

# RED DAWN



Published by: Red Dawn Committee (M-L)

April, 1978

**No. 1**

**\$2.00**



# In This Issue...

This is the first issue of Red Dawn magazine, published by the Red Dawn Committee (M-L). It has been a year and a half in the making because we are convinced that our movement needs well-thought-out analyses, not superficial stuff. We are self-critical because, in fact, most of the material here was ready months ago. Instead of printing it then, we were waiting for our article on the October League to be completed. Now we are putting that article out in the second issue, available in a few weeks, for practical reasons. But, in any event, we erred by not publishing these articles long ago, especially those on the split in the Workers' Congress.

The first article, "Why the Red Dawn?" is the most up-to-date statement of our views on our tasks for party building. These have, of course, been altered since our departure from the Workers' Congress and the lack of a nationwide organization with a regular paper.

The next two articles make up our statement on the split in the WC, published for the first time. We have edited the original drafts slightly, in order to make them clearer, but we have not changed the line. They are our main founding documents and show our basic views. "The Abandonment of the Iskra Plan" explains the importance of propaganda in building the Marxist-Leninist party, and details how the WC dropped this work. It was written in August, 1976.

Our movement discusses the issues of propaganda, agitation, fusion, etc., but discussing the question of democratic centralism

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pages 8-10 Downplays importance of unity on political line. Talks instead of "ideological unity." Best does want to help develop a program for a party.



seems taboo. "In Defense of Democratic Centralism" relates the organizational experience of the WC. Too many groups act as though they are the party, as though they have a agreed-upon party program, as though their leadership represents the revolutionary center. We see democratic centralism in the light of our task of party building and the article explains this. It was written in December, 1976.

These two articles have some points that are dated. We would not say, today, in the absence of a nationwide organization, that the Iskra-type paper is the key link. This was correct at the time, though, in the context of the WC, and we have let it stand. There are also some points on the international situation that we would no longer make, but until we complete our study on this question and express our views fully, we will let these stand, too. We have added a postscript to these articles in order to bring them up to date and deepen the analysis.

"Never Forget Class Struggle" is from July, 1976. It is a criticism of the plan for a "common editorial policy" put out by the opportunists in the WC, and should be read in conjunction with "The Abandonment of the Iskra Plan." Since its writing, this article has been fully verified by events. The seeming unity of the communist movement on the international situation has fallen apart. These are the fruits of being "satisfied with unity on political line," instead of fighting against opportunism for "ideological unity on Marxism-Leninism."

The "Letter of Resignation" is by two comrades who were formerly in the Political Standing Committee of the WC. Written in April, 1976, it is issued publicly for the first time here. It provides a close-up look at the day-to-day opportunism of the leaders of the Workers' Congress. It has been contributed by the authors and is printed with their approval.

The Unity Conference Resolutions were passed at the founding meeting of the Workers' Congress in August, 1975. We reprint them so the reader can more easily compare these positions with the opportunist practice of the WC. These resolutions represent the line developed in opposition to the anti-lefts in the Black Workers' Congress. We have footnoted them where we have clarifications and comments to make.

"Party Building and the Struggle at Gouverneur Hospital" was written in May, 1977. It sums up our own experience in winning the advanced to communism and in struggling against opportunism. It is a continuation of a series of articles in The Communist on the New York crisis. In the future, it will be our responsibility to carry this series further. We have added a postscript to bring some of the information up to date.

Some people may question our use of the names of the opportunist leadership of the Workers' Congress. These people were the chief proponents of right opportunism. They must be held responsible for the consequences of their line, and identified to the people. We restricted ourselves to the leading opportunists who are public figures in the movement, and about whom there can be no question of security.

In annotating our quotes we have tried to use the most accessible sources and the best English translations. Where we note: "Lenin CW" it refers to the Collected Works. A few quotes are noted, "Iskra Period," and this refers to the readily available 8-volume collection of Lenin put out by International Publishers in New York, 1929. Unless otherwise noted, page numbers for other works of the great Marxist teachers refer to the editions of the Foreign Languages Press in Peking.

\* \* \*

About our Name. The Red Dawn represents the coming of a new socialist era. Lenin's magazine that accompanied Iskra was called Zarya or Dawn. We are not affiliated with any group that uses the name Red Dawn today.



# WHY THE RED DAWN?

Communists and advanced workers in the United States today are faced with a critical situation. Many of us have broken with or been expelled from the major organizations of our times and are consciously seeking the correct course to follow. But we are seeking as individuals or small collectives, our movement is fragmented and lacks a genuine Marxist-Leninist center to direct and lead it. As a whole, our movement is dominated by right opportunism. The ideology of spontaneity, the root of all opportunism, reigns. The rampant infestation of social chauvinism and American exceptionalism; the position that "political line is the key link to party building"; attempts to build broad-based social democratic parties from within the mass movement; the call to "go to the masses" as a solution to the crisis in our movement -- these and many other anti-Marxist lines prevail. The main forces in our movement continue the course set by the CPUSA of liquidating and, at best, belittling theory. Yet without consciously taking up the theoretical tasks demanded by our times and seriously applying the Marxist principle that "without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement," we will be unable to effectively make a qualitative break with opportunism and bourgeois ideology. Our movement needs a center, a genuine Marxist-Leninist center, one that will be powerful enough to defeat the right opportunist trend and consolidate the genuine Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers in this country into an organized and centralized force -- the party of the proletariat.

vs KKK? groups

It is to the fulfillment of these tasks that the Red Dawn Committee intends to dedicate itself. We were formed in the summer of 1976 after a heated struggle within the Workers' Congress that proved the bankruptcy, not of the original position of that organization, but of their leadership (for further explanation of this struggle, see the article on the split in the Workers' Congress). We have tried over the past year and a half to take up the theoretical work that we believe is necessary to lay a basis for building the ideological and political unity, first of our own committee, and now with other Marxist-Leninists in the U.S. We have tried to use the preparation of the propaganda for this magazine as a means to consolidate ideologically our newly-formed committee. Our own relative inexperience in doing this type of work, as well as the recent arrests of David Perez and Vincent Alba presented objective obstacles that we have had to overcome.\* We have taken a year and a half to put out the first issue of this magazine because we refuse to race behind the ever-changing objective conditions, rushing to put out positions for the sake of putting out a position.

\* One of these comrades, David Perez, is a member of the Red Dawn Committee. We had to work on the case as a matter of self-defense, which affected the work on the magazine because of our limited resources.



We have tried to place quality over quantity and struggled to utilize the science of Marxism-Leninism -- the direct and indirect experience of the international proletariat -- to distinguish between the morass of opportunist trends and the genuine Marxist-Leninist trend that exist in the world today. Communists must study opportunism in the context of the world today, a world that can only be understood in terms of Lenin's analysis that it is a world in the epoch of imperialism and the eve of the social revolution of the proletariat. The struggle of the proletariat for political power demands that we be able to make the distinction between opportunist and revolutionary trends with the same accuracy that Lenin and the other great teachers achieved. Failure to penetrate this question deeply and to quell the growth of opportunism can, in the long run, cost the masses millions of lives.

"Is there any connection between imperialism and that monstrous and disgusting victory which opportunism (in the shape of social chauvinism) has gained over the labor movement in Europe? That is the fundamental question of contemporary socialism. And having in our Party literature fully established, first the imperialist character of our epoch and of the present war, and second, the inseparable historical connection between social-chauvinism and opportunism, and also the identity of their ideological and political content, we can and must proceed to analyze this fundamental question." (Lenin, "Imperialism and the Split in Socialism," LCW, Vol. 23, p. 366)

These points may seem elementary to our well-read pseudo-Marxists, but the fact is this fundamental question of opportunist trends in the U.S. movement has not been fully understood from a historical or international Marxist-Leninist perspective. In this era it has become more important that all questions of the revolution be viewed in an international context. As Stalin explained:

"Formerly, the analysis of the prerequisites for the proletarian revolution was usually approached from the point of view of the economic state of individual countries. Now, this approach is no longer adequate. Now the matter must be approached from the point of view of the economic state of all or the majority of countries, from the point of view of the state of world economy; for individual countries and individual national economies have ceased to be self-sufficient units, have become links in a single chain called world economy; for the old 'cultured' capitalism has evolved into imperialism, and imperialism is a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the world by a handful of 'advanced' countries." (Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, p.28)

This includes the question of trends. Instead we have a multitude of bankrupt analyses of the communist movement in the U.S. -- for example, that an ideological break with revisionism was made in, say, 1972; or that breaking with the CPUSA automatically meant a break with revisionism.

Independently of the intentions of the propagators of these views, they objectively prevent a real ideological, qualitative break with revisionism, condemning the advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals to the ideological enslavement of revisionism. By their treacherous acts they hide the nature of classes, the particular interests of each class, and the historical mission of the proletariat. With their poisonous pens they attempt to write a distorted history of the world and of this country. Mouthing opposition to revisionism, these "communists" over and over state they are fighting against opportunism. This is not enough to distinguish a genuine Marxist-Leninist from the sham. The struggle against opportunism must be waged in the context of the historical expe-



rience of the international communist movement, and specifically in relation to the tasks that presently confront us.

And yet in our movement we have a very dangerous tendency, a clear anti-Marxist tendency, that views the different opportunist ideological and political currents as isolated phenomena whose history is either liquidated or distorted. This tendency has found fertile soil among the young revolutionaries inside the U.S. who, cut off from a continuous revolutionary movement by the utter bankruptcy of the CPUSA, fell victim to the historical tendency of the U.S. communist movement to pragmatism, social chauvinism and American exceptionalism.\* The objective result of this tendency is a contempt for the kind of scientific theoretical work guided by the principles of dialectical and historical materialism that is necessary to raise the level of all revolutionaries striving to be communists from the quagmire of amateurishness and disunity to the realm of "professionalism" and unity. They spontaneously gravitate towards a glorification of practical work "among the masses" which liquidates the struggle for the final aims of the revolution in favor of its immediate gains. The treachery of the right opportunist leaders is that they attempt to develop theoretical justifications for bowing to the spontaneous movement of the masses. In order to defeat this, a profound historical assessment of the class struggle against opportunism must be developed.

For example, the worldwide struggle against modern revisionism and the new shades of right opportunism is but a continuation of the struggle waged by Lenin and the Bolsheviks against the social chauvinists and the opportunists of the Second International. In the U.S. the struggle against right opportunism -- which is the main danger -- is inseparable from the worldwide struggle against revisionism. Attempts by anti-Marxist theoreticians to divorce the struggle against all forms of opportunism in the U.S. from the international communist movement must be consistently opposed. Divorcing the U.S. communist movement from the worldwide movement fosters the view that the U.S. communist movement is unique -- i.e., American exceptionalism. Recently this has manifested itself in the position that ultra-"leftism" is the main danger in the U.S. -- a position which most of our movement has held in practice. ||

We are not saying that ultra-"leftism" can never be the main danger, or that the "left" can't be the main danger in one country while the right is the main danger in another. What we are saying is that this requires a deep and penetrating analysis of the objective and subjective factors in relation to the relevant tasks in each country, and not the kind of facile analyses that are in essence excuses for the continuation of right opportunism.

Furthermore these same anti-Marxists, in order to perpetuate their position that an ideological break with revisionism has been made, liquidate the necessity of relating today's struggle against right opportunism to the historical struggle of the proletariat in the U.S. against all forms of bourgeois ideology. They discourage revolutionaries from systematically studying our history, and they distort the true history of the communist movement in the U.S. For example, certain facts are conveniently overlooked or misinterpreted, like the fact that the CPUSA was never a bolshevik party (that it never implemented the resolutions of the Comintern to bolshevize itself); that Browder's revisionism came to power without major national opposition in the party, including opposition from Mr. Foster; that, contrary to popular opinion, the CPUSA was a revisionist association long before 1956 when Krushchev came to power in the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact the CPUSA was reconstituted as a party in 1946 by Foster, but unfortunately it was reconstituted essentially under the same old revisionist program.

\* Pragmatism is the philosophy that the meaning or value of any action is determined by its immediate, practical consequences: "if it works, do it." It is especially popular in the United States.

Handwritten notes and markings on the right margin: "ba", "sa", "um", "✓", "NBS", "CPUSA", "NBS", "1945?", "do?", "1945?".



To further show the penetration of revisionism in the U.S. communist movement, look at the failure of the PLP and the POC to provide correct leadership in building a new communist party. Initially these groups attempted to advance the struggle for Marxism-Leninism. They failed because they were unable to make a radical, qualitative, ideological rupture with revisionism. To cover this fact merely by saying that they were Trotskyites or sectarian is not acceptable.

Without a historical analysis it is impossible to understand the different groups and organizations that have emerged inside the U.S. and that profess to be Marxist-Leninists, particularly alleged communist groups such as the RU, OL and CL, that were formed at the heels of the spontaneous movements of the late 1960's. Each organization points to the others' liberalism and opportunism; gives an account of how it has grown from smaller to larger; and professes to be the only true followers of Marxism-Leninism or Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. But each fails to mention what all these groups have in common: their unwillingness and inability to take up the theoretical tasks of the movement. They all ignore the conclusions Lenin drew from a similar period in the Russian movement:

"Such being the peculiar features of Russian 'criticism' and Russian Bernsteinism, what should have been the task of those who desired to oppose opportunism, in deeds and not merely in words? First of all, they should have made efforts to resume the theoretical work that the period of 'legal Marxism' had only just begun, and that has now again fallen on the shoulders of the illegal workers." (Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, p. 22-3)

The failure of the "anti-revisionists" is the failure of the previous generations of "anti-revisionists," from Foster to the PL, the failure to resume the theoretical work that had been started by the previous generation of revolutionaries, contributions made before Browder came to power, contributions that are virtually unknown today. *which?*

For the young revolutionaries of the 60's this became a crucial question. We developed with a minimal knowledge of the actual history of the communist movement. This crippling legacy has not been overcome.

Intensifying its crippling effects is the fact that veterans of the CPUSA helped forge the various organizations that became the worst representatives of right opportunism -- Leibel Bergman and the RU, Nelson Perry and the CL, Harry Haywood and the OL. A political alliance between veterans of the CPUSA and the worst petty-bourgeois intellectuals of the 60's has provided the ideological and political leadership for today's "vanguard left." They did not provide organizations like the BWC, PRRWO, ATM, IWK -- organizations that had developed in the main out of the spontaneous revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nationalities -- with genuine Marxist-Leninist leadership. As experienced Marxist-Leninists, it was their responsibility to bring the science of socialism to the advancing revolutionaries, many of whom were at the time ardently striving for it, and to lead these revolutionaries in the struggle against opportunism. Instead, they used the national organizations as recruiting grounds to add coloring to their mainly petty-bourgeois, white organizations and to spread anti-Marxist theories.

The veterans of the CPUSA were not wrong to make an alliance with the newly developing petty-bourgeois revolutionaries of the 1960's. Their error was that this alliance was not based on a correct assessment of the political and theoretical tasks of the movement. Rather than provide conscious Marxist-Leninist leadership to the movement, they were condemned to tail it.

When organizations like PRRWO or the BWC attempted to break from the RU or the CL they broke on the basis of particular political questions. Because they did not carry out in reality the theoretical tasks that are prerequisites for forging a Marxist party, although at times they gave lip service to these tasks, they were unable to make an "ideological rupture" with the new shades of revisionism. For example, when PRRWO and the BWC split from the RU in 1974 the struggle focused



in the main on the national question, although party building, economism, propaganda, etc. were superficially addressed. Later on, after a brief alliance with the CL, the break focused on the international question, particularly the question of the Third World and Soviet social imperialism, and again on the national question inside the U.S., the analysis of the Afro-American question. well?

PRRWO and the BWC in this regard carried on the errors made by individuals and groups who split from the CPUSA after Browder came to power, the error being to break with a revisionist organization on the basis of a particular line or position, such as opposition to the peaceful transition to socialism, or the blatant liquidation of the national question in the U.S., the liquidation of the revolutionary vanguard role of the party of the proletariat, or an attack on genuine Marxist-Leninist parties, the Party of Labor of Albania or the Communist Party of China. Their error was in their failure to get to the essence of the class struggle by repudiating the ideological basis of all opportunism -- bowing to spontaneity. *oversimplified.* *Spontaneity is "Kings".*

We would like to add that we are well aware that this is a cursory analysis of the U.S. communist movement and that in the future, we plan to devote great attention to it, particularly analyzing the implications of the kind of alliances mentioned above in greater detail.

Throughout this article we have spoken of the failure of the communist movement in the U.S. to carry out the theoretical tasks required to forge the ideological unity of genuine Marxist-Leninists for the future, and of the fact that only by placing theory in its proper position can we defeat the right opportunist trends that assail us. We have come to this conclusion after studying the formation of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, particularly during the Iskra period. Without carrying out the theoretical work that will answer all the questions posed by the proletarian movement we will be unable to build a center of representatives of a genuine Marxist-Leninist trend in the U.S. Stalin places theory in its proper position when he says:

"Theory is the experience of the working-class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect. Of course, theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory. But theory can become a tremendous force in the working-class movement if it is built up in indissoluble connection with revolutionary practice; for theory, and theory alone, can give the movement confidence, the power of orientation, and an understanding of the inner relation of surrounding events; for it, and it alone, can help practice to realize not only how and in which direction classes are moving at the present time, but also how and in which direction they will move in the near future." (Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, p. 22)

He goes on to quote Lenin:

"The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory." (What Is To Be Done? p. 29)

At the Unity Conference in 1975, the Workers' Congress declared that the central task of all communists in the U.S., building the party of the proletariat, should be fulfilled through the Iskra plan. The newspaper, The Communist, was principally to have contained propaganda and to have been a collective propagandist, agitator and organizer. It was on this basis that we united with the Workers' Congress. Unfortunately these plans never materialized. If they had, there would have been no pressing need for the Red Dawn, since The Communist would have played the necessary role of developing a leading theoretical center, representative of the Marxist-Leninist trend in the U.S. Unfortunately, leaders of the present

*But in 1975 (or now) Iskra plan wasn't enough. Needed 'lines of demarcation', but didn't have them.*



Workers' Congress were, and still are, dead set against carrying through this task, in deed sabotaging it practically from its outset.

