workplace and the relative failure of our public forums in attracting worker militants.

These practices arose quite naturally in the previous period, they made it impossible to develop many worker revolutionaries but, they were a symptom of our lack of credibility in a labor movement which was still passive. The impact of the crisis on a section of the working class has made these attitudes redundant and in some cases actually harmful to the rank and file movement we are starting to create. Our experience has been that the only real defense against red-baiting that inevitably follows the organization of an effective group is to have already proved to fellow workers that they are not being conned and to have prepared in advance, a political defense of the group from such attacks. The truth is that we need to be open and aggressive about our revolutionary politics not only in order to create other revolutionary workers but also to build a opposition group that doesn't disintegrate at the first pressure from the bureaucrats and bosses. Finally, we must be aware that the strengthening of any rank and file grouping can be significantly aided by knowledge that other workers are involved in similar struggles and are gaining experience that is valuable to the whole movement. As WP has developed it has become a vehicle, the April 26 Rank n' File Coalition is another for spreading this experience. We are at the stage where our paper has ceased to be an embarrassment and is now an organizer of our industrial work. It can only play that role if we operate as open revolutionaries. The turn to agitation demands that change in our method of operation and makes it possible to break down the artificial barrier that has arisen between our concrete agitation and our general propaganda. Indeed the turn to agitation is the only method by which we can develop a working class audience for revolutionary propaganda.

4. The Development of Consciousness in the Working Class

The potential we have outlined above for rooting our revolutionary politics in the working class in this period, of becoming a genuine, if small, current within the labor movement, exists because we have developed a revolutionary political strategy based on class struggle unionism and the self-activity of the working class which fits the objective needs of the class. In truth, our politics are no longer something that the class needs to embrace but rather the highest expression of a reaction that is already underway amongst the best sections of the class. Over the past period, we have begun to learn how to make those politics relevant to the direct and real experience of workers on the shop floor. For the first time in our history it is clear that if a situation exists where we cannot raise our whole political program to at least a minority of the workers we are involved with, it is solely and totally our fault because the objective conditions that separated revolutionary socialists from the working class no longer exist. We must be clear about exactly what is happening in the class, it is not enough just to make sweeping statements about objective conditions and empty assertions that we are now swimming with the tide. It has not been our intervention that has forced a section of the class to react to present conditions by coming to political conclusions. No, it has been the severity of the recession and the fact that workers have been largely defenseless in face of that onslaught. American workers have been faced with a level of real wage cuts and unemployment that is greater than in any other country in the crisis-ridden capitalist world. Given the level of integration of the trade union machine into the capitalist system, the extent to which the bureaucrats at every level are consciously acting as the bosses economic police, the fight back by the American working class has been weaker than in any other country. The reason for this phenomena is clear. It is not that the American working class is fundamentally different than the class in Europe, for instance, although there is no doubt that its lack of traditions are a hindrance in this period; it is rather that the mechanisms don't exist for defensive reaction at the shop-floor level. In Britain, workers can cling to the illusion that they can defend themselves against the crisis by relying on the militancy, organization and relative autonomy of the shop floor. In the US a worker coming into the struggle is soon forced to recognize that the whole system, including the corporations, the unions and the state must be confronted and beaten, even if the original aim was simply a partial defense against the economic effects of the crisis. When workers are forced to confront the whole system they are also forced to question the whole basis of that system. That is what is happening now in a small section of the American working class. It is our job to focus and harness that reaction and it is vital that we don't throw away the opportunity that arises. In a very real sense the nature of American capitalism means that less workers than in Europe enter the struggle against it because the odds seem too great. But it also means that those who do take up the fight are increasingly forced to take up the fight against the whole system and for a socialist alternative to that system. It is important for us not to fall into the trap of basing our perspectives on a super-optimism which ignores the reality of life in the plants. Red-baiting for instance is still a greater problem than in any other country in the world. But, we must be aware of the dynamic. The impact of the crisis, the consciousness of Black workers which arose out of the movement of the late 60's, the impact of the Vietnam war and Watergate, all these and many other factors have combined to make workers, particularly Black workers who will be the vanguard of the American revolution, less susceptible to being disarmed by the red scare. Workers in the Detroit Justice Committee have insisted that we discuss revolutionary politics with them. The same is true of a couple of members in the Chicago Teamster group, small numbers still, but for the first time in many years we no longer have the worry that we are pushing irrelevant politics down the throats of workers; it is much more likely that conditioned by past events and experiences our members are too nervous about raising our political analysis. Our assessment of the possibility of raising politics on the shop floor at least to a small number of our work-mates is based not only on an abstract analysis but, on our actual experience in key areas of work. Generalizing this experience to all our industrial work is another part of the turn we are making.

