

RESOLVING THE CRISIS IN THE I.S.

The I.S. today is in crisis. A sign of the crisis is the fact that it erupted despite the success of TDC/TDU. The appearance of the Left Faction is only a symptom of the crisis, not its cause. The cause for the widespread doubts about the direction of the I.S. among large sections of the organization has its roots in the politics and methods with which the organization carried out the turn to agitation passed at the 1975 convention. They do not lie with industrialization, priorities, and the turn to agitation itself, as the Left Faction would have us believe.

At the 1975 convention, the organization adopted, either explicitly or implicitly, a whole set of ideas around which the I.S. would be mobilized for the next two and a half years. These ideas were closely interrelated to one another, and provided a strategy for external intervention and an internal mode of functioning to support our external work. It was stated at that time:

1) Capitalism was entering an extended period of crisis.
2) The consequent squeeze on profits would force a sharp employers' offensive against the working class' living and working standards.

3) The union bureaucracy would shift to the right, or at least stand aside, to let the capitalists recover their profits.

4) This would create a vacuum of leadership within the working class itself. (So far so good; but still a very general analysis upon which to base a specific strategy for work in a highly specified time period -- July '75 to the end of '77.)

Yet we went on to predict that:

5) The working class would respond to the employers' offensive with massive upheavals in basic industry, focused on the major industry contracts, that

6) Given the vacuum of leadership resulting from the betrayal of the bureaucracy, the I.S. would be able to step in and play a decisive role in leading those struggles, and that

7) On the basis of being the best fighters for the rank and file, we would be able to recruit large numbers of indigenous workers to the I.S.

8) The key, therefore, for I.S. success was to get as many people as possible industrialized in basic industry, in as many cities as possible in the Midwest.

In other words, industrialization was raised from a necessary tactic to the level of strategy.

9) Since the strategy was apparently clear, it seemed that all that was needed was to administer it -- in particular to discipline the rank and file to working class work, and especially to get them into industry and pressure them to raise the banner of the rank and file struggle. Thus what was supposedly needed was a "hard" "kick-ass" EC which would present a common face to the membership and even to the NC which elects it, through the mechanism of a disciplined EC that would carry the line it laid down through the creation of a leadership machine consisting of a staff of branch organizers who would act as the EC's political agents.

Such was the policy of "Stalinization", and despite any number of disclaimers, admissions of error in individual cases, and even some tactical concessions on internal group functioning, it remains the basic "line" of the I.S. Yet, beyond the fundamental fact of economic crisis, the employers' offensive, and the bureaucracy's move to the right, almost every link in the chain of reasoning is false ... and, as we shall try to

show, leads to disastrous policies. Until we consciously and explicitly repudiate its mechanistic conceptions of the relationship between economics and workers' consciousness, party and class, leadership and rank and file, we will fail to overcome our current, very debilitating weaknesses. We will be unable to develop the specific strategies which are indispensable for building our rank and file work in our various arenas; we will be incapable of developing at any level (top leadership, secondary leadership, rank and file) a cadre which can operate with an adequate level of political preparedness; and we will consequently be unable to introduce the high degree of flexibility in our political functioning that is needed to make the small gains that are open for us in the immediate period.

As an alternative to the current strategy, we argue that the Left Faction is a dead-end, that it has no plausible explanation of the roots of the crisis in the U.S., and that what arguments are presented for the way forward would, if followed, point us away from our very real possibilities of building a workers' organization in this period.

Finally, we present a way forward which goes beyond the sterile debate over industrialization, priorities and mass work, to the real questions of the politics of the U.S. which lie behind these. We believe that the nature of the period does make it possible for the U.S. to become a workers organization, but only if we adopt a realistic view of our potential. Starting out from the assumption that agitation in the working class is a necessary prerequisite for recruitment of workers, and cannot be separated from the process of politicization, we try to show how agitation can be made more effective and lead to recruitment, not merely through calling on people to abstractly "raise politics", but through setting out strategies which politicize our agitation from the start. We try to show why in this period such politicization of agitational work is not just necessary to make socialist propaganda, but in fact responds to the immediate tactical necessities of organizing the rank and file to fight back. We try to locate the reason for industrialization and priorities in heavy industry and the need to "dig in" to what will ultimately be the key working class sectors politically; to give the group "steady work" in the class; to take advantage of our key opportunities in heavy industry, most notably the IBT; and to provide the basis for a whole series of activities outside the priorities but linked up with them. At the same time, we try to show that industrialization and priorities should not stand in the way of opening up women's work, recruitment of students, and in some places public sector work, because these do not involve, as the organization wrongly told itself, competing resources. On the contrary we argue that through linking up our non-priority with our priority work, we will recruit workers outside the priorities and non-workers to our working class perspectives. Finally, we argue that none of these steps can be taken -- toward the politicization of our agitation, the integration of our industrial priority work with other work, the opening up of new arenas through increased flexibility -- without a fundamental change in the organization's methods and internal operation. Specifically, we must repudiate the method of "stick bending" and the commandist conception of leadership, embodied in the unacceptable forms of the "disciplined EC" and "organizers as EC agents". We argue that these methods of leadership lead to patronizing the members, particularly workers, who are not assumed to be capable of internalizing our full politics. A new leadership majority, committed to the fullest possible collaboration between all sections of the organization and capable of providing a political lead to our working class work, must be elected at the next convention.

"Economic Crisis Equals Working Class Upsurge"

"The objective development of capitalist crisis, of a tendency toward 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." (emphasis added)

Bolshevization of the L.S. 1975 Convention Document

The economic crisis has fundamentally transformed the working class landscape. It has opened up possibilities for revolutionaries which were not available during the 1950s and 1960s, when capitalism seemed to be permanently expanding and increasingly powerful and when, in particular, the trade union bureaucracy could take advantage of the corporations' steady profits to "win" gains for its membership so as to undercut any emerging rank and file challenge. The crisis and the employers' offensive have indeed undermined the union bureaucracy's ability to deliver, and have produced a serious decline in the standard of living of the working class. Yet, to conclude from the fact that the workers need to fight that they actually will fight is to lapse into mechanistic materialism. This is not only bound to lead to incorrect predictions, but to turn our attention away from the crucial question of the actual preparedness of the class to fight, its state of organization and its confidence.

In 1975 the turn to agitation was taken on the assumption that economic conditions would generate a working class upsurge. At this time we were already worried that we didn't have enough of a base in industry to have an impact "on the struggle around the contracts which will take place during the short lived 1976 boom to be decisive." Why should this upsurge take place? Aside from reference to a few modest successes in local caucus work and an inflated assessment of national caucuses like UNC, our prediction was based entirely on the workers' recent experience of economic crisis along with the expectation that they would be experiencing a slight upturn when the contracts came up.

unemployed
demonstrations -
only
still
striking
5/2
D.H.H.

Now, in general, there is nothing in history which shows that workers necessarily respond to crisis with militant action. The Great Depression, leading to perhaps the worst onslaught on the standard of U.S. workers in our history, began in 1929, There was little working class response until 1933. Even more striking, in England there was hardly any working class action throughout the length of the 1930s, despite continuing depression during the whole period. The working class was unable to recover from their disastrous defeat in the 1926 general strike. And this is precisely the point. The possibility of motion within the working class at any particular time and place depends on a variety of factors: its history, traditions, its degree of confidence or demoralization from past victories or defeats, and especially, its degree of self-organization and independence from the union officials. Yet, our analyses and evaluations since the turn have constantly ignored these questions. We assumed the workers had to fight so we tended to minimize the importance of realistically assessing the actual level of self-organization and self-confidence of workers in general and in each industry and local where we were active in order to calculate our possibilities for engaging in action.

It cannot be said that we were entirely unaware of these sorts of facts. Indeed, we knew a great deal about the variations within the U.S. working class, within our industrial priorities, in working class preparedness and organization. But we failed to take these into account. For the whole method of the turn forced them into the background. Ironically, our decision to intervene around the Master Freight Contract in teamsters had been formulated before the turn was actually passed at the Convention and was based on an analysis of conditions specific to the teamsters.

In particular, the teamsters union, relative to the employers, was far stronger than the unions in auto and steel, largely because the teamster companies were so much smaller and weaker and less well organized than the auto and steel giants. At the same time, the teamster companies, less directly threatened by foreign competition than auto and steel, and still subsidized by the government, were slower to feel the economic pinch and slower and less effective in unleashing their employers' offensive. Finally, and perhaps most important, dispersed as they were in small shops, the teamster militants had recently been more difficult for the bureaucracy to control than had (say) the auto militants. And their rank and file organization, though hardly powerful, had not been subjected to the same defeats by the employers. All these factors opened things up to our intervention and possibilities for recruitment. However, in fact, the specifics of the teamsters industry were largely lost to the organization's consciousness in the bally-hoo of the turn. And they do not seem to have been taken ^{into} account -- at least not in published documents -- in preparing for the interventions elsewhere.