We are convinced that an Iskra-type newspaper is absolutely necessary. Without it, without the timely political exposures that it will conduct, the task of winning advanced workers to communism and defeating right opportunism is impossible. A regular national newspaper is necessary in the long run to weld the Leninist core. Lenin wrote:

"The masses cannot be trained in political consciousness and revolutionary activity in any other way except by means of such exposures. Hence, activity of this kind is one of the most important functions of international Social-Democracy as a whole, for even the existence of political liberty does not in the least remove the necessity for such exposures; it merely changes somewhat the sphere against which they are directed." (Lenin, What Is To Be Done?, p. 85)

And he continued:

"The consciousness of the masses of the workers cannot be genuine class consciousness, unless the workers learn to observe from concrete, and above all from topical (current) political facts and events, every other social class and all the manifestations of the intellectual, ethical and political life of these classes; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of all aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social-Democrats..." (Ibid., p. 86)

However, although we recognize the necessity of an Iskra-type newspaper, we also recognize the fact that it would be sheer idealism to try to put it out now. At this particular point in the development of our movement there is no leading theoretical center capable of organizing a network of agents and contributors on the basis of a sound Marxist-Leninist ideological footing. The theoretical foundations for a draft program have yet to be laid, and it is on this that we must concentrate our attention -- without it there is no basis for organizational unity of a leading, country-wide Marxist-Leninist center.

We want the Red Dawn magazine to serve as a vehicle to help create such a theoretical center and to help draft the party program. In it we plan to put forward our theoretical positions and analyses of our practical work, including topical exposures aimed at winning over advanced workers like the ones we had begun to do in the Workers' Congress. At the same time we hope to provide the movement with a regular publication to which independent Marxist-Leninists and Marxist-Leninist organizations with whom we have some principled agreement can contribute. The kind of principled agreements we are talking about must be based on what people do, and not just what they say. There are a number of organizations, such as the "Revolutionary Wing," who say that theory is primary, for example, but who in practice distort the theory of Marxism-Leninism and with whom we would not unite. Our yardstick for developing relationships will be the theoretical work that revolutionaries are doing to answer some of these questions, and how we work together to carry them out.

Concerning our editorial policy, we eagerly look forward to the day when enough agreement has been reached among Marxist-Leninists on a national basis to draft a political statement similar to the Declaration of the Editorial Board of Iskra in 1900, the basic ingredients of a party program, and to the day when we can relinquish the editing of the magazine to an editorial board representative of

What about party unity?



the national Leninist trend. Until that day, however, we insist upon taking full responsibility for the editing of the magazine. What we mean by this is that we reserve the right to clearly express our agreements or disagreements with any material published in the magazine that is written by contributors. We also plan to edit on the basis of consultation with regular contributors.

How does this differ from CR?

To sum up we would like to present five points which should serve as a guide for study and discussion.

1. The development of a national theoretical center and the draft of a party program require that the theoretical work be directed to instill among the advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals a profound grasp of the science of Marxism-Leninism, particularly study from the great teachers of Marxism-Leninism and their students who have made great contributions, combined with a steel-like proletarian internationalist stand. This can not be done without organized and planned study to answer all the questions of the movement.

2. It requires a firm grasp of the struggle against opportunism; consciously understanding the contemporary conditions and specific forms under which this struggle is being conducted; carefully and methodically establishing the concrete relationships between international currents or trends and the particular features of the United States. The welding of the party core can only be accomplished with a firm and consistent struggle against opportunism.

3. It requires that we grasp the principal strategic task of today -- building the party -- in relation to the other strategic tasks of building the united front and armed struggle, and carry them out by making propaganda our chief form of activity, concentrating our attention on winning the advanced workers to communism.

4. It requires that we address ourselves to understanding the character of proletarian revolution inside the U.S.; that we identify and correctly answer the strategic and tactical questions of the revolution in order to develop the party program.

5. It requires a qualitative change in the content and form of our literature. It requires the development of a regular Iskra-type newspaper along with theoretical journals and pamphlets or books with a regular network of agents who will attend to all aspects of its creation and distribution, including its organizational impact on the masses, and advanced workers in particular. In the course of this, agents must be trained in utilizing legal and illegal forms of struggle in order to guarantee the continuity of the publications.

Our goal is to train and unite from among the advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals true proletarian leaders and organizers, comrades who will dedicate all their lives and energy to carrying out the historical mission of the working class, the elimination of exploitation and all forms of oppression and the abolition of class society.

To those who say we lack people, our goals are too ambitious, we refer you to what Lenin said in What Is To Be Done?:

"There are no people -- yet there is a mass of people. There is a mass of people, because the working class and ever more diverse strata of society, year after year, advance from their ranks an increasing number of discontented people who desire to protest, who are ready to render all the assistance they can in the fight against absolutism, the intolerableness of which is not yet recognized by all, but is nevertheless more and more acutely sensed by increasing masses of the people. At the same time we have no people, because we have no leaders, no talented organizers capable of arranging extensive and at the same time uniform and harmonious work that would employ all forces, even the most inconsiderable." (p. 157-8)

Lenin compared the Iskra to the scaffolding around which a building is constructed. We would like to identify the Red Dawn magazine as an instrument which will play an important role in surveying the land, clearing the landscape, and laying the foundations upon which the scaffolding is founded and the building assembled.

J in CR



# The Split in the Workers' Congress (M-L)

Statement of the Former Members of the New York District

Part 1

## The Abandonment of the ISKRA Plan

August, 1976

When the Workers' Congress was formed, it boldly announced that it would break with the economism, tailism, and amateurishness that characterized so much of the communist movement. The Iskra plan was raised as the concrete way to make propaganda the chief form of activity, to win the advanced workers to communism, unite genuine Marxist-Leninists, and lay the basis for a founding party congress. Despite the slanders and ridicules by opportunists of all stripes, the Workers' Congress vowed to uphold the Leninist method of party-building.

It was in full unity with this correct line that we who formed the New York district of the WC joined the organization -- to uphold and implement the Iskra plan to build a new communist party. We all had been in the communist movement for some time, and had seen the poison of opportunism, both "left" and right, destroying organization after organization, disabling them from training the advanced workers to become revolutionary cadre and leaders, and thus making these organizations at best useless, and at worst dangerous obstacles to building a party. We had high hopes that the WC would succeed in doing what it promised, in building a genuine party in a bolshevik way. After the destruction of the BWC's work in New York by the so-called "Revolutionary Bloc" allied with PRRWO, we had to re-establish the organization's work from scratch in this district. We eagerly joined in the nationwide effort to build The Communist into an Iskra-type paper, making numerous contributions on many subjects and starting to build the organization and develop contacts in this district around the paper.

Now we are out of the WC and obligated to explain why. We will put it very bluntly and plainly: We are no longer in the WC for the same reasons we are no longer in the other organizations we had previously worked with. The WC has been unable to overcome its opportunist past, its history of worshipping the spontaneous movement, belittling theory, and defending primitivism and amateurishness in organization. In short, we are out of the WC because the present leadership of the WC has in fact abandoned the Iskra plan, reversed the correct line of our Unity Conference of August, 1975, and replaced it with an economist, rightist line. The task of winning the advanced workers to communism has now become a sideline job, with each district doing this (or, more accurately, not doing this) in whatever way it pleases. In practice, the organization no longer uses the paper as a collective propagandist, agitator, and organizer, has replaced the nuclear style of work with various social-democratic methods of organization, and has been unable to establish itself on the basis of democratic centralism. It has abandoned the task of giving communist leadership to the mass movement and



instead has adopted an economist, tailist line that worships the spontaneous movement. In other words, it has replaced our correct line on party building with a new, right opportunist economist line. It has abandoned all the tasks necessary to building a party, and, in so doing, has actually abandoned party-building. And because we, along with others, have fought hard to retain the line and principles which the organization was founded upon, which have been betrayed by the present opportunist leadership, we have been expelled.

In explaining this split, we will refer not only to various documents, but also to a meeting in June, 1976, between the chairman of the WC and the New York district that formalized the split. This meeting fully confirmed to us the bankruptcy of the present position of the organization's leadership, further revealed their reversal of the Iskra plan, and exposed their all-out degeneration and capitulation to opportunism. A right line now has hegemony in the WC, and it is our duty to unmask its promoters to all true communists and class-conscious workers.

At this point it is necessary to point out that this right line was not something that just popped up in the WC -- it was a continuation of the opportunism some of this same misleadership demonstrated in the BWC. Unfortunately, we were taken in by their verbal defense of essentially correct positions in the BWC. They put out some correct ideas, such as right opportunism being the main danger, but they put them out only to cover their own right opportunism. Thus, when faced with the political and organizational steps necessary to combat right opportunism, they did everything in their power to see that the line they had espoused for the organization did not get implemented.

Strong words, the reader may say. But we are prepared to prove every single one of them, both in this and other papers. It is not a pleasure to expose an organization we so recently had such high hopes for. But the best thing the WC can now become is a teacher by negative example, a rich experience in how a good thing gets turned into a bad thing. If we can correctly sum up the errors of the WC and consolidate forces around this understanding, then, while the WC may remain useless to the working class, the lessons of its degeneration will be of great value to building a party.

#### THE ISKRA PLAN

The WC, from its inception, upheld the Iskra plan as the correct means to develop a line and program, win the advanced workers to communism, wage polemics and draw lines of demarcation with opportunism, and build an organization capable of leading to a party. The essence of the plan is that the key link towards building a genuine communist party in the U.S. today is the struggle for the establishment of an all-U.S. newspaper, a propaganda organ modeled after Lenin's newspaper Iskra.\* The work around this paper must become our main task -- propaganda must be our chief form of activity.

*on what lines  
of demarc-  
was this  
iskra plan  
based?*

To say that propaganda is our chief form of activity means that we make propaganda the key link to fulfilling our main ideological, political, and organizational tasks. Propaganda must be chiefly political exposures that explain the class nature of various burning questions to the advanced. It must show how all

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\* This was true at the time. Today the conditions for such a paper are absent. We must work to create such conditions.

We use the term "key link" here in its tactical sense as used by Stalin in Foundations of Leninism, p. 95.



the oppression and abuses the people face, and how all the events and issues of the day are related to the laws of capitalism, how they are inevitable under capitalism. Yet in order to do good propaganda, a number of other tasks flow directly from this one. Research, study, and investigation are required to do concrete analysis and political exposures. Circles must be set up to get materials and prepare propaganda. The task of propaganda, if done correctly, directly contributes to the development of a political line and program. Further, the purpose of the propaganda is to train the advanced workers to become revolutionary leaders. Again flowing from the propaganda is the necessity to set up circles to train advanced workers, to devise study plans and carry out study of the Marxist-Leninist classics, since the concrete exposures link theory and practice by applying Marxism-Leninism to concrete conditions, and thus provide a solid practical backdrop for illuminating and understanding the universal laws of Marxism-Leninism. Moreover, the fulfillment of these tasks over a period of time will lead to the building up of an Iskra-type organization, both in uniting Marxist-Leninists and in winning over new advanced workers, which will, in turn, prepare the conditions for holding a party congress. The workers' circles, which will be made up of workers and revolutionary intellectuals, are both the backbone of an Iskra-type organization and the embryo of factory nuclei. They are the beginnings of a nationwide network of illegal organization on an industrial basis that help lay the basis for the development of the highest form of organization of the proletariat, the party. The factory nuclei will become the organizational link between the party and the working class.

The work done on the exposures should be used as a basis for the political line of the organization. Study, consolidation, and struggle within the organization should unfold around the propaganda. Our theoretical work then guides mass work and lays the basis for propaganda and agitation. A correct communist policy can be developed on the basis of the theoretical work required to do propaganda. Then agitational material for mass activity can be prepared on that basis to lead the struggles correctly. In this way, deeper theoretical work -- the ongoing ideological struggle to remold world outlook and defeat all forms of bourgeois thinking -- can also unfold around propaganda. This ideological remolding takes literary form in the shape of scientific pamphlets and books, as well as speeches.

Finally, the lines we develop to direct our activity can only develop in opposition to incorrect lines. Hence the necessity for polemics with other forces, both to draw lines of demarcation to achieve ideological and political clarity and principled unity, and to train the organization and all its cadres and supporters to be able to distinguish between genuine and phony Marxism-Leninism. All these tasks unfold around the key link of propaganda. This is the Leninist line on party-building, and that is what the Iskra plan was supposed to do.

But the WC was not born pure. It came into this world with the opportunist birthmarks of its predecessor, the BWC. The line of the WC had been developed in sharp class struggle against two right opportunist lines and camps in the BWC. Both of these came to be known as the anti-lefts because their lines shared the same economist essence, and had many important particularities in common, such as that ultra-"leftism" was the main danger in the BWC at that time. They both united in opposition to the genuine left-wing of the BWC, which later formed the WC. The genuine left held that the main danger in the BWC had been right opportunism, tailing the spontaneous movement, since the BWC, itself a product of the mass movement, had only just begun to become bolshevized and had not yet rid itself of the tailist line and practice, and narrow and amateurish methods of work carried over from the mass movement. All the anti-lefts fiercely resisted the move toward rectifying this situation. They directed their main fire against continuing to build The Communist, first put out by the BWC, into an Iskra-type paper, and against the line of making propaganda the chief form of activity. One



group which formed the so-called "Revolutionary Workers' Congress" before dis-integrating (with some of its leaders ending up with OL and some with RCP) said the newspaper should be aimed at the masses instead of the advanced, along the lines of The Call. Another group, which was known as the so-called "Revolutionary Bloc," and ended up in bed with the PRRWO after going through more splits among themselves, wanted to abolish the newspaper altogether. So the desire to cling to the narrow, tailist methods of the past were very strong within the BWC, and a great struggle was required to defeat the various rightist lines and set the organization straight. This struggle, of course, resulted in the split in the BWC.

Yet, with the formation of the WC, the tasks of establishing an Iskra-type paper, making propaganda the chief form activity in practice, bolshevizing the organization, and really rooting out bourgeois ideology had still to be accomplished. It was one thing to merely declare that we had broken with the past; it proved quite another to actually do it. From the beginning of the organization, there was an intense two-line struggle over whether or not to really carry out the Iskra plan. We shall present some of our experiences with the organization to show just how it has abandoned the Iskra plan. Further, we will show how the leadership of the WC, the same leadership that led the struggle against right opportunism in the BWC, could not pull both feet out of the marsh of opportunism and has been unable to make a real rupture with economism.

#### POLITICAL EXPOSURES AND POLITICAL LINE

The WC has consistently held that propaganda should be the chief form of activity. This held true not only for winning the advanced workers to communism, but also for the tasks of deepening the political unity we already have, further developing a political line, and laying the basis for a program. Through doing political exposures, we would develop a uniform line around the analysis put out in the paper. To do this, the organizations's leadership had to be good at concentrating the ideas coming from below, taking the lead in putting out a correct line, and implementing a plan for consolidating the organization and the Leninist trend on this line. None of this, however, happened.

The experience of how the organization worked around the current economic crisis clearly shows these errors. The May 1, 1975 issue of The Communist, in an article called "Bourgeois or Marxist Political Economy," exposed the inability of the opportunists of the old BWC to correctly explain the economic crisis and tied this to their opportunist line on party-building. This article placed high standards on the propaganda required to win advanced workers to communism and start to lay a correct course on the question of a line for the present crisis. Our district took this up in the articles which we prepared on the New York fiscal crisis. Much study and struggle was unfolded in the district and among our contacts around these articles, as we better grasped both Marxist-Leninist teachings on political economy and a correct analysis of not only the New York crisis, but of the entire economic crisis today. On this basis, we were able to start the task of explaining what was really going on to the advanced, and of winning them over to communism.

But while we were developing our line, based almost entirely on local initiative, what was going on in the organization? Instead of the leadership correctly concentrating these ideas and struggling for unity of ideas in the organization, they were content to let various districts develop their own lines, from below, and spontaneously. No centralized leadership or uniform study plan was developed for the organization. The result was that the paper, instead of developing unity of ideas, was degenerating into a storehouse of views.

On the question of political economy, this was best seen in the issue of February 23, 1976, in which three different articles put out three different analyses of the current economic crisis. The "Ford Vetoes Jobs" article chiefly blames



federal budget cuts on increased military spending. The crime article on page 3 asserts that the increased attacks on the people are chiefly because of U.S. imperialism's defeats in the Third World, and that big capitalists are not hurt at all by the current crisis. In our article on New York, we continue to develop our analysis that the crisis in banking (certainly not small capitalists) and the falling rate of profit, leading to a massive turn to capital-raising through the corporate bond market, were the chief reasons for the New York cutbacks (we also have been developing a third major reason: the bourgeoisie's anti-inflation strategy). Obviously, these lines cannot be reconciled. But what was printed in the February paper on New York was merely a continuation and deepening of the analysis put out in the October, 1975 paper. Where was the line consolidation in the organization? Obviously, the leadership did not lead in developing a common line, and was content for everybody to put out their own line.

While the example we have given here relates to our own experience, it must be emphasized that the task of unfolding study and investigation around propaganda on a nationwide basis and using it to consolidate a line in the organization was not initiated around other key questions by the leadership, either. What unity we did have on such questions as the international situation and the national question was not developed as part of a disciplined, uniform method of study and struggle throughout the organization. While there was common study and the beginnings of a common line on the woman question, even here there were weaknesses. The struggle was not more thoroughly unfolded in the organization because the Political Standing Committee (PSC) was severely divided over whether or not to carry that struggle through to the end, with the opportunists on this question being the same ones we later took on. This led to a split in the organization, which left the PSC unable to lead any longer (more on this later). It should be clear that these incorrect methods, the lack of common study and investigation, neither consolidated a line nor converted the WC from what the BWC had in reality been -- a coalition of local collectives each with their own line. And all this was a reflection of the degeneration of The Communist as a means of developing a correct, common line, of a departure from the lofty goals we had so recently declared.

No doubt to give the appearance of having a consolidated line, an article has appeared in the July 20, 1976 Communist on the New York 1199 hospital strike, published after we had been expelled, which superficially repeats a sentence or two of the economic analysis in our previous New York articles. Yet its shallowness is really more of a self-exposure than anything else. First, it opportunistically tries to give the impression of continuity with the other New York articles, trying to "out-manuever" us and not deal with the split with us straight up. Secondly, it is a cheap attempt at mechanically consolidating a line merely by repetition, rather than by serious work. Finally, aside from its theoretical weaknesses, (such as not tying in this struggle to the overall development of the people's struggles in New York, its empirical and pragmatic pasting together of all sorts of issues, etc.) it fully reveals discontinuity with the rest of the series by dropping the analysis we had been developing around the questions of fascism, national oppression, allies, and the relation of these three questions. Quite simply, the article fails to maintain continuity because there never was any continuity to begin with. And for these reasons, the "analysis" of this article is incapable of being much of a guide to training the advanced, consolidating the WC, or leading the struggle.

