

majority caucus bulletin #2

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THE "BETTER COURSE" ISN'T - a reply to:

"Towards a Political Solution--The Better Course for the I.S." By Mike U

At a time of crisis in the organization, and especially in the middle of a faction fight, it is crucially important that all comrades keep a cool head and take a responsible attitude towards the discussions. A faction fight, during which all kinds of irresponsible charges, slanders and distortions are thrown around, is not the time for raising any and all criticisms that one might have. It is important to stick to essentials. It is even more important that we be clear as to the importance of any criticisms raised, their relevance to the specific situation in the group at present, and that they be related to specific solutions and alternatives.

Otherwise the result is likely to be not clarity and a strengthening of the group, but confusion, disorientation and demoralization as members are met with only a rising cacaphony of attacks against the organization, its leaders, policies etc.. To raise criticisms in such a manner is irresponsible, if not downright destructive, at any time, and doubly so during a faction fight.

It is unfortunate that the authors of the "Towards a Political Solution" document (TPS) have chosen to raise a whole series of criticisms in what must be judged an irresponsible manner. It is doubly unfortunate that in the process they lend credence to many of the charges and slanders raised by the Left Faction.

Their document in general consists of a melange of criticisms with little or no substantiation or defense. In no case is the discussion taken up in terms of the activities of the group, perspectives adopted. None of the proposals of the leadership, aimed at overcoming certain problems, are discussed. The document ends up with proposals which are thoroughly eclectic, giving no real direction. The document thus remains abstract and timeless, providing no guidance to the group/

This lack of seriousness in the document is clearest in their treatment of what they consider to be the central point. In their proposals the document states that "The I.S. must become...more political than ever before". How do they suggest we solve this problem? "Fresh ideas and methods must be circulated." Terrific! Unfortunately before fresh ideas can be circulated someone must first come up with them and write them down. Do these comrades have any fresh ideas? If they do, they are keeping them a secret. After twelve pages of attacks and criticisms all they can come up with is this forlorn appeal. Very well. We endorse this appeal. But we also suggest that before the comrades write another twelve pages of criticisms they first try to write one page of fresh ideas!

What these comrades seem to be unaware of is that some new ideas hve been circulated already. I am referring to the documents from the last NC, which discussed some proposals for developing the political life in the organization. The authors would have been less irresponsible if they had at least referred to those proposals, pointing out their agreements or disagreements, where they could be strengthened, discussing what progress had been made, etc...

Instead we are left with a collection of irresponsible attacks on the organization for a lack of politics, condemning the leadership in the process, without ever seriously acknowledging, let alone evaluating, the fact that the leadership recognizes this problem and has taken steps to overcome it.

This failure to acknowledge the actions taken by the leadership and the organization as a whole to overcome certain problems in the group occurs time and again throughout the document. The impression is given (either consciously or unconsciously) that the leadership is either unaware of the problems or is hostile to any solutions. Since this is a specific attitude taken by the LF it is not a minor point to raise.

For instance, on page 3 they state that "what the LF says about the effects of the 'triumphalist' tendencies of our leadership is largely valid." (Why only largely?). What about the self-criticisms made by the leadership on this point? Do you agree or disagree? Do you even know what it is, or don't you even care?

This attack on the leadership does not remain implicit. In fact, they take up, and pass off as good coin, many of the slanders and distortions raised by the LF. No attempt is made to argue against the leadership's point of view, or even to check out the charges with the leadership as to their validity.

The LF states: "when there is a genuine controversy the leadership attempts to suppress it; it muzzles dissenting speakers, it will not order or distribute certain materials, it "loses" correspondence and it fails to disseminate documents submitted by its membership." No proof is offered for any of this.

This gets watered down slightly in the TPS document: "The flow of information... is severely restricted", "the prohibition of (or atmosphere of intimidation against) certain other discussions", and finally "there should be no suppression of discussion as occurred, e.g., with John Charlton's visit and written reports from comrades visiting Portugal." Again, no proof is given.

The reason is simple - there is no proof. The LF does not surprise us, since they are merely out to discredit the leadership, and will use any slanders to do so. But it is distressing when other comrades merely pass on the LF's garbage, and indicate their lack of seriousness and responsibility. Indeed, they even go so far as to pass on the slander that we are suppressing discussion of the Saklowski campaign.

There are no documents which have been suppressed, and no one has been able to point to a single one. There are reports on trips to Portugal in the NO files which have not been published. These are not suppressed (if they were it would be pretty silly to allow the opposition to read them, as silly as suppressing one out of three letters from the ISGB). These were not written for publication, but as private reports for the E.C.

There was a decision not to open a full scale discussion and debate on Portugal last year. That is not the same as suppressing such a discussion. None of the current opposition was writing opposing documents and clamoring for such a discussion, no motion was presented to any NC to overrule the EC. It is to open such a discussion. There are lots of other discussions which we have implicitly decided not to open, such as on the nature of Stalinism and Stalinist parties on which there are known differences in the group. No one has yet charged that we are suppressing such discussions. The reason is simple. To open such a discussion means allocating time and energy towards it, writing documents, discussing it in all the branches, etc.. Such decisions, based on how to allocate our scarce resources may be right or wrong, but to charge suppression whenever you disagree with such a decision is sheer demagogery.

Similarly on the flow of information. There was a decision made at one point to drop the internal bulletins. This was done because many of us felt that they were mostly worthless and a waste of time and effort. It was felt that there were better ways to get out the information. That proved not to work and the bulletins were started again. They still are not very useful. The problem is not that information is restricted, as you charge, but that the wrong information is transmitted. You are quite correct to point to the evaluation of the auto campaign as a model to follow, but such reports are not restricted, in fact they are encouraged. Unfortunately we are all quite sloppy on this. But steps for improvements are being made. Straightening the fractions, and getting out regular and serious fraction bulletins will help (and has already begun). Are you even aware of what steps have been taken? Instead of more appeals, what we need are more examples. Why don't you comrades do a serious evaluation of our years of work in N.Y. Teachers as an example for others to follow?

All of this could be overlooked if the document actually went on to provide some answers, give a clear direction that the organization could move forward on. In the end what we get is an eclectic hodge-podge. It is difficult to know what would be different tomorrow if this proposal was adopted.

They do defend the need for priorities, and even for the priorities that we have. But it is done with so many qualifications it is difficult to know what it means in practice.

Thus they attack the "narrow and rigid implementation" of priorities (where?) though they accept the "basic thrust and direction of IS work in our priority areas"/

The difference is clearer when they state; "Our quarrel is not with the way the IS deals with its priorities; its with the way the organization has dealt with it non-priorities." No comrades, the problem is with the priorities. And because the problem is there it is inevitable that the non-priorities will get short-changed. This will continue to be so until we are closer to completing the transformation to a workers combat organization which was begun several years ago. This was even the experience of the ISGB.

"The main priority throughout this period, however, was industry. Indeed, IS was often accused of one-sidedness and 'economism' because of its neglect of other sectors (e.g. students) and other areas of work (e.g. international solidarity). But given the overwhelming difficulty of winning roots in the working class, and the overriding urgency of doing so, such a lack of balance was justified. In the abstract its fine to talk of 'bringing politics to workers'; but if there are no workers to bring them to, then the discussion is futile." (Birchall, History of IS, IS #77)

And again: "Groups were formed of comrades working around particular industries and combines. An attempt was made to establish priorities for industrial work....The first job was to turn a largely student and middle-class membership into a cadre capable of making some impact in the industrial working class. This in turn provided a selection process; membership actually fell during 1969...The aim was to transform the nature of the branches, to make them, in Trotsky's phrase, 'habitable for workers'."

That, comrades, is the fight which resulted in the split in 1973, and it is at the root of the present crisis. It is precisely that fight, and all the problems associated with it, that is absent that is absent from the TBS document.

It is that fight which provides the context for the "lack of balance" in our work which we decry, for bending the stick (which you ridicule), for the pushing and pullings of the leadership, their main interventions in the branches, and yes, comrades, for occasionally kicking a little ass.

If you think that this is harsh we suggest that you go read Trotsky (who suggested expelling anyone who couldn't recruit a worker in six months) or Lenin.

We have proceeded a little way down that road. It is the leadership that has been responsible for many of the small steps that we have made. They have also made some mistakes. You don't bother to discuss that process, only attacking the mistakes (real or imagined) in a timeless and completely abstract way.