It is clear that we are at the beginning of a period of profound crisis in the world capitalist system. The exact nature of that crisis and that the way it will unfold over the coming years has been the subject of NC documents which are already available to the membership and is analysed in more concrete details, in terms of what are the exact consequences for IS, in another convention document. This is not the place therefore to superficially duplicate that discussion, but if we are to understand how revolutionary consciousness will develop in the working class there are certain facts that we cannot ignore. We are at the beginning of a period in which it will be objectively possible to make a revolution. Such a period has not existed on a world scale since the 30's and it is beyond question that the 50's and 60's were not such a period. Despite the unevenness of economic developments, the short-term recoveries that capitalism will be able to atone for some years yet, despite the unevenness that this will produce in the reactions of the class, despite the fragmentation and isolation of the struggle which will characterize developments for some time yet, there can be no doubt that massive class battles are on the horizon. The objective development of capitalist crisis, of a tendency towards massive inflation and high unemployment which the ruling class cannot control will necessarily create a massive reaction from the working class. The whole history of our class demonstrates this to be the case. In the 30's there were armed factory occupations, general strikes, street fighting in major cities, successful struggles for the 30 and 35 hr. week, and the creation in a matter of years of massive industrial unions. In a similar crisis today, a class which is now largely unionized, which has not suffered massive defeats and which has developed a belief that there is not only a right to work, but a right to improve the standard of living, will produce a response no less explosive than the events of the 30's. A response which will be an echo of the struggles of European workers who in Portugal are already contending for state power. The question for Marxists is not will this happen, but will it be wasted as it was in the 30's, will the ruling class be capable of preventing revolution thru war and fascism. It will be wasted if there is no workers party to unite, direct, and lead the struggle forward. The foundation for that party must be laid down now and it is clear from the impotence of the Maoists and other sects in the face of present conditions that we will have to bear the major responsibility for creating those foundations. This is why the development of the R&F movement and the transformation of the IS into a workers combat organization has become a matter of extreme urgency. We are already behind the timetable, we don't yet have the base to ensure that we can have enough impact on the struggles around the contracts which will take place during the short lived 1976 boom to be decisive. Decisive not in the sense of leading successful struggles around the contracts, but decisive in ensuring we enter 1977 as the leaders of that section of worker militants who were active in these struggles. The organization by us of that core of militant worker leaders will be a pre-requisite for ensuring that the traditional volatility of the American working class is harnessed for the revolution. Constant agitational work wherever we have an industrial presence in the pre-requisite for proving ourselves capable in practice of taking up this leadership role.

Agitation is best defined as organizing our fellow workers in a real fight for concrete and limited demands. The essence of successful agitation is that it demonstrates in practice that victories however small, can be won by organized workers, that it is possible for workers to impose some element of control over their working lives and that lessons can be learned in such battles which will develop consciousness and build confidence for the bigger battles of the future. Such agitation has always been the method by which a workers revolutionary party was created.