While in effect fostering and encouraging ideological and political autonomism from below, the leadership, especially the PSC, was also guilty of trying to ram its own line down the throats of the organization. The negation of the Iskra plan as a means of consolidating a line in the organization came out most clearly around their proposal for May Day. The PSC ran its erroneous line on war to the organization. It directed the districts to hold workshops on May Day



to run this line (we will later criticize the organizational method of workshops). At that point, only one article had appeared in The Communist on war, no uniform study had taken place in the organization on this question, and no common line had been hammered out and adopted, either at the Unity Conference or thereafter. The leadership was ideologically unprepared to develop a correct political line on war due to the lack of thorough study on this question. The cadre were ideologically unprepared to win over anybody to this line because of lack of common study and consolidation. And the line itself was wrong, because it reflected the infection of bourgeois ideology in the ranks of the leadership, and because of the wrong method used to develop the line.

In this type of situation, where ideological and political unity have still to be developed, where the paper must serve the role, as Lenin said in the "Declaration by the Editorial Board of Iskra," of developing "unity of ideas," just issuing orders to implement a line will not create that unity. This bureaucratic method will not arm cadre with the ideological weapon of Marxism-Leninism on this or any other question. It will not develop them to distinguish genuine from sham Marxism on their own. On the contrary, this can only promote slavishness and employe mentality in the organization. It dooms the cadre to tail the spontaneous movement, because they will be totally unprepared to fulfill the task of training revolutionary leaders from among the advanced workers.

If the PSC were serious about training strong cadre and winning the advanced, it would have stuck to the Iskra plan and consolidated the organization on the line of the paper. It would have undertaken intensive study, investigation and struggle in its own ranks. But since it was not interested in any of these things, it proceeded in its reckless fashion, actually operating as a faction of the organization by promoting its own line.

Just listen to some of the gibberish put out by the PSC to defend its bankrupt position on how line is developed. In its letter of May 9, 1976 to the New York district, the PSC writes:

"It was raised that how could we have workshops like this without a consolidated line on the question. We do have a line on the question. We take our leadership from the line of the Communist Party of China who has told us: Prepare for War. We know that the conditions for war now exist."

Besides distorting the Communist Party of China's (CPC) line, the PSC here still provides no evidence that there has been any consolidation in the organization on this line, that the cadre are prepared to put it out. They in fact reveal instead their own ideological bankruptcy, their own inability to analyze these questions for themselves. Correct leadership can only come if the leaders are skilled in using the science of Marxism-Leninism. Yet unskilled leaders, not trained to think correctly, are bound, in practice, to mislead. Further, even if the PSC had put out the correct line of the CPC, what it in effect is doing is encouraging slavishness towards the CPC by just saying we should follow it because they say so. Remember, the CPC would be the first ones to discourage this sort of blind slavishness and lack of ideological self-reliance.

In a later letter to the New York district dated June 5, 1976, the PSC writes:

"You ask where the position put forward on war was discussed in the organization. The answer is: where it should have been -- it was collectively discussed and approved by the highest collective of the organization when the Central Committee is not in session -- the PSC."

We will later on show how this is a distorted concept of democratic centralism. For now, notice how the Iskra plan to consolidate our line is not even mentioned, notice how even a token reference to propaganda being the chief form of activity is not made. What we have here is a tremendous underestimation of the ideological tasks confronting us in bolshevizing our ranks and training cadre capable of winning the



advanced. One is not necessarily capable, say, of explaining such key questions as the economic crisis or the growing danger of world war because one is ordered to, or told that an article on that question appeared in Peking Review. All this requires much study and investigation. And this is what the Iskra plan was for.

Yet now the PSC is replacing this plan. They are trying to theoretically justify their practice of letting different lines develop spontaneously from below, while issuing bureaucratic commands to put out a wrong, unconsolidated line. Of course, they need such a chaotic and primitive state of affairs in the organization to be able to follow their own tailist and amateurish course -- this is the connection between their "combination" of anarchy of line from below and from above. Further, in a meeting held with the New York district, the WC chairman actually said that in China, all the CPC did to start the Cultural Revolution was to issue a directive of the Central Committee. Here he was hoping we were as ignorant of such things as he hoped all cadre would be. But we are not, for we know that there were years of ideological preparation for the Cultural Revolution, as the first part of the political report of the Ninth Congress of the CPC, drawn up under Chairman Mao's direct guidance, points out. And this ideological preparation took place both among the masses and within the Central Committee. Look not to the Chinese for justification of your raggedy, bureaucratic line, Mr. "Chairman." It was not Mao or the Central Committee that promoted the kind of bureaucratic practices you so admire, but the likes of Liu Shao-chi. Peking Review number 10 of 1971 points out that:

"The saying that giving play to democracy will make it difficult to have unity in thinking is, in fact, a reflection of Liu Shao-chi's theory of the 'the masses being backward.' Having faith only in oneself but not in the masses and what 'I' think being the criterion for doing everything-- this inevitably will affect unity. If you do not let others speak out, correct views cannot be expressed and incorrect views cannot be criticized and made right; how can there be any concentration and unification? Without concentration and unification, there will not be genuine revolutionary unity."

And for our organization, the Iskra plan was essential to getting that unity in thinking. Clearly, the PSC's May Day proposal amounted to a scrapping of the Iskra plan as a means of developing line. For this reason, we refused to carry it out, because it was a violation of our organization's basic line decided at our Unity Conference. (See also the article on democratic centralism.) Failure of the district to do a self-criticism for not carrying out the May Day directive was the "grounds" on which we were expelled, although, as we are showing, we were actually expelled for insisting a maintaining, rather than abandoning, the Iskra plan.

Further evidence of how reversing the Iskra plan has led to a degeneration of The Communist can be seen in just what is put out on the international situation, the fruits of the PSC's wrong method of developing line. Take the recent articles on Lebanon. The June 15, 1976 article tells us in a front-page headline that, "Superpower Collusion Sparks Intervention," meaning the Syrian invasion. Yet what mainly characterizes the relation of the superpowers today, including in Lebanon, is not mainly collusion, as it was chiefly during the period of the people's war in Indochina, but contention for hegemony. This analysis has correctly been put out by the Communist Party of China, but our slavish worshippers of the CPC line are so blinded by their own ideological backwardness that they are unable even to repeat, let alone grasp or develop, what the CPC is saying, without making big blunders. The Lebanon articles actually spend more time attacking Syria than the Soviet Union, showing there is no consolidation in practice that the superpowers are the principal enemy, that the Soviet Union today is the main source of a danger of world war, and that we must approach the question of contradictions between Third World countries in a fundamentally different way than those between the



superpowers and the Third World, or between the superpowers themselves. So discuss these questions in your "highest" bureaucratic collectives all you like, members of the PSC, but you cannot cover up the fact that there is not now nor has there ever been a consolidated line in the WC on the international situation or the question of war:

Stalin once said that "after the correct political line has been laid down, organizational work decided everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its success or failure." (On Organization, Calcutta, p. 6) Clearly the wrong way in which we developed work around our once-correct line on such questions as the international situation and political economy has led today to wrong lines on these and other questions. By belittling the ideological preparation necessary for the leadership to be able to concentrate ideas, for the cadre to be consolidated on line, and for the whole organization to be sufficiently armed theoretically to be able to train the advanced workers, the organization has been unable to overcome the tailism of the old BWC. Certainly we are not putting out the ultra-democratic view of discussing everything before doing anything. But what we are saying, is that ideological work must unfold around the propaganda in order to unify our ranks. This is one key aspect of the Iskra plan. This entails serious study and investigation. If the Iskra plan had been carried out instead of being dumped by the leadership, these problems could have been solved. We would have been consistently striving to remold our world outlook in order to achieve success in developing capable leaders, strong cadre, a consolidated line, and winning the advanced. And this correct application of the Iskra plan, which we and others had fought for, has never been implemented in the WC.

The result, in addition to glorifying the ideological and political confusion reigning in the WC on such questions as political economy and the international situation, has been the inability of the paper to speak on some of the burning issues of the day. It took over a year for there to be any mention of the question of busing, although this issue has been very sharp. The attacks on busing, both by wider sections of the bourgeoisie and by so-called "communists", have intensified. Yet since genuine consolidation has never been done on our basically correct line, the WC has been unable to further develop its line, continue the exposures on the busing struggle, or consolidate other forces around the line. While the July 20, 1976 issue of The Communist finally broke the silence on this question in a short article on Ford's attacks on busing, this article failed to sum up the rich lessons of the struggles against school segregation, failed to deepen the exposure of the bankrupt anti-busing line of some "communists" that parallels the bourgeoisie's line, and failed to expose the "friends of the Black people" such as the supposedly pro-busing section of the liberal bourgeoisie and the NAACP. Note should be taken here of the classical connection between the overall economist swing of the WC and the inability of The Communist to expose the liberal bourgeoisie on such important questions as busing. The tendency is reformism down the line. In short, it took them a year to write a short article to restate an old line poorly. This is further evidence that the correct method for consolidating and developing a line, the Iskra plan, had not been implemented either on the Afro-American national question, or on the important specific question of busing and school segregation.

In addition, the paper has abandoned the task of carrying timely polemics on such burning questions in the communist movement as OL's party-building activity, the split in the "revolutionary wing," PRRWO's physical attacks on some of their former members and other communists, etc. The inability of the editors of The Communist to give national leadership on these questions reflects both how a line degenerates if it is not deepened and persevered in, and how a successful line turns into a failure if it is not organized around correctly.

Either you move forward or backward -- and The Communist has unfortunately gone way backward. Of late, the paper has been loaded up with all sorts of short articles that report local events or struggles where cadre happen to be working.



The emphasis on developing broad exposures on all the burning issues has been replaced by a tendency to ignore the nationwide burning issues and focus on local issues in a narrow fashion. How long has it been since the national economy has been summed up? Why are the presidential elections being ignored? What about the bourgeoisie's sex scandals or the situation in Europe, the focus of superpower contention? The Communist has not become the collective propagandist and agitator we had hoped it would be, but more and more a nationwide jumble of local articles and local lines. If the leadership was so serious about using the paper to consolidate our line, why was the distinction between articles representing our line and those of contributors so often blurred in the pages of The Communist? Cadres were supposed to follow the line of the paper without even knowing which articles reflected the organization's line, and which represented the views of contributors! All these points we have raised time and again, yet the errors not only deepen, but are now justified by the phony theoreticians of the PSC. The resulting degeneration of The Communist is further proof that you cannot develop or maintain a correct political line unless you tie this to a constant struggle both for ideological revolutionization and a correct organizational line, policy and plan.

#### ADVANCED WORKERS, FACTORY NUCLEI, AND PROPAGANDA

The paper's role as a collective organizer includes its use in winning the advanced workers to communism and the development of factory nuclei. The degeneration of The Communist and the WC has resulted not only in ideologically disarming the organization and various wrong political lines cropping up, but also in promoting a social-democratic line on organization that negates the role of propaganda as our chief form of activity and the paper as a collective organizer.

The amateurishness and primitivism of the old BWC are a matter of record. Yet amateurishness alone is not a sufficient explanation of why the WC failed miserably to break with its economist past. What we have to examine is the conscious defense of primitiveness by the right opportunist leadership in both the BWC and the WC. Although in the BWC, economism was up front, the leadership of the WC had become slicker in covering their right opportunism with left phraseology. To understand why the WC was unable to implement the Iskra plan for developing and consolidating line, for winning the advanced workers to communism, and for building factory nuclei, we must sum up the two-line struggles that went on in the organization over these questions.

In September, 1975, an organizational plan for using The Communist was circulated in and around the organization. The report said, "Developing factory nuclei in close connection with The Communist and with it as a weapon is where our primary focus should be." But the report did not go beyond repeating some brief, general truths about factory nuclei. It gave no specific or concrete guidance as to how to do this. Yet included in the "practical steps to be taken" was a call for a "formation of supporters and builders of The Communist." The relation between these groups and factory nuclei, or their function, was not spelled out. Just what the leadership had in mind about these groups was not yet made clear. In addition, the report called for the formation of groups of our closest contacts, something we immediately proceeded on, being a small district starting from scratch.

After this core of close contacts had been meeting for a while, we began to undertake the question of how to organize and centralize all the activity of the district and our contacts. It was at this point that the district advocated what had been put out in the September paper -- the formation of a "Friends of The Communist" group which would bring together us, our contacts, and the people they and we were working with, to consolidate, to hold monthly discussion meetings around the newspaper. Immediately this plan was sharply criticized by several people as social democratic on the grounds that it liquidated the question of security by



exposing everyone to each other.

After a struggle on this, the district re-studied Lenin's "Letter to a Comrade on our Organizational Tasks" and concluded that the plan for the "Friends of The Communist" was indeed a social-democratic deviation for more reasons than just lack of security measures. These regular discussion meetings for the people we were trying to build nuclei with are similar to the type Lenin described as "wholly unnecessary" because such discussions should be carried out in the context of groups that are doing on-going work related to the district committee. In the main, our plan would have diverted us from developing the contacts into circles on an industrial basis that, as part of their special work in that area, will lead to the formation of factory nuclei. The factory nuclei must be the main organizational link between the communist organization and the working class, both to build the party from the working class and to be linked to it on a communist basis. Focusing on discussion meetings takes chief attention away from building the nuclei and recruiting through them. This plan further deviated from the Iskra plan by replacing use of The Communist with general discussions as our chief means of propaganda. Needless to say, these discussion meeting could never have provided the ideological training in the science of Marxism-Leninism necessary to train advanced workers, could not have taken up all the practical questions necessary to build nuclei, and would have belittled the task of building the party in the course of the class struggle.

But there was still another twist to this. The present leadership of the WC by this time was not only infatuated with focusing a lot of attention on this kind of discussion meetings. They wanted the district to separate out the revolutionary intellectuals from the advanced workers, to form the discussion meetings group with the intellectuals, and for that group to maintain separate, independent contact with the center. This further deviated from the development of factory nuclei because we were starting to develop from among the intellectuals (and from the advanced workers, too) trained propagandists who could write articles, give lectures or presentations to circles of advanced workers, and actively participate in the building up of factory nuclei. They could either visit several circles to discuss specific topics, or participate regularly in one circle related to their jobs. Separating the intellectuals from the workers negated the task of attaching those propagandists who came from the ranks of the revolutionary intelligentsia to the circles of advanced workers. And, conversely, it negated the task of training and developing circles of propagandists from among the advanced workers. There should be no separation of revolutionary intellectuals from advanced workers.

Then there was the question of the call for separate reporting. Lenin laid out that all circles or committees set up by the district committee should become institutions, of one sort or the other, of the committee. The best forces were to be recruited into the party. The purpose of setting up these circles was to build up one organization and develop unified, centralized leadership. Division of labor was to be exercised both between the center and the district committee, and in the various committees set up by the district committee. As Lenin said regarding the establishment of this network of agents around the paper, "It is understood, of course, that these agents can act successfully only if they work in close connection with the local committee (groups or circles) of our party." ("Where to Begin," Iskra Period, Book 1, p. 114)

Yet the plan for separate reporting actually undermined the development of a central organization and leadership with division of labor by making it impossible for a single line and plan to be put out to these contacts of the organization. In the name of decentralization of reporting, the PSC was actually pushing the decentralization of work at the district level. The centralization of contacts would have taken place from the national center, without going through the district organization. This undermined our ability to create a reliable and strong district organization. In addition, by advancing a plan that improperly used division of



labor, the leadership not only created favorable conditions for chaos and disorganization of unified leadership and centralized organization at the district level, but it also actually promoted bureaucracy by taking many of the functions and powers of the district committee for itself. Thus, like any bourgeois or social-democratic party, autonomy from below was the cover for the real state of affairs -- a bureaucratic clique running things from the top. Where we bowed to this line in our propaganda work by having some contacts work out a separate plan for a series of articles on the Middle East, it became more difficult for the district to give direct ideological leadership on this question, especially when differences arose around the articles. If we had followed the leadership's overall plan for these contacts, it would have undermined our efforts to consolidate them to the organization's line and jointly work out a plan of activity for using the propaganda. In essence, this sabotaged the goals of the Iskra plan in creating an organization around the paper.

All of this was communicated to the center by early March, 1976. We felt we had made a right error in advocating a "Friends of The Communist" group, correctly summed it up, and had learned some lessons which were valuable both to us and the whole organization. Certainly a leadership dedicated to building up factory nuclei as our chief organizational unit would evaluate and respond to the summation of some months of work to implement the Iskra plan. Not only was this not done, (nor to this date has it been done) but, instead, in mid-April, the PSC issued its May Day directive, calling for workshops of all our contacts to discuss the question of war. Where was the relation of May Day to work around the paper, to building nuclei? Where were instructions on the question of security? Nowhere. We had summed up our work, shown how such a method was a deviation from the Iskra plan and from building factory nuclei, and put it out to the organization. Yet all we get is more degeneration, a further abandonment of the Iskra plan, and more plans for loose, armchair, social-democratic discussions separated from the actual tasks of party building.

The failure to respond to our report or to correct its way was not an accidental or isolated event. Reporting, having inner-party publicity, is an important organizational method for developing a common line and unified and centralized leadership. While we attempted to take up the task of reporting, we certainly had many weaknesses in that regard, reflecting our own amateurishness. Certainly we could have issued more and better reports. Yet by not even responding to the reports we did make, the PSC further revealed its preference for maintaining social-democratic methods of organization. Further, it was part of a process of degeneration centered around liquidating work around the paper as our chief form of activity. Where were organizational sum-ups of the attempts at building nuclei? Why were there no uniform study plans put out, say, to study political economy, scientific socialism, or dialectical and historical materialism? All this was left up to the fancy of the districts because the leadership was not serious about using the paper as a collective organizer. Factory nuclei became a nice phrase to be bandied about, but not something to be created in practice.

We anticipate the next question of our readers: If they didn't want to use the paper as the chief form of activity, as a collective organizer of the advanced, just what kind of activity did they propose? Surely not just more workshops, for May Day comes but once a year!

The answer to this question is that besides encouraging each district to hold its workshops as it pleased, the PSC began advocating a campaign to "go deeper into the industrial masses." The organization was to focus, we were told, "on making a qualitative breakthrough in the working class." The adoption of this slogan and the type of work that flowed from it marked, as we shall show, a new phase in the abandonment of the Iskra plan and a return to economism, tailism, amateurishness, and primitiveness. The essence of this "new" proposal can be seen by examining both the context in which it was proposed and how it has been implemented so far.