Until such time as the priority work of the organization is more successful, the leadership will have to devote most of its energies to it. Anything less would be irresponsible. But to suggest that because of this the leadership has a blanket hostility to non-priority work is a complete distortion. It is this same leadership which has initiated many of the non-priority activities that even you point to. They have also, perhaps mistakenly in certain areas, discouraged others. None of this justifies the kind of attacks you level against them.

You will object that you are not really proposing everything equally, that what you want is some "serious, limited, and carefully controlled activities aimed at students, independent radicals, and workers in non-priority work." Fine, the organization already does some of this, and its work could undoubtedly be strengthened, opportunities have indeed been missed. But you raise your proposals in such an eclectic manner that it is difficult to tell what you really want us to do, and the distinct impression is left that while you are for the priorities you are also for doing everything else.

For instance, we have had certain perspectives for our work in NY since last Sept. No amendments were made to this perspective. Yet in your document you raise a multitude of activities in NY which are examples of the kind of work you have in mind. Comrades, get serious. Which ones are you for doing here? What should we drop? If all you want are examples there are a hundred more. (It is also dishonest to leave the impression that we have not tried any of these things in NY.)

You go on to state that we can "rest assured" that you do not want to return to the much dreaded talk shop. Comrades, your document does not assure us. Frankly it does just the opposite.

Your attempt to locate the source of the de-politicization in the supposed workerism developed when we broke away from the new left in the 60's disturbs us. We did not overcome the talk shop back then (and certainly we did not bend the stick too far!); nor did we overcome it in the split in 1973. In fact that fight continued in NY up until the time we split the branch up into three separate branches. We believe there are still tendencies to slip back to the old habits. And when you call for the leadership to actually promote political debate inside the organization we must admit that it raises awful memories of our early history.

And we find it hard to understand how to avoid a talk shop when you call for all members to "politically assess all the aspects of work done by all the various parts of the organization." (emphasis added) When are we supposed to do all this, and have classes, and cadre schools, and external work, and discuss our own activities, let alone time to read all the pages and pages of reports and discussion articles that you are calling for?

Perhaps a student can do it, and certainly a full time staffer should do as much of it as possible. But members who work 40-60 hours a week will never have time for it. And the situation is going to get worse, not better, as the organization gets bigger, and is involved in more activities. To argue that everyone has to keep up with everything is utopian.

I have not tried to take up all the points raised in the document. It may be claimed that I unfairly give the impression that there is nothing correct or worthwhile in the document. There are some correct criticisms, and even some valuable suggestions. But it was the overall character of the document which distressed me, its lack of seriousness in the way it handles questions, and the irresponsible criticisms it throws around. It may still get many supporters, after all its eclectic approach almost guarantees that there is something there for everyone. But what it ins't is a document which helps us arrive at a "potentially correct solution of this crisis", "one which will move the I.S. forward in a coherent and clear political direction."

## MAJORITY CAUCUS STATEMENT

### I INTRODUCTION

The majority caucus was formed to defend the shared politics of the majority of the IS for building a workers combat organization. We are committed to a perspective that includes industrial priorities, industrialization, and "mass work". We have become a centralized campaigning organization. Our goal, is the transformation of the IS into a workers combat organization. Central to that task is continued efforts at recruitment and integration of workers into our organization, and continued emphasis on agitational methods and the mass work approach to develop our members as leaders in the class struggle.

The "Left Faction" claims that the IS is in a deep crisis and has no future. We admit that the organization has been having real problems over the past year, however we do not agree with the description of those problems put forward by the "Left" Faction, nor do we believe their strategies represents a way forward.

It is approximately 2 years since the IS began the turn to agitation in fact, if not yet in title. This meant that the IS began putting our main emphasis on attempting to lead working class struggles, and for the first time we made an aggressive attempt to recruit workers.

Although there have been mistakes and problems resulting from the inexperience of the entire organization, the majority caucus stands by the advances made by the turn.

Despite setbacks and disappointments - particularly in our CWA work and in our CGC campaign, IS industrial work advanced steadily. Increasingly, we have members who are respected and influential militants in their workplaces and unions. Their defeats, just as much as their successes over the years, contribute heavily to the IS collective understanding of how workers are organized and led in the class struggle, and how a workers movement in this country will be built. It is out of this ongoing experience that our mass work perspective has been developed, and will continue to evolve.

In Teamsters our successes are well known in the organization. In auto we have strong roots in a number of locals, and are just beginning to lay the basis for the development of a national fraction outside Detroit. In CWA, our fraction shows modest signs of recovery from the defeat of the last year. In the past period the building of a functioning national steel fraction has begun. Approximately one-third of our total membership now has jobs in priority industries. The experience and knowledge gained by comrades in the priorities has enabled us to do good industrial work in other industries - postal, the bakers union, among bus drivers, waitresses, teachers to name a few.

The past period has also seen modest advances in our non-industrial work. Less than a year ago, our Red Tide perspective had totally collapsed. We now have a fragile but real Red Tide, with a developing leadership of its own, with a predominantly working class and majority black membership. Several branches have been experimenting in doing black community work and even though we have not yet made significant breakthroughs, we are beginning to get much needed experience, and have had a few modest successes including our work around busing, Gary Tyler and Marquette Park. The organization as a whole is taking the first steps towards longterm

serious commitment to Southern Africa solidarity work. And we have a full-time National Black organizer and a developing black leadership.

Since the IS began the turn the organization has changed fundamentally in composition, work, and self conception. Today 12% of the IS are working class, we have recruited a small but significant number of blacks. Most importantly, with few exceptions, both the blacks and workers were recruited out of struggles that we led in telephone, teamster, auto, life GT, etc.

Also, although there have been excesses, we have learned extremely important lessons on how to build a revolutionary workers organization in this country, in this period. We learned that revolutionaries can lead in fact, because of the lack of traditions in the American working class - revolutionaries must lead. We learned too, that workers can be won to revolutionary socialist ideas and can be recruited to a revolutionary organization through struggle.

But there have been problems. Although we understood that the turn carried with it the potential problems of overstretching the organization and depoliticization, we did not have the experience to stop it. Thus, we were forced to learn the hard way.

At the October NC we began coming to grips with these problems. We discussed the fact that although TDC had been a far bigger success than our predictions, we had not recruited and the organization was exhausted and demoralized. In a series of documents that laid out a perspective for re-politicizing the organization and party building out of mass work we began to move the organization forward again.

In summary these documents laid out the strategy of mass work and why and how revolutionaries use it. The documents also traced the need to politicize the work, our past mistakes and how to rectify them. In particular the documents discussed the need to build a periphery for the IS and how to do that. One of the documents discussed Workers Power as a tool in periphery building and how to make the paper more political.

Updating and correcting our economic perspectives was also taken up. Here we stated that our economic perspectives had been off, that although the strength of the recovery is mixed, its course would be stretched out longer and the boom phase pushed farther into the future. This meant inflation would not rise significantly before the end of the bargaining round and wages would not be a major issue.

For us this meant the collapse of our perspective for building national opposition groupings out of contract campaigns in auto and telephone, greater focus on local work and the increased need to be more political in our industrial work in order to recruit.

Following the October NC (which almost all agreed had been the best NC in several years) we began the slow process of re-politicizing the IS and periphery building. During that time socialist study groups for Teamsters contacts were organized in almost all branches with serious IBT work. Also during that time Teamster recruitment began. During that time also we began using "Last Grave" to bring people around the IS.

But we did not move fast enough or boldly enough. The problems of the past had already lead to the underground organizing of the left faction.

And their subterranean, but very real existence, acted as a brake on the organization's ability to move ahead.

The resulting paralysis and the formal announcement of the existence of the "left" faction has forced the majority to take a long hard look at the organization, where we have come and where we are going.

In general we believe that the fundamentals of our strategy - mass work industrialization and national priorities are overwhelmingly correct. Our problems flow instead from mistakes in specific perspectives and problems of internal functioning. Divisions and suspicions between different sections of the leadership have inhibited us from coming to grips with our mistakes. A failure to properly integrate and train newer members meant the general isolation of the leadership. All of this must be corrected for us to move ahead.

This document comes out of discussions of the majority caucus leadership meeting in Detroit, Jan. 1 & 2 and out of further discussions of a drafting committee selected by that meeting.

We don't pretend that there is agreement on the solution to every question facing the organization within our ranks. However, on the level of program and practice, the difference between the old convention opposition and the EC have been diminishing and not increasing. In the course of the faction fight, members of the majority, approaching the common problems of the organization have made substantial progress in hammering out a common program.