In fact, even the specific situation of class organization in auto does not seem to have been at the center of our consideration in the auto fight, except, of course, our noting that with layoffs down (economic conditions again), the workers were likely to have more confidence to fight. What we refused to confront head on (it cannot be said we were entirely unaware of it) was the fact that the employers' offensive had long been under way in auto and had administered to the workers there a series of demoralizing defeats. In response to the imposition of GMAD in the early '70s, there had been a rank and file upsurge throughout auto. There were important strikes in Lordstown, and Norwood, as well as in St. Louis and other places which led in 1972 to the rank and file demand that a national strike against GMAD be called. Not only was GM able to smash the Lordstown, Norwood and St. Louis strikes; it got the collaboration of the bureaucracy who called a suicidal series of so-called "apache strikes" which killed what was left of rank and file resistance. To our knowledge, though some of these facts were mentioned in both I.S. internal and external publications during the CGC, they were never integrated into the understanding of our militants in auto, never specifically related to our expectations concerning the response of auto workers to CGC, and certainly never raised directly to the auto workers with the intention of drawing the lessons. This is clearly the result of the leadership's dogged attachment to a crass economic explanation of workers' consciousness.

In an appendix to one of the NC documents, Mark L. offered the sensible amendment that one reason for the failure of the auto workers to mount an opposition to this year's company attack was the earlier defeat of the black movement. The NC approved Mark's contribution. It is astounding that this did not form a central part of our analysis of the auto contract fight before it started. Nor, as we've just noted, did the

history of the rank and file revolt against the employers' offensive of the early '70s. Yet it should be obvious that if we were to move auto workers to struggle around the contract, we would have to show them why they could succeed now when they had been defeated not very long before. In particular, our main argument had to have been that previously the lack of national organization by the rank and file had left the various militant locals subject to be picked off one by one and sold out. This was why auto workers needed CGC -- indeed a permanent national rank and file organization. We would not, of course, contend that this would have guaranteed success. But analysis and strategy in detail, after all, is one of the main things we as revolutionaries have to offer and this requires relating to workers' "subjective" conditions of self-confidence and organization, not just economics.

Our crude materialism has left us entirely unable to evaluate the results of our work, within the course of a campaign or after it is over. As a result, we have not been able to alter our tactics when our predictions are wrong or learn from our mistakes. As the Auto Fraction Steering Committee concluded its evaluation of CGC:

But we had thought that the greater effects of the layoffs in auto and the relatively high proportion of blacks, who always feel the brunt of capitalist crisis first, would make auto workers more likely to be combative on their contract than other workers. We were wrong. The fear associated with being out on a limb led to passivity rather than aggression.

Here, indeed, is the type of "correction" or "rethinking" which a crude materialist approach makes possible. Now economic crisis no longer causes militancy; rather, it causes passivity. Of course, in fact, in itself crisis causes neither, because economic conditions, in themselves, though an important part of workers' experience, do not determine workers' actions.

Not surprising, we can't maintain a consistent line from one document to the next, because the EC's economic determinism cuts in so many (opposite) directions at once. So, in their recent reply to the New Course document we are told that "As we stated in the October NC documents, the economic pressures on the working class have not been as great as we expected. That, along with other factors, meant that the bargaining round was not as volatile as we expected." Yet this argument is contradicted by the facts. In auto -- the main place the bargaining round was not as volatile as expected -- the employers' offensive was, if anything, worse than we expected, with speedup at record levels and an unprecedentedly bad contract forced on the workers. Our crude materialism forces us to re-work the facts in order to explain why workers didn't move. In fact, to explain why workers have not acted, and to help them move forward, we will need to spend a lot more time on figuring out exactly where they are at, not just the material problems they face. That we are inside the shops should position us to do this quite well... but it will do so only if our organization develops a much more political conception of the role of our militants.

"The Best Fighters Will Build the Party"

The misconception that the economic crisis of '74-'75 would automatically lead to mass workers upsurge in '75-'77 helped to buttress a further notion which was equally

misleading: that the I.S. could grow simply by giving a lead to the contract fight to come. With their union leaders clearly compromised, workers would join the I.S. because we were the best fighters. We had no commitment to capitalism, so we would never have to compromise the reform struggle of the workers for immediate gains, as would the bureaucrats. The workers would cease to follow the bureaucrats and flock to our banners.

The "best fighters" approach is a mechanical distortion of the socialist method toward agitation. We say that the workers learn through struggle, because it is only when workers have succeeded in organizing themselves collectively to fight, that certain ideas, especially socialist ideas, become relevant and realistic. Without agitation, without activity, we do not have much chance to change many workers' ideas. But to assume that just because workers are in struggle they will actually change their world view to the extent of joining and remaining in a revolutionary party is as one sided an idea as that merely by "bringing workers our ideas" apart from the struggle we can win them to the party.

It is true, of course, that there are today few among us who would openly admit to holding the view that mere militancy will automatically lead to socialist politics; but the fact is that this was for quite a while a widespread view within the group, and, more important, the organization has continued to act as if it believed this. This has been reflected in: a) the lack of political training of the cadre; b) the cheer-leading role of the newspaper, despite all sorts of resolutions to "raise politics"; c) the organization's failure to produce pamphlets analyzing our struggles from a socialist viewpoint; d) the lack of serious discussion in the I.S. We have, in other words, reduced the struggle for socialism, at almost every point in our working class work, to rank and filism, rather than building the rank and file movement in the context of socialist politics. In fact, we must realize in the first place that our socialist ideas provide the essential basis for the development of rank and file strategies; secondly, that our rank and file work is, in large part, a means to an end: It creates the possibilities for revolutionaries to get a hearing for our distinct ideas.

The simple fact is that workers can recognize that we are the best militants, congratulate us for our indispensable role in their reform struggles, yet stay far away from joining the party. Indeed, in some cases, the very success of the rank and file movement can provide militants a reason for staying outside the party, since it seems (for the moment) that all that's really needed to protect the rank and file is the rank and file movement. The only way we can combat such illusions is to take them head on, which means explicitly presenting the limitations of rank and filism to the people we work with. In the first place, in nearly every case, short of the great mass upsurges, national rank and file movements could not exist without revolutionaries. This is not just because revolutionaries are great fighters, but because they understand that the organization of capitalism, the trade union bureaucracy, and the state generally render local movements ineffectual and short-lived. Secondly, the reason the revolutionaries bother to build rank and file movements is to help build the movement for socialism, and in particular the revolutionary party. This is because the rank and file movement cannot, in the long run (usually not even in the medium run), defend the workers, especially as the crisis deepens. Only socialist revolution can do this. In the past, we have indeed extolled the great role of revolutionaries in building the rank and file move-

ment, but we haven't made clear the explicit analysis of the capitalist system as a whole which provides us with the means to be effective. Nor have we stated clearly our own motivations in building the rank and file movement... its relationship to making socialist revolution.

Our problems have been particularly clear in Teamsters, for here our agitation was successful, and we showed ourselves capable of leading the rank and file. Yet, in teamsters, recruitment has proved a very complicated process, which has not been helped by our failure to face up explicitly to the limitations of TDU, and to explain these very carefully to the militants with whom we are working. It does us no good to pretend, moreover, that the current vacuum of leadership in teamsters has simply destroyed the attraction of other stronger forces to whom the rank and file still would hope to turn: the courts, the government/legislation, even reform bureaucrats who are not yet on the scene but who are still expected to emerge to clean up the union. Unless and until our membership is prepared to deal effectively with these illusions, we will not be able to recruit and especially to hold onto worker militants. Through our necessary agitation/militancy we can do no more than attract a number of people toward us. We still have the task of systematically winning them from reformism. The I.S. will have suffered a defeat if we cannot take political advantage of our position in TDU to recruit a significant number of Teamsters in the next year.

Our rank-and-file approach was particularly manifest in our response to red-baiting. Obviously, in certain instances, we have to approach this problem in a defensive manner. But red-baiting also opens up certain opportunities, especially for getting things across to the militants we're working with. Unfortunately, in Workers' Power where we should be presenting our politics, our general emphasis was on what good militants the reds were and how the bureaucrats used redbaiting to divide and break the movement. In other words, we defended the socialists only through their supportive relationship to rank and file agitation. We did not use the opportunity to say why we are reds... i. e. precisely because the rank and file movement alone could not reach the goals the rank and file militants are after.

Indeed in WP, we have generally taken up a self-deluding role as cheerleaders (supermilitants) for the rank and file movement, rather than (a) providing the sort of strategies for immediate struggle that can only come out of a socialist understanding of capitalism, and (b) showing why a struggle for socialism is the necessary response to the employers' offensive. In fact, we are just kidding ourselves to think that WP's militancy, cheerleading has any significant effect. The great mass of workers will not read WP, and certainly will not struggle to "Strike Ford" because we say so, or "Vote Sadlowski" because we say they should. On the other hand, the militants who will read WP are already convinced of our broad agitational calls, and are seeking strategies, as well as analyses for their struggles. It is these militants who can be open to socialism, if we are not afraid to tell them that socialism is the only solution to the problems they are struggling to solve.