In terms of winning the advanced workers to communism, there had been some progress since the WC was formed. Still, it could not be said that the masses were sleeping on our doorsteps. Yet this was nothing new, as this situation has characterized the communist movement as a whole. The question becomes how to change this situation and start to break with the rampant petty-bourgeois right opportunism that isolates communists from the working class by having them tail the workers' consciousness and worship the spontaneous mass movement. When an organization's work is beset with problems and is at best sputtering along, there have generally been one of two approaches taken to correct the problems. The first is to demand better training of cadre, more and better propaganda, better organization, etc. This means rooting out economism and tailism. The second is to demand we broaden our appeal to reach the masses instead of focusing on the advanced, to "integrate" with the masses by putting out more economic agitation, to insist that we have spent "too much time" on internal polemics or ideological training, etc. Today, this second approach has become the watchword of all the economists, the rightist trend in our movement. Yet in the context of problems in our work, the leaders of the WC have abandoned our correct line and plan on how genuine communists must merge with the working class, and have adopted the latter, economist approach.

The line of "go deeper into the industrial masses" has started to reduce The Communist to a mere collection of local agitational leaflets. One look at the July 20, 1976 issue will clearly reveal this. We see the lead article on the New York hospital strike telling us that the workers walked out "against the bourgeoisie's plan to cut back sick time, pensions and refuse any cost of living raise," as if the strike was consciously directed against the bourgeoisie, and not just a spontaneous strike on a contract, no matter how righteous its aims were. This is similar to the economist line run by Workers' Viewpoint Organization in their August newspaper that the miners' strike was a political strike because it was directed against government outlawing and breaking the strike through the courts. This glorification of economic strikes and "lending the economic struggle a political character," as a substitution for real political exposures, is a characteristic feature of all economists. The July 20 Communist is loaded up with a bunch of local, agitational articles on various local strikes and struggles that similarly fail to provide the kind of high-quality, political propaganda and communist leadership necessary to train advanced workers.

Along with this "new look" for The Communist, the Central Committee is now calling for a series of "national campaigns" in various industries. One look at the articles in the paper will quickly show that these agitational articles intended to initiate these campaigns are more suited as kick-offs for campaigns to set up rank-and-file caucuses, and not factory nuclei. These articles are not genuine communist propaganda or political exposures, but localized economic agitation. In fact, the attention given them in the July 20 paper signals a retreat from the task of concentrating on political exposures. Now, certainly agitation and rank-and-file caucuses are necessary, and this sort of mass work is an important, component part of party building. On this there cannot be any question. But the problem with these "campaigns" is this: they lower the level of the paper from that of a collective propagandist, agitator and organizer to that of a depository of local leaflets, no longer chiefly propaganda, and, in so doing, lower the level of all our activity, making propaganda no longer the chief form of activity. We are not opposed, of course, to including such articles in a paper. But we are opposed to the wholesale substitution of such articles for ones that can actually train advanced workers, and to the lowering of the level of the paper to that of one big trade union organizer. Certainly all the effort put into all these strike articles, or at least some of it, could have been much better utilized if, say, it were directed at producing one larger, clear article exposing the so-called economic "recovery" and showing how the capitalist economy is on its way, very soon, to another, even worse, collapse. Now, this would be a powerful weapon in our hands that would

not necessarily



certainly better enable us to make a "qualitative breakthrough" among the advanced workers. Yet all these campaigns, in practice, as the paper shows, are not directed to better training the cadre to better train the advanced workers, but actually aimed at making economic agitation the main form of activity and converting the paper from a political leader of the working class, along the lines of Lenin's Iskra, into its economist tail, along the lines of The Call, Workers' Viewpoint, and Revolution.

How do we get better agitation? Through better training of the advanced workers as revolutionary leaders! If we get more consistent propaganda to train the advanced workers, then we will create a core of leaders from the working class trained to think scientifically and skilled in leading the proletariat on all political and economic questions, no matter how big or small. The inability of the economists such as OL, RCP, WVO and others to train advanced workers as leaders is the reason that all their agitation can advise the workers to do is "fight back," "make the bosses pay," or other such dead and shallow ideas. To lower one's standards in the realm of propaganda today and opt for the short-cut of agitation is a sure way to fail in both. Without relying on the advanced workers, our influence among the masses must necessarily be severely limited.

The further degeneration of The Communist into an economist paper and the abandonment of the Iskra plan at the first signs of trouble reminds us of an incident that took place when Lenin and the genuine revolutionaries of his time were building Iskra. In the midst of the difficult but steady growth of the forces around Iskra, Lenin received a proposal from S. O. Tsederbaum, Martov's brother, calling for the establishment of various local, mass papers in Russia. To this Lenin replied:

"Do you mean to say our aim is to descend closer to the 'mass' instead of raising this already stirring mass to the level of an organized political movement? Is it letters from factories and workshops we lack, and not political exposures, political knowledge, and political generalizations?" (CW, Vol. 34, p. 77)

Does this not ring a familiar bell, comrades? Is it "national campaigns" that glorify trade union struggle and articles from whatever plants the cadre happen to work in that we lack? Or is it trained propagandist and trained workers who can become revolutionary leaders? Do we need more repetition that the workers are exploited and the union leaders betray them? No, no, no!! What we sorely and direly need, what we most emphatically demand is MORE AND BETTER PROPAGANDA! If you cannot give that to us, if we can no longer work jointly towards these tougher but loftier ends, then step aside please, for there are already too many economists out there and we don't need to be associated with but another garden variety of opportunism.

In his reply to Tsederbaum, Lenin added further that, "The Iskra organization exists to support and develop the paper and to unite the Party through it, and not for a dispersion of our forces, of which there is more than enough without this organization." (Ibid., p. 78) Is it not clear that the activity of both our organization and our movement is, likewise, scattered and fragmented all over the place? While the form of Tsederbaum's proposal, the establishment of several local papers, is different from that of the WC, which is lowering the level of the nationwide paper to a collection of local articles for "the masses," the content is the same -- a dispersion of our forces, a degrading and lowering of the level of our activity, and a narrowing of our aims. How can such "national campaigns" around strikes be the answer to winning over the advanced, uniting the Leninist trend, and laying the basis for a party? Such economic agitation does not require a national organization or a nationwide paper. And for this reason, the WC is consolidating around being a mere vehicle to tail various local movements. Inevitably, this narrowing of activity is bound to lead to further chaos in the WC and greater degeneration of The Communist.



There are no doubt not a few reading this paper who will notice that many of the same criticisms we raise here against the WC were raised against the anti-lefts in the BWC. And these readers are correct in that assumption. It is a fact that the WC never succeeded in bolshevizing itself. It is a fact that the petty-bourgeois leadership of the WC has not succeeded in remolding its world outlook and ridding itself of right opportunism. The petty bourgeoisie has been under much attack in past years by the bourgeoisie. Many from its ranks entered the revolutionary movement when faced with the prospect of being cannon fodder for imperialist aggression, when they learned that the only future that awaited them was the unemployment line, or when they found that mere reform struggles for equality and democratic rights were not enough. Thrown into the ranks of the proletariat and the revolutionary opposition to capitalism, the petty bourgeoisie bring with it into the revolutionary movement all the individualism and petty vacillation it has learned previously and is inherent in the consciousness arising from its role in production. Hence, the struggle against the influence of petty bourgeois ideology and to remold the world outlook of communists from the petty bourgeoisie is long, intense, and requires much vigilance. Yet the leaders of the WC, clinging to the petty-bourgeois democracy that reflects their class backgrounds, have accepted the Iskra plan only in words, while in deeds applauding and orchestrating a vast dispersion of our forces and a mass exodus away from the path of developing solid and quality propaganda. The Iskra plan was supposed to centralize our activity. Now these unremolded petty-bourgeois intellectuals want to drag us back, to decentralize our activity with all sorts of "national campaigns" and local, economist agitation. Scream all you like about how our district is guilty of "local autonomism." We are confident that we have shown that it was, in fact, the leadership of the WC that encouraged the decentralization of the activity of the organization.

When we joined the organization, we thought we already had a national campaign. That was to build an Iskra-type paper and make that the lifeblood of all our work to build a party. And, as we have shown, when we ourselves started to deviate from that path and not meet with success, we studied some more, investigated more deeply and started to correct our errors, as with the "Friends of The Communist." But even the slogan of "go deeper into the industrial masses" itself is a dead give-away that the present leadership of the WC believes, in essence, that our chief problem is isolation from the masses, and not the inability to raise up the advanced to the level of scientific socialism. It further exposes the nature of the accompanying "campaigns" as not aimed at the advanced but at the masses. Where have we had so much success among the advanced that it has now become time to focus on the broad masses in our literary and organizational activities? As a comrade has pointed out to us, these new campaigns lead to doing a lot of talk about political exposures in theory, but, in practice, doing economic agitation.

Of course, the WC leadership's problem is not that they are "dizzy with success." On the contrary, they are indeed quite worried and pessimistic. Even the article on page one of the July 20, 1976 Communist announcing the new slogan admits that it is lack of success that has led to this new approach. We are told the new slogan is raised so "that the advances that we have made theoretically must become manifested in revolutionary practice..." indicating that there has been failure at accomplishing these tasks so far. Perhaps the WC leaders think that this slogan is somewhat creative or original. But it is not. After some reverses suffered by the Bolsheviks on May Day, 1905, Lenin wrote:

"We have quite a few Social-Democrats who give way to pessimism every time the workers suffer a reverse in single battles with the capitalists or with the government, and who scornfully dismiss all mention of the great and lofty aims of the working-class movement by pointing to the inadequate degree of our influence on the masses."

("On Confounding Politics with Pedagogics," CW, Vol. 8, p. 452-5)

Sound familiar? Should we call it mere chance or an accident of history that the



slogan raised by the Mensheviks at that time, in opposition to the Bolsheviks' revolutionary slogans, was -- "To the masses!" ? No coincidence at all. And while the Bolsheviks had already established their party at the time of this article by Lenin, the lessons in it surely apply to our pre-party situation today. Lenin proceeded to show that, "It is our duty always to intensify and broaden our work and influence among the masses." However, he continued,

"We should not turn the emphasis upon this work into a special slogan or build upon it any special trend if we do not wish to court the risk of descending to demagoguery and degrading the aims of the advanced and only truly revolutionary class."

And what are our aims today? Precisely to win the advanced workers over to communism and build a party. Is it not clear that the present WC leadership is guilty of the same pessimism as the Mensheviks, of the same attempt to drag us backwards instead of leading us forward after suffering some reverses in building up the paper and the organization? And any such call to "go to the masses" is, in fact, even more dangerous and more opportunist in the period when we have yet to build the party, when the WC raised it, than in the period when the party had already been built, when the Mensheviks raised it.

In contrast to the plans put out by the pessimistic vacillators who now run the WC, the organization should have actually tried to deepen its grasp of the Iskra plan and implement it in practice. What was needed was more and better propagandists, centralized leadership in developed study plans to train the advanced, thorough sum-ups throughout the organization of experience and problems in training advanced workers, etc., but all this would have meant carrying through our plan to the end, a consistent commitment these unremolded petty-bourgeois intellectuals were incapable of. Instead of raising everybody up, at all levels, they preferred to bask in the gray shadows of their theoretical poverty. Unable to make the big break with opportunism, they have slid back into the marsh, reducing The Communist to a junior edition of The Call.

It must be stated further that the abandonment of the Iskra plan was no overnight thing. The resistance of the leaders of the WC to bolshevizing the organization was clearly seen in the inability to overcome the most primitive methods of work. For example, in our district we began carrying out the work of forming a network of agents around the paper, which included forces to write for, distribute, and use the paper. Yet the only way we often could find out the deadline for the next paper was if we placed a long-distance phone call to the center in Chicago! Once, just a few days after we received one issue, we were told we had only a week to get the next articles in. Since the paper was supposed to be a monthly, this upset the district's plan to work with these forces around the paper, as we scrambled to meet the new deadline. We figured we could only get in about half of what we had originally planned. Even so, several people had to skip work to meet this new deadline. This showed much initiative and a growing dedication to the paper and the organization by these people. But after a few days of this running around, we were told by the center that the deadline had been pushed back a week or so again! Is there a better way than this to squash people's initiative and demoralize them? And this is but one example of destroying, rather than building, a network of agents. How often it was that we never knew which, if any, of our articles would be printed until the paper arrived! In fact, one of the articles we rushed to finish, which was a good article, but could have used improvements from additional material we had obtained shortly after we had sent it in, was not printed until two months after it had been sitting around in Chicago. Had we been told there would be a delay in printing it, we could have produced a better article, but that would have meant that the editors were really interested in the quality of the paper. Finally, after hammering out differences for many hours with some contributors with whom we were preparing a series of articles, when we opened up the paper in which one of the articles appeared, we found some key sections of the



article edited out and changed. When we asked for the political reason why these cuts were made, we were merely told that the editors "didn't know" the article was from contributors! Aside from the fact that they would have known about this article if they had read our accompanying communication sent with the article, they did not offer a word of political justification for the cuts. The excuse of lack of space doesn't even speak to the unexplained changes, which didn't alter the space, and, if they had differences with the article, why not run it with a response? Usually, we had to wait at least a month, often longer, to get this sort of bullshit explanation about the editing, even though this caused real problems, both in the paper's worth, and the credibility of the organization, just how far it could be trusted to be principled, with people we worked with. This, again, is a surefire way to disorganize a network of agents.

Needless to say, all this primitiveness created many problems for our district and further showed the futility of trying to build a network of agents and a genuine party around the degenerating Communist and the WC. One can only abuse people for so long. What these examples show is that the WC leadership remained amateurs to the bone, both by not grasping the essence of the Iskra plan, and by actually sabotaging the construction of a network of agents. "Primitivism," Lenin said, "is a much more dangerous enemy than Economism, for vital roots of Economism, we are profoundly convinced, are deeply buried in primitivism." ("Letter to Tsederbaum," Ibid., p. 78) Clinging to primitive methods, and failure to practice a professional style of work, are further demonstrations of right opportunism in the WC.

The inability of the WC to build The Communist into a collective organizer; their resistance to taking the path that would lead to this lofty goal; the subsequent development of all sorts of "campaigns," slogans, and plans that actually tailed the mass movement and paralyzed the ability of the organization to play a leading role in winning the advanced workers to communism -- all this, and more, signalled the decline and fall of the WC as an organization headed on the road toward building a bolshevik party. With the degeneration of the organization came the degeneration of the paper. And with the triumph of economism and primitivism in the WC as reflected in the pages of The Communist, we in New York, as one comrade here put it, felt robbed of our vehicle for building the party. Our ability to use the paper as a collective propagandist, agitator, and organizer did not cease when we were expelled from the organization. On the contrary, the paper had long since ceased to serve these functions, ever since the forces of opportunism gained the upper hand in the WC. How could we make propaganda our chief form of activity when the paper had lowered its level away from the advanced and ceased to be mainly communist political exposures? We could no longer rely on the previous high quality of its content, on the correctness of its line, on its being aimed, in reality, at the advanced workers, and on it being a key tool to building factory nuclei and a network of agents. Where we needed propaganda, they gave us agitation. Where we fought for and started to implement bolshevik methods of organization, they fought for and implemented social-democratic, primitive methods of organization. To put it another way, we had learned that the present leadership of the WC had neither the intention nor the ability to carry out the Iskra plan. Hard, bitter lessons, but, oh, so true!

#### UNITING MARXIST-LENINISTS -- ISKRA PLAN OR "COMMON EDITORIAL POLICY"?

We have already in another paper exposed the proposal for a "common editorial policy" and have shown how it is a component part of the reversal of the Iskra plan by the present leadership of the WC.\* We will not repeat the points

\* "Never Forget Class Struggle" on page 68 of this magazine.



of that paper, but will add here a few additional remarks.

Emphasis must be placed on the understanding that if we are to model our line on party-building and our newspaper after Lenin's, then we are obliged to fight for hegemony of our line and organization within the communist movement. The Iskra-type paper should have been aimed at becoming a leader in winning over advanced workers, combatting right opportunism, uniting the Leninist trend, and building up an organization capable of leading the genuine forces in our movement on to a founding party congress. What we need, as Lenin once said, is a circle that can become a "base of operations." ("Preface to the Collection 12 Years," CW Vol. 13, pl 105-6)

Lenin was very specific on the question of hegemony. In writing about the relation of the forces grouped around Iskra to various opportunists in Russia who wanted to usurp leadership of the revolutionary movement, Lenin said, "If it is our destiny and if it is possible for us to achieve real hegemony, it will be exclusively by means of a political newspaper (reinforced by a scientific organ)..." (letter to Plekhanov, January 30, 1901, CW Vol. 34, p. 56, emphasis added)

But instead of upholding the correct Leninist line on the question of fighting for the hegemony of the correct line and organization, the WC leadership has put forth a bourgeois-democratic line on party building. In a report in the May 1, 1976 Communist, regarding other groups' lines on party-building, they write, "Notice that none of these groups have a plan to unite Marxist-Leninists, but are struggling for the hegemony of their own small circle." What is this but liberal equalitarianism?

It is well known that the petty bourgeoisie cannot carry proletarian revolution through successfully to the end. Likewise, those in the communist movement who still cling to petty-bourgeois ideology cannot lead the struggle against opportunism to the end. At some point they will vacillate and tend to compromise or capitulate. So it should not surprise us that we have encountered this same kind of faint-heartedness among the present opportunist leadership of the WC. These unremolded petty-bourgeois intellectuals shudder at the thought of aiming for hegemony and leadership of the communist movement. In fact, two-line struggle in the WC on this question goes all the way back to the Unity Conference. At that time, there were those, as a document written by some comrades who are former leading members of the WC points out, who had a "timid and half-assed manner" in not boldly raising The Communist as the closest to Iskra, and in not calling loudly for the Leninist trend to join in this effort.\* And, of course, it was the present leadership of the WC who were the ones who vacillated even then on breaking with the economism of the old BWC, in actually rectifying our work and bolshevizing our organization.

By retreating to the essentially bourgeois-democratic line on party-building of a "common editorial policy," the opportunist leadership of the WC has actually given credence to all those who "slandered" the plan for an Iskra-type paper as a scheme for organizational unity before ideological and political unity, and building a paper that was a mere storehouse of views. While many of these forces who raised these criticisms were honestly confused about the aim of the Iskra plan, it must be said that the opportunists in the WC only fed this confusion by never clearly laying out on just what terms we would have to agree before we could unite in producing common literature. Some in the WC did want to draw firm lines of demarcation and demand that other forces abandon their Tailism and economism before we could unite, while others actually did envision unity around a paper based on just some general principles. While this error was attacked as ultra-"left" by some because it "outstripped" our present level of unity, the deviation was actually rightist because it capitulated to right

\* See page 74 of this magazine.



opportunism and liquidated the struggle against it, especially since the designs of the opportunists in the WC included establishing unity with OL on this basis. The net effect of this right opportunism was to discredit the Iskra plan. What an absolute disgrace!