The breadth of this document is to summarize the state of the organization and the economic and political perspectives for the next year, and to handle in depth, our resulting organizational tasks. This document will be fleshed out by an in depth economic and political perspectives document and specific perspectives documents for our industrial work, women's liberation, black liberation and youth work.

We believe that these documents plus the political direction charted by the October NC lay out the political framework in which a new majority can move the organization forward.

We encourage supporters of the majority and members of the minority to help shape the direction of the IS along the lines laid out in this and other majority caucus documents.

## II ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Most of 1977, and possibly through the beginning of 1978 will see a period of relatively slow growth.

Inflation will be moderate, not high. Heavy unemployment will persist, but there will be no new round of massive layoffs. The employers offensive will concentrate predominantly on productivity and working conditions. Job security, while remaining an issue will be less intense. Wage conflict, outside the public sector, will not be a major source of struggle. By 1978, however, inflation may again start getting out of hand, and any efforts by the Carter administration to control it will have to be at the expense of employment.

During Carter's first year in office, large sections of the working



class will be particularly true of workers in the larger, stronger unions who have enough seniority to feel that their jobs are secure. And illusions in the government will be stronger among seniority black workers, more so than any time in the past decade. Among youth, and especially black youth, unemployment will remain a critical and highly explosive problem. Illusions in the government will be very much weaker among working class youth.

Over the next year, conditions will not be good for the development of national union reform or contract movements. Where national organization or networks already exist (like IUT) they can be maintained and built on. But on the whole, the center of industrial and trade union struggle will tend to be local in character.

The economic and political situation in the country will generate an atmosphere where, on the whole, workers will be less easily receptive to radical and extreme ideas than they were over the past two years.

However after this year the economy will most likely begin to heat up again, inflation will rise and boom will quickly turn to bust. The long term stability of the 50's and 60's is no longer a possibility for world or American capitalism. The return to recession and even another depression will expand general working class receptivity to radical ideas.

There will still be many opportunities for periphery building and recruitment.

These will be most promising where we have been able to carry out consistent work over the past several years, and where we can consolidate and build from the work. Shop and local issues, and local union reform will be most important. But for the I.S. to reap the benefits in terms of periphery building and recruitment it will be increasingly important for us to bring outside community and other political issues (like South Africa) into the workplace.

We will also have small successes in places where we are relatively new. Although most working people want to "give Jimmy a chance," the political legacy of Watergate and Vietnam, combined with the recent depression and continued high unemployment mean that the overall consciousness of the American working class is far more cynical than when we first went into industry. Even our newest industrial members will be able to raise politics barring security considerations.

And the organization will continue to meet radicalized workers in ones and twos through community work.

The point is that even in this next immediate period when the working class is, in general, less open to revolutionary socialist politics there will be real opportunities to recruit workers to our periphery and to the I.S.

Community and general political work will be more important for the I.S. over the next year than it has been at any time since we made our original turn to the working class and industrialization. In part, the reasons for this are internal, and one of the successes of our original turn.

It is because of our industrial experience and roots that we are developing the ability to carry out community and general political work on a working class basis. In the past, efforts at general political work tended to create a split consciousness in the organization: economic work geared to the working class; political work geared to the middle class.

Also, it will be to more general political work that our new worker recruits will be able to bring their families and friends.

In our community and general political work, we will orient to white workers as well as black workers, adults as well as youth. But in practice, we can expect to find higher receptivity among youth and among blacks. This work can provide the practical context in which we can develop and deepen our Black Liberation and youth perspectives.

In the period ahead, we can expect intensification of attacks on women. There will be concerted efforts to reverse the growing influx of women into the workforce - and particularly into the better high paying jobs. This will emerge as a conscious reactionary program for reducing unemployment by reducing the number of job seekers. Recent court decisions reducing equal opportunity job protection and rights for women signal that trend. There will be resistance to this attack as is shown by the response to the Supreme Court decision on maternity benefits. But because of the present extreme weakness of the women's movement, and because workingclass women do not constitute a self-conscious community of interest in society the way blacks do or industrial workers do, we can expect response to these attacks to be slow.

It is in our industrial work that it will be easiest for us to organize against the growing attack on women - particularly in those branches with the deepest roots in industry. On a low level, there will be growing opportunities for struggle over women's issues. As the reactionary trend increases to a wholesale attack on all women's rights - which it will - these opportunities will increase. But even in the short run, we will be able to recruit working class women to the I.S. - both from within and outside of our priorities. And concentrated efforts of this kind of work, are also important in the development of women's leadership and self confidence inside the organization. For these reasons we will put increasing emphasis on women's liberation work in the next period.

(The majority caucus will be putting forward specific perspectives documents on women's liberation, black liberation and youth work.)

#### Section on Districts and National Organization

Since 1970, along with industrial concentration, the I.S. geographically prioritized the mid-west industrial cities. The I.S. knew then, as it knows now, that the center of American industry are in the midwest. We understood that it was in the industrial midwest that the working class was most highly concentrated, had some of the strongest traditions of militancy, and is the best organized today. We understood that the American revolutionary party would be built in the midwest, that the midwest would be the center of a workers revolution and that we had to move there.

After several years of extreme difficulty including a major faction fight we had successfully reconstituted ourselves in the midwest. We had several branches in key cities, cadres in our priorities, roots, and the beginnings of workers recruitment. By the 1975 convention it was clear that our strategy to build in the midwest had been successful. The I.S. was on the road to becoming a workers group and was fundamentally different in composition and actual work, than the group had been in 1970.

Following the 1975 convention we began laying out plans for expansion. These plans were based on a perspective of significant growth. We agreed on five new branches including establishing a beachhead in the South. The new branches campaign was now the priority - over the established midwest branches. Comrades willing to move were asked to move to a new branch.

In the end we decided on only three of the five branches. Nonetheless even these three put an enormous strain on the organization. We had not grown enough to sustain expansion. As the economic picture had changed, it was not as easy to build as we had expected, and we did not have sufficient cadres to both actually lead the new branches and maintain some of the old ones.

Attempting to properly service the newer branches placed an immense additional burden on an already severely stretched organization. Not only did the new branches suffer - all the branches did. The smaller branches on both coasts got almost no attention. The center was unable to stay very far ahead of the organization.

We must now come to grips with these problems and attempt to solve them.

Over the last period the development of the I.S., branch by branch, has been uneven. In general, it is in the smaller branches which have not been able to develop successful work in the priorities., and the new branches which have not yet sunk roots that the organization is demoralized. On the other hand the midwest, industrial branches are fairly healthy, stable groups, with recruitment (although slow) and expanding political work.

The solution is not, however to abandon any notion of geographical priorities as the "left" faction does and declare all branches equal with equal potential. This would be politically dishonest and would further demoralize comrades in the more peripheral branches when they discovered this is not to be true later on. The midwest will in general lead the development of working class struggle and a revolutionary workers movement. As long as that is what we are trying to build, our midwest branches will be the healthiest.

However, we want a national organization. The struggle cannot be built successfully in the midwest alone. The union movement although strongest in the midwest, is national in scope. The political struggles we have attempted to build - GT, now South Africa - must be built nationally to be effective. And of course attempting to build a revolutionary party that was not national is ludicrous.

The smaller have done best when they were able to do work around our national priorities. In the Bay Area, Louisville, Boston Cincinnati and Portland we were able to do successful work around Teamster because of our national teamster work. In two cities we recruited - Louisville and Cincinnati.

This has been true of political priorities as well. Many branches have done good GT work and good South Africa work is beginning because of a lead given in the more developed branches.

The smaller branches have been least successful when they have been unable to get into the priorities. This is one of the problems we have to deal with. A second problem of the smaller branches has been the lack of sufficient cadres to lead. A third problem has been that we failed to recognize the unevenness of branches. When national campaigns were established all branches were expected to carry them out, whether or not they had the resources to do it. Detroit and Boston were expected to carry out similar work.

To begin solving the problems of the smaller branches we will:

1. Rationalize the work. All branches cannot be expected to do the same things. Perspectives for each branch will be worked out that are tailored to the specific needs and abilities of the branches. For example, Boston might only do South Africa work and work around their members in industry.
2. The peripheral branches will still try to get into the priorities. In cases where that is impossible, local industrial perspectives will be worked out. Local priorities should not stop continued effort to get into the national priorities nor should they stop transferring over when possible.
3. The development of secondary leaders and cadre will become a high priority for the smaller branches. This means that greater local initiatives will be encouraged and that resources will be given from the center to aid in cadre development. (See sections on expanding the leadership and training.)

4. The job of the national organizer will be to work with the smaller branches, to develop perspectives, to help rationalize the work and develop cadre.