It is because of our de facto gross overestimation (in fact, if not in theory) of the sort of party-building impact we can have merely through setting ourselves up as leaders of struggle (an overestimation fueled by an unrealistic view of the impact of the crisis on worker militancy) that has led us not merely to play down our politics, but at times to actually distort our politics. It is, in the first place, wrong to think that by

showing in WP that Sadlowski has a better paper program than McBride, we will get large numbers of workers to vote for him. This is obviously a mistaken view of WP as an agitational weapon: it cannot be that on a mass scale. But what is perhaps worse, in the process of supporting the election of Sadlowski, which was in itself quite correct, we presented quite misleading politics. When we made a big point of showing that Sadlowski said much better things than McBride, we gave the impression that we were supporting him because we actually expected him to do better things. In fact, our position is (or should be) that we support Sadlowski despite the fact that we do not think he will win significant gains from the steel corporations once in office. This is because, at this point, his paper program of policies is quite meaningless...and by playing it up, we necessarily create illusions (even if at other points in WP we say things which tend to attempt to undercut this). We know, and we should say, that no head of a giant union today can by himself do anything for the rank and file because there is no way he can stand up by himself against the giant companies (and the rest of the bureaucracy, as well as the state)...unless he is backed and controlled by a powerful rank and file movement. Sadlowski is part of no such movement. We support Sadlowski primarily because a victory for him will mean a break in the bureaucracy. This will, in turn, open up better possibilities for rank and file organizing...but it is only if this organizing materializes that things can improve. This is what we must be saying explicitly, and constantly, and most particularly because it is here a question of an election (rather than an actual struggle against the bosses, as in TDC). For there is no form of working class organization that tends to be less meaningful, less permanent, more subject to bureaucratic control from the top, and thus more subject to collapse very quickly, than an election campaign movement.

Similarly, in auto, WP called for a strike against Ford. Obviously, WP could have no influence on whether or not the great mass of workers would force the bureaucracy to move. We could possibly have influenced the small number of workers who did read our paper, explaining to them that a strike against Ford alone could not win, because the bureaucracy's strategy of playing one company off against the other was pure jive. The auto companies, we should have said, would not try to exploit working class action against one of their number; they would, in fact, unite against the common enemy, the workers. Especially in a period of employers' offensive, the companies clearly realized that the worst thing that could happen to them would be any sort of big victory for the workers. A win at Ford would have threatened GM. GM would therefore have supported Ford. It might be said that it would have been "unrealistic" to call for a strike against all three, given the sentiments of the mass of the workers at the time. To this we have two answers. First, if it was in fact tactically unwise for the workers to strike Ford alone, we should have said so. Second, if it was already settled that there would be a strike at Ford, or if this was likely and it was therefore necessary to mobilize the greatest possible support for this, we should, of course, have supported the strike, but argued in WP that for this to have a better chance to win, the militants should be pushing to strike all three. When Woodcock calls for a strike at Ford, we say a strike is necessary, but his is not a strategy which can win. When the Ford workers go out, we support them while trying to convince the militants that strike all three is a much better strategy to win. The point is that we do have legitimacy because we are in fact organizing and agitating to support whatever mass action is on. However, by being realistic about the necessary strategy to win -- even if it means pointing to a much harder road -- we will gain the respect, and hopefully ultimately the adherence,

of militants who see the need to face reality and know we are pointing to the only road.

The best fighter theory and simple focus on agitation was to an important degree responsible also for our failure to keep most of the workers we recruited through the worker recruitment rallies. Rather than show the newly-recruited workers how our role in agitation is necessarily linked to our socialist politics, we tried to recruit to the conception that the primary role of the I.S. was to help them in their day to day struggles. Aside from the fact that I.S. couldn't provide such support, this is a weak basis to retain workers in a socialist organization; for struggles come and go, ebb and flow, with more defeats than victories. Unless we quickly politicize workers we recruit, we will lose them, generally as quickly as we did in the worker recruitment campaign.

In sum, the implicit idea that the party, or even a national rank and file movement, can be built in this period through militancy and organization alone, has caused an enormous chasm between our trade union work and our politics. As a result, we have even failed in general to present our analysis of the capitalist crisis and the employers' offensive. Yes, of course, we have mentioned the attacks by the employers quite often, but generally without explaining them, except through reference to the employers' insatiable greed. Ironically, the crisis itself, the lynchpin of our whole outlook, rarely enters into our analysis as the explanation for changed conditions and the need for changed strategies. This was particularly reflected through the period of TDC and CGC. When these movements were operating at the same time, they were not linked propagandistically in our paper or other propaganda. This was the ideal time to make the point that the employers' offensive is general, linked to the nature of capitalism and falling capitalist profits (not rising profits, as we are often implying). These points are crucial not only to convince militants who are close to us to actually join us, but to better show the need for a relatively permanent national rank and file organization. The point, of course, is not to separate this from militancy and agitation -- this is the I.S.' strong suit -- but to make that militancy much more effective and to recruit. We have to realize that our error in 1976-76 was not just to spend less time on political education and propaganda "on the one hand" in comparison to agitation "on the other hand". The point is that our agitation itself was very much weakened because it was not integrated with our politics. However, until the organization realizes the necessity of using our politics to do decent agitation, we will never get more politics, however much people say abstractly that they want it -- either in WP, in pamphlets, or in internal education. This is because until the specific forms of our agitation are seen to flow out of our specific politics, politics will not be seen to be a practical necessity.

A Rightward Tendency

The implicit view that agitation, being the best fighters, will somehow suffice to build the rank and file movement and recruit, at first pushes our politics into the background... but in the long run it tends to push our politics to the right. When the crisis does not actually bend masses of workers into motion, and we cannot provide the lead, we start to look to other forces which could possibly create that motion for us... particularly the "left" or out-bureaucrats. So obsessed do we become with "mass work" at all costs, that we tend to lose sight of our essential politics: that mass work is a means to the end of building an independent rank and file movement.

In the auto contract fight, according to the EC's anti-New Course document, "By entering into various united fronts, and even by trying to influence sections of the secondary leadership, we were positioning ourselves for that role (as the leadership of the auto rank and file)." Yet, this was an illusory strategy for our auto rank and file organizing, because we did not have adequate forces to make possible a successful united front. Obviously, united fronts with bureaucrats (or even worse elements) are permissible or desirable in certain instances. Each case must be evaluated on its merits. But we have to remember, a united front is an alliance. The first requirement for entering a united front alliance is a base of your own. If you do not have an adequate base, you inevitably end up being used by the bureaucrats, rather than being able to use them. This is because you cannot set up a strong enough pole of attraction to the rank and file, which can seriously compete with them.

There seem to be three possible justifications for our having sought out an alliance with the bureaucrats in auto: (1) we actually thought they would lead a fight, (2) we thought their entering the fight would inspire other rank and filers to move, (3) we thought we could rip off their base.

With respect to the first possibility, it is a cornerstone of our analysis of this period that we do not expect bureaucrats of any stripe to actually fight the bosses unless they are pushed to do so by the rank and file. To our knowledge, the actions of Oginsky, Weissman, et al in allying with us at various points were at no time forced by their supporters, nor was there significant independent rank and file force in their locals pushing them to keep them honest. So we had no reason whatsoever to think they would carry through a real fight, rather than go through certain motions to maintain their "leftish" reputations -- and, of course, they didn't.

With respect to the second possibility, it is possible the entry by bureaucrats into CGC did move some rank and filers to join too. But this does not justify the tactic of setting up an alliance with them. For we had no reason to believe, given our own weakness, that these rank and filers would not continue to follow them. The point is, when you start off with an alliance with the bureaucrats, you create the conditions for the bureaucrats to control any movement which you yourself may actually get going. Suppose we had gotten some modest action in auto. Do we really think that the Weissmans, Oginskys, et al, who were publicly touted as the leaders of the movement, would not have been able to control it? We might have been able to offer the better strategy on paper for the rank and file. But with their powerful bases, the bureaucrats would have, in fact, been in position to present the only "realistic" alternative within CGC and, thus, to have been able to derail the movement rather easily. Obviously, when any movement really gets going, there is usually the problem of the rise of opportunist bureaucrats jumping on the bandwagon. But at least if the bandwagon is already rolling, having been pushed off under rank and file and/or socialist leadership, the bureaucrats at least have to put up a fight to gain control of the leadership.

The third possibility, that of ripping off the base of these bureaucrats, was even more unrealistic. Their followers were largely captive and pretty much under their control. If they hadn't been, the bureaucrats would not have been so glad to join us. On the other hand, given the small number of people who backed us, how could we possibly have formed a real force of attraction to win away the bureaucrats' supporters

from them?

Of course, if we had not sought out the bureaucrats from the start (as we apparently did, according to the EC document), but instead they had come out for CGC on their own, we would have had to fully accept their support. To do otherwise would have been sectarian. Even then we would not have put them forward as the leaders of the movement. In any case, it would have been the correct political course to spell out in WP -- on the basis of our understanding of their position as bureaucrats and our knowledge of their previous actions -- what we could expect from them. To say, in particular, that, given the privileged position of the bureaucrats and the pressures they faced from the bosses and the upper levels of the bureaucracy, the rank and file could not expect them to actually fight for the positions they supported on paper unless the rank and file organized itself to keep the pressure on them and to control them. In fact, our coverage in WP far too often gave uncritical support, even promoted these bureaucrats. But this was the logical outcome of our strategy. Since we seem to have hoped to use their support to build CGC from the beginning, we had no choice but to publicize this fact, and to build them up.

In contrast, in TDC/IDU, to our knowledge, we rarely if ever sought the endorsement of individual bureaucrats, speaking for their locals, even where these might have been available. We went directly to the rank and file for local endorsement. This was because we knew that unless TDC/IDU won its own rank and file base from the start, we would have a very difficult time keeping any part of this base in the future... when bureaucrats who seemed to have the power to do much more would come on the scene to try to derail our movement.