But this is not the only thing these rightists ought to be ashamed about. Just listen to the justification for the "common editorial policy" proposal offered by one of the members of the PSC, as quoted by some former leading members of the WC: "We might as well try it to see if it works since nothing else seems to." Incredible! Sheer, unadulterated pragmatism! Is it even necessary to ask if this kind of feeble, desperate thinking has anything in common with the sturdy science of Marxism-Leninism? But that is not all. In an article in the May 1, 1976 Communist defending the Iskra policy, in response to a challenge to show how the conditions at the time of Lenin's Iskra and those of today's communist movement are similar enough to warrant adoption of such a similar plan, the paper replies, "Probably that analogy could be made, but we have always thought it was a mechanical way to pose the question and a diversion." (p. 6) Doing concrete analysis of concrete conditions is now a "diversion!" And only "probably" could this analysis scientifically validate the main line around which the WC was built! Instead of a scientific Marxist-Leninist analysis, we get empiricism. You won't convince too many people with this cheap stuff! We, on the other hand, definitely know that both these sets of conditions require similar plans, for we have done that study and investigation. Ducking the issue is actually a confession that the WC leaders have serious doubts as to the applicability of the Iskra plan and of Leninist principles of party building. Better they should step down as leaders than continue to spew forth such garbage. But instead of doing this, or even doing some more study, investigation, and summing up past experience, in short, instead of using Marxism-Leninism, they have chosen the well-worn path of belittling the importance of scientific theory. And just what sort of a party can be built if it is so infected with this pragmatism and empiricism? Who will trust such forces to lead the life-and-death struggle to overthrow the criminal rule of U.S. imperialism?

The WC has adopted the line of "common editorial policy," but only, as its chairman hastened to explain to us, in "modified" form. To us, whatever changes have been made are merely cosmetic, for all the essentials of this plan, all the capitulation to opportunism, were actually in effect long before the plan was formally drawn up. The proposal was actually more of a crystallization of a tendency and line already existing in the WC and already reflected in the paper, than a new phase, although its adoption by the Central Committee did reflect another qualitative step in the degeneration of the organization.

Take the example of the way the OL has been dealt with. When the OL came up with its second, current plan for its "party," the PSC wrote that "this method is similar to the ideas that we have advanced." This same view was repeated to us in the meeting we had with the WC chairman who said that the OL was following a "correct method" to build the party. When we asked how the OL could be using a "correct method" if, as our organization had previously held, they were not focusing on what should be the chief form of activity, propaganda, to build the party, we were answered only by a puzzled stare. This is a straight-up capitulation to economism and a reversal of our previous correct analysis that the OL was part of an opportunist trend, which the WC chairman also refused to affirm. In fact, the WC chairman revealed to us that there was considerable favor to OL in the WC, both among leading members and cadres. This was reflected on Women's Day when members of another district attended the Black Women's United Front conference and rally in New York, dominated by the Congress of African People (now RCL) and OL, and we planned a joint article to expose the errors of the opportunist around International Working Women's Day. The other district was supposed to focus on OL, but never wrote their part of the article. And no one was ready to kick them out of the orga-



nization for not following the agreed-upon plan for International Working Women's Day. Of course, to some, capitulation to opportunism is alright, while struggle against it reflects "local circle spirit." Is it then any wonder why The Communist has been so silent about OL and its party-building motion? It should surprise no one that the WC has limited itself to a sickly protest of OL's smearing of the line of making propaganda the chief form of activity as the bankrupt "advanced" line of the Communist League, instead of taking ideological leadership in the struggle against opportunism and using The Communist to rip apart The Call and expose the activity of the OL as thoroughly economist. Because of the dominance of pro-OL forces in the WC, the ideological struggle against OL has been left in the hands of the "political-line-is-the-key-link" crowd in the communist movement, which can never zero in on the main features and real essence of OL's economism and opportunism, and which spends almost as much time attacking OL with a wrong line (such as those opposing busing) as it does raising passable points.

Yet the OL is not the only group whose tails the WC is sniffing these days. After remaining silent about the "revolutionary wing" for months, all we now get is a few sentences pointing out their most obvious faults: "left" liquidation of political exposures, negation of danger of war and struggle for democratic rights. This analysis, in fact, merely tails that of Workers' Viewpoint Organization, which is still being protected by the WC's shroud of silence. Nowhere do we see the Leninist requirement of national ideological leadership fulfilled.

Already this is leading to disastrous results. For example, at a forum on the West Coast, when Resistencia claimed that the New York district had formed an anti-PRRWO bloc that included the Puerto Rican Socialist Party and CLP, the members and supporters of the WC were unable to respond or comment on how the struggle had been carried out. The truth was that we carried out the struggle on two fronts. First, we sent in a long article analyzing the "wing" and Workers' Viewpoint. This was a major part of the Women's Day article, since the split between these groups became public around Women's Day. This article was not printed in the paper, and no other analysis has yet been printed. Secondly, we had to take practical measures because of the rampage PRRWO was then on against its former members -- our district included former leading members of PRRWO who might have been targets of attacks, as the WC leadership knew. A call was put out for a wide variety of groups to issue a joint statement which would not analyze the lines or condemn or support one side, but would restrict itself to condemning the physical attacks on other communist. A broad range of groups and individuals, including not only PSP and CLP, but also forces that did not claim to be communists, such as some Puerto Rican revolutionary nationalists, was invited to tactically isolate PRRWO as much as possible and defuse the situation. This would stem any further attacks by making correct use of contradictions, and show just who was reliable and stood for unity in the face of these attacks. Forces such as PSP, RCP, CLP and others never even bothered to answer back, exposing them. Others, like OL, WVO, IWK, and Resistencia refused to sign the statement. Now a component part of our participation in this effort was our expectation that The Communist would not only print our independent, communist analysis of what was up with PRRWO--which would have given us the basis to take united action with forces with whom we had disagreements, even those we wanted to expose--but would also expose the physical attacks and print the joint statement. So the charge that we formed an anti-PRRWO bloc was ridiculous, since we planned to combine our own analysis with the tactic of a united front around the question of condemning the physical attacks. But not only was nothing printed in the paper about this whole affair with PRRWO, but at its most recent meeting, the Central Committee did not even want to hear what had happened around this situation, much less circulate the facts to the organization. So no wonder that the cadres on the West Coast couldn't respond to Resistencia's slanders.

The only ones to blame for this mess are the opportunist leaders of the WC who squealed that they didn't think this was important because in Chicago they don't



! have PRFWO to deal with. Well, we have news for you. These lines and lessons are being studied and debated out all over the country, and forces from coast to coast are looking to determine just who is genuine and who is sham in this country. It is the job of leaders to give leadership on a national scale, because the party will be formed with forces from all over the U.S. This should be elementary to any serious national leadership, but all we get is a confession of their own, narrow, local scope, of their inability to grasp the importance of drawing clear lines of demarcation in the ongoing, nationwide struggle to build a party. In this regard, as in all other aspects of party-building, the leaders of the WC have proven themselves totally unfit to lead any genuine communist organization, and have only succeeded in driving the WC further into the ground.

[ The old BWC was once the ideological leader of an emerging Leninist trend. After its demise, it was left to the WC to re-establish this leadership. But the WC has failed, too. And today its leaders have raised justifications for all their errors, hatched all sorts of opportunist plans, and have consolidated the organization around a bankrupt, opportunist line. ?!

Those of us who have fought against this degeneration have been attacked for supposed "capitulation to difficulty," for "local circle spirit." But it is those of us who are out of the WC who have actually stood up for the Iskra plan, who have demanded a relentless struggle against opportunism, both in our own ranks and in the communist movement, and who have fought to uphold the principles and line that the organization was founded upon. It was in this context that we fought against the May Day proposal, against the deviation of the organization from its previous correct course. There was no room to compromise in the WC on whether to uphold the Iskra plan or to replace it with an opportunist ideological, political and organizational line.

The conditions today are favorable for the defeat of right opportunism. All the rightists have been facing considerable difficulty of late, as more people have seen how their wrong lines prevent them from building a genuine, revolutionary party. Yet all we are offered by the WC is the liberal banner of "peace" with opportunism, in the WC itself and in the communist movement. The working class and oppressed peoples have no need for these liberals. Thus we leave the WC with no regrets, save that we did not struggle sooner, better, and more vigorously.

Strong on Iskra plan but no sound defense of it.  
on what lines of demarcation was it to be implemented?  
(what political lines?)

Quite a good look at being inside an "M-L" group,  
though.

Strongly oppose s-d methods, spontaneity,  
sustainedness, demagoguing theory + propaganda.



# In Defense of DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

Part 2

December, 1976

We realize there is a keen interest in the question of democratic centralism in our movement. Many forces have had bad, and even nightmarish experiences with gross violations of democratic centralism by various organizations in the Communist movement. Yet open polemics, or even summing-up of experiences on this question are very rare. So taking a scientific approach to such important questions as defining the Marxist-Leninist principle of democratic centralism, and applying it, is something many in our ranks have been thirsting for. The distortions of democratic centralism in the PRRWO, for example, especially in waging line struggle, were a contributing factor in the split of the original BWC. But this has never been summed up. While verbally explaining the two-line struggle on democratic centralism in the WC, we have encountered a somewhat unexpected eagerness to deal with these questions. We are convinced that our experiences can contribute to the development of a correct line on democratic centralism, which will aid the genuine forces in our movement, since organization is a component part of party-building. We also hope to encourage other people to sum up their own experiences in this area. Rather than merely repeating or summarizing Marxist-Leninist teachings on democratic centralism, we can best contribute to the development of a correct line by showing how our line developed, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, in opposition to the incorrect line of the present WC leadership.

One of the main questions in the struggle in the old BWC was the question of organization. The forces that formed the Workers' Congress vowed to put an end to the amateurishness and primitiveness in organization that so greatly hampered our ability to carry out our tasks. Lenin's great work ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK (OSF, TSB) was upheld as putting forth the organizational principles of a Marxist-Leninist party, and it was proudly declared that democratic centralism was to be the organizational principle of the WC. To emphasize the necessity to bolshevize our ranks, the timely slogan, "Organization is Key", was raised, much to the chagrin of all the amateurs and tailists in our movement who scoffed at it and tried to play on their own cadres' lack of ideological training by confusing the word "key" with the question of tactical leadership "key link." The motion of the WC was, at least on paper, a good beginning.

But whether or not the WC would adhere to Marxist-Leninist principles of organization in practice was another matter. The actual tasks of bolshevizing the organization remained to be done. Just as the Iskra plan had been upheld in words but obstructed and finally scrapped by the present opportunist leadership of the WC, proletarian principles of organization were resisted at every step by these same opportunists.

The WC opens a polemic in the October 10, 1976 COMMUNIST against the former New York district by informing us, "It is an elementary lesson of struggle that to declare a battle is not to win it." They



then go on to present what on the surface appears to be a dialectical and historical link between the struggle against the right wing of the BWC and various struggles in the WC that have led to a number of resignations and expulsions from the organization. And, as is to be expected, they characterize all the lines opposed to theirs as mere variants of the right line in the old BWC, and all of their struggles against these lines as continuations of the struggle against right opportunism, including the struggle of the present leadership of the WC against the New York district. In fact, we are even branded as the "best example" of local circle autonomy!

Perhaps this literary trick is impressive to those who know little or nothing of the history, line, and practice of the WC. And certainly the WC leadership is relying on the ignorance of much of the communist movement about the WC in order to get over with this stuff. But for those who have either been in or around the organization, what is at first most striking about this article is its absolute distortion of the history and content of the two-line struggle in the WC, both by leaving out huge chunks of it, and by outright lying about what it preferred not to ignore. Any honest revolutionary who wanted to take up the struggle against revisionism in a principled and open and aboveboard way would have to present the various stages and development of the struggle, run down the two lines at each key point, and draw conclusions based on this analysis. This is precisely the method Lenin used in OSF, TSB, where he proceeded from a detailed and careful evaluation of the minutes of the 2nd congress of the Russian party in order to fully expose the bankruptcy of the Menshevik line on organization. In fact, Lenin even attacked the Mensheviks' fear of analyzing these minutes and directly addressing their contents because this would openly expose them. He said that the Menshevik "Martov now finds

the facts of our struggle at the Congress so unpleasant that he tries to slur over them altogether." (OSF, TSB, p.14 \*) It would not be stretching the analogy between the present opportunist leadership of the WC and the Russian Mensheviks too far to point out that the WC opportunists likewise dread laying out the real history and content of the two-line struggle on democratic centralism lest they, too, would be unmasked as the petty-bourgeois democrats they really are. Moreover, their article against us is a consciously dishonest hack job which even includes the lying accusation that "the former N.Y. district attacks the line of the Chinese Communist Party" on the international situation, a cheap attempt to pass off the bankrupt WC line as that of the C.P.C. This kind of two-sentence analysis of major issues and lines is similar to the unprincipled method of polemics employed by the WC's opportunist allies in the OL. Further, by slinging the charge of "circle spirit" at us for persisting in our struggle against right opportunism and putting out our views clearly, the WC merely echoes the charge made by Martov of "circle politics" against Lenin and the Bolsheviks for attempting to clearly demarcate the various lines and groupings at their 2nd congress. (OSF, TSB, p.14)

Well, then, just what are the facts? In order to understand the two lines on democratic centralism, in order to see just who stands guilty of circle spirit, we must lay out in some detail the content and history of the various struggles in the WC around democratic centralism. This article shall summarize the three major struggles around democratic centralism that took place in

\* Progress Publishers Edition, Moscow, 1973



the WC, show how the right opportunist line was victorious in each of these struggles (including the struggle of the NY district, around the May Day directive) and show how the opportunists in the WC were merely continuing the same old rightism that characterized the opportunists of the old BWC. It should become clear from this article that in practice the WC was never established on the basis of democratic centralism, and that from day one of the organization the opportunist in leadership opposed any attempt to begin bolshevizing our ranks and implementing democratic centralism. By laying out the main lines of the three major struggles around democratic centralism, we shall show that, at each step, the present leaders of the WC turned Chairman Mao's teachings on party discipline on their head and actually advocated subordinating the organization to the individual, subordinating the majority to the minority, subordinating the higher level to the lower level, and subordinating the Central Committee to a section of the membership.

In ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK, Lenin described the main feature of the opportunist line on organization held by the Mensheviks this way, "The important thing here is to note the undoubted tendency to defend autonomism against centralism, which is a fundamental characteristic of opportunism in matters of organization." (p.192) Beyond all shadow of doubt, this characterization fully applies to the opportunists in the WC. As we shall show, they promoted, defended, and supported autonomism on virtually all aspects of organization. Both autonomism "from below" -- individual cadre, districts, lower levels, minorities of cadre, working as they pleased, not bound to follow the line and discipline of the organization, not given unified and centralized leadership, and even forming factions;-- and autonomism "from above" -- leading bodies and heads of committees also not abiding by the line and discipline of the organization, acting in a bureaucratic and commandist way by issuing orders that were not based on the concentration of correct ideas and reliance on the initiative of the cadres and the masses, and actually behaving like a faction at the top rather than leaders of an organization -- marked the organizational work of the WC and helped cripple it from fulfilling its tasks successfully. Both forms of autonomism, from above and from below, while different in form, are in their essence the same, and reflect the individualism and hatred of discipline of the petty bourgeoisie, both among the cadre and the leadership. We shall emphasize the unity of these two types of errors and their common features, since both stem from the same source. The blame for these errors, of course, lies with those who gave incorrect guidance to the organization, and those who spun theoretical justifications to glamorize and defend the most backward state of affairs carried over from the BWC into the WC. Amateurishness and autonomism are inevitable to a certain extent in a new and developing organization. But what differentiates honest errors from outright opportunism is a prolonged defense of these errors and consolidation around their justification. This is precisely what happened in the leadership of the WC.

We have been accused by the WC leadership of "local circle spirit" for not carrying out the May Day directive. Yet we will show that it was, in fact, the present leadership of the WC who actually opposed democratic centralism in every struggle on organizational questions, and that the May Day directive was itself a violation of democratic centralism -- a continuation of the flouting of every basic tenet and Marxist-Leninist principle on organization. Since the struggle around



May Day was a component part of the sharp two-line struggle on organizational matters that existed since the WC was formed, we can only properly show its essence and significance by placing it in the context of the degeneration of the WC.

We have said quite a lot already in our introduction to this section, and there is still much more to say. Let us now turn to the task of actually summarizing the three major struggles on democratic centralism in the WC, showing clearly to all just who had the real opportunist line.

#### FIRST MAJOR STRUGGLE

The first major struggle in the WC around democratic centralism was initiated and led by comrades from Detroit. This struggle was of particular importance because it took place right at the birth of the organization, and its outcome played a key role in the shaping of events to come. The issues involved in this struggle included a wide range. We shall summarize the two lines on the most important of these -- organizational rules and constitution, relation of various levels to the Central Committee and congress, division of labor between higher and lower levels, and the question of the discipline of members. Its wide scope, including every principle of democratic centralism, gives it even more importance.

The rightist line scored a number of important victories right from the outset of the WC's history. This was primarily due to the depth of opportunism that remained in the WC leadership, held over from the old BWC, but also, secondarily, because of certain errors made in the struggle against that opportunism. The victory of opportunism led to the resignation of almost the entire Detroit district from the WC. And while we do not agree with everything these comrades have done or said, in the main the points they raised were correct, and we shall uphold and defend these points.

#### Organizational Rules and Constitution

After the split in the BWC and the establishment of the WC, two lines broke out on the question of the need for rules and a constitution to lay out a guiding policy on organization questions. One line, fought for by the comrades from Detroit, who have since left the WC, said that rules and a constitution were needed because the WC was united that democratic centralism is a "weapon to build a party and is the guiding principle for communist organization," and we need such rules to take "a step toward ending our uneven, scattered and disunited existence as a collection of circles and individuals." (p.3 of an unpublished document by Detroit comrades on their resignation from the WC) One would think that such a view would be readily accepted without much fuss in an organization which had as one of its major distinguishing features the struggle against the kind of organizational anarchy that helped wreck the BWC. But quite the contrary was the case. When this line was raised inside the Editorial Board before the Unity Conference, and in subsequent meetings, it was openly fought against by an alliance of the then chair of the center, now expelled, and the present chair of the organization. The opposing line held that we didn't need rules since Lenin had said that before the 2nd party congress in Russia they didn't have enough experience to draw up rules, and that the WC should deal with organizational problems as they came up. Some of the same people who had played a leading role in the struggle against the rightist defense of amateurishness and autonomy in the BWC emerged at the Unity Conference as the opposition against such basic tools of bolshevizing our ranks as rules and a



constitution. After further summing up our own experience in the WC and doing further investigation into the split in the BWC, we have concluded that while the WC leaders were more correct in their presentation of the different political tendencies in the BWC, and in their analysis of our tasks, they, in fact, didn't succeed in winning the other comrades in the organization to their position because of their own opportunism. They could not prevent the total destruction of the BWC because this opportunism led them into an unprincipled factional struggle, a result of their petty-bourgeois careerist ambition.