Just as we must recognize that the smaller branches have specific, different problems that we must deal with, so do the branches in the industrial midwest. In the next period the I.S. will be able to move forward most decisively in the upper mid-west cities where our industrial work is most advanced and our cadre most experienced and established. It is the branches of the midwest that is leading the organization as a whole in becoming a workers combat organization.

The branches where our industrial work is most developed are the ones that most need to develop strength in the full spectrum of our political work - community work, black liberation work, women's liberation work, and anti-imperialist work. It is in these districts where we can expect to be most successful in carrying out these kinds of activities on a working class basis. It is in these districts where we will have the earliest successes, not just in recruiting and integrating workers from our priorities, but also their relatives and friends who will usually not work in priorities. It is in these districts where we have the most immediate prospects for the development of strong Red Tide branches. It will be these districts that will have the greatest prospects, and will be under the greatest pressure to develop I.S. district organizations, organized on an increasingly well developed internal political and educational life. And it will be these branches that will have to become more and more tied to the political life of the working class in the cities in which they live.

These tasks will not be accomplished over night, but where our industrial work is strongest, and our worker recruitment prospects greatest, this is the direction we will have to move in the next 2-3 years. To do so will require strong, well organized district organizations with their own developed and rounded political leadership. These are the tasks that our mid-west industrial branches are, in fact already beginning to grapple with, and is the direction that must be encouraged by the organization, both politically and in terms of allocating the necessary resources.

The Chicago-Gary area will still need some personell brought in from the outside. We are committed to whatever personell commitments are required to maintain and build our southern beachhead in Atlanta. We may also ask specific comrades to move to fill specific staff openings or to take advantage of specific hiring opportunities.

For now with the exception of college towns, we are dropping the notion of "feeder branch". Later on when the organization's growth warrents expansion, some comrades will again be asked to move. However we'd like to see further colonization come much more from the more developed areas.

Following the four midwest districts, the next places where we would like to move in the direction of strong rounded district organization will be Los Angeles and New Jersey. But it is too early to even guess at the timing for that.

In the next period, success in the large midwest district will generate resources for the organization as a whole. It will be there that cadre develop fastest. Not only will their political experience become enormously useful to the organization as a whole, but they will provide speakers, travelling organizers, etc., for the organization. Eventually, we hope that we will be able to send out experienced cadre from the central branches as part of the process of developing the I.S. into a strong national organization.

#### BROADENING AND STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

In the past two years, the I.S. made significant progress in transforming itself into a centralized campaigning organization, began to build a professional organizational machine.

In developing organizational efficiency and a division of labor, we ended up going too far. Comrades on all levels have become much too specialized, and as a result, there is too little collective responsibility for the overall needs of the organization as a whole.

Leadership at every level has not expanded sufficiently to meet our expanded task. all too often, administrative methods of leadership have replaced political methods inside the organization. The leadership has tended to become isolated. Initiative, on all levels within the organization, has all too often been discouraged rather than encouraged.

In bringing about organizational changes, we start at the top - with the national leadership. The national leadership is not just the E.C., nor is it any other existing political body. The I.S. national leadership consists of the central leadership, (E.C. and national org staff, N.C.,) and the national fraction leaders, full time organizers. In the next year the I.S. must develop a fully integrated and collaborative national leadership.

In the past period, the most serious divisions within the national leadership have been tension between the industrial fraction leaderships, on the one hand, and full time staff - particularly the E.C. - on the other. All now agree that these tensions must be overcome in order to effectively combat natural tendencies toward conservatism in industrial work in a period like the present. Fraction leaderships will have to take more responsibility for the organization as a whole. And they have a decisive role in making sure the fractions help train new workersmembers to be full revolutionary socialists and not simply industrial militants. Full time staff will have to collaborate closely with industrial leadership both in advancing the industrial work and in developing the other political aspects of the organization. And it is equally important that the overall political lead given by the full time staff be grounded in the real experiences of our industrial work.

We make the following specific organizational proposals:

A. Establish an I.S. Central Committee of 12 to 15 members consisting of the E.C. plus 7 to 10 additional members. These additional members will be selected from the midwest branches and will be weighted toward the leaders of our industrial work. They will include at least one full time branch district organizer and at least one member central to our black and community work.

Members of the CC will be selected from the midwest so that we can afford to have monthly CC meetings and a fairly high level of collaboration among CC members between meetings. We are projecting a CC for the next year that is weighted in favor of industrial leadership, at the likely expense of under-representing branch district organizers. This is because we all agree that integrating industrial/fraction leadership into the national leadership is a key task for this period. But branch/district organizers are an equally important part of the national leadership. We are not projecting that future CC's will continue this kind of imbalance.

The CC will be elected by the convention, though its membership can be changed, during the year, by the NC. It will review and revise the organization's perspectives on a monthly basis and share responsibility for implementation. It will strive to become an integrated and collaborative leadership body for the overall political guidance of the whole organization - not a parliament representing different constituencies, nor a veto group over the EC. After the CC has existed for approximately six months, the NC will review its functioning and progress and make whatever changes may be needed in its functioning or its composition.

B. The National Committee will also be elected at the convention. All CC members will be on the NC. Its other members will be drawn from all geographic sections of the organization. Approximately every third month, its meeting will replace the regular CC

meeting. It has the power to change the EC or the CC, to instruct either of these bodies, and to overrule any of their decisions. It must approve major changes in perspective.

C. The Executive Committee will continue day to day tasks of political leadership for the organization. It will continue to be charged with overall leadership responsibilities in relationship to all other leading bodies of the organization. It will continue to be elected and replaceable by the NC. The CC can instruct the EC, but it can not replace the E.C.

D. Establish a mid-west full time Organizers Council. This body will have no formal decision making power. It will play an important role in refining policy and in initiating discussion that can be sent to the EC or CC. It will also be responsible for developing and refining the political roles and functions of branch and district organizers in the I.S. This body will be able to collectivize our experiences in developing rounded branch and district organization, and will be able to collectivize the experience of developing collaborative relations between industrial leadership and full timers on the branch/district level. It will provide an opportunity for full time organizers to teach each other and learn from each other on the basis of the actual experiences the different branches go through in carrying out national policy and building the organization.

The OC will have a convener who is him/herself one of the full time branch or district organizers. Its members will include the full time mid-west organizers, plus specified members from the National Organizational Staff, from the E.C. and from the C.C. It will maintain regular communication with all the full time organizers throughout the organization. Periodically, it will organize national organizers meetings, schools, or conferences for all organizers.

E. The organization will make sufficient commitment of resources to establish strong and viable national industrial fraction leadership bodies. This will include resident steering committees; national leadership councils; when needed and national fraction travelers where possible. Between conventions, we will continue to hold national fraction meetings, and/or national fraction council meetings to play a role in developing and carrying out fraction perspectives.

A resident I.S. women's commission will be established, and the convention women's caucus will elect a national women's council that will meet at least once a year between conventions. A resident and a national black commission will be established and maintained. Fractions will be created around other areas of work as needed, such as for example, the South Africa work. National and/or regional meetings of these bodies will take place as necessary for the work.

F. In the next period, great stress will be put on developing and maintaining collaborative relations between leadership bodies. It will be the responsibility of fraction leaderships to take the initiative in developing perspectives in consultation with the EC and CC. It is our view that the entire national leadership shares with the E.C. responsibility for implementation of the organization's perspectives.

The E.C. will not maintain its internal discipline within the CC, but will carry out open and frank discussion within it. The CC will develop its own form of disciplined functioning designed to allow the maximum political dialog and communication within the organization without generating artificial factionalism over CC disputes, without permitting CC differences to undermine or disrupt ongoing work, and without creating a system that encourages each CC member to maintain their own constituency with whom they have to consult before they feel free to change their mind.

The E.C. and C.C. will be charged with the responsibility of organizing internal I.S. discussion on major political issues. These may include pre-discussion in the organization of questions going to the CC for resolution; or discussions organized by the CC that go on through the organization before final resolution.

## BUILDING THE SECONDARY LEADERSHIP

The revolutionary party we wish to build will be an organization of class leaders. Developing and training our membership to be leaders of workers, and forging the I.S. into a collective leadership organization is what we are all about. But in different periods, different aspects of this task get different emphasis. In the past period, our effort to turn the I.S. to agitation emphasized the use of bold initiatives. This turn shaped our approach to developing leadership. We emphasized training our members thru external work. And this has produced valuable results.