There is a world of difference between pushing reformist workers forward in the rank and file movement and pushing reformist bureaucrats. This is because workers have no institutional stake in capitalism, no matter what their current level of consciousness, whereas the bureaucrats do. That is why we always fight to prevent bureaucrats, no matter what they say or promise to the workers, from gaining hegemony over movements. In our desire to prove that we are non-sectarian, tactically flexible, willing to work with everybody, etc., we must not succumb to get-rich-quick schemes which not only contradict our principles, but also don't work.

In this regard, it is remarkable to say the least, that the EC can refer, in the same document, to the alliance of leftists with John L. Lewis in the CIO to provide justification, by way of analogy, for our alliances with auto bureaucrats today. This omits merely two small points. In the first place, the CP, although still small in absolute terms, represented at that point an incalculably greater weight in the working class, and especially in the industries where the organizing was happening, than we do in auto. That we can possibly compare ourselves with the CP in the mid-1930s may indicate some disorientation. Secondly (and probably even more importantly), the very motion of the bureaucrats who went to organize the CIO was the result of a titanic mass movement in industry, which had been on for several years beginning in 1932-33. They were thus attempting to gain control of a movement which had rushed beyond them. In working with Lewis and the CIO, the leftists were taking advantage of the relative weakness of the bureaucracy on the one hand, and, on the other, moving into a situation where they were organizing a mass upsurge (e.g. the auto sitdown strikes), where the problems

of bureaucratic control were very great and the opportunities for revolutionaries extraordinary. It is today impossible to predict for sure that a mass upsurge of 1930s proportions will not occur in the near future. Yet, for the EC to imply that we can base our strategies with regard to the bureaucracy on parallels from the '30s is to further confirm the suspicion that they have yet to break from their economic/catastrophist vision of this immediate period, with all the distortions this has brought.

Industrialization Raised to the Level of Strategy

Given our expectations that the workers would automatically move in response to the crisis, and that we could lead and recruit merely by being the best fighters, it was natural that we should tend to elevate industrialization to the level of a strategy, indeed the strategy for the whole organization. The organization attempted to send people in, with the expectation that they could lead, without providing them with the necessary political education and without developing the necessary political strategy for their specific, local arenas. Since simply to "go in and fight" was all that was supposedly needed to build the I.S., industrialization became a moral rather than a political issue. Anyone who didn't go in was preventing the I.S. from advancing, and was thus definitely of lower quality. So, on the one hand, industrialization was put forward as a panacea; on the other hand, everything else was put down. This tended to politically disorient those who actually did go in; it demoralized those who did not; and it led the organization as a whole to adopt a series of very wrong and very damaging positions.

Industrialization is simply a tactic, like working from the outside. It is required in the U.S., especially in big, unionized heavy industry -- where we want to put down roots -- because of the difficulties of gaining access to workers from the outside due to the harassment of the bosses, the propaganda of the bureaucrats, the suspicions of the workers themselves. But to be effective, industrialization needs to be done in a political manner. Yet too often, those sent into industry were given the idea they could succeed without a full knowledge of the history and traditions of their workplace and without a real understanding of how to relate their revolutionary politics to their specific situations. As a result, two things tended to happen. At first, the industrialized comrades, fully encouraged by the leadership, tended to feel that merely by being there, having made the sacrifice, they deserved special political consideration, "higher" political position, whatever their actual contributions, even level of activity. But sooner or later, if success did not come as it was promised, there was disappointment and demoralization. This was usually first directed at themselves (encouraged by the leadership, who often blamed those inside for the failures to get rank and file organization going). Then, the whole tactic of industrialization was by many rejected outright. This was quite natural, of course, given the motivations and expectations on going in. But it missed the whole point. Industrialization is necessary. But it cannot be accomplished without a great deal of political preparation: training of the comrade going in, development by the branch/fraction of a specific political strategy for that comrade. We think it is no accident that many of those who seem to have industrialized most successfully are those who went in relatively early on; for they were not only politically ready to go in, having often been long-time I.S. comrades, but also politically motivated to go in, having realized the necessity of the tactic apart from any short-term promises of immediate payoffs.

this is the explanation

Unfortunately, the whole moralistic bias toward going in tended to undermine the organization's ability to politically prepare. Moreover, those on the outside who might have played a significant role in the industrial fractions alongside the industrialized comrades, through doing some of the research and information gathering, as well as political thinking, to work collaboratively with those inside in developing tactics and politics, were demoted to second class status. They could not contribute politically, first because of the workerist/militancy centered orientation of our work, but, secondly, because they were no longer on an equal footing with those inside. In general, they had to become shitworkers for the industrialized comrades.

To make matters worse, those who were not industrialized or working in a priority fraction, were given the impression, or told directly, that there was really very little place in the organization for them. They were given nothing to do; no work was developed for them. Since they were already second class, it is not surprising that many dropped out. At the same time, many who could have been recruited were actually discouraged from joining, because they were not ready to industrialize! In this manner we wasted a large amount of resources, as is indicated by the fact that our membership has not grown over the past year and a half, despite the number of people recruited in this period.

Possibly worst of all, a series of disastrous political positions were adopted to justify our total focus on industrialization in the priorities, and the downplaying of everything else. Most obvious was our lack of women's politics. We wanted to industrialize as many women as possible into our heavy industry priorities. This was reasonable as a tactic. But to enforce this tactic, we developed the theory that the leadership of the working women's movement would come out of heavy industry. This idea, to be brief, contradicts all our basic notions of workers' self-organization: it implies that the leadership of the working women's movement will not come out of the same places where mass women's organization and struggle must arise -- i. e., in the places where there are predominantly women workers. The result of this perspective was a total withdrawal from women's work. As a result, only the relatively small number of women who wanted to go into heavy industry could find a place in our organization. It was the prototypical result of raising industrialization to the level of a strategy. It was not that industrialization/ priorities and women's work were in fact counterposed. For the main resource to do women's work -- i. e., I. S. women and potential I. S. women recruits -- will by and large not industrialize. This doesn't mean they shouldn't be encouraged to do so, especially if they have been prepared to do so. It does mean that the many who do not go in, and who would want to be in I. S. if there were significant work for them to do, need to be given an activist place within the organization as equals of everyone else. This means developing external women's work. (It should be mentioned in passing that there is no way the organization will take women's liberation politics seriously, no way there can be a viable women's caucus, unless the organization actually does external work with women, so that the question of women's politics becomes of practical importance to the group).

work in the heavy industry

Similar distinctions developed in our attitude to students and public workers, indeed workers outside our priorities. Students were labelled petty bourgeois, and discouraged from joining -- a policy which ignored the fact that almost our entire organization came from the middle class and had once been students. Again, industrialization as a

absolute opposite... generally in the process manufacturing a new theory for the new turn. If we need a turn to agitation, then the leadership must characterize the old I.S. as a petty bourgeois talk shop and vilify those who raise questions about aspects of the turn as conservatives. If the organization has to be moved to activity, then all discussion is disparaged. If we need people in industry, it is said that no one outside industry has a place in the organization. If a concentration on heavy industry is needed, public sector workers must be characterized as right-ward moving and as somehow not really workers.

"Bending the stick" as a method of leadership should not be confused ^{with} explicitly emphasizing or prioritizing certain areas of work, strategies, and so on. This may be especially necessary when such areas have been neglected or are new and necessary departures from the past. For instance, it was certainly appropriate to strongly emphasize the need to industrialize members of the I.S., coming, as we did, from a student past. But the reasons for such emphasis, and corresponding de-emphasis must be made explicit to everyone, and the problems entailed fully explained.

"Bending the stick" means the leadership consciously distorts reality. It means the leadership tells the membership one thing and tells itself something else. For the leadership knows (and knew) that much of the one-sided justification for the turn was not correct. The leadership knew that clerical workers are part of the working class; that non-industrialized people can make important contributions to our work; that ideas are necessary for successful party activity, etc. But the leadership was not willing to tell this to the membership. Behind this method of leadership lies a view of the membership as essentially conservative, timid, and politically unreliable. In essence, the EC operates on the theory that "the leadership is to the party as the party is to the class." The membership is "backward" relative to the leadership. Most particularly, in the case of the turn, the leadership acted on the assumption that it would be next to impossible to convince the membership that the turn was correct if they discussed the inevitable difficulties we would run into carrying out rank and file work... that unless a mass upsurge was predicted, the membership would not enthusiastically enter industry. To win the membership to the turn, they simplified reality and made grandiose promises about results.

In order to keep people committed to the turn, the EC tended to cover up defeat by blaming it on the membership. Here we got the star system, whereby individuals and branches who were involved in successful work were pushed forward, while those whose work didn't get off the ground, or whose rank and file groups were smashed by the bureaucrats, were considered to have messed up.

Of course, with such a system, it was impossible to get a thorough political assessment of our work in a given geographical area or arena. The implications of those experiences for the general line were never raised. To explain, for example, the specific reasons that TDC didn't get a response in one city, might discourage people in another branch from continuing to do TDC work, or might scare off the CWA fraction from taking up a contract campaign. Yet, an assessment of why TDC didn't go over in one place would have made the work in other places more effective. We could have learned from our mistakes and we could have expanded our whole membership's knowledge about the objective conditions that make rank and file organization easier or more

difficult. We could also have involved the organization in the discussions that would lead to developing other ways of working around the contracts in situations where, at a given moment, a full-fledged rank and file group with a national newspaper, etc. was not possible.