While our opponents of rules tried to cover themselves by saying that the constitution of the Chinese CP should be our "model" the essence of their line was opposition to concrete steps being taken to develop rules to guide the discipline and structure the WC needed, given its concrete situation which was so obviously not the same as that of the CPC. In fact, their appeal to Lenin for justification actually shows their opposition to Leninist principles of organization. The reason Lenin said that rules were not needed at one point was:

"because the Party consisted of separate circles without any organizational ties between them. Any individual could pass from one circle to another at his own "sweet will," for he was not faced with any formulated expression of the will of the whole. Disputes within the circles were not settled according to Rules, 'but by struggle and threats to resign,' as I put it in A Letter to a Comrade, summarizing the experience of a number of circles in general and of our own editorial board of six in particular." (OSF, TSB, p.188. emphasis original)

This, of course, was during the well-known scattered period of the Bolshevik Party when circle spirit reigned and the party did not yet exist as a unified, national organization, but only as a collection of more or less autonomous circles. Lenin continues,

"In the era of circles, this was natural and inevitable, but it never occurred to anybody to extol it, to regard it as ideal; everyone complained of the disunity, everyone was distressed by it and eager to see the isolated circles fused into a formally consolidated party organization. And now that this fusion has taken place, we are being dragged back and, under the guise of higher organizational views, treated to anarchist phrase-mongering." (p.188. emphasis added)

Well! Is it not fair to say that the appeal to Lenin to justify opposition to rules on the grounds of the similarity between the era of circles in Russia and our situation now is actually an attempt to "extol" such a scattered state, "to regard it as ideal"? And wasn't the WC born in the struggle precisely to put an end to such a wretched state of organizational affairs? The opposition to rules by the alliance of the former and present chairs of the WC actually is a confession to their opposition to ending the primitive state of the WC and bolshevizing its ranks.

Further, the appeal to "lack of experience" is another phony argument. Lenin's writings on democratic centralism marked, for the first time in the history of the international communist movement, the complete and clear formulation of proletarian principles on party organization. These theories concentrated the historical experience of the international communist movement, and continue to guide our organizational practice today. To appeal merely to our own limited, direct experience on organizational matters is a



classic economist belittling of theory and a retreat from orthodox Marxism-Leninism to narrow empiricism. Now, it might seem almost silly to repeat these points for the millionth time, which so much of our movement has claimed to uphold since the 1973-4 struggle against RU's economism, but repeat it we must. The appeal to our "own experience" as a cover for not integrating the universal Marxist-Leninist laws on organization with our own concrete practice glorifies our scattered state and opposes taking concrete steps to change it. Moreover, it shows how the idealist world view of empiricism has still not been overcome in our movement, how errors in organizational line are reflections of errors in ideological and political line, and how the erroneous line that an ideological break with revisionism has in the main been completed in the communist movement both underestimates the still-strong bourgeois ideology in our own ranks, and disarms us from getting to the roots of opportunism by declaring that the struggle against "revisionist bourgeois ideology" is now secondary.

*it is primary??*

Lenin further explained why there were no rules in the era of circles this way: "It was unnecessary and impossible to give formal shape to the internal ties of a circle or the ties between circles, for these ties rested on personal friendship or on an instinctive 'confidence' for which no reason was given." (p.189) For the party, he concluded, this situation is impermissible. Circle spirit must be overcome before the party was formed and in order to form the party. Yet to oppose formal rules and a constitution is actually to rob the organization of the means to enforce democratic centralism and overcome autonomism in its ranks. Remember that when Lenin said that rules were not needed, neither was democratic centralism. Rules help both formally and in practice to centralize and make uniform the activity of the previously scattered circles. Rules are the way of enforcing and carrying out democratic centralism, and are inseparably connected with it. A loose coalition of circles does not need rules, but a national organization attempting to centralize its activity cannot do so without them. To argue, then, against rules for a national organization like the WC is, in reality, to argue against establishing democratic centralism, against unified and centralized leadership and centralized activity. How else can the duties and responsibilities of the cadres, the qualifications for new members, the relation of higher and lower levels, the apparatus for developing a common, the means of discipline and democratic discussion, etc., be spelled out and enforced but by rules and a constitution?

*NB*

And let us hear no more about the CPC constitution as "our model." Certainly this document is an excellent one and can serve as a guide. But, aside from the fact that we must integrate the general laws with our concrete situation, (the CPC and the Albanian party do not have the same constitution, nor are theirs the same as the old Bolsheviks', although they all apply the same general laws to their specific conditions), the CPC constitution was not even required reading for new members of the WC, much less a guide to action. It is all too often that opportunists in our movement have spewed out tons of meaningless phrases about how great the CPC is in order to try to get over with a position they are incapable of defending on their own.



In short, the opposition to rules and a constitution actually meant opposition to overcoming the chaotic, anarchistic state of affairs and the local-circle autonomy held over from the BWC. It is a self-exposure of how the opportunists really conceived of the WC -- as another coalition of circles where rules were not essential. It is also noteworthy that since the opportunist line held sway on this question, there was now a basis, a precedent, an opening for the petty-bourgeois democratic line on organization to be consolidated throughout the organization and a green light for the opportunists to continue doing whatever the hell they wanted. This struggle was perhaps the most important one in the WC on organization since this early victory for opportunism meant that the autonomism and chaos of the WC would only get worse and not be rooted out at the beginning. Further appeals to continue this struggle were ignored by the leadership, and thus they avoided an organization-wide confrontation on this issue by squashing it in Detroit. After that, the issue became "lost in the shuffle" of the ensuing chaos, one of the million-and-one agenda items at CC and PSC meetings that never seemed to be gotten to.

The significance of the victory of opportunism on this question cannot be overestimated. It represented a glorification of local-circle autonomy, of the "aristocratic anarchism," as Lenin called it, of the petty-bourgeois academic stratum resulting from its relation to the means of production. Now the door was open to all varieties of autonomism to grow and prosper, for the individualist position to spread and corrode the proletariat's sole weapon in the struggle for emancipation -- organization.

#### Relation of various levels to the CC and Congress

Fresh from its first victory in reversing the verdicts of the struggle in the BWC, the opportunists in the WC wasted little time in moving forward in their defense of autonomism. The focus of this two-line struggle was to shift at the first CC meeting to the question of the congress, the CC, and the PSC. The question of their relation was made immediate because the original chair of the WC had been suspended from that post because of a secret, adulterous sexual relationship he had initiated with a woman also on the CC, behind the backs of the organization and his wife -- also a CC member at that time. (More on this later.)

The question of the authority and role of the new chair and the PSC was debated at the first CC meeting. And, as on the question of rules, a two-line struggle again broke out between the comrades from Detroit and the present opportunist leaders of the WC. On the question of the authority of the PSC, the comrades from Detroit said they would only accept binding directives from the PSC if the PSC continued the ideological struggle against revisionism, economism, national chauvinism, and right opportunism within its ranks; if these directives were consistent with the line of the CC; and if the PSC acted within the authority delegated to it by the CC. And, again, while these points might have been better formulated, they are still nothing for any genuine Marxist-Leninists to raise their eyebrows at. But not so for our defenders of autonomism. These points were ridiculed as "some kind of bourgeois system of checks and balances" and vigorously opposed. Instead, what we got, as our Detroit comrades put it, was "a defense of the PSC's autonomism in relation to the CC" (p.6, unpublished paper), and, we might add,



in relation to the organization as a whole.

Let us start with the question of the ideological struggle against revisionism and all bourgeois ideology in the PSC. The CPC constitution -- which is so lavishly praised by the WC opportunists, but so totally ignored when it comes to applying its principles to our own organization -- states in Chapter 2, Article 3 that every member of the party must "Conscientiously study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and criticize revisionism." This is the first of five qualifications given for party membership, and applies at all levels. Why would the PSC not agree to this qualification for its leadership? Was it more immune to revisionism than every member of the CPC? The present opportunist leadership of the WC claimed that they would of course struggle against revisionism, but that these restrictions were really "compromising the principles of Marxism-Leninism." (Minutes of 1st CC mtg, p.6) In fact it has been they, as we have shown many times, who actually belittled the importance of the ideological struggle against revisionism and compromised Marxism-Leninism in a justification of, and return to, all sorts of economist methods on such key questions of party building as propaganda, program, polemics, and organization. Thus, their rejection of this first point reflected a justification of all the opportunism that was to come. And it reflected a defense of revisionism in ideological and political line that lay at the basis of their wrong organizational line.

The next points, the relation of the PSC to the CC and the Congress, further revealed how their belief of vigilance in the struggle against revisionism was tied to a wrong organizational line. In addition, the outcome of this struggle had a great bearing on the later struggle around May Day. Throughout the first CC meeting, the present WC chair on several occasions referred to the PSC as the supreme body of the WC. And on those occasions he was corrected and informed that, according to every other genuine M-L party and all the positive historical experience of the international communist movement, the supreme body was the congress. Lenin made this very clear in ONE STEP FORWARD (page 192), and the CPC also upholds this in Article 6 of their constitution as one of their organizational principles. In the WC, this would refer to the Unity Conference -- although the lack of rules and a constitution would leave even this in doubt, since nowhere is it laid out that a congress must be called, how to call it, under which conditions, etc. Now, faced with such an open exposure of his wrong line on democratic centralism, the chair soon had to abandon his original line that the PSC was the supreme body. But he had not at all abandoned his defense of the autonomy of the PSC to the CC and the Congress or the relation of these bodies.

The Congress is the supreme body. That is agreed. When the Congress is not in session, the CC elected by it becomes the highest leading body. But the CC is elected by the Congress, and not the other way around. While the CC is charged with, naturally, preparing for and leading the Congress, it is the Congress, which represents directly the will of the party membership, that has the final say as to who makes up the CC. The



minority is subordinate to the majority. The CC, thus, must carry out the line and resolutions of the Congress, applying them to the conditions as they develop between Congress sessions, including, of course, the further development of the party's basic line. When the CC is not in plenary session, the Political Bureau and the Standing Committee (in the case of the WC, the Political Standing Committee), elected by the CC, exercises the functions and powers of the CC. Thus, the PSC is responsible to the CC, and elected by it, and, again, not vice versa. So the PSC is therefore bound ("Oh, what a terrible word!" our opportunists wince) to carry out the line of the CC, and cannot reverse either the CC's line or the line of the Congress. Further, one of the rules laid down by Chairman Mao is that the entire membership is subordinate to the CC. Notice he doesn't say the Political Bureau or the Standing Committee. And Mao was Chairman of the CC, not of the Political Bureau. Thus the PSC of the WC should be viewed, likewise, as required to carry out the line of the CC and the Congress.

But only one class in human society has an ideology that does not shudder at being bound and acting according to iron discipline. And this class, the proletariat, whose name is invoked so often in vain, cannot achieve victory unless its vanguard organization either transforms or rids itself of all those whose individualism, vacillation, selfishness, and other variants of petty-bourgeois ideology wrecks the fighting unity of the party and the working class. All this is elementary. So how should we characterize political leaders who refuse to be bound by the Congress, subordinated to the majority? And what term would be appropriate to label those who refuse to be subordinate to the CC? Why else would they ridicule the attempt at developing organizational rules as "some kind of bourgeois system of checks and balances"? Would it be unfair to conclude that there is a connection between the individualist opposition to rules and the autonomist opposition to binding the PSC to follow the dictates of the Congress and the CC? Certainly we distinguish between those on the CC who opposed the proposals from the Detroit comrades for honest, if wrong, reasons, and who generally uphold Marxist-Leninist principles and line, from the present opportunist leaders of the WC who opposed these resolutions so the PSC could act autonomously and discard the line of the Unity Conference (especially the Iskra plan) when it pleased, and carry out an all-round reversal of the direction of the WC. But it would not at all be wrong to characterize this struggle as one between a defense by the Detroit comrades of Marxist-Leninist principles regarding the relation of various bodies and a defense by the present opportunist leaders of the WC of the autonomism of the PSC.

Defending the autonomy of one committee of an organization, even if it is as high as the PSC, is still a defense of autonomy against centralism. It still subordinates the majority to the minority, and the CC to a section of the membership, no matter which way you slice it. It is totally consistent with the opposition to rules, since both the opposition to rules and opposition to restrictions on the powers of the PSC defend anarchy and chaos in the organization, and leave the petty-bourgeois individualists "free" to "do their own thing". It is to the credit of the Detroit comrades that they raised this question and pointed out the relation between both forms of autonomism.

It is not beyond reason at all for someone to ask just how or if the PSC in practice used this to justify exceeding their authority and, in effect, functioning as a faction. After all, we mainly judge political organizations by their deeds. The clearest example was laid out in the first part of this statement-- the abandonment of the Iskra plan. What the opportunists were fighting for was the leeway to junk the Iskra plan when they felt like it and return to all the discredited, opportunist methods of the past. Their economism and



tailism in ideological and political line, as seen in their abandonment of the Iskra plan, was reflected in their opportunist organizational line, their defense of autonomy. Further, since they could not openly win the organization to their economism, they had to function as a faction at the top. And this is precisely what they tried to justify with their opposition to the Detroit proposals. This point is very important when we examine the issues around May Day.

A word must be added about the comrades from Detroit. They must be criticized for not exposing at this first CC meeting the treacherous history of the present WC chair, with whom they had worked for some time, and with whom many other CC members had little or no direct experiences. Some comrades have since estimated that if the Detroit comrades had spoken up strongly against him, he would not have been selected chair. This same criticism applies to their hesitation in circulating their paper even after they left the WC. Their justification, that they did not want to violate the democratic centralism of the WC, is absolutely ridiculous, since they had just finished exposing how there was no democratic centralism at all in the WC and how the WC stood opposed to the interests of the masses. If they believed their own analysis, then violating the discipline of a bankrupt and worthless organization should have been no barrier. While it is understandable that the agony of having to put up with such an alliance of opportunists created big difficulties for them, they should not have given up so fast on the rest of the WC membership and should have persisted in their struggle. Communists can never be "autonomous" from the struggle against opportunism, from whatever quarter it may come. It is our life-long duty to persist in class struggle, whatever the cost. While we understand the obstacles placed in their way, and understand how they were literally driven out of the WC, it would not be unfair to say that they showed a tendency to withdraw into their own circle and not rely on or trust other comrades.

*How could there be d-c with no rules + constitution?*

Finally, we must draw attention to the distortions of the issues of this struggle by the present WC leaders. The issue, of course, was not whether the PSC's directives were at all binding, but whether or not the PSC itself was bound by the line of the Unity Conference and the CC. No one questioned that the PSC had all the powers of the CC when the CC was not in session. But our opportunists seemed to obey the saying "when the cat's away, the mouse will play", far more than Marxist-Leninist principles of organization. Further, they resume their distortions in their attack on the former New York district by labeling their own view of the role of the PSC as "centralized leadership", when, in fact, all along they have done everything possible to undermine the development of unified and centralized leadership by undermining the line and powers of the Unity Conference and the CC.

In order to understand the struggle over May Day against the autonomy of the PSC, it is necessary to understand the history of the two lines, something the WC opportunists fear doing. Nowhere in their presentation of this question in their public polemic against us do they even hint at these past struggles, lest their lie -i.e., that our struggle really amounted to one renegade district running its own line and violating discipline, versus the whole CC -be shot to bits. While we must continue with the history of the defense of all forms of autonomism by the opportunists, the reader is advised to note well some of the particularities of this question when we take up the issue of May Day.

Division of Labor Between Higher and Lower Levels

It is history now that the BWC was never organized according to Marxist-Leninist principles. This has all been struggled out many times before, ]



especially in the split in the BWC that gave birth to the WC. Among the organizational defects of the BWC was the failure to establish a leading national center. As our Detroit comrades have pointed out, "The CC remained, throughout the period of James Forman's revisionism and after, simply 'representatives' of the local organization and not members of a unified CC." (p. 18). Often it reduced its own role to that of a local body, actually decentralizing the work at a local level and acting in practice as a second local center. All this, of course, conflicted with its task of giving national leadership. Thus the national leadership's activity was often lowered and narrowed to serve the local spontaneous movement. This incorrect division of labor resulted from the BWC's predominant tailism and economism. Bolshevization of the WC would have had to have included a rectification of this state of affairs and an instituting of a correct division of labor between higher and lower levels. But, as with all other questions, the WC failed to correct the errors of the past, and instead continued blindly to trail behind the mass movement in organizational affairs.

Soon after the WC was formed, a struggle broke out over the tasks of the higher and lower levels. Specifically, the present WC chair and others were criticized for maintaining personal contact and individual political work with Marxist-Leninist groups and individuals after the WC was formed. Again, the work was not being centralized, and as had often happened in the BWC, the maintaining of individual ties and political work independent of the plan of the local committee and often contradicting that plan was, as our Detroit comrades characterized it, "plain ultra-democracy." (p. 21) This was a clear violation of Lenin's teaching in "Letter to a Comrade" that there should be only one leading center at each local level. "The committee should, therefore," Lenin said, "include, as far as possible, all the principal leaders of the working class movement from among the workers themselves; it should direct all aspects of the local movement and take charge of all local institutions, forces, and means of the party." (Collected Works, vol.6, p.235, emphasis original.) Clear enough. After a period of struggle, the WC chair claimed he accepted the criticism, although the right was reserved in "exceptional cases" for such independent contact and study to go on. Just what this "acceptance" of the criticism with the option of pursuing independent work in "exceptional cases" meant soon became clear.

The practice of the WC chair never changed on this question, except that the local organization was told about the results of this work. The contradictions again came to a head when a set of questions written by a comrade with whom the WC chair had maintained independent work was printed, with a reply, in The Communist, against the wishes of this comrade and before consulting him, because of a "mix-up" in who had responsibility for overseeing this work. The confusion over the article resulted from the failure to follow a strict division of labor as part of a common plan of work -- specifically in the PSC chair bypassing the local district in this work and pursuing another, different plan of action. The result of this affair was that the contradictions between the comrade who had written the list of questions and the local district were heightened, and the work hurt.