Through intense arena activity, our organization, our fractions, and many of our members, have experienced political growth that could never have been accomplished with even years of intense study. But the turn has also had negative effects on the development of leadership. Many members and many political questions have been left aside. As the organization became more and more over-stretched, the number of members actually involved in this learning process shrank, and the breadth of the political questions under consideration also shrank.

Because of changing conditions in the world around us, and because of internal problems coming out of the distortions of the last period, our perspectives now must be adjusted.

We expect that the pace of industrial struggle will be somewhat slower over the next year. This will give the time and political space to round out the excesses of the past period. We will now have more resources for conscious leadership development. We must take advantage of this.

Within the organization we must re-vitalize the notion of building the secondary leadership. This is an idea that has gotten little attention in the I.S. over the past period as more and more of the decision making rested on fewer and fewer people.

Before going further it must be recognized that there is a secondary leadership in the I.S. - much of which has been developed in the last two years. The problem is that the process of leadership training has not been thought out and the result is extremely uneven development. To turn this around comrades on all levels will have to be assigned tasks they have not normally done in the past. If they have problems they will have to be helped. But initiative will have to be stressed, even to the point of willingness to live with many mistakes and failures. Our fractions and other functional work units will have a special responsibility for leadership development.

National fractions, local fractions, and other functional units will be given greater responsibility for the development of perspectives for their areas of work. They will also be expected to develop general knowledge of the industries, unions, communities, struggles, etc. etc. relevant to their work.

Another important aspect in leadership training is the repoliticization of the IS. This is done best when it is connected to the work.

Political questions that arise from our work must be generalized and brought into the organization for discussion. For example, our South Africa work can be used to open up all kinds of political questions: imperialism, permanent revolution, the working class in the national liberation struggle, etc. etc. We will have to start generalizing discussions out of our trade union and industrial work also: the role of trade union in times of crisis, the relationship between the struggle within the union and the struggle against the employer, etc. etc. Both the central leadership and the fraction leadership will have an important role to play in developing these political discussions.

I.S. has made recent progress in black work. But our South Africa work, Gary Tyler work, community work, struggles against racism on the job etc. still remain mainly as isolated projects. The development of resident and national black commission, and the development of a black liberation perspective can be used to tie the work together and advance it, to develop leadership, and to generate political discussion in the organization as a whole.

The development of black and working class leadership are our most important tasks in the coming period.

Working class and black members like everyone else, will develop best in training situations where they can make an immediate contribution. We all learn best when we are forced to think out our ideas, rather than have the solutions handed to us. This means that special attention will be given to training black and white working class members in the work units they are in. For example, the Teamster fraction has set up a national fraction council of 20 members, half of whom are workers who have recently joined the IS.

This places new responsibilities on the existing leaders. Part of their political tasks will be the training and developing of new leaders. We cannot simply throw newer members into the leadership pool and expect them to swim. Those with more experience will have to spend time helping, guiding and supporting.

Many of the workers we recruit in the next period will already be leaders in their workplace or union and will already have a base before joining the I.S. Their integration into the organization will require special attention and cause special problems - though we welcome these kinds of problems. When they go through the process of coming out openly as socialists among their co-workers, they usually catch lots of flack. They will need from the organization a lot of patience and a lot of support.

Many of these new worker recruits will also go through a period where a large proportion of their best ideas are quickly, abruptly, and uniformly rejected inside the I.S. Liberalism is no solution to this problem. But, comrades must be careful not to rigidly reject out of hand all new ideas. Even proposals containing serious problems, often also have a large healthy kernel.

The organization must also give special attention to the special problems of developing women and youth as leaders. The women's commission and national women's council will have special responsibility to oversee the development of women's leadership. It should also help bring political discussion on questions relating to women into the organization as a whole. Fraction and branch leaderships must pay special attention to putting women forward in the organization. Youth leadership will be developed primarily through the Red Tide. But on a branch level, leadership must pay special development to youth cadre development, and must be prepared to assign comrades to work with Red Tide members and help them develop.

## EDUCATION

A large part of the organization's education and training occurs in the normal course of carrying out the work and the perspectives, and in participating in the I.S. internal political life. Much of our proposals on building secondary leadership are geared around repoliticizing the organization by programing political discussion right into our perspectives. But that's not enough. We also need programs geared specifically for education and training.

When someone joins the IS, we must be able to tell them, with confidence, that as a member of the I.S., they will receive a better education than they could from any school or college. That's the way it should be. But on the whole, I.S. education programs have tended to be ineffective and have been the first thing to be dropped in the press of events.



As we stated early, the pace of events will be slower - we must use the time to bring education to the fore. Training and education can no longer come at the end of everyone's list. Education must now move up near the top.

Education must now be seen as a political necessity - not a luxury. To miss an educational session - either as teacher or student must be considered as irresponsible as missing a demonstration or a union meeting.

We must instill the sense that education is not a personal matter, but part of one's political responsibility to the whole organization. We must also make clear that education and training never end. No matter what level we are on we must continue the process of training and education.

We must also come to grips with what works and what does not. Many branches have used what are called "buddy systems" which have not been overly successful. Still, if you go around the organization and talk to the politically developed comrades, you will find that in almost every instance, they didn't learn their politics in classes or merely by reading books. Rather, they learned basic politics through intensive one on one discussions with other, already developed members.

The I.S. has many members with large amounts of political knowledge and experience. They are our most valuable political resource. In the next period, the keystone of our program for political education and training will be the slogan: "Each One Teach One".

Every member of the organization will be assigned a more developed comrade with whom to work. On the average, assigned comrades should try to get together for political discussion every week for two or three hours. These get togethers should not be viewed as formal classes. They should be loose, and the comrades should feel free to raise and explore what they want: topics that interest them, political questions about which they are confused, matters being discussed in the organization or factions, etc.

To accomplish this will take a great deal of organization and bugging. We will not change our habits over night. We will also have to add more resources to education and training.

One member of the E.C. will be assigned to make sure that each one teach one system is working. A comrade on the branch level will be in charge as well. Both the more experienced and the less experienced comrade should be responsible that meetings take place.

W.P. should run political education articles every other week specifically addressed to the I.S. membership. These and other material from WP and WPR should regularly be used in the sessions. Based on experience, other educational materials from the center will be produced as well.

We should also plan in the next period to hold regional one day cadre schools aimed at the membership. These cover topics like party building, black liberation, etc. They should be based on well prepared presentations with written material circulated in advance. The topics should be worked out in consultation with the branch leaderships. We should also plan regional conferences aimed at members and contacts. These would be on topic like: political developments in the country, trade union issues, etc. They too should be well prepared in advance, and topics should be worked out in consultation with local leaders.

There should be special emphasis on writing for WP. We should push the slogan: "Every Member a Writer". We should organize branch and regional schools on writing for WP. Comrades who need help should be given help and training. The more comrades write for W.P., the more they will use it in their work, and the better use they will make of it.

No education program can be effective if the whole organization is depoliticized. The basis of upgrading education exists in the proposals on the secondary leadership development aimed at regenerating political discussion in the organization. But in the context of success in carrying out those proposals, interest in political discussion will increase, and education programs that did not work in the past can be highly effective.

## EC REPORT ON MEETING WITH STEVE JEFFRIES

Steve Jeffries met with the EC on Wed., Jan 19. In his meeting in the branches he had laid out a political line in advance of what the Left faction has until now presented, and clarified some of the differences. However, in each meeting his line and approach was somewhat different.

Under persistent questioning and debate with the EC his views were spelled out in more detail. Therefore we are summarizing his remarks and those of the EC so that comrades can be prepared for what are the merging views of the Left faction.

### FACTIONAL ORGANIZERS

When Jeffreys arrived in the States he made it clear to the EC that he was here to support the Left Faction. With other comrades in the majority he took a different line. To teamster comrades in Detroit he claimed that he was only to observe and learn the facts. To others he stated his purpose was to prevent a split.

In Portland he claimed to support 90% of the Los Angeles document. When asked about this by the EC he made it clear that the only thing he supported in the LA document is where it raised criticisms similar to those of the Left Faction.

The EC had decided to organize a tour for Jeffreys, allowing him to present his views to the branches, despite the fact that they were the use of the prestige of the IAGB for factional purposes. Jeffreys however refused to cooperate with us in setting up meetings convenient to the work of the branches.

Instead he organized his own trip as factional organizer for the Left Faction. Despite this we cooperated with him, and instructed the branches to organize meetings and discussions for him.

At the end of his trip he requested a 2 hour meeting with the EC, which we agreed to. We were taken aback when he made a 5 minute presentation, which discussed none of the politics. He said nothing more than: if there was a split in the IS the ISGB would support the Left Faction's organization.