5. Agitation - The Only Road

The concentration of the whole organization on the question of agitation is not simply a method of creating a working class audience for our propaganda, which by definition is not limited but speaks to our whole socialist perspective. Nor is it simply a matter of being unable to compete with the capitalist press, media, and institutions just with our own papers, leaflets, and meetings in the fight for workers ideas. Though this is an important part of it, for our experience has demonstrated that workers ideas about society change predominately and in a lasting way thru struggle. No, we are building thru agitation because the major problem facing the working classes in this period is reduced to a problem of confidence. It is not fantastically difficult for a socialist to con-

Bolshevization of the IS page 7

vice a worker that capitalism fucks over workers, that it is cruel, vicious, irrational and oppressive system. Similarly, the conviction that those who produce the wealth should own and ~~xxxxxx~~ control it is far from being an idea that workers find impossible to grasp. The problem arises not in convincing someone on these questions but in convincing them that something can be done about it. It is at this point in any discussion that workers will tell you "it wouldn't work," "I agree but other workers are too greedy and selfish" or "I am not interested in politics." These reactions are what stand in our way. They are the reactions of workers who have the ability to control the system but have had their confidence systematically destroyed by class society, who have been isolated from their fellow workers and have become apathetic out a feeling of powerlessness. The job of a revolutionary is to demonstrate that something can be done, that workers do have power at the point of production, that by organizing and standing together they can change something, if it is only whether overtime is worked or the speed of the production line. We should not under-estimate how difficult it is to even create the small victories over the line speed or overtime, but those victories are essential in developing the consciousness of the class. There is one sense in which ~~xxxxxx~~ getting a small number of inexperienced workers to take the first step of taking some control will be as difficult as getting millions of self-confident workers to take the last step to seizing state power. But it is a step which must be taken if the journey is ever to be completed. Agitation is about taking that first step, building confidence inside the working class and thus laying the basis for the revolutionary party without which socialism cannot be built.

For us the turn to agitation will involve showing not only that we can fight the bureaucrats who dominate the unions but that we can fight the bosses too. That is why the victory of the Danville sit-in was the front page story in WP, why we report on the Woodhaven victory against overtime even though we don't know a single person there and why in a mid-west tractor plant where we do have members virtually our whole emphasis at the moment is in building and strengthening a slow-down campaign as a physical response to the bosses attempts to speed-up. It will increasingly be the case that our branches, fractions, and national leadership will have to spend more and more time and resources on developing specific strategies for specific agitational interventions of this kind in specific places. This is the secret of recruiting workers to IS, abstract sloganizing will build us nothing.

6. Opening the Gates to the Workers.

It follows from everything that has gone before that the turn we are making demands a large and fast recruitment of worker members. The qualitative transformation of I.S. must go step by step with the quantitative transformation as well. From now on there can be no barrier in our organization to the recruitment of workers. A worker who is ready to work under our discipline in the workplace and accepts the most basic formulations of our revolutionary socialist perspective must be brought into the organization with all possible speed. Cadres are not built in the periphery and there must be an absolute end to any bourgeois academic concepts of what a person needs to know (usually needs to have read) before they are 'eligible' for membership. Workers who are involved in a fight to the finish with their own boss or trade union bureaucracy don't have to prove anything to us except that they are willing to fight more effectively by joining our organization.

Without this attitude to workers' membership there can be no serious content to the slogan of a workers combat organization. We will not be succeeding if each branch recruits only one or two workers this year because we will then still be an organization of industrialized radicals, but now with a few show-piece workers who for from proletarianising I.S. will be themselves increasingly isolated from the working class.

Wherever possible workers should be recruited in groups, where it is not possible it must be made clear to individual worker recruits that their first job is to recruit other workers. From the beginning this new wave of members must be forced into the leadership and we must expect more experienced and initially more competent non-worker leaders not only to step aside for them but also to take responsibility for turning the new leaders ~~XX~~ into a well-rounded cadre. We must break with the concept of "educating" our members and start training them politically to do the job of leader in the work place. When you open the gates to recruitment it is impossible to avoid losing a proportion of the new members but we must be clear that more workers will leave I.S. because it appeared irrelevant than will leave because they have clear political differences with our line.