This incorrect division of labor was mainly a lowering of the activity of the higher levels. It violated the Marxist-Leninist teaching that the lower levels are subordinate, not equal to, the higher levels, and that the higher levels must guide and lead, not compete with, the the lower levels. And not only was this ultra-democratic error further pursued in the events outlined by the Detroit comrades, but, as we have shown in the first part of this statement, it was also the basis of the PSC's erroneous plan for separate reporting for the "Friends of The Communist" group, with a separate plan issued by the PSC chair to a contact of the organization, with the New York district bypassed and not even informed of this new plan directly. All this undermining of the local organization and disruption of the formation of a network of agents under



unified and centralized leadership reflects the inability of the opportunists in the WC to resist "doing their own thing" and to abide by a disciplined, planned division of labor. Such division of labor is necessary both to build unified, centralized leadership at the top that leads all the work, concentrates correct ideas, and develops a guiding policy; and to develop strong local organization with unified, centralized leadership at the local level. But this proletarian line on organization, that insists that the lower level is subordinate to the higher level, was always resisted and opposed in practice by the present opportunist leadership of the WC.

#### Discipline of Members

The final major issue involved in this first major struggle around democratic centralism was that of the discipline of members, specifically, the case of Don Williams. It would not serve any useful purpose for us to more than note that Williams's many degenerate sexual affairs, alcoholism, and other forms of decadence and extreme individualism greatly disrupted and hampered the work of the WC, both during the struggle in the BWC, and after the WC was formed. When his secret, adulterous affair was uncovered, no liberalism could solve this problem. Strict adherence to the principle that the individual is subordinate to the organization was required. And that this question involved the then-chair of the WC made it even more important for a proper precedent to be set in the WC. Yet, although Williams was supposedly disciplined by the CC and prohibited from drinking any liquor, he openly flouted the CC and continued to drink -- among other things. The discipline was not enforced. The present opportunist WC leaders showed themselves to be tolerant of such individualism, revealing their defense of individual autonomy in the organization. Not only was violation of proletarian morality tolerated, but erosion of the iron discipline necessary if we are to succeed in overthrowing the imperialists was also allowed. Thus, again, individualism was permitted to triumph over Marxism-Leninism, and autonomism and anarchy over democratic centralism.

Finally, it should surprise no one that Williams's deceitfulness and individualism, aided and abetted by the other opportunists in the WC, led to severe contradictions with the comrades from Detroit, including his former wife. These contradictions, improperly dealt with by the WC leadership, became antagonistic, but since the WC opportunists had their own brand of individualism and autonomism to sell, they directed their main fire at the Detroit comrades. These circumstances forced these comrades out of the WC.

The lessons we can draw from this first major struggle are obvious. We have shown that right from the beginning of the WC, the present opportunist leaders of the WC opposed every Marxist-Leninist principle of organization. Victories for opportunism were won on many fronts. At first, these victories had to be somewhat concealed. For example, the WC opportunists originally agreed that the Detroit comrades were indeed forced out of the WC, and that the errors were not mainly their fault. This was the verdict of the CC. Later on, however, they began to sneak in their own line that the Detroit comrades never struggled for their views, that they were opportunists, etc. With this they put out their philistine explanation of the struggles in the WC, trying to cover up the fierce struggle against right opportunism that had taken place. By labelling everyone who fought against them as supporters of circle spirit, accusing them of "capitulating to difficulties," and lumping them together with those who had just quit the WC to exit from making revolution, the WC opportunists began an ideological offensive to promote their overall rightist line that resulted in the scrapping of the Iskra plan.

Still, there were errors that the Detroit comrades made. While they



struggled under very difficult conditions, they had a responsibility to the organization, especially to the CC, to expose the opportunist history of the present WC leaders, since many other CC members had had little or no direct experience with them before. This was not done adequately. Further, even after they left the WC, they should have widely publicized their views to help contribute to the struggle to build a party. Their rich experience has many lessons valuable to all oppressed people. They should have relied more on the cadre in the WC and organized to win them over to their line. Failure to persist enough in the struggle, including not distributing their document until many months after they left the WC, only let the right opportunists off the hook and deprived genuine revolutionaries of more ammunition in the battle against revisionism. While the Detroit comrades made many important contributions to the struggle against opportunism, even with the many obstacles that were placed in their way, the errors they made although they were secondary, made the struggle against opportunism in the WC more difficult and hindered the rallying of all serious revolutionaries in the WC in a united effort to defeat the opportunists and set the organization straight.

Could the opportunists have been routed if the struggle had been carried out in a more thorough and protracted way? Most likely yes, since the features of the WC were still being consolidated when this struggle went on, and the vigilance of the cadre was highest then against right opportunism. That these struggles took place so soon after the BWC split created favorable subjective conditions for exposing and defeating right opportunism. Nevertheless, it is academic to dwell on what might have been. The first major struggle on democratic centralism ended in a big victory for opportunism and a defeat for those who really wanted to break with the economism and tailism of the past.

## SECOND MAJOR STRUGGLE

The second major struggle around democratic centralism also took place among those who had extensive day-to-day contact with the present opportunist leaders of the WC -- right in the PSC itself. It is a struggle most embarrassing to the opportunists because those with whom they had worked so closely ended up condemning them as right opportunists, with so much evidence to expose them and on such important questions as the internal life of the PSC itself. Of course, the issues in this struggle were not dealt with in their public hack job against "circle spirit" in the October, 1976 COMMUNIST. This struggle was a direct continuation of the previous struggles, involving both similar and different issues, with right opportunism again winning out. As we shall see, it directly involves the question of May Day and why it was the present opportunist leaders of the WC and not the NY district that actually violated democratic centralism around May Day. And, again, its lessons further show how the WC was rotting alive and the pitiful results of how the abandonment of democratic centralism rips an organization apart.

The comrades who waged this struggle were both members of the PSC at the time they resigned from the WC. They opposed the right opportunists on a wide variety of questions, including the bourgeois democratic scheme of a "common editorial policy" (see page 68, NEVER FORGET CLASS STRUGGLE!). For now, however, we will focus only on the two lines on democratic centralism, and on two major questions -- the continuation of the struggle around the Don Williams situation and the internal life of the PSC, including the question of May Day.



The Situation with Don Williams

As time went on, Don Williams continued along the path of degeneration. In addition, he was more and more staunchly defended by Kathy, the woman with whom he had had the secret affair. While Williams' individualism and gross violation of discipline would have been hard to be equaled by Kathy, both were guilty of major violations of organizational discipline and the general requirements for being Communists. Further, the significance of their individualist activity went far beyond their violations of proletarian morality. As a component part of their unrepentant belittling of their errors and refusal to mend their ways, they began to promote an all-around right opportunist program for the WC. They claimed we were "sectarian" to OL and RU-RCP because of the even feeble attempts of the WC to oppose revisionism. They said there were only tactical differences between the different groups that said they followed China and Albania, that virtually no differences of principle existed, and that we should all unite to build a united front against fascism and war, as the 7th Congress of the Comintern did in 1935. By negating the depth and consolidation of revisionism in the communist movement and by belittling the strength of the people and the irreversible trend to independence, liberation, and revolution that differentiates today's world situation from that of 1935, they put forward a plan to liquidate both the struggle for a revolutionary line against revisionism in the communist movement, and the preparation of the masses for revolution. Clearly, then, the relationship of Don Williams and Kathy was not a mere personal one, but a political alliance based on right opportunism.

The further backsliding of these two individuals heightened the struggle between the two lines through dealing with their violations of proletarian morality and discipline. In fact, as the comrades from Chicago pointed out, the struggle over how to deal with the two of them became the major focus of the work of the PSC and helped to prevent the PSC from carrying out its main tasks of building the center and providing direction for the WC on a regular basis. What emerged was a full-blown two-line struggle over whether or not the WC was to be a disciplined, Bolshevik organization, or a loose, useless Menshevik-style group.

As for Williams, he had declared he would refuse to carry out his political work. After submitting an inadequate self-criticism, he failed to meet the deadline for a new self-criticism. The comrades from Chicago held that this open flaunting of discipline and failure to do self-criticism should result in his suspension from the WC. In fact, they even said Williams and Kathy should have been purged or at least suspended immediately after their secret affair was uncovered, because of the years of dishonesty, arrogance, and bourgeois degeneracy that characterized their behavior. But the opportunists who presently head the WC disagreed and came up with a whole series of excuses for not suspending Williams. They claimed that the CC had to be prepared first if Williams was going to be suspended. Now, remember, these were the same people who insisted so strongly on the autonomy of the PSC in relation to the CC. Now, however, they wanted to hold up on a suspension, which would have been well within the authority of the PSC, which assumes the powers of the CC when it is not in session. Here their petty bourgeois individualistic hatred for discipline and love of ultra-democracy and autonomism was again clearly revealed.



The advocating of the PSC's autonomy was a defense of autonomy in general. Thus, when the PSC should have rightly acted to stamp out autonomism and purge the main defenders and unrepentant examples of autonomism from the ranks of the organization, our "only weapon," the opportunists got faint-hearted and cried out in opposition. When it came time to defeat autonomism, which was entirely in line with everything the WC was founded upon and had always stood for, they somehow could not find all that authority they had so fiercely insisted the PSC had. And when it came time to give leadership to the struggle against right opportunism, the WC opportunists displayed a miserable tailism in matters of organization, actually liquidating the authority of the PSC and weakening the role of the organization's center.

Now we see what these tricksters had up their sleeves when they fought so hard for the autonomy of the PSC -- they really wanted the PSC to be "free" to violate the basic line of the organization, to be "free" to defend organizational chaos and anarchy and ignore the basic M-L principles on organization. These opportunists cherished the anarchistic state of affairs in the WC, which gave them room to carry out their own autonomous plans. Thus, they had to rise up as objective allies of the other main defenders of autonomism in order to protect their own narrow interests and be able to pursue their own bankrupt course. Further, they echoed the capitulationist line of Williams and Kathy that denied the existence of principled differences in the communist movement by claiming that whether or not to suspend Williams was a matter of tactics and "political judgment," and not a question of principle, or upholding the organizational principle of democratic centralism. Thus, by virtue of their common line on so many questions, an objective alliance developed between the two blocs of rightists -- the present opportunist leaders of the WC who were in the PSC, and Williams and Kathy. And clearly, this struggle against right opportunism in the PSC was a continuation of the previous struggles to uphold democratic centralism.

Regarding Kathy, she was accorded the same kind of liberalism and tolerance. Kathy supported Williams on almost every point of difference with the PSC. She made no attempt to carry out her assigned task of resolving the contradictions with the ex-wife of Williams. She dished up all sorts of revisionist lines, as pointed out before. She did not do the work assigned her by her district. She stated that 90% of the Black women in the WC did not trust her, trying in a chauvinist way to shift the blame on the Black cadre and raising up narrow nationalism, rather than white chauvinism, as the main danger to multinational unity. She also had been the main proponent of contact and alliance with the highly questionable "COUSM-L." Yet for all this she was rewarded by her opportunist allies. At the second CC meeting, the question of reinstating Kathy to the CC was taken up. The internal struggle against petty bourgeois democracy had now reached crisis proportions. Howard beat his breast in praise of Kathy, hailing her "great virtues," "broadness of view," etc. He was joined in by the other opportunist on the PSC, who had vacillated on this question before, but ended up finding a comfortable home in the rightest camp. Thus, rotten line and all, the CC, in another giant step backwards, followed the opportunists' baton and restored Kathy to the CC.



What is also significant here, aside from the capitulation to autonomism, is the view of the nature of the CC by the opportunists. To them, it was of no concern that Kathy had been so openly pushing a line even to the right of theirs, for the only issue they said mattered in deciding on her reinstatement was whether or not she had begun to mend her ways. What line she pushed, then, was not decisive. This flies in the face of M-L. Chairman Mao taught explicitly that "the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything." We must suppose, then, that the present opportunist leaders of the WC, in their infinite wisdom, hold that when Chairman Mao said this and summed up the rich historical experience of the international communist movement, that line decides everything, he forgot to add that the word "everything" does not include requirements for a CC member! By belittling the importance of line, the WC opportunists belittle vigilance and struggle against revisionism and expose their social-democratic view of the CC as a bourgeois-democratic coalition of representatives of different lines, factions, and classes, rather than a committee of the best leaders.

Whether or not to purge the consolidated opportunists is a question of whether or not to uphold M-L principles on organization. We do not need or want a tea club where all the professors and bad elements can sit around and debate forever the products of their own individual "genius." Stalin, in FOUNDATION OF LENINISM, clearly opposed the "theory of 'overcoming' these elements within the confines of a single party." While opportunists like the residue of the "revolutionary wing" idiotically misinterpret this to mean that every difference of opinion in an organization reflects consolidated opportunism and should result in a purge, genuine M-L's must adhere to this principle, or else we will cripple the ability of the organization to function in a unified, strong, discipline, and revolutionary way. But the WC opportunists instead sought an alliance with those who should have been purged in order to fight the genuine left wing of the organization.

Today the opportunist leaders of the WC are trying to pass themselves off as the ones who "carried this struggle through to the end." True, in the end, they had to throw Don and Kathy out. But this occurred only after two other important events. The first was the months of open defiance of discipline and the virtual severing of connections with the WC by Williams, supported by Kathy. Williams was in practice no longer part of the WC when the opportunists got around to supporting his expulsion, again miserably tailing events. Second, his expulsion and Kathy's suspension coincided with the wholesale exits of any opposition on the CC to the dominant rightist line. Only after the resignation of the comrades from Chicago between the second and third CC meetings, and the removal of the one NY CC member at the third meeting, did they move at the third CC meeting. The alliance had served its purpose. The two opportunists remaining on the PSC had used their rightist allies against the left. They even kept Kathy on the CC long enough to vote at the third CC meeting to remove the NY CC member.



Now that the left was out, this alliance was no longer needed. The breakup of the alliance of these two blocs of rightists was a falling out of thieves and in no way represented a repudiation of autonomism. Instead, it represented the final phase of the seizure of the WC leadership by the present opportunist leaders and the wrecking of what once was a vibrant, growing group.

#### PSC's Internal Life -- The Truth About May Day

The struggle against opportunism in the PSC included a struggle against the smashing of its collective unity by the opportunists. This line struggle between the opportunists and the comrades who later resigned from the WC took place in the PSC on almost every important question. The opportunists tried to hush up this struggle against their revisionism by claiming that "fundamental unity of line" mainly characterized the PSC. In response, the comrades responded that disunity mainly characterized the PSC, and that this question could only be dealt with by examining one's deeds, not just one's words. The opportunists further exposed the bankruptcy of their own position by calling for the removal of the other comrades from the PSC, comrades with whom they supposedly had so much "fundamental unity."

The most useful example of many to show how rotten the internal life of the PSC had become and how the opportunists sought to split, not unite, and to intrigue and conspire, not be open and above-board (which flowed from their revisionism) is the example of how the PSC supposedly "approved" the May Day directive. This example will also provide us with the context in which the New York district later waged a struggle against this directive before it was issued to the organization, and that the PSC had thoroughly studied the questions around the directive before they sent it out. Both these statements are outright, conscious lies. We repeat: The May Day directive was not approved by the PSC before it was sent out (nor, as we shall show, did that body as a whole ever approve it), and it was never thoroughly discussed. It was a concoction and scheme of the opportunists in the PSC, represented only in their line, and reflected how they were in fact operating as a faction at the top that ignored the discipline of the PSC, the CC, the basic line of the organization, and anything else other than their own revisionist fancies.

A few weeks before May Day, the PSC set out to discuss a proposal for an activity for the organization. At the first session on May Day, there was to be both study and the discussion of a proposal. One of the opportunists laid out his line and proposal for discussion. The study part of the meeting was limited since one of the PSC members had been unable to get the assigned work since China Books was sold out of it, and another was too ill to attend the meeting. As the meeting went on, two general views started to emerge. The opportunists put out their line that we must "raise the banner of civil war" today and that May Day should focus on this. In opposition to this,



one of the comrades who later resigned said that May Day should be used to begin ideological preparation for a position on war and that what was needed was common study and an organization-wide follow-up. (It should be noted here that the views of these comrades on May Day were entirely in keeping with applying the Iskra plan to the question of war and very similar to our own views.) Since these were supposed to be preliminary discussions, no specific agreement was reached, and everyone agreed that the proposal should be finalized and considered again at the next meeting. Thus only some very general agreement was achieved at this first session, with important specific questions left unresolved until the next session.

At the second session, the final draft of the proposal was presented. At this meeting, one of the comrades who later resigned was unable to attend, by prior agreement of all of the PSC. The chair of the WC had added a long list of books to be read by the whole organization. Essentially, the same objections were raised, that just sending out a shopping list of books did not mean that real study and investigation would or could be done, especially with the short time allowed, and that May Day should be for ideological preparation. But when these objections were raised, the opportunists said that they did not matter, since the directive had already been sent out to the organization in the name of the PSC! Then, in a cheap display of bourgeois parliamentary maneuvering, a "vote" was taken of the proposal that passed by one vote, but wouldn't have if the absent member had been there. Thus the proposal was sent out behind the backs of the whole PSC in an attempt to fool the organization into thinking it had approved these shoddy wares.

If the opportunists were really so anxious to achieve or develop the so-called "fundamental unity on line" of the PSC, why did they lie to the other PSC members when they agreed to resolve the question at the next PSC session? Why did they claim that their position was the product of so much study, and that the comrades who soon after resigned went along with it? Did they expect anyone to believe that calling a vote only after the directive had been sent out and when a PSC member opposed to them was absent was done from the standpoint of achieving principled unity? And why did they try to fool the organization and now the whole communist movement by claiming that the NY district violated a directive approved by the PSC? The only response these dogs have given so far is to claim that all this is not true. But the facts speak for themselves. The opportunists have neither presented their version of the facts nor any documents to back them up, for they cannot rewrite history.

In exposing their little scheme to pull the wool over everyone's eyes, we must also point out how the opportunists made use of their alliance with Kathy Chandler. Although not on the PSC itself, she studied with them and found general unity with the May Day proposal. She helped develop the WC's wrong line on war. She was needed by the opportunists as a reliable ally against the left. This further shows how the opportunists cherished the existence of factions in the WC. Their faction could ally with another faction to out-manuever the left. Then, after the left of the organization was gone, these opportunists could dump their old allies, Kathy and Co., to usurp full control of the organization.



Thus, it was not a fiction of the NY district that the opportunists of the PSC behaved as a faction "from above". This bloc of rightists is guilty of willful, conscious factionalism and of intriguing and conspiring to try to deceive and split the organization. They are slimey opportunists who place their own petty-bourgeois careerist interests above that of any organization or of the exploited and oppressed. Further, it was correct not to follow this bogus May Day "directive" since it represented nothing more than the feeble wishes of a faction within the PSC that was unable to sway the majority to its views.