We insisted that after factionally campaigning throughout the organization he had the minimum responsibility of discussing those politics with the EC (which he had not done at the beginning of his trip because he began his trip during the Christmas break). Under consistent pressure and questioning he did lay out and discuss the politics, which follow later.

### A SPLIT - OR PERMANENT FACTION

We also pressed him on the question of split. Since he had been acting as the chief organizer for the Left Faction in the last period, and since his only message to us was the threat that the ISGB would support the Lefts in a split, we wanted to know from him what could be done to prevent a split, what proposals he and the Left faction had to alleviate the situation they had provoked in the IS. He had no proposals whatsoever.

Under questioning his views boiled down to the only way to prevent a split was to allow the left faction the ability to wage this fight, with modifications after the convention, indefinitely until they changed the politics of the IS.

If we were to continue on with our current political direction then there was not the basis for a common organization. Or as he stated it, we would be incompatible if we maintained our politics.

Behind the diplomacy he made it clear that there would be a split, it was only a matter of timing, and whether we wanted to throw the organization open to an unending faction fight during that period of time.

#### RIGHT WING SHIFT?

Jeffreys maintained that the IS is politically shifting to the right. A left turn is needed in the organization. While the ISGB could not support all the positions and formulations of the Left faction, the general politics of the Left faction would move the organization in the correct direction.

Jefferys stated that the political ideas which link our two organizations were still there. The same was true of the Left faction. Its politics were compatible with a single organization with the majority at least for the present time. The EC however was trying to force through a split. If that occurred the ISGB would support the Left faction and the new organization it would form.

If the ISUS continued on its current course, then over a period of time the two groups would be incompatible. The Left faction, to prevent the IS from continuing on this course, should have the right to continue to argue for its views after a convention.

While of course it could not raise these at any meetings it wanted to, it should have access to raising this in writing in Bulletins at any time. He was against permanent factionalism, but the left faction had to have the right to form a faction again at any time.

Jeffreys said he had won them to the conception that the ISUS was the best revolutionary organization in the US, with the best people, and best newspaper, and therefore that they should not split.

He could not under repeated questioning propose anything that would alleviate the current factional impasse of the IS. It was clear that he had only one purpose - to try to scare us, or maneuver some sections of the majority to agree to accommodate the Left faction with an ongoing arena for factional strife.

He talked vaguely of a fight of 3 years, and embarrassedly revised that to a year's duration. He made it crystal clear that while they might disband their faction at the convention, and had already stated so to some people, that they would attempt to reraise the debate and reform a faction whenever it was possible.

#### FROM SPLIT PERSPECTIVE -- TO LONG-TERM ENTRISM

The positions he laid out on these questions confirmed our views that the Left faction had been for a split, and that he had won them to an entrism viewpoint. The statement that the ISUS is the "best revolutionary organization in the US" is not a statement of agreement with and loyalty to our program, only a statement that we are the best possible arena for the Left faction to develop its politics and cadres in, while building up for a split in the future.

Jeffreys has made it clear to comrades throughout the country that he did not believe that the Left faction was capable of maintaining an independent organization. It lacked the cadres and leadership to do so. That would

have to emerge in a fight within the IS. It also lacked the politics. IN some cities he completely distanced himself from the Left faction document as juvenile, and incompetent.

We too agree with Jeffreys that on its own, the Left Faction would not be a viable organization . That does not lead us to believe that therefore we should allow them to have a parasitic existance inside the IS paralyzing our work and organization until they are ready in their own good time to consummate a split. It was clear that this was Jeffreys' perspective.

He made it quite clear we had compatible views only if we changed our positions. If not, if the majority held to its views, then of course the two groups were incompatible.

While we would not fall into the trap of honestly admitting that he was therefore for a split if we held to our positions, nonetheless the implications were clearly spelled out for anyone to draw the conclusinns.

Indeed as will follow, the politics he laid out were such that lingering illusions that these two groups were compatible, that it would be possible to build together, without always pulling in different directions with different politics were dispelled.

He also stated that he was against the entire leadership, because of its political defection, but he could not propose any alternative leadership. Beyond saying that there were many talented people in the ISUS, he would not argue for any alternative leadership.

When we charged him with irresponsibility for going throughout the country speaking for dumping the present leadership since it is hopelessly right wing, without presenting any concrete alternative, he refused to answer.

We charged Jeffreys with not stating his alternative leadership because he could not defend it. What he would have would be a leadership which could not stand on its own feet politically but would be dependend on whatever the ISGB laid out for it.

The discussion further confirmed our suspicions that Jeffreys and the Left faction leadership were only against a split on tactical reasons, that is until an alternative leadership could be developed, when a split would be in order, since in truth they did not believe their politics were compatible with the program and direction on the IS.

The most telling of his arguments was his instance that the maintenaces of our politics would lead to incompatibility. That is the conception of a split further down the road, at a time when they choose it. No doubt after much more factional activity which would wreck the organization they would decide the IS was no longer the "best revolutionary organization" and would split.

#### NO CAPITALIST CRISIS -- NO WORKERS ORGANIZATION

The politics that Jeffreys laid out were extreme. The IS was taking a right turn because of its attempt to engage in mass work when the working c class was not in motion. It was impossible to build a workers organization in the US in this period.

The reason was that the US economy was not in crisis. It was not even stagnant - just experiencing slower growth. It was unlike Britain, Italy, or other European countries which were in crisis.

As a result of the false perspective that there was an economic crisis in the US, we were attempting to build a workers organization in a period when it was impossible. As a result of trying to do the impossible, we were

desperately trying to accommodate politically to the right and to compromise our political principles.

We had developed a stagist theory of building the party. First we build reform movements, with our members trying to become leaders of rank and file movements, then we would build a revolutionary party. It was triumphalist to believe we could actually lead workers struggles with our small size. Our unique role was not in building movements, but in exposing their leaders and the illusions within rank and file movements.

Our attempts to build these movements encouraged workerism and to dropping demands on racism and sexism. Our support to Sadlawoski was uncritical... We misused our newspaper... It is a rank and file newspaper, not a revolutionary socialist newspaper, not the principle builder of IS. Workers Power should be written to our members, to dispel their illusions in Sadlowski, and to point out his limitations. But Workers Power refrains from criticizing Sadlowski and gives up its unique roll.

The EC responded politically sharply to Jeffreys attack on the basic program and perspectives of the IS. We did so not just for Jeffrey's sake, but in the expectation that what he was laying out today will become Left faction politics tomorrow.

We wanted him to report back to them that the leadership and the majority would be politically firm in their opposition to this attempt to undermine IS politics.

#### A NEW ECONOMIC THEORY -- FOR THE FACTION FIGHT

The economic analysis that Jeffreys presented is not just at variance with reality, but also with the stated positions of the ISGB. The international capitalist system is in crisis. The US economy is an integral part of that system, not isolated from it and the world crisis.

Although the US is the strongest of the capitalist countries, with more fat on it than the others, it is as much a part of the crisis as the weaker links in the imperialist chain are. Indeed, the crisis centers in the US with the revival of strong imperialist struggle for world market against American hegemony, and the contradictions of the permanent ares economy centered in the US.

The two other major strong capitalist economies, Germany and Japan are heavily dependent on export markets in the US, and are deeply affected by the US recession. The weaker capitalist economies are intzrn dependent on the health of these 3 strong ones.

The thesis of US prospertiy in the midst of world crisis, and therefore no pollibility of a revolutionary workers organization is the thesis of American exceptionalism: that a prosperour, stable America can avoid the world economic crisis and its political conclusions.

This is put foreward by Jeffreys and the Left faction, at a time when the US is more than ever a part of world economy, indeed the dominating one. And a time when there is not prosperity, butthe biggest slump in the US since the 30's, with the greatest inflation in US history.

Unemployment today is 8.1%, more that 50% higher than Britains (5.5%). Tony Cliff's "modest estimate" of the crisis in SW that British unemployment would double in 6 to 10 years will not have riséd to US proportions, for some years. Despite this enormous level of unemployment, inflation, has only been reduced to an underlying lever of 5-7%, the floor from which it will

heat up in the future. In the boom aspects of the cycle it is hardly triumphalist to think that it will go over 10% (double digit). The boom of 73-74 saw 14% inflation starting from a much lower floor, and double digit inflation has already returned to France, and was never overcome in Britain, Italy, Spain, etc during the slump.