The same fundamental lack of confidence in the membership that produced "stick bending" also made it inevitable that both the membership and the organization would stagnate politically. There has been a lot of talk in the last months about de-politicization. Yet, it is no accident that attempts to "politicize" the I.S. have not yet made noticeable differences. We cannot politicize our members individually, nor develop and deepen the politics of the I.S. unless we are willing to organize internal discussion around differences. As Trotsky argued:

— around the differences —
Without temporary ideological groupings, the ideological life of the party is unthinkable. Nobody has yet discovered any other procedure. And those who have sought to discover it have only shown that their remedy was tantamount to strangling the ideological life of the party. Naturally, groupings as well as differences of opinion are an "evil". But this evil constitutes as necessary an integral part of the dialectic of party development as do toxins in the life of the human organism.

so state the problems —
This means explicitly that the leadership must trust the membership to be able to carry out a line even in the face of differences. Yet, in the past the opposite has been the case. The disciplined EC was created on the basis that were the membership to know the leadership was divided on a given line, they would resist carrying it out or lack confidence in it and thus be unable to carry it out effectively. In fact, the membership has been disarmed by suppression of differences within the leadership. The line comes down cut and dried from the center. The membership has no knowledge of the process of argument and debate, the alternatives to the line, the arguments for these alternatives, the arguments against them that convinced a majority of the leadership to choose one approach rather than another. Therefore, they have not had as clear an understanding of the line as they could have. And they have no basis for evaluating the line as they put it into practice. Except, of course, whether it works or doesn't. When it works, we can't really say why. When it doesn't work, we are not ready then to begin considering other possibilities. Instead, every failure demoralizes and disorients the organization rather than helping it to do better next time.

The same fear of debate that leads to the suppression of differences within the leadership, with the effect of politically disabling the rank and file, has created an atmosphere in which individuals, fractions, or branches are discouraged from carrying their doubts and disagreements into the organization. As a result, the leadership has not been getting necessary feedback by which it can deepen and develop our politics and make correctives in our strategy to bring it more in line with the real world. The experience of the members carrying the line in the class, then politically assessing their work on the basis of that experience and discussing it with the leadership connects the leadership to the working class. When the membership is neither politically prepared for, nor confident about, affecting the leadership, it may passively accept leadership directives or shine them on. Before long, the leadership becomes isolated and can no longer lead. Six people cannot think for a whole party. But the

EC's exhortations for participation and feedback will remain unanswered, because they are not willing to submit their politics to challenge and debate.

In the simple dream world where crisis leads to mass upsurge, where the best fighters make socialists, real discussion, debate, and political development must be lost. Only when the organization realizes the necessity of politics for agitation, will they see the necessity of a highly trained political cadre which can both help develop strategy and agitate in a political way. Only then will people think it worth their time to have not just forums, and education, but sharp internal debates as a matter of course. Only in this way will people see that democracy is not just desirable, but a practical necessity.

The New Course: A Dead End

The New Course document reflects the profound political confusion which dominates our organization today. It has no coherent analysis of the roots of the problems which the I.S. faces. It offers a string of criticisms, many of which we share, but which do not add up to an analysis. The New Course links these criticisms to industrialization and priorities. Thus, like the EC, the New Course locates the central question for debate in the wrong place: confusing tactics for strategy, it proposes to change one tactic -- "industrialization" -- for another -- "going where the action is". The EC, and following them, the vast majority of our membership, reduced the turn to agitation to the simple formula "industrialize, agitate and grow". The Left Faction simply turns the formula on its head, and tells us "de-industrialize, don't agitate, and grow". Yet, as we have tried to show, it was not the tactics of industrialization and agitation, but the incorrect strategy, the organizational methods, and the over-simplified and mechanistic ideas with which the whole turn to agitation was carried out that is the key to our problems. Attacking industrialization, the Left Faction ignores the arguments that led us to put industrialization and priorities at the center of our turn to the working class in the first place. Indeed, the Left Faction opposes industrialization at the same time that they put forward a description of the American working class that provides good reasons for industrialization. It bases its arguments for dropping industrialization and priorities on the backwardness of the working class. Yet, it is precisely for this reason that we undertook industrialization in the first place. We recognize that the British I.S. was able to recruit workers without industrializing large numbers of their members in the class. This was possible because of conditions there which are not present in the U.S.: namely, a politicized working class with a Labor Party and a significant socialist tradition, and a combative working class with live traditions of rank and file organization and especially a shop stewards movement. It was, in fact, to a layer of already organized trade union militants and particularly to the shop stewards that the English I.S. directed its intervention, and through them that they were able to reach into the working class. This was their original base. In the U.S., by contrast, this layer has to be created. This does not mean that it is impossible to recruit workers from the outside. It does mean that the opportunities for reaching into the class, especially in big monopoly industry with big trade union bureaucracy, from the outside in the U.S. are more limited than they were in B. and for that reason it is necessary to go inside.

We have good reason for industrialization and priorities. The Left Faction does not show we are wrong. All they do is tell us industrialization failed and conclude that it should be dropped. But it's not enough to say we failed. Revolutions and strikes have also failed. It does not follow that they were not worth doing. As Marxists and revolutionaries, we are constantly arguing that the failure of the Russian revolution does not prove that successful socialist revolutions are impossible. We argue with Teamsters that the defeat of the 1970 wildcat doesn't prove that wildcat strikes can't win. We argue with blacks that the defeat of the black movement doesn't prove that independent organization of blacks is a loser. We have an analysis of these events, we show what was missing, what weakened the movement, what it was about, both the objective conditions the movement faced and the movement itself, that led to those defeats, and how both objective conditions and the practice and organization of the movement can change to become more effective. The same type of approach has to be taken to our own activity. The Left Faction must demonstrate why industrialization and priorities must inevitably produce the problems that the I.S. now has.

Instead we are offered a lesson in social psychology: industrialized radicals will be conservatized and, therefore, their intervention must fail. The fact is that all trade unionists, whether indigenous or industrialized, are constantly subject to conservative pressure. Indeed, what is true of industrialized members and workers is also true for those who intervene "from the outside". It is "agitation", the attempt to move relatively broad layers of workers around immediate and partial demands, not industrialization and priorities, which exposes our party to the conservatizing pressures from the class. Whether we are relating to workers on a picket line, orienting to a national contract, or dealing with public employees faced with an urban fiscal crisis, we must be attempting, along with the most militant and advanced layers of these groups of workers, to move the broader layers. That is the essence of agitation.

Here we come to the heart of the New Course document and our fundamental disagreement with it. For the New Course proposes to solve the problem of exposing our cadre to the conservatism of the class by withdrawing from it. Rather than trying to move the rank and file who are "cowardly and reactionary", we should relate instead to a "thin layer" of more purified militants.

But who is this militant minority and where do they come from? The New Course recognizes that the militant minority are people like those who led their more conservative fellow workers in struggles around partial and limited programs, like the 1976 Detroit freight wildcat, the central states UPS wildcat and the TDU. But the New Course does not fully appreciate this central fact: this minority of more conscious workers were not lurking in the wings just waiting for socialists to come along and recruit them. They were developed out of their own struggles in concert and conflict with the I.S. members involved in those struggles. It was only the interaction in activity between the socialists in the I.S. and worker militants attempting to organize other workers that created this militant minority.

The point is, either we get involved with the workers in struggle, with all their illusions and failings, or we don't. The New Course can't have it both ways. If they do intend, as they say, to intervene in struggles around partial and immediate demands,

then they will, along with their militant minority, find themselves having to organize the more reactionary workers in order to win the struggle. On the other hand, if they wish to avoid the taint of conservatism that supposedly comes from orienting toward the broader layer, they must inevitably abstain from the struggles. In practice the comrades of the Left Faction will have to choose between these two roads.

The Left Faction proposes to solve the problem of contamination by limiting our exposure to some already radicalized elements of the working class. This means, whether they want to admit it or not, a retreat from agitation around partial and limited demands. The only effective way to protect our cadre, whether indigenous workers, industrialized radicals, or whatever, from the conservatizing pressures of reform movements is not to withdraw from the movements but to develop the party. By support, guidance, and most importantly, by deeply politicizing its cadre, the party can guide them through the long haul. But this process of politicization cannot be limited to socialist education or learning our line. Our cadre has not only to understand, for example, our general position on the relationship between racism and capitalism and the necessity for independent organization. Our cadre must also be able to offer to workers who are prepared to fight the bosses the reasons why the fight against racism has to be part of their struggle, the strategy for carrying the fight, the way demands can best be formulated, how and where they should be raised, how to overcome the resistance to those ideas that they will surely face when they try to organize other workers. In other words, the internal process of politicization must be rooted in external activity, must be related to the concerns of the working class, especially of the thin but critical layer of worker militants who are ready to move. It is these workers, whether they are younger, radicalized workers turned off by the union and pessimistic about the willingness of the rest of the class to fight, or older militants locked into types of trade union activity that served them in the past but are now no longer effective, that we have to target for recruitment. Our key task in recruiting them will be to convince them not just that socialism is a good system, but that it is possible to win. This, in turn, means convincing them about our idea that it is through the development of the rank and file movement that the self-organization of the class can be rebuilt, a movement for socialism created, and a society run by workers achieved. This, in turn, means developing a strategy for rank and file activity that takes into account where the rest of the class is, in order to move them forward. To do this we cannot insulate ourselves from the conservative ideas of the class, but, on the contrary, have to be constantly bumping up against them. In the process we will be able to develop our ideas in such a way that we can really offer something to the worker militants that we want to attract. Moreover, as we develop a relationship with these activists, as we are able more and more to connect our ideas about where we want the working class to be with an understanding of where they are now, we will protect ourselves from the conservatism of the majority of the class, not by abstaining from moving them, but by creating a political periphery for the I. S. A periphery of workers who are connected through their activity both to other workers and to the I. S. is not only our best defense against accomodation, but is also the key to building the party and the rank and file movement at the same time.