This is why we talk about training and not abstract education. From now on the marxist theory of the state should mainly be taught on the basis of the actual events going on in Portugal, events that are getting into the newspapers and are actually being discussed on the shop floor. It should be taught on the basis of whether workers in a particular plant should go to law over a particular issue. We will not stop insisting that our members know the marxist theory of the state but we should be demonstrating why they cannot be effective without knowing it. Lenin says in "State and Revolution" will be read but more likely at the stage where a comrade says "I have to know more", not as a step in a dry, irrelevant and abstract study group session that is mandatory for new members. Our training will be broader than our education ever was. We will teach our new members how to sell Workers Power and in the course of it convince them that the paper's fundamental role is as an organizer. We will teach them to write for the paper, to draw out the political lessons and thus demonstrate why the party must exist, etc. It would be possible to do a whole document just on examples of how we must change the approach we have on training and then another dozen documents on other elements of how we make our organization habitable for workers. But that will be an unnecessary waste of time as long as we are revolutionary enough to change our past attitudes on these questions. If our attitudes are not changed, if the discussion group mentality continues, then several tons of documents will not save us from being a total irrelevancy.

In 1975 we must double our membership. This is a wholly realistic target. In order to ensure this target is achieved there will be a worker membership campaign in the fall for a period of 3 months in which every branch and fraction will be focusing on worker recruitment. Such a campaign will demand the production of a new pamphlet, which is the basis introduction to our politics in the context of what is going on in the world, and in the American labor movement. We will be producing a new Basic Training Program in printed form which is specifically designed for speeding the political development of this new layer of members. We will be using the paper, and the drive to get worker contacts to sell WP and write for it as the general focus of the campaign. We expect that the weekly WP will start production at the mid-way period of the campaign. Our most impressive speakers will do recruitment rallies in every branch in the country . . . and a few places where we will be building branches . . . rallies which are meticulously organized from the center and professionally executed in the branches. The overall outline of the campaign will be produced, well in advance, in another document and this is not the place to go into all the details but members should be aware that this will be an open campaign starting on a specific date, for a specific period, with its progress reported in WP and with every branch and national fraction having well-planned target before it starts. One of our newest and least experienced branches in Louisville have already shown in practice that such an aggressive approach to recruitment can succeed. The experience, albeit less spectacular, in other areas demonstrates that Louisville is no flash in the pan but something that can be achieved nationally. The recruitment campaign is being designed to turn that possibility into certainty. Of course, not all our new members will be workers. The recruitment training, and industrialization of non-workers remains a top priority particularly in places like Bloomington and Amhurst. But, we expect that up to half of the new members will be workers and that many of them will be real leaders of I.S. Before the year is out,

Such a development does not simply involve the growth of our existing branches, we will be setting up more new branches, particularly in the mid-west during this period than at any time in our history. This in itself requires a much more serious organization. We will have to send experienced members to new cities to be the core of those branches. The time when the leadership could spend a year convincing a comrade that in 18 months time they might consider favorably moving to one of a list of several locations is gone forever. Things will move more ~~slowly~~ quickly from now on and in the last analysis we will be directing our members to where they are needed. That is yet another aspect of the present turn.

7) A Periphery of Thousands

There is a danger in a drive for recruitment of the kind we have outlined. It is the danger that we will wipe out our periphery, that in the drive for recruits, workers who are a part of our rank and file activity will either be recruited or driven away from IS by the pressure of the greater demands we make on them. We must be clear that that is too high a price to pay for gaining a worker membership. It follows, if we are not to abandon our whole strategy, that that the extension of our periphery, the strengthening of our rank and file work was never more important than it is today. And it cannot just be building in the areas where we already have some presence and experience. As we come into the summer and really start to make the contents of this document real we will already be embarking on the next step of our drive to build IS. We will be focusing the whole organization on the problem recruiting Black workers into IS. Long before this turn is complete we will be developing and applying concrete perspectives on Black recruitment and we will be putting vast amounts of our limited resources into achieving results in this area. In a perfect world we would not have to try and do everything at once, but for us the existence of a growing periphery, particularly a larger and more committed Black periphery, is a matter of life and death.