Our analysis of the world crisis is succinctly described in the latest IS Journal (#94) "the final collapse of capitalism is not around the corner. However, the sort of steady and stable growth enjoyed by western economies during the long boom of the 1950's and 1960's will not return. Instead the booms will be brief, fragile and inflationary, while the slumps will be long deep and inflationary. Unemployment will reach levels much higher than we have seen since the 1930s."

We challenged Jeffreys to have his economic views printed in the IS Journal. The truth is these views are sheer invention, without any serious Marxist analysis. It is cooked up solely to give the Left faction a political rationale to justify their subjective feelings that we can't build a workers organization.

Jeffreys was proposing a turn away from building a workers organization and an orientation to the petty bourgeois, to students, and intellectuals.

Our view is that this is indeed the period, not any particular month or year of it, but this is the period of world economic crisis when the roots have to be laid in the working class to have a strong organization when a deeper crisis emerges.

#### A POLITICALLY IGNORANT INTERVENTION

The latest IS Journal article on the economy also held that in the recession the workers successfully held off the employers' offensive, maintained strong shop floor organization, and in the upturn could win better wages and conditions.

The one example it held up internationally was the Ford strike in the US, which they held out as a victory. And this from a group that says that it is impossible to build a workers' organization in the US. In truth the Ford strike was a defeat. Their shocking ignorance on the US did not in any way fit them to arrogantly intervene in a situation that they had made no serious analysis of.

We made it clear to Jeffreys that we would not give up building a workers organization in this period. We would be abandoning our task and responsibility to the working class and to the revolution, and become one more irrelevant middle class sect if we did so.

We had no intention of repeating the mistake of the Trotskyists of the 1930s who turned away from mass work in 1935 despite their success in Minneapolis and Toledo in 1934 - and oriented revolutionary propaganda to intellectuals, and missed the CIO upsurge of raw workers in 1936-37.

We had been a student group that had had to go through 3 faction fights and splits to come this far along the road to becoming a workers organization. We had started with student, middle class perceptions of the working class, and made many errors just to gain the experience we now had, that allowed us to do successful rank and file work.

After learning the realities of working class life which came out of practice and aren't as romantic as student radical discussions about the workers, we were not retreating to that perspective. We didn't plan to have another 3 faction fights and splits in order to get back into the working class and to relearn the reality of union struggles and politics.

## THE "STAGE THEORY" - ANOTHER PHONY ISSUE

Jefferys views on the rank and file movement were similar, and necessarily so as they were invented for this faction fight. We understand that the revolutionary workers' party will be built out of revolutionaries providing leadership to immediate workers' struggles, particularly in the trade unions. This is not a recent stagist invention of the ISUS. It has been revolutionary strategy in this country since at least the early Comintern.

In a country with a large labor movement and weak revolutionary organization, the Comintern advised, and correctly so, that revolutionaries would build a party by organizing rank and file groups within the unions against the conservative, bureaucratic leaders. They should do so on issues that the rank and file, the overwhelming bulk of whom were not revolutionary, could move on. The revolutionaries leading those struggles could prove their politics in practice. They could win the ranks to greater militancy, class consciousness, and revolutionary politics, by generalizing from the struggles themselves, and introducing politics into them.

This method is of course what the ISGB criticizes the PRP for supposedly not doing. But we are now told that this is stagist.

No doubt it is, for maxiamalists whose only conception is to approach workers with revolutionary politics, and who reject being the "best leaders, and best fighters" of rank and file struggles. But not for the ISGB which follows this method itself.

What is stagist is precisely the new Jefferys-Left faction line. You can't build a revolutionary workers organization among industrial workers, but only through a preceding stage of recruiting among the petty bourgeois - students and white collar workers. The white collar workers they mean are teachers, nurses, social workers, civil servants, etc. They try to deny that there is even much difference between industrial workers and white collar workers and their role in the proletarian revolution.

In truth we ourselves went through this stage in the 1960s, when there was not an economic crisis. We changed our views as soon as the world capitalist crisis began to emerge. We did not accept the revisionist views of the 4th International which tried to justify white collar-intellectual organization on the theory of "from the periphery to the center", that first you had to organize on the margins of the working class before you could organize industrial workers. We, and the ISGB, rejected this as revisionism, and stated that working class parties could be built in the period by organizing around immediate struggles of industrial workers.

This preceding stagist view is a hallmark of petty bourgeois conceptions of organizing workers - from the SWP to NAM, to the right faction of the IS which masquerades as a left because of some sectarian ideas it throws into the hopper. It is an idea eminently attractive to middle class people who can be assured that it is possible to organize a workers party the easy way, by avoiding contamination with the day to day struggles of workers who are not yet revolutionary, and organizing among social groups which are not too far removed from the life styles and intellectual interests of the middle class.

## ROOTS OF THE CONFUSION

The reason for the confusion in the American left on how to build a party out of immediate working class struggles, aside from the left's origins in te



petty bourgeois radicalism of the 60s, is that revolutionaries could not play this role in the working class in the last generation. During the long boom, the system and with it the union leadership could deliver the goods.

Revolutionaries could not lead on immediate questions. Hoffa in the 50s could bring home the bacon. There was no need to look for revolutionaries to lead in organizing rank and file groups.

Fitzsimmons is not qualitatively different from Hoffa. But the system and the bureaucracy can't deliver in the same way it once did, due to the world economic crisis and its impact on American industry, the employers and their labor lieutenants.

In order to lead a fight the bureaucracy would have to mobilize the rank and file for a class struggle. The bureaucracy is against this because a rank and file in motion would be a deadly threat to the bureaucracy and its privileges. Precisely at the moment when this can be done, and not just talked about, the Left faction looks at the difficulties involved in doing it, and tells us it is impossible because of the economy! To hint that not only is it possible, but that on a small scale we have done it, is what is now dismissed as triumphalism.

#### CONCRETE POLITICS AND AGITATION

Beyond these generalizations on rank and file groups we pointed out to Jeffreys that each union with its politics requires concrete politics. The rank and file movement was not a neat abstract conception, similar in each union. Taking part in union politics meant dealing with the other forces there, making alliances however temporary to build the movement, etc.

In the miners or steel union it would be impossible to build rank and file groups independent or competitive to the Miners for Democracy a few years ago, or the Sadlowski Fight Back campaign today. The rank and file movement would be built out and in cooperation with the militants involved in those movements, not in opposition to them.

At the beginning of our involvement in the Sadlowski campaign we had written a document on the union, Sadlowski, critical support and our tactics in the struggle. We were surprised that after carrying out the campaign he did in the organization, particularly stressing the Sadlowski campaign that he was still ignorant of the basic document written on it.

Workers Power is used to influence broader layers beyond our own members, although we refuted his charges that Workers Power was uncritical of Sadlowski. The point that Jeffreys wanted to make about Sadlowski was that it was an instance of mass work and therefore an instance of rightward drift. He was trying to create an artificial distinction between mass work and agitation.

The reason is that the ISGB is for agitation - for any revolutionary group, no matter how small, no matter what the time historically. Consequently they reject the Left Factions formulation that the IS should become a "propaganda interventionist group."

But to win the Left faction back to their position they are posing good "agitation" verses bad "mass work". This distinction is phony, created solely for confusion purposes in this faction fight, since the ISGB does indeed do mass work.

This term was also not invented by the ISGB, but has been a revolutionary truism at least since the 3rd Comintern Congress which raised the slogan of mass work, along with that of the united front, transitional demands and the labor party in opposition to the ultraleft sectarianism of the newly created CPs.

Jeffreys did make it clear to us that he expected the left faction to change its embarrassing formulation on agitation. No matter that the basis of their original organizing was in opposition to the turn to agitation. London was speaking. We drew the conclusion that we could expect to see the Left faction do another 180 degree flip flop in the near future.

But while they will come out for agitation the content will remain the same throughout their opposition to mass work, and the attempt to create mushy and academic confusions on the non-existent distinctions between the two.

#### IS MASS WORK RACIST OR SEXIST?

Jeffreys other point on mass work was that it prevented raising black and womens demands and therefore represents further rightward drift. We pointed out to him that until this last year the IS had not been able to do much on the struggle for black liberation except for raising propaganda. We are very proud of the record we started to build up in the last year - busing in Louisville, Gary Tyler, Marquette Park, Southern Africa, as well as the unsung, unheroic day to day work our comrades do in the factories, unions, and rank and file groups on black liberation and racism. It was these accomplishments which allowed us to recruit the beginning of a black membership and cadre in the IS and Red Tide. These gains had come out of MASS WORK.