It is only natural, then, that the Left Faction comrades have gravitated away from working class work and toward campus work, as the solution to our problems. Rather than understanding that the nature of the crisis now makes it possible for us to position

ourselves in the working class for modest recruitment now and greater recruitment in the future as more workers begin to move, the Left Faction would now bring us back to the 1960s in the vain hope that students would flock to our banner without significant industrial work. In fact, it will be precisely because we have shown in practice that we are serious about building a workers movement in the U.S. and not just talking about it, that we will recruit non-workers, including students, to the I.S.

The Road Forward

We have presented these critiques of the past practice of the organization and of the Left Faction to lay a firm political basis for a discussion of the way forward for the I.S. First and foremost, we need a perspective which rejects the crude materialism, moralism, and commandism which has characterized the I.S. Such a perspective will not be developed so long as we confine ourselves only to the sterile debate over whether we should engage in industrialization, priorities, and agitation.

In this debate we are asked to choose between false dichotomies: between industrialization and significant work "from the outside"; between priorities in heavy industry and intervention in other arenas -- especially the public sector; between building a rank and file movement and building the independent organization of women and oppressed groups; between mass work and raising politics to a militant minority. In this debate we are forced to choose between a practice that submerges the I.S. into the class -- agitation without politics -- and one that withdraws from the class -- politics without agitation. The argument inevitably takes this form because the Left Faction has no better idea than the EC of the necessity and the possibility of integrating our socialist politics with agitational work.

This is because neither has a conception of the working class which allows for such integration. If workers' militancy, or lack of it, is simply a reflection of economic conditions, then the actual ideas workers have are unimportant. We just have to wait for the "right" economic conditions so that we can lead upsurges and recruit to the I.S. In this world, socialist ideas are unnecessary to the transformation of working class consciousness. For their part, the Left Faction sees workers' ideas as unconnected to motion (i. e. agitation) in the working class. They argue that most workers are conservative because they are filled with racism, sexism, and chauvinism. They concentrate mainly on propaganda because they do not believe workers can be moved from these ideas in struggle. Hence, their sole orientation toward an imaginary group of enlightened workers.

The way forward for the I.S. lies in the rejection of these methods with the built-in distortions of revolutionary Marxism which flow from them. We proceed from the assumption that there is a dialectical relationship between the objective economic conditions faced by workers and their subjective state of consciousness, organization, and readiness to struggle. One cannot be collapsed into the other. We argue that the decisive political problem of American workers, and thus for revolutionaries, is the workers' lack of self-organization, which has its ideological reflection in trade union reformism (i. e. electing better union officials), and defeatism, and cynicism toward themselves.

At the same time, the nature of the crisis actually requires broader formations of struggle for workers, such as national rank and file groupings, and lays the practical basis for solidarity action among workers. This is because isolated struggles tend to be more easily defeated, especially in big unionized industry. This is the lesson workers have learned and accounts to some degree for their cynicism concerning local shop floor activity.

The current state of self-organization of U.S. workers is low. Our most pressing task is to grasp whatever opportunities arise to change this, especially in our priorities where possible, but also among workers in the non-priority industries and workplaces. In the present period, our greatest possibilities for such agitation and recruitment are in the Teamsters, where we are best positioned, whereas both the potential for agitation and recruitment in the other priorities appear considerably lower. Comrades in these priorities especially can be utilized to intervene in struggles outside the priorities. These limited possibilities open the way to building a small workers organization in this period and attract other workers and non-workers to us.

But the key to building the party among workers is to bring to militant workers our distinct socialist analysis and conclusions about the crisis of capitalism, the role of the trade unions, the role of the revolutionary party, in short, making sense of their own experiences. This requires the fullest possible discussion and debate within all levels of the I.S., for it is only through such discussion that we can politicize our own members, Workers' Power, develop pamphlets, and, therefore, show our worker periphery that our politics is the only answer to their problems. We propose a nationally directed discussion on the Marxist approach to the trade unions and its application to our work, including our attitude toward special demands, such as superseniority, for women and black workers.

We argue further that we cannot rely on building the party mainly through recruitment from the priorities (except for Teamsters), and that we must engage in campaigns outside the priorities -- in other unions, in the community, and especially in the independent black and women's movements from which we can more easily recruit. This means that, while we continue to support industrialization into our priorities, we see this as part of our strategic orientation toward developing a presence in industry, rather than as the sole means by which the party will be built immediately.

Finally, and in order to facilitate the growth of the I.S., we propose a return to the norms of democratic centralism, whereby the membership must be able to help develop, correct, and carry out the line of the leadership. This means putting an end to the disciplined EC as an anti-democratic organizational method, as well as the training of organizers as political agents of the EC. It means rejecting the "bending the stick" method whereby the leadership is always assumed to be more ahead of the more backward membership. In its place, we propose a fully collaborative leadership which understands the need to put forward their important differences before the membership, so that the membership will be able to more clearly understand and, therefore, carry out the line, and, at the same time, have the necessary information to change it, if necessary. We propose organizers who serve as a transmission belt from the base to the center as well as visa versa.

Finally, we propose that the convention elect a new majority leadership which is committed neither to the methods and politics of the present EC, nor to the perspectives of the Left Faction, but rather as much as possible to the flexible perspectives and method outlined here.

Perspectives for Agitation

Agitation is the prerequisite for recruitment to the party. At the same time, we cannot leap over the lack of self-organization in the class. We cannot, at this point, count on having a decisive impact on the contracts, since the means of doing this, i. e. national rank and file organization, has to be created from the ground up. The major but not exclusive task of our industrial comrades is precisely to make this possible by building up their shop floor base, which will involve leading struggles, wherever possible, on the many issues faced by the rank and file. (In the IBT, our local work can take on a more advanced character, because we can link it to the TDU movement in the whole union). On the other hand, we cannot ignore the opening that contracts provide us. Contracts by their nature raise the question of the employers' offensive, the bankruptcy of the trade union leadership, the difficulties of the ranks in responding. Thus, contract periods offer a special opportunity for us to attract around us militants who are looking for explanations of why their conditions have gone to hell and what can be done about it. The point is, workers are as aware as we that they are largely unable to defend themselves at the moment. We can put their experience into a framework: the employers' offensive arising from the crisis; how capitalism works on a national and international basis so as to break formerly successful local militancy, the way that national rank and file organization provides an effective way to fight back.

We have to approach contract periods, union election campaigns, local strikes, as moments for raising our rank and file perspective in the class. The EC has regarded these as opportunities for decisively affecting the course of the class struggle. Now they retreat to merely doing local work, pure and simple. Those who have rejected the turn have concluded that since we generally can't effect the outcome of the major battles we should ignore them. We believe that we can no more afford to count on moving thousands than we can afford to kid ourselves that action around shop floor or local union issues will lead workers to build a rank and file movement. Small gains on a shop floor or local level can help to maintain ideas. But in and of themselves, local victories and local organization do not solve the fundamental problem: that the employers and the union bureaucracy are organized nationally. Indeed, as the experience in auto (the local anti-GMAD strikes of the early '70s) and teamsters (the 1970 wildcat) demonstrate, and what workers realize, is that militant local strikes lead more often to defeat than to victory. So, unless we are there with arguments, suggestions for activity, that will go beyond these important but small gains, we will not be able to convince workers to move. The strategy for the rank and file movement is crucial to the development of the movement. This means that we must be raising strategic ideas in WP and in the rank and file organization, ideas which relate to our broader analysis, even if they can't always be implemented immediately. If we are active with workers around a shop floor issue, we are pushing them to relate to the local, to link up with other shops in their area, with other locals in their industry and with workers in other industries. We are constantly looking for opportunities to build activity that concretely

makes these links.

Here are some examples of the kind of things we should be looking to do wherever possible:

** During the beer driver strike in Los Angeles we brought freight drivers in TDU to the picket lines, organized freight barn meetings to get financial and other kinds of support, got beer drivers to speak at freight local meetings, even got some beer drivers to leaflet grocery workers' local strike meetings to link up their strikes. Some of these locals were outside the Teamsters.

** Also in L. A., we are linking up our Local 692 (Long Beach) rank and file Teamster work with rank and file activity in a local OCAW local. Labor contractors have signed sweetheart agreements with the officials of Teamster Local 692 to the detriment of decent union conditions in both locals. Such joint activity will be written up in the local TDU paper, Grapevine.