For some time we have been stressing that the building of IS and the R&F movement doesn't proceed in stages, that we don't build the R&F first and then start talking about IS. Indeed it is our understanding of history that only revolutionaries can build even a non-revolutionary R&F mass movement, and we cannot fool ourselves that there are yet enough revolutionaries in IS to achieve this aim. At this stage however it might be necessary to stress the other side of the coin, that you cannot take a breather from building the R&F while you make the turn in IS. The class struggle unionism strategy is the bedrock of our organization; in a very real sense we are making the turn in order to make this strategy even more effective and we will build IS amongst large numbers of workers only if we can prove our politics in action, in the class struggle.

From the center our emphasis over the next year will be on building real national fractions and capitalizing on our tremendous success on April 26 by consolidating the groups of the R&F Coalition both individually and as a movement. In more serious about our fraction and caucus work in the future and much more bolder in launching initiatives which will either strengthen existing groups or build new ones. There are new layers of workers coming into struggle, that is a fact, they cannot be met by rank and file papers or factory bulletins which struggle into the light of day irregularly, that involve no consistent work to build up a supporters group, that carry no clear program of short and mid-term R&F demands as a target for the agitation but flit around from one campaign to another like a gadfly. The bolshevization of IS demands that every branch is divided into well organized factory cells or trade union fractions, that every work unit is involved in a regular publication with a clear program and every publication has around it organized supporters who are not cut off from the rest of the industry or the R&F in other industries. In future we must expect to be judged on the activity of the rank and file groups we have initiated, we must accept our responsibility for strengthening them all and creating new ones at an increasing rate.

No worker, however enthusiastic, is going to be impressed by IS in a city if there are no regular public gatherings of the branch to attend. Monthly forums which are well-prepared, well advertised, and really built should become a regular feature of branch activity because they are indispensable to developing the politics of our contacts and demonstrating that we have something to say and people to say it to who are not already known to our contacts. Films, dinner discussions, etc. are additional methods of doing the same job and it is a job that must be done with more application than has generally been the case. In the past we have acted as if we lacked confidence in our politics, we have been reticent about putting them forward publically, we have not been convinced that workers would find our politics relevant. If we don't take ourselves seriously then no one else will. An IS member should act with confidence and a certain amount of comradely aggression because it is a fact that someone who has been a marxist for only a day and never near a factory in their life has something to teach (and also a lot to learn from) a militant who doesn't understand the class nature of capitalist society even though they may have been fighting the boss for 30 years. And it is certainly the case that militant Black workers will never be recruited in substantial numbers on the basis of simply shop floor demands with little political content.

There can be no section of our organization that is free from politics or the process of political development. That may sound a useless platitude until you consider that how many comrades have been in fractions that were not only incapable of seeing beyond the narrow confines of a particular ~~area~~ economic or trade union question but also were capable of training members to work more effectively - both as militants and socialists in a particular area of work. Political discussion, contact work, recruitment, training, WP sales are not areas to be left to the branch but also must be the responsibility of the fractions as well. This is all part of bringing IS politics to the fore and integrating them into the everyday experiences of workers.

9) The Use of Workers Power

In WP we not only have the best paper on the revolutionary left but also a regular showcase for IS that is infinitely more impressive to workers than any single member or branch in the whole organization. In short WP is nearer to being a workers paper than IS is to being a workers organization. It is an advantage that must not be wasted because it is still virtually the only thing about us which can convince people we are a national fighting, expanding organization.