In fact we had started to use the term precisely when we began significant work among blacks, stating that it was an extension of our agitational approach to other areas of work as well.

We challenged Jeffrey's remarks on women's liberation. While there was a strong women's liberation movement we were an active part of it. During that period the ISGB consistently criticized our heavy involvement in the women's movement, dismissing it as "petty bourgeois feminism."

Now the women's movement has disintegrated Jeffrey's raise that we aren't doing enough. We considered his views unserious, and strictly for factional purposes.

Naturally with the decline of the movement are difficulties in our work. Fighting sexism in the working class and raising womens demands is slow going at this point. Nonetheless it is a concrete part of our trade union work whenever possible, whether it is fighting on immediate agitational issues such as bathhouses in steel, or forming women's groups in the teamsters.

The ISUS is now 37% women, and the percentage is growing, while the ISGB remains at only 22% women. Women comrades are being developed as rank and file leaders, and as leaders of the IS. In Britain however, there are no women on Central Committee, and on their national council of 145 there are only 7 women. We still believe that this is not only due to sexism in the ISGB, but also to the fact that women comrades do not play a leading role in the industrial and rank and file work in Britain.

#### PERMANENT FACTIONS MEAN PERMANENT PARALYSIS

The sharp political differences which characterized our conversation with Jefferys, is more and more emerging with the Left faction which continues to move in a political direction further and further from our politics. It is these differences which make it increasingly difficult for the Left faction to carry out political perspectives to which they have no agreement or loyalty. It is clear that whatever tactical turns their leadership takes, their perspective it to try to find some way in which to overturn the perspectives of the IS.

Since they know they will not be successful at this convention, unless they can convince some sections of the organization to block with them, their view is to carry on this fight indefinitely. If they have to make a tactical retreat, and give up a formal faction for a while, they still will try to regroup and reform a faction at the earliest possible moment.

Their long run view is that their politics are incompatible with ours unless we change our views on building a workers' combat organization, mass work, our relationship to the rank and file movement, etc. These are the basic political perspectives which inform all of our ongoing external work.

Increasingly, if this continues, we will begin to find the situation which already exists in some branches, like Gary and Louisville, that there is little basis for ongoing political collaboration externally, the branch is factionally divided.

Whenever a strong minority can be developed it will factionally fight against all of the perspectives of the IS. Every branch can become a factional battleground. Every new member will be fought over, every new campaign will become the basis for a new fight on basis perspectives. The organization would be paralyzed unless a decisive decision is made to reaffirm our perspectives and act on them in a disciplined fashion without further factional strife.

## STATE OF THE FACTION FIGHT

Over the last several weeks there has been very little motion either toward or away from the "left" faction. The exceptions have been Portland and Springfield, (more on both later). Essentially most of the I.S. had taken a position on the "left" faction by the end of the year. Those lines have essentially held.

However, the last several weeks have seen the development of the politics of the "left". It is becoming clear that the real issue in this fight is not industrialization, priorities or mass work.

The real issue is whether or not it is possible to build a workers' organization in the United States in this period. The "left" faction, at least its most articulate spokesperson - Steve Jeffries, says it is not. Jeffries toured the ISUS for a little over 3 weeks. He said many different things to different people - often in contradiction to each other. For example, when he first arrived he told Glenn he was here to help the "left" faction. The next day he told Pete and Al of the Detroit Teamsters branch that he was a "neutral" observer, touring the ISUS to check out if the criticisms the ISGB had of us were correct.

In Portland he told the branch that he agreed with 90% of Joel J's document. When they pressed him on what EC 90% agreement was based on, he admitted it was only the criticisms in Joel's document. - not the politics. Hardly 90%.

Nonetheless, even amidst the contradictory statements and half truths, a fairly consistent political thread did emerge. (A detailed description of the EC discussion with Jeffries is attached.) According to Jeffries, the U.S. is not in a crisis, of depression or stagnation as is Europe.

U.S. capitalism is instead, in a crisis of slow growth. This means that the response of the working class will not be sufficient to sustain working class recruitment to revolutionary ideas. To recruit the IS must look elsewhere - to sections of society that are more likely to be recruited through ideas: teachers, students, white collar workers, especially those sections of society that have been radicalized - blacks and women.

During this time neither Jeffries or the left faction have been able to show why this new strategy will work - other than the fact that they claim it worked in Britain. The truth is that there is very little movement on the campuses, and groups with this strategy are having then difficulties as well. The U.S.A. convention only had 600-700 in attendance. The year before 12,00. Two years before that 2,000.

In essence Jeffries proposes - and the left faction has adopted the strategy of the SWP. Granted - not yet with SWP politics.

During the last several weeks another friend has begun to emerge. The development of a sectarian method. In Louisville minority members stated they were opposed to working in coalition with other groups to defend Jeffrey Moody (?). (Moody is a black who was harrassed by an off duty racist, white cop. The case is becoming very big in Louisville. The defense effort includes most groups on the left plus many individuals from the black community.)

The "lefts" stated they were opposed to working in coalitions because to do so meant to "dissolve" the I.S.

In both Seattle and Louisville the "lefts" stated they were against investigating the possibility of working in coalitions around the issue of paid maternity leave for the same reason; to do so would mean "dissolving" the I.S. Instead, in Louisville,

They proposed only putting out an I.S. leaflet on the question, to be passed out at workplaces which have large concentrations of women.

It is unclear if this sectarian method is actually being put forward by the entire left faction or if the positions taken in Louisville and Seattle are just attempts by less experienced "left" faction members to put into practice what they understand "left" faction politics to be.

Continued on next page

In Louisville, the branch has been controlled by the "left" faction. The organiser is a member as were three out of four of the exec. Two weeks ago the organiser presented a perspective to the exec which was based on "left" faction policies. The first draft called for "refocussing" the branch work around womens work, South Africa, education and Workers Power. Under each of these broad headings were proposals that amounted to little more than an internal education and propaganda. The only external activity around South Africa was the setting up of a lit. table at the university. The external activity listed for womens work was the leafletting of women workers about paid maternity mentioned earlier.

The branch perspective offered no perspective for either telephone work or teamster work, both of which are quite promising. In the IBT, a TDU meeting was called to which 22 people came. This was the first attempt at such a meeting in some time. New people attended including some from freight. Vince was enthusiastic and committed resources, in terms of the participation of his people to build the group and the local paper, "The Louisville Lip".

In telephone Mary has finally become a steward because her work group petitioned, twice, for her certification. The women around her are interested in organising within the local over the question of paid maternity leave. They are considering petitioning the local bargaining council, bringing motions to local meetings in which they would mobilize other women to attend and getting articles into the local newsletter. The possibility exists of these women working with broader forces on the issue,

The branch perspective also failed to mention RT or work around black issues. At one time there were supposedly close to 10 young blacks in the RT. However members of the "left" faction decided that the national RT was only a paper organisation and would not send representatives to the RT convention or any of the RT schools. The branch perspective, proposed by the "left" does not mention these RTers or what happened to them.

The presentation of these perspectives helped to politically solidify the majority which called for the election of a new branch exec at the branch meeting on Jan. 23rd. The majority argued that a new exec was needed because the "left" faction was attempting to lead the branch on their own policies and not the policies of the organisation. A new exec was elected which will lead the branch on the politics voted for by the majority of the organisation at the last convention.

At the same meeting, Micheal L. informed Danny privately that in no way would the "left" faction end the debate following the convention. He stated they would keep fighting within the IS until they win!

The Portland branch has remained suspended between the majority and minority for some time. Seven members at first signed the "left" document. They then took their ~~own~~ names off as a group because they felt they did not have enough information/experience to take a firm position either way. Since then the exec has had disagreements over new local perspectives. Three of them then decided to join the minority because they wanted to downplay teamster work. In response, several others decided they should join the majority as they began to understand what the different positions would mean in practise.

The Springfield branch voted to join the "left" faction during the Jeffries visit. They voted 5 to 0 with one abstention. We are still not

sure what questions swung them over to the opposition. All along they had been soft on the minority, but as a protest against what they saw as not being taken seriously. Mike E had admitted to Mike U that his consideration of support to the minority was on the basis of "playing politics". That is to sign as a form of protest/pressure. It appeared that the branch leadership had been convinced that this was wrong and had stepped back. Only two days before voting to sign the "left" document, two of the branch leaders had told Sam that they were very sympathetic to the NY document. Sam then went to Springfield to debate Barbara, but by the time he arrived the branch had already been won over. We do not feel they are hard and are continuing in discussion with them.

Steering Committee.