The point is not simply to raise strategic ideas on an ad hoc, local basis. We must also win militants to these ideas as part of our national rank and file organizing campaigns. For example, in our teamster work in TDU, the I. S. has to see as fundamental the task of drawing out for TDU the implications of the employers' offensive. Briefly, we should be saying that the pressure of the profit squeeze in the major industries which use freight will force the freight industry to cut its costs. In an industry dominated by labor costs, as is freight, this will mean a concerted attack on freight workers' living and working standards. We must tell freight workers that they can expect: a) massive speed-up such as the seven day flexible work week; b) the introduction of de-regulation; c) the massive influx of owner-operators to take their jobs. The only way to resist this trend will be to transform the union. In particular, this means strengthening and linking up with the organization of non-freight people within the I. S. This should be a central agitational/propagandistic platform of TDU. Unless the non-freight sections are strengthened, the teamster bureaucracy will simply sacrifice freight, relying on its easy dues base outside of freight. At the same time, organizing strong unions outside of freight, but linked with it, will immeasurably strengthen both. Our work already in the L. A. beer strike and in the carhaulers' strike shows what can be done.

Utilizing our Resources

Once it is recognized that mass actions around the major contracts in our priorities are not on the cards in the short run (although the contract round still offers opportunities for work), and that we cannot hot-house their development, the justification for industrialization that we have operated with up to the present falls apart. We can no longer view industrialization simply as a way of grasping leadership of mass movements through being the best fighters. Therefore, we can no longer make industrialization into the strategy for building the rank and file movement and of overcoming the cynicism and powerlessness of the working class.

Does this mean, then, that industrialization makes no sense, that we should get out, or change our priorities? We believe not. In the long run, workers in auto, steel, telephone, trucking, will be the heart of the rank and file movement because

these industries are at the center of the capitalist economy. We can also expect that, perhaps sooner but quite possibly later, the rank and file in these industries will go into motion. We cannot predict when that will be. We can only begin to position ourselves now so as to be as well prepared for it as possible. To position ourselves, we need to industrialize many of our members in these arenas. For, in highly concentrated heavy industry with powerful union bureaucracies and traditions of union organization, it is extremely difficult to recruit from the outside in the absence of mass struggle. By industrializing, we can recruit slowly but steadily and, at the same time, build a base from which we will be able to intervene in the future when more motion does occur.

Consistent activity in the priorities has another rationale. Such work can be a significant springboard for carrying out rank and file work and/or attracting militants from other industries. The fact that I.S. is already doing serious work in the priorities shows its long-term commitment to working class struggle, provides models for work in other arenas, and at times can be used directly in support of work outside the priorities (e.g. the carhaulers strike in Detroit, the L.A. beer strike, etc.) Once we understand that our industrialized comrades are in the priorities with a much longer run perspective, we will be far more open to developing types of work for them, both within their industries and outside of them, that allow them to operate much more flexibly and politically, freed from the unrealistic demands of producing a national rank and file organization immediately regardless of the circumstances.

Because we believe that our members can keep two things in their heads at once, we believe that industrialized comrades can stick it out even when the present gains of work are not enormous, while non-industrialized comrades can continue to support them even in the absence of immediate pay-offs. The key to this is a realistic assessment of what can be done and an appreciation on the other hand of the value of industrialization, not only for the priorities, but for the rest of our work also (i.e. for other union work, community work, and work among oppressed groups).

Industrialization in a few priority industries must remain a basic task for the I.S. But it must cease to be the sum total of our external activity. For it is not in basic industry, in this period, that the working class is most in motion; nor is it in basic industry that the scattered recovery from the defeat of the black and women's liberation movements is occurring; nor is it in basic industry (except in Teamsters), in this period, that we will most likely recruit significant numbers. However, simply to pass resolutions that work outside basic industry is "equal" with rank and file work within industry is not enough. What is necessary is an approach both to work in the industrial priorities and to other work that centers on linking the two in practice. We develop activity, for example, around South Africa to be attractive and available to our worker contacts. The more we can bring our contacts out to these kinds of events, the more we will show other workers we may know, students and radicals we wish to recruit, that the I.S. does not simply have working class politics, but has working class connections, is putting those politics into practice.

On the other hand, as we bring workers, especially black workers in our industrial priorities to these kinds of actions, we help to convince them of our position that the I.S. is committed not just to the rank and file movement but to black liberation. And we are

able to provide our industrialized people with an opportunity for raising racism with their contacts, both black and white, again in a concrete, practical way.

Finally, intervention from the outside in industries other than the priorities as well as I. S. participation in other types of work, must be recognized as absolutely essential to recruitment and growth.

We should maintain and expand the number of our members in all our priorities. However, certain changes in industrialization and priorities are necessary if we are going to recruit in the difficult period ahead of us, politicize our work, and improve our women's work.

We need more careful selection of those comrades we ask to industrialize. We must realize that many comrades are playing critical roles in the organization without being industrialized (e. g. organizers, teachers, blacks and women in non-priorities, etc.) We should make the effort to convince people to go into industry, but only comrades with real personal commitment to industrialization should industrialize.

We must politically train all comrades who are going to or already have industrialized. Members must be fully trained, not only in the general politics of the I. S., but in the specific politics and history of the union and industry.

Women's work must become a priority. In many places this can be done by prioritizing the areas in the Teamsters where there are majority or near majority of women (some warehouse, some production, Montgomery Ward's, freight clerical, etc.) This will take advantage of our position in the union through TDU and our broad political experience in the IBT. In areas where Teamster women's priorities are not a possibility because of no jobs, gangsterism, no women's work in the area, we should prioritize a local area of work of non-professional working women where the prospects for continuing rank and file activity and recruitment are judged best by the branch in collaboration with the national leadership.

We cannot count on mass upsurges or even organization on the level of TDU to form in our other national priorities in the next year. This means significant recruitment will be difficult. However, it also means that less resources of the organization will be tied up in these campaigns and we will have a greater possibility to intervene and recruit in non-priorities. Wherever possible, this should be done so that it links up with our priority work.

Politicization

The political development of our membership does not occur simply by putting them in a position to lead. In order to lead, they need to have a clear idea of the decisive political problems within the working class and in society as a whole. We have indicated here that it is the workers' lack of self-organization and their reformist consciousness that are the chief obstacles to the building of rank and file movements in industry, so it is here that political discussion should be centered.

It is the responsibility of the national leadership to organize a national political discussion around our trade union politics from a socialist perspective, and not merely call upon the membership to develop their own discussions on a branch by branch, or fraction by fraction basis. This means a fuller discussion of the effect of the economic crisis in various branches of industry, the response of the bureaucracy, and the response of the rank and file. This means a national discussion on the role of trade unions under capitalism, especially in times of capitalist crisis. It means full discussion of the specific role of the trade union bureaucracy -- from former militant fighters like Arnold Miller to died-in-the-wool business unionists like Frank Fitzsimmons -- within capitalism. It means full discussion of the limitations of the rank and file movements in industry which only seek to control a trade union.

Only these kinds of discussions can make sense out of the work we're doing, can enable us to generalize from our specific situation to understand the whole picture. Such discussions, held in the fractions, the branches, and at the center, can form the political basis for the recruitment of our trade union contacts to the I.S. as the only organized force in society with a program and a strategy which can win. We must put an immediate end to the notion inside the organization that "politics" means discussion of the Permanent Revolution or the Permanent Arms Economy, or Fascism, as opposed to political analyses of trade unionism and our working class work. It is a sad fact that our membership, especially those recruited to the idea that a socialist movement can be built just by being the best fighters, are poorly prepared to argue with our contacts why workers need more than the rank and file movements we are building. That's because they have been taught to think the main role of socialists is simply to build these movements.

Similarly, many of our members have not been educated on the strong conservative tendency of the entire trade union bureaucracy in the economic crisis -- left, right, and center. We must be mercilessly critical of such bureaucrats or emerging bureaucrats -- explaining why if left on their own they will be forced to the right -- so as to prepare the rank and file that it is only through their own actions that anything will be won, no matter who is elected to union office. This is not to say that we do not participate in campaigns to elect such bureaucrats, but without fostering any illusions in them.

We must also have a serious national discussion of independent organization of oppressed groups including blacks, women, gays, etc. in relation to the concrete questions of special demands such as superseniority, etc. We can no longer wish away the problem with the empty hope that the rank and file upsurge will sweep away the problem. Right now, there are few people in the I.S. who even think that we have a position on these questions, much less know what they are. This is a luxury we can ill afford at a time when the employers' offensive is wiping away gains by women, blacks, etc. in employment.

Finally, the organization must fully discuss the role of the revolutionary party in the trade unions and in society generally, and how the party must always fight against the conservatizing influence of capitalist society, even on its own members and leaders, through discussion and debate (which is the only condition for real unity in action.)

Such discussions, carried out with the participation of our contacts, with the understanding of the need to politicize our external work of all kinds, can lay the basis for the politicization of the U.S. and the recruitment to our tendency. They then form the basis for the politicization of Workers' Power and the creation of pamphlets which speak to the present day concerns of workers from a socialist vantage point.