We have already made considerable progress in expanding the sales and influence of the paper but we have still not succeeded in integrating the paper into all our activity i.e. it is still sold as an activity rather than being a part of every activity of every member. WP is capable of giving a lead to work of organizing concrete agitation in our priority industries, but only if it is used much more and understood to be the major weapon we have in building IS and making the turn to a workers organization. The increasing sales to workers will have to become increasing sales by workers, even those who are not yet members, in the various work places where we are building our influence. This is only method of increasing the circulation to the sort of figure we need in this period. It is also the case that just as a worker who buys the paper is more committed to our politics than the one who is given the paper, so a worker who sells the paper is more likely to get involved in the other activities of the organization. We should also be clear that we are talking about a workers paper, a paper written by workers and it is the job of every member to play their part in getting workers to write for the paper. The truth is, at this point in time, even having all our own members who are involved in organization and struggle actually writing for the paper would increase its effectiveness immeasurably. We aim to be the paper that militants have to read to get the news of what is really going on in the working class. With 250 members we should have 250 correspondents, and that is more than even the largest bourgeois daily can put into the field. The leadership at every level of the organization will have a responsibility for ensuring that the paper, because of its coverage, has a real place in the labor movement.

11) Strengthening the Leadership

Given the vast range of tasks that we must undertake in this period, it is never more necessary than it is now to have a strong national leadership in the group. To have even the smallest chance of success our meager resources must clearly be focused and directed to the point at which we can be most effective. There can be no retreat to a situation in which our branches are all able to do their own thing. Wherever we have good experience it is the responsibility of the national EC to insist that those lessons are concretely applied in all areas. This is why the leadership is being strengthened, why the EC is involved in increasing intervention in the branches and fractions. But such a strengthening involves not just the ability to intervene, there are heavy responsibilities laid on the EC as well. We will be required to break with the old methods of giving general guidance of a purely abstract nature. Wherever the EC gives out a line the members will have the right to demand "what does that mean specifically for this branch, for this fraction?" The answers to those questions cannot come from a desk in Detroit. That is why we now have four national full-timeers traveling regularly to the branches thus gaining the necessary experience to help give concrete form to our political line.

But leadership rests not only with the national EC. The NC, branch execs, and fraction steering comm. must all accept those responsibilities as well. A revolutionary organization strives to be an organization composed of totally of leaders. Not everyone leads internally, those elected to provide an internal lead will never lead on every question, but from the beginning every member will be expected to go lead someone, if it is only one or two isolated contacts in a workplace where we don't even have members. We must be absolutely clear that the working class cannot make the revolution without the constant lead of those revolutionaries who have a clear and worked out class struggle perspective.

It is equally true that a combat organization, intervening in every level of the class struggle, will find it totally impossible to either decide every element of that intervention from the top or even be able to have all initiatives from the center vetted and controlled from the branches. That is a fact of life in our new situation. It is the situation that demands that democratic centralism becomes a working doctrine in a group which has sufficient training for its members to ensure they are capable of undertaking independent action. That is the only organizational method that can guarantee our effectiveness and without proletarian democracy there will be no effectiveness. Our democratic process is the guarantee that we speak to the real world, that the lead we give comes from direct and real experience. For too long, revolutionary socialism has existed in a twilight world cut off from the working class, the leadership has mouthed platitudes and built nothing. We fight for greater democracy in IS not as an abstract principle but as the only method for ensuring the correctness of our line, for ensuring that our politics reflect the reality of class struggle and for creating from IS the future revolutionary party.

The turn we are making demands changes in every single sphere of our organization and activity. It goes without saying that these changes require a certain continuity of leadership in the organization. We are immature enough as it is when it comes to leading workers so we will not be dumping any of our small but hard-won experience in this field by having a frivolous attitude to removing the leadership on any level of the organization that has gained that experience. But let's be clear, you can change the leadership without dumping every member of experience. You can replace leaders precisely because there are candidates available with more experience or greater skill. It would be ludicrous to believe that we can grow at the rate we intend to without developing new leaders in the present membership or recruiting potentially better worker leaders in our key areas of work. Flexibility must be the key to our approach in this area. flexibility and a struggle against inertia. If the leadership at every level of the organization does not change and develop from day one of the turn, our growth will be reduced to being little more than a bureaucratic attempt to strengthen the dues base, undertaken by an old guard leadership which falls behind developments in the working class.