Workers' Power itself reflects the problems we are discussing. Just as we began to conceive of the party as an adjunct to the mass movement, we conceived of Workers' Power as mainly a mass agitational tool, "our best organizer". But in the present state of the class, it is generally impossible for a socialist newspaper to be a mass agitational tool, although we do want it to provide militants with the strategic weapons to do mass organizing. We cannot hope to reach the broad masses with a socialist paper. Nor can we hope to seduce people into socialism by offering them a rank and file paper with socialist politics tagged on. Yet, this was the basic conception behind the WP as organizer method. And naturally, the politics of the paper have become increasingly low key, the explanations offered for what's happening increasingly oversimplified, our willingness to tackle controversial issues in a controversial way increasingly diminished. It was because we have had this concept of the paper that we have continued to carry during TDC and TDU articles in WP that essentially repeated those in Convoy, which is and should be a mass agitational paper. It is for this reason that even the new WP Review (#1), intended as a weapon of politicization and recruitment for the U.S., gives us a rundown of TDU explaining why militants should join it, not a Marxist analysis, explaining the connections and differences between the rank and file movement and the revolutionary party -- the limits of the former, the need for the latter.

WP should be a newspaper of socialist analysis, written primarily for militants whom we wish to develop into our periphery. It should not be primarily a paper seeking to move large numbers of workers into mass action, though the paper will and must continue to carry news and stories of working class struggles. The primary job of WP will be to generalize from these struggles, etc. so that the reader will see how only a socialist viewpoint can make sense out of his/her experiences and provide a way forward. This is not to say that WP cannot play an interventionist role. It must do so in two ways: first, by bringing strategic ideas for advancing the struggle to a small layer who are likely to read it regularly. We must be particularly clear that especially in our national priorities we will not be speaking to the mass of workers or carrying out mass agitation with our paper. Insofar as it is possible, agitational type coverage of our priorities should be carried in our rank and file papers. Secondly, in on-going struggles such as local strikes, we will often want to have an agitational coverage which may call for the support of the struggle, for it is when workers are in sharp conflict with the employers that a relatively large proportion will be open to reading our press. Especially in areas outside our priorities, such coverage may offer us an opportunity to intervene in action through strike support work.

Workers' Power should open up its pages from time to time to debates or disagreements within the membership and/or leadership which would have no immediate bearing on our campaigns. It is important that our periphery see us as an organization which is not afraid to bring some of these differences out in the open. Most workers have been brought up to suspect revolutionary organizations of monolithism and closed

mindedness, not intellectual dilletantism. Such a policy helps to bring our periphery closer to the I.S. by involving them in the working out of our line. (For instance, it would have been entirely appropriate for WF to carry the majority and minority views on Portugal in one or more of its issues.) Differences which arise before conventions should be aired in the paper to show how the I.S. works out its positions and to advertize for the convention.

Similarly with pamphlets. We do not have a usable pamphlet on black liberation or women's liberation or about racism or sexism at the workplace. We do not even have one on our most important work, i. e. on the I.S. political analysis of Teamsters (the Conspiracy pamphlet is good muckraking, but no substitute.) That this hasn't happened is a sad commentary on the seriousness with which we take party building, as well as a reflection of the preoccupation of our leaders with administration, rather than political development of the group. We must produce pamphlets which are the outgrowths of the political discussions within the national fractions, black commission, and women's commission, etc. These should be complemented by pamphlets on all other major issues which affect our work, such as Gary Tyler, the Sadlowski campaign, the Employers' Offensive, etc.

Recruitment (read INSERT on page 31 here)

We have the best politics on the left. We should be expanding. Instead we are shrinking, our branches are far too small to carry out work in any but one or two arenas and at the same time integrate new people, develop the politics of the organization, etc. We cannot grow, however, as long as we regard white collar workers as somehow petty bourgeois, and students as somehow suspect, as long as we have nothing much to say to workers in industries other than telephone, steel, auto and trucking, and as long as we fail to develop women's work. Developing a serious perspective for I.S. activity outside the industrial priorities is essential, not only to recruit but to hold people. Without this perspective we cut ourself off from areas where we can recruit; we have difficulty recruiting because we cannot offer people attracted to our politics arenas for work; and we fail to hold recruits because we have little significant work for them to do. Again, it must be emphasized that the key to developing other arenas that are no longer considered to be secondary or second class is to have an approach to work here and in our industrial priorities that is based on their interconnection. Such an approach centers our role in building rank and file activity on our strategic conception that re-building workers' self-organization depends on the development of links between workers in different industries, between public and private sector workers, between the community-based and more general movements against racism, sexism, and imperialism, and the trade union movement. From this point of view, launching a South Africa campaign that will organize outside the factories and be brought by our industrialized people into the factories or involving freight workers in the carhauleders' strike, is not an activity that the I.S. undertakes only when our rank and file organizing in freight or in auto is at a lull. On the contrary, such campaigns are understood to be a consistent necessity for they provide our industrial comrades an opportunity for confronting and convincing the militants they work with of the practicality and necessity of reaching out beyond their own industries and locals.

Our ability to recruit does not turn only on developing new arenas for external work. We also have to break completely with our present methods of leadership and internal organization. The commandism and moralism that accompanies stick-bending as a method of leadership creates an atmosphere that repels not only "intellectuals and students who don't understand discipline", but workers. Workers attracted to revolutionary politics are often driven by anger born of being ordered around and pressured to get in line. Within bourgeois society they are systematically denied respect for their ideas and opportunities for self-development. So long as we operate with the idea that a workers combat organization has to be run like an army, the I. S. will not offer workers a really different experience. Once we understand that an effective workers combat organization must be organized to maximize discussion and debate, to treat every comrade equally to get the most of their talents and potential, we can move to make the I. S. an organization which encourages the creative and critical abilities of its worker members, which doesn't claim to have all the answers, is brutally realistic in its assessment of itself and its adversaries. We will then be able to honestly say to our worker contacts: "Your life will be more coherent, more satisfying, more what you want it to be, by joining the I. S. than by any other real choice that you have."

Democracy

None of these proposals can possibly be implemented without a return to full party democracy and an acceptance of the norms of democratic centralism. Unlike all bourgeois, social democratic, or Stalinist forms of organization, socialist organization requires the greatest possible feedback from the base to the center, including criticism as well as agreement. This is true no matter what the size or composition of the organization. Democracy is not a tactic to be turned to when the leadership is afraid of losing control. Democratic feedback and membership control are principles of socialist organization.

In the past few years, the I. S. has strayed far from these norms of democratic centralism, despite the fact that, in many ways, the I. S. is more democratic than our British counterpart. The measure of a democratic organization is the degree to which the membership has developed and internalized, through discussion and debate, the line of the organization, and can collaborate in implementing the line effectively and flexibly. By this standard, the I. S. has fared poorly. Discussion and debate have been discouraged, and even ridiculed as a carryover from our student past. Failures and mistakes go without plausible explanation. The leadership deems collaboration impossible when differences arise (i. e. removing an EC member from the EC for the last pre-convention period because he had differences with the majority). Secondary leaders are not adequately consulted in developing policy.

Our tasks require an end to this kind of leadership and in favor of a fully collaborative, working body of socialists, in which all are equals regardless of party position or workplace, and in which the leadership is constantly subject to the critical review of the membership.

To make this possible, we propose the following:

1. An end to the "disciplined EC" as an unacceptable, anti-democratic method of socialist leadership. This is justified by the EC, in part in relation to the "turn", and has contributed to the depoliticization and the decline of democracy in the I. S. The EC should be a fully collaborative body which should make available its important differences to the organization, if not always for immediate discussion, then at least so that the membership may know where individuals in the leadership stand and what other viewpoints were presented. The situation is so blatantly absurd that even the NC, which elects the EC, has no formal knowledge of political differences on the EC because it is "disciplined" never to bring them out. We demand that our leadership collaborate, even with differences, just as we expect of a local branch Exec. Those who cannot collaborate should be removed.

2. An end to the training of organizers as "the political agents of the EC". Many branch organizers have failed because they could not develop collaborative relations with the members of their branch due to this mistraining. Rather than seeing their role as a dual one which includes soliciting feedback to the center, which may in fact disagree with elements of the EC line, organizers have been trained to see their role as mainly to "carry" their Exec and their branch to the line of the EC. This one way, top down conception handicaps the membership and the leadership because it stifles the feedback from the base which the leadership needs to correct its perspectives. We propose a fully collaborative relationship between the organizers and branch membership.

3. The election of a new majority leadership at the convention which is committed to most, if not all, the perspectives in this document. The present EC and its supporters have fought tooth and nail against many of these proposals at NCs and at the last two conventions. That they may now perhaps be willing to abolish the disciplined EC, to politically develop the fractions, and to call for more politics does not convince us that they have changed their positions, especially in view of their current tactical need to bloc with others who do not share their conceptions, and whom they attacked as recently as the last convention as the right wing. That the leadership defends virtually all of its basic methods and policies is proof enough of this.

We need a leadership which rejects the patronizing method of "bending the stick", which assumes that the membership cannot fully grasp the complexities of our politics and so must always be given a relatively simple set of directions. This method in and of itself retards the political development of the membership, especially workers who it is assumed cannot develop our full politics and who will only be interested in their own particular partial struggles. Instead, we need a leadership which relates to workers -- whether in or out of the I. S. -- as fully intelligent equals who have significant ideas of their own, and can collaborate with those workers without patronizing them. Only this kind of leadership will ever gain the respect of workers and therefore be able to attract them to the I. S. Furthermore, we need a leadership which organizes the rest of the organization to collaborate fully in the working out of our political line, and then collaborates fully in the changing of the line as necessary. This means that the leadership cannot substitute itself for other bodies in the organization (i. e. fractions, execs, etc.) or simply tell these bodies to do their own thing. It is the job of the national leadership to help provide political direction for these bodies, to help them