In October we are going to a weekly paper and the effectiveness of WP for us will increase enormously. Before then we can still increase the circulation by thousands, and indeed we need that sort of base to make the weekly economically viable. This means every member selling more than they can yesterday. This is not unrealistic if we get involved in consistent weekly rather than bi-weekly selling. Each branch should also be planning for how it will maintain its sales when the weekly comes out. because we will have to get back up to the highest figure for the bi-weekly by edition six of the weekly, this is the rate of progress we must be making in this period if our aim is to be the pole of attraction for the increasing number of radicalized workers. With the paper, as with most other elements of our organization, the period demands a much greater degree of professionalism. It will be stupid to have a paper that is not on the streets the day it is produced and sold out by day four. We certainly cannot allow the situation that often arises now with the paper being sold at factories on the day the new edition is being printed. Even in the socialist press there is nothing more useless than an out of date newspaper.

10.) From Industrialization to Proletarianization

It has long been our position that the working class has power at the point of production so that is where we should be. We have also correctly emphasized four priority industries where we try (recessions permitting) to place our non-worker members who can take industrial jobs. We should be clear, that despite the fact that we are now recruiting indigenous workers for the first time and will be putting increasing emphasis on this growth, that the policy of industrialization will be maintained and we will continue to encourage new members and old alike to industrialize. We have many areas of work where we will be recruiting non-workers in the coming period at a considerable rate, that is why the industrialization program must be maintained.

But not just maintained, this area needs to undergo some changes in response to the general turn we are making in the organization, industrialization will not be enough. Our non-worker members will not proletarianize, to be part of the working class in more ways than clocking on and off at the same time as other workers. The most effective industrialized comrades will be the ones who do not keep their social life separate from their fellow workers, who avoid the temptation to remain part of an IS social clique and actually build real relationships in the work place. We must consciously avoid the impression that we are visitors to the working class, we must cease to stand out like the proverbial sore thumb. Where we live, where we drink, where we shop and what we buy. These trivial questions are part and parcel of the process of seriously and successfully industrializing. They should not be ignored.

Nor can we ignore the problem of how to effectively use those members who are unable to industrialize because we will never be a totally industrialized organization, there will always be members who are housewives, students, or white collar workers. We will fight to bring these comrades into the organization and there will be no second class membership in IS. But it must be admitted that the leadership, in the branches and nationally, has not always proved able to develop patterns of work for these comrades that fit our overall strategy and take the group forward. This is a ridiculous situation, we don't have so many resources that we can afford to have any of them lying idle. There are jobs for everyone to do, jobs that relate to our major emphasis of turning IS into a workers organization. In the present new climate it will be possible to build a working class base from outside the workplace as long as the work is done by trained and committed comrades. This approach is relatively new to us and our experience is limited. It is consequently impossible to give the sort of concrete list of things to be done that are put forward in this document other sections on the periphery, extending our political work, expanding WP, etc. The necessity in this situation for the national leadership to pool experience, develop general guidelines and ensure that whatever mistakes and failures that arise are not repeated in branch after branch is obvious. We are far from knowing all the answers in truth we don't even have a clear idea about relatively simple things like which geographical areas and specific industries will be hardest to penetrate in this manner. But this present turn also involves developing a leadership and building an administrative machine that can cope with problems such as these. Not only these problems, the leadership has to move on the necessary resources and flexibility to also develop clear agitational programs around experienced workers who will be recruited and stay in non-priority industries as well.

12) For a Serious and Dedicated Organization

Every line of this document contains the built in assumption that everyone of our members is going to work harder than ever before. For the first time in our history we are speaking of an organization which is composed of the best class fighters, of comrades who have the respect, however grudging, of the brothers and sisters they work with. In truth, we are building an organization with a higher level of commitment, a much more serious view of its role and a more thoroughly professional approach to its intervention than ever before. Workers will expect us to be more serious than in the past. They will not take the risk of joining what is still a group of non-workers unless every aspect of our industrial work has the stamp of permanence and seriousness. In joining us a worker is risking being fired, risking the well-being of the family, risking harassment in the community and doing it with the certain knowledge that if things go wrong they cannot escape the consequences. These risks have not existed to anything like the same extent for our present generation of members. Our new worker members will therefore demand a level of seriousness and hard work which we have not had in the past. They will demand it, quite rightly, even though they, because of family commitments, commitments in the community etc., will have less time to give than an ex-student with no commitments. A life in the factory convinces workers about the size of the job we are taking on in attempting the destruction of capitalism, they know it cannot be undertaken lightly. It is also the case however, that if we are serious in our approach we will never have to fight ideas that say "I know best because I am a real worker who's been in the factory longer than you". Vulgar workerism of that variety has no place in the IS but, we should be aware that historically it only arises with non-workers or in a situation in which non-workers are proving themselves unserious about their politics.

We are demanding more work, more commitment, more dedication. An outward looking group with an open political presence, stronger industrial work, and a worker membership will require it. The period will guarantee that we get results from such an increase in our activity.

We are out to destroy the capitalist state, we are taking on the very institution that under capitalism has monopoly on legitimate violence. In setting out on the road we are taking great personal and political risks. This idea should never be far from the front of our minds because certain specific changes in our organization follow from it. We must develop a level of security and self-reliance in the organization that will protect our members as far as possible from the worst interventions of the state the bosses and the bureaucrats. So far we have not done that and we can be sure that we will not recruit Black workers until we do. The Panthers were on the high road to nowhere, their strategy created problems for the bourgeoisie but because of their politics never basically threatened the whole system as we do. Even so the Panthers were physically annihilated. They will try that with us. They will only fail if we already have a secure, well serious and highly disciplined organization when the attacks come. Black workers will not join an undisciplined and sloppy organization because when the crunch comes as it did with the Panthers, it is suicide to be the leader of such an organization and irrelevant to be a member because the organization will be destroyed. All directives on security must be followed to the letter, they are not the melodramatic response of middle-class hysterics to mythical threats. They are the price we pay for survival as a workers revolutionary organization.

13) Some Sobering Conclusions

It has already been said in the organization that we are making the turn pre-maturely or at too fast a rate. Such a position misses the point. We did not decide this timing of the turn, capitalism did. The leadership cannot guarantee the success of the turn, but we can say that we know of no alternative to it. We know the stakes are high indeed but we are not involved in a game where we can hang back because we perceive problems ahead. We are totally agreed as an organization on our analysis of the period. Capitalism is in Act One of a deep and prolonged crisis from which it can only recover by smashing the organized working class and making our class carry the horrendous cost of re-stabilizing capitalism.

Conditions for the creation of socialism in America and across the world have been ripe for some time, but the revolution is not made in a period of stability, it arises out of capitalist crisis. Who would deny that we are in such a crisis and this are entering a new period of revolutionary potential? If we fail in this period, if the ~~organization~~ organized working class is smashed, then the objective possibility for a workers revolution is put back decades rather than years. We entered this period with about 210 members out of a population of 210 million. That is our weakness, that is why any talk of moving fast is wrong. There is no way that we can do what we have to do without taking risks. Making this turn now, in this way, involves risks. But there is no gamble in not making the turn to bolshevizing IS. The results of that are guaranteed. We would be irrelevant in couple of years, just another bankrupt sect in the long line of socialist organizations which failed to measure up to the real world.

We need to be aware of our incredible weakness but we must not be paralysed by it, we have strengths as well. Over the years we have developed a set of politics that fits the times. We have built up an impressive cadre thruout the organization from which we can take off. The objective conditions in the class around us were never better. In making the turn we are swimming with the tide for the first time in almost 40 years. Everything set out in this document can be achieved, the component parts of most of it are already being applied successfully in some parts of the group. Experience shows that it can be done. Failure to carry out the perspective of this document with all possible speed would be the biggest disaster ever to hit the organization. We are small and insignificant, we will never be anything else unless we seize the time.