This particular incident of treachery and intrigue came after a long series of similar incidents and innumerable hours of struggle by these comrades against the opportunists. It came after countless letters to the WC from advanced workers and communists from all over the country seeking guidance and organization, (especially around "The Communist") had been ignored by the WC chair. It came after the opportunists proposed the "common editorial policy", opposed by these comrades, and after the opportunists tried to send a letter to the rightist OL asking for a "joint editorial board" in the name of the WC, to be stopped only at the last moment by these comrades. It came after a months-long battle royale on whether to practice Marxism or revisionism. Clearly the internal life of the PSC was in ruin. The opportunists had succeeded in restoring Kathy to the CC, and in dominating the leadership of the WC. Since there was no longer any point or even the means of continuing the struggle inside the WC, these comrades took the only route open to them to continue to make revolution -- they resigned from the WC.

The resolution of this struggle was another nail in the coffin for democratic centralism in the WC, and marked another victory for factionalism, individualistic aversion to discipline, and autonomism in general. The final victory of opportunism was to come a few weeks later in the third major struggle on democratic centralism, concerning May Day.

### THIRD MAJOR STRUGGLE

The third major struggle around democratic centralism, carried out by the NY district, took place in the context of the previous victories for opportunism in the WC. Having won two important struggles that allowed their love of autonomism to twist the once-budding democratic centralism of the WC into a hollow mockery of itself, the opportunists sought to further consolidate their gains and complete their domination of the WC, even if it meant wrecking and crippling the organization. They had been fortunate in that they had escaped the fate of being confronted with a single, united, nation-wide opposition to their treachery. Thus, they had been able to take advantage of the temporary fragmentation of the left wing of the WC and the ideological weaknesses that prevented more cadre from rising up to oust them. Still, it was our duty to wage the best fight we could, because even though the odds were against us in the short run, the lessons we learned would help enable the genuine Marxist-Leninists in this country to form a firm, Bolshevik party.

Before going on to explain the struggle further, let us remind the reader of two key points. The first is that, as we have shown in the first part of this statement, the May Day directive was an



out-and-out abandonment of the Iskra plan -- the basic line of the WC on party-building, our central task. This abandonment was part of an overall reversal of the WC's generally correct line and its replacement by a revisionist, economist line. Second, the May Day directive was never approved by the PSC, and, therefore, was in no way binding on anyone since it only represented the views of a faction within the PSC. All the lying, scheming, and treachery that accompanied the defense of this "directive" cannot cover this up. Although this last point is very important in unmasking the double-dealing of the opportunists in the WC, we maintain that even if the PSC had approved the plan, that it was still a violation of democratic centralism, a scrapping of the organization's basic line, and was therefore not binding. Especially since we began our struggle without knowing that the PSC hadn't really approved the May Day directive, we are obliged to review here the main reasons that we did not carry out this directive.

#### Once Again On The Authority Of The PSC

We must thank the opportunists in the WC for publicly polemicizing us in their October, 1976 issue of "The Communist", for all they have done is to publicly prove true every charge we have made against them. We are flattered that the main fire of this article was directed against the former NY district, and that we were branded as "the best example" of so-called "local circle autonomy". In order to have earned this honor, we must have really put their backs up against the wall. Few will be fooled by such a hack job, and even fewer will continue to raise doubts about the victory of revisionism in the WC once the whole truth is revealed.

The tirade against us says that we were suspended from the WC for "failure to carry out a directive from the organization's leading body" around May Day (meaning the PSC's directive). We had given the opportunists too much credit when we thought they would attempt to mask their line of calling the PSC the "leading body", but here it is again in black and white. The old notion that the PSC is autonomous from the CC and the Congress is dragged out to justify their errors. This is still one of the main platforms of the opportunists on organization, and a key part of their erroneous line, without which their whole position could not even exist.

Their persistence in upholding the autonomy of the PSC (in this case even more ridiculous -- the autonomy of a faction of the PSC!) allows them to render as irrelevant any argument that the May Day directive was invalid because it violated the Iskra plan. To them, this is of no consequence, especially since they oppose propaganda as the chief form of activity. But to us, this is of crucial importance, since the PSC has no authority to overturn in practice the decision of the Unity Conference or the CC. It is duty-bound to carry them out, like it or not. But since the Iskra plan no longer captured the egos of these opportunists, they threw it out like it was diseased.

A meeting held after we had been kicked out, between a representative of the former NY district and the opportunists in the PSC who concocted the May Day directive, was very instructive in this regard. Although the opportunists were repeatedly asked to justify how the May Day directive was in keeping with the Iskra plan, they continuously refused to speak to this point straight up, preferring



to focus on countless numbers of secondary questions. They did not see that this was at the heart of the matter. Further, they even made no pretense of defending the directive on these grounds. To them, this question was one to be avoided like the plague. Now, as we have pointed out earlier, the paper "Leninism or Petty Bourgeois Democracy", probably the most important document that came out of the struggle in the BWC and that contributed to the formation of the WC (this has been conveniently left unpublished by the WC opportunists), explicitly points out that the newspaper should be a collective organizer and the main means by which the line should be consolidated, and that a newspaper is merely a "necessary evil" for the opportunists. But today this is a no-no for the WC, and they prefer to let the remaining xeroxed copies of this paper gather dust at the back of some closet rather than provide the communists and advanced workers with this powerful theoretical weapon. They want to hide and obscure just what the basic line was that the WC was founded upon, and just what they are bound to carry out. And check out their polemic against us--again they make no effort to even go through the motions of defending their line on the basis that May Day was an application of the Iskra plan. You got to be in serious trouble when you can't even fake a defense!

Instead of dealing with the basic question, the WC is trying to make it an open-and-shut case that we were bound to carry out any directive from a higher body whether we agreed with it or not. But this is not the issue at all. We never said or even implied that we would do only things we agreed with. This would be the height of individualism and a total social-democratic repudiation of democratic centralism. In fact, our district on many occasions worked long and hard on using "The Communist," even though we had reservations which were sent in bulk to the center but were usually ignored. And we find it amusing for the opportunists to raise this objection, since it is none other than they who went ahead with issuing the May Day directive before and without PSC approval. So much for the all-powerful authority of the "organization's leading body" when it doesn't back them up!

Basic M-L principles on organization teach us that the minority is subordinate to the majority, that the lower levels are subordinate to the higher levels, and that, once a decision is made after discussion, everyone is obliged to carry it out without further discussion. This is the only way to assure unity of will and unity of action. But to the opportunists, these laws mean that everyone is obliged to carry out any directive issued by any person at a higher level, whether or not this directive conforms to the line of the organization. There are also limits on what these directives can include, and if the directives overstep these limits, then they are not binding. Factionalism at the top is still factionalism, and its product in no way binds anyone to go along with it.

Certainly we must distinguish between a particular directive one may disagree with that is a misapplication of the basic line, in which case the directive is binding, and a directive that is an all-out reversal and violation of a correct basic line, which in no way can be binding. To be able to distinguish between these two is of great importance and requires cadre who are good at distinguishing genuine from sham Marxism. But to raise these points greatly upsets the WC opportunists. They claim that this means that every cadre has to decide for themselves whether or not to carry out every directive. What they are really advocating is slavishness, where cadre have a low ideological level and blindly follow the leadership, no matter what line they hold. We must always be vigilant against revisionism and always evaluate on our own whether or not an organization



is staying on the correct path. Otherwise, if we could not distinguish right from wrong on our own, we would be useless as revolutionary leaders. And this includes being able to distinguish between different types of errors in different directives. While this is often a complicated question and there is always the danger of ultra-democracy in this process, maintaining a high ideological and political level of all cadres best keeps the organization from making errors in this regard.

Finally, the last leg the opportunists in the WC have fallen back upon is the third CC meeting which "unanimously" endorsed their line and demanded a self-criticism from the NY district. Their polemic against us asks how they can be factionalists if the whole CC supports them. Here again they try to play on the ignorance of people by painting a picture of harmony and unity at the top, with the NY district bucking all authority on its own. But they dare not tell anyone that half of the PSC opposed them, that half of the PSC disapproved of their May Day directive, and that between the previous CC meeting and that vote, half the PSC and almost half of the CC had either resigned or were removed. What has happened was that the faction of opportunists in the PSC had won as allies several other CC members, while the left wing was either forced out or thrown out of the organization. Opportunist factions have won a majority in the CC and climbed to power before, most notably in the CPSU. Win, lose, or draw, a faction is still a faction. To try publicly to portray a picture of smooth sailing in the PSC or between the PSC and the CC is sheer deception aimed at covering up the real history of the continuous struggle against right opportunism in the PSC, the CC, and the whole organization, and the ultimate victory and consolidation of the rightest factionalist clique. Support for this clique was never unanimous until they split the organization (more later on the significance of the third CC meeting). If anyone was belittling the role of the PSC, it was the opportunists. Why did they not raise their May Day proposal at the second CC meeting, just a few weeks before they sent it out? There was no reason that such an important such as calling for a civil war should not have been approved by such an important body as the CC before it was sent out. But the opportunists by-passed the second CC waiting until the third CC, when all major opposition was off the CC, to "ratify" what they had already done. But no matter how you look at it, the opportunists can come up with no justification for this scrapping of the Iskra plan and their erroneous May Day directive.

It should not therefore surprise us that hand in hand with all this opportunism come the advocacy of a social-democratic method of work. The May Day activity, as we pointed out in the first part of this statement, was supposed to be carried out in workshops of all our contacts. The WC opportunists claimed that this need not violate security measures. Yet at an International Women's Day workshop, similar to the one advocated for May Day, these same opportunists showed their lack of concern for proletarian methods of organization. One person who was a closed communist at his job asked if he should attend since another person who worked at the same place might invite workers who would recognize him. The opportunists said there would be no problem. Nevertheless, the fears of this person came true when a worker showed up who knew him. Yet instead of popularizing this negative example in the organization and summing up its lessons, the opportunists proceeded to once again cheerily assure the organization that workshops would cause no problems.

#### Party-Building and Democratic Centralism

The WC has long put forward the correct formulation that in the relationship between proletarian democracy and proletarian centralism, centralism was absolute and democracy was relative. It is obviously the purpose of democracy to serve centralized thinking and activity, and not the other way around. As Chairman Mao said, "The Communist Party not only needs democracy, but needs centralization even



more." The defense of autonomy in all spheres of work by the opportunists in the WC violated these basic laws.

Related to their opposition to democratic centralism in addition is their incorrect view of the role of democracy and its relation to centralism. This question is one of the least understood in our movement, being rarely discussed or even referred to. The rampant amateurishness and social-democratic methods of work make these questions very embarrassing to the phony "leaders" of the proletariat--to the Avakians, Klonskys, Jerry Tungs, and the rest. If one has a wrong attitude to centralism and belittles its role, as the WC opportunists do, it follows that a wrong attitude will be taken to democracy and its relation to centralism.

What is the basis of centralism? What makes iron discipline and unity of action that a communist organization needs to fight the enemy possible? Chairman Mao answers it this way: "Without democracy there cannot be correct concentration because it is impossible to establish centralism when people have divergent views and don't have unity in thinking." (quoted in Peking Review #15, 1969) In other words, unity of action can only be based on unity of thinking. He goes on, "What is meant by concentration? First, there must be concentration of correct ideas. Unity in thinking, policy, plan, command and action is attained on the basis of concentrating correct ideas. This is unity through concentration." Thus, concentration of correct ideas makes possible centralism in thinking and action.

Stalin puts it in a similar fashion; "The Party must achieve iron proletarian discipline based on ideological solidarity, clarity concerning the aims of the movement, unity of practical action, and an understanding of the Party's tasks by the mass of the Party membership." ("The Prospects of the CP of Germany and the Question of Bolshevization," vol. 7, p. 40.)

Naturally, this question is of little concern to those who do not really want to achieve centralism--our "aristocratic anarchists." But to genuine M-L's, this is a most crucial question, since we must answer it properly both in theory and practice to assure the unity and discipline of the mighty weapon of the proletariat, the organization.

To understand the importance of concentration of correct ideas at this time, we must view it, and our organizational tasks in general, in the context of our present tasks. In fact, it is our central task that determines the nature of all our other tasks. In this period party building is our central task. We are in a period in which "without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement." At present, theory is primary over practice, propaganda is our main form of activity and primary over mass agitation, and winning the advanced workers to communism ideologically is primary over winning the broad masses politically to the side of revolution. Further, we still have no program. The completion of all these major tasks demands organizational forms and methods that correspond to the particular requirements of these tasks--forms and methods that would be entirely different if our central task was people's war, building a united front, etc. Today, to build a party, we need to defeat opportunism and unite all genuine M-L's. But, as Lenin said in the DECLARATION OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF ISKRA, "such unity cannot be brought about by simply giving orders." To achieve unity, he said, "In the first place, it is necessary to bring about unity of ideas which will remove the difference of opinion and confusion that--we will be frank--reign among Russian social democrats at the present time." (ISKRA PERIOD, BOOK 1, p. 40-41, emphasis added). He then went on to call for an organization to unite the various circles and build up Iskra. Thus, the organization's nature and activity were determined by what was needed "in the first place"--unity of ideas. And so



it is with our application of the organizational principle of democratic centralism today. Our emphasis must be on achieving unity of ideas, unity of thinking, and this means that our emphasis on democratic centralism today must be on concentrating and centralizing our ideas. To do otherwise would belittle our theoretical tasks and would mean rushing ahead blinding in our practical tasks before sufficient basis was laid in unified line. Such bureaucratic, mechanical shortcuts will actually only disrupt unity by not resolving the contradictions that stand in the way of unity.

And such was the case of the WC. The emphasis on developing unity of ideas was particularly important since the basic features of the WC were still being formed, since many important questions had never been taken up in a materialist manner before in our movement, and since revisionism on so many questions, especially in the form of American exceptionalism, was rampant in our movement. As Lenin, said, "The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory." (WHAT IS TO BE DONE?, p. 29, Chinese ed., emphasis original.) Thus, in order to both develop a line on major questions (such as war) and to consolidate the organization, much attention had to be placed on our theoretical tasks. Without democratic debate and concentrating correct ideas, how could a correct line ever be developed? Good organization, especially on a nationwide scale, was of course required to carry this out, and a correct application of democratic centralism was required to enable the organization to be capable of fulfilling these tasks. So our emphasis had to be on centralization of ideas in order to facilitate the fulfilling of our central task.

The WC originally, at least in words, answered these questions correctly on how to achieve concentration of correct ideas, that ideological solidarity and common understanding that Stalin spoke of, through the carrying out of the Iskra plan by the WC and the Leninist trend of the communist movement. Although they never explicitly upheld the concept of concentrating ideas, they claimed to uphold Lenin's, Stalin's, and Mao's teachings on the party, and put forward a generally correct method for fulfilling our tasks. The newspaper was supposed to be a collective propagandist, agitator, and organizer. It was to embody the unity of theory and practice through pursuing propaganda work, which entailed study, investigation, line struggle, winning the advanced workers to communism, mass work, agitation, and organization. On this basis, correct ideas were to be concentrated, line and program were to be further developed and/or established, and an organization around the newspaper was to be erected. The leaders of the WC were supposed to use this method to lead in concentrating correct ideas from the masses and the cadre, and to lead in promoting a correct plan and policy on that basis. In other words, propaganda was our chief form of activity in party-building, including in developing line, plan, and policy.

Yet, at no time did the WC ever put this correct method into practice. The basic lessons on concentration were never studied, propagated, or referred to. Instead, the opportunists, like all their predecessors, preferred to base their thinking only on their own limited experience and understanding. The CPC described such people like Liu Shao-chi this way: "Having faith only in oneself but not in the masses and what 'I' think being the criterion for doing everything." (Peking Review #10, 1971, p.6.)

Further, to the opportunists in the WC, somehow democratic centralism had nothing to do with concentration of ideas, with the taking of scattered and incomplete ideas and concentrating them into correct ideas. When Chairman Mao said that the party needs democracy but needs centralism more, he was also talking about centralization of ideas, and not only of action. The opportunists conception of democratic centralism counterposed our ideological and organizational tasks. They



saw democracy as referring to ideas and discussion, but centralism as referring only to centralized action. The link, concentration of correct ideas, was missing, as they did not grasp how organization serves and is used to carry out our ideological and political line. Whenever they praise themselves for overcoming "circle spirit," they never even bother to make a pretense of showing how they achieved this on the basis of unity of ideas. In fact, the rapid splintering of the WC is testimony to how their leadership has instead resulted in disunity of ideas. They also never refer to the concept of concentrating correct ideas, and only refer to centralism when they are talking about action, and not thinking. Further, the opportunists also counterposed democracy to centralism. Their practice showed that they did not really see how there can be no real centralism, especially of ideas, and particularly in the present period, without democracy. Thus, their whole conception of democratic centralism was not only extremely one-sided and superficial, but hopelessly incomplete. And all this both reflected and resulted in a miserable belittling of the immensity of our present theoretical tasks.

May Day is but a typical, classic example of this opportunism. Before May Day, there was only one article in "The Communist" on war. No organization-wide study had been undertaken, with only a long shopping list of books having been sent out two weeks before May Day, with no possibility of completion or real follow-up. Interestingly enough, the opportunists chose to circulate an internal paper and have at least some, although not adequate, internal debate before taking a position on ERA, but not on war, thus exposing their inconsistency and pragmatism on developing a line. On the war question, the opportunists were playing at concentration. How could this work be carried out if there was such an inadequate basis for it? We have already exposed the lack of study and investigation in the PSC, and shown in the first part of this statement how this wrong method led to the inevitable development of different lines in the pages of "The Communist", including on the international situation. It should be obvious that the lack of concentration of ideas crippled the unity and discipline of the WC, made it impossible for the leadership to overcome the situation of scattered collectives with their own separate views and activity, promoted the growth of different lines and activity in the organization, and led to the great fragmentation and decline of the WC so soon after it was formed.

The fiasco around May Day occurred precisely because the opportunists attempted to centralize the line and activity of the organization without basing that on concentration of correct ideas, both from among the masses and also the cadre. Further, they attempted to centralize the activity before the ideas were centralized and in practice placed their main attention on centralizing activity around war. They did not see how only on the basis of prior democratic discussion could ideological consolidation and preparation take place, and lead to centralized activity on war. This was bowing to spontaneity pure and simple, in this case bowing to the objectively sharpening contention for world hegemony between the two superpowers and the growing danger of world war. Instead of sticking to our basic line and using the newspaper to develop a line in a planned, conscious, and sober way, the opportunists, panic-stricken at the thought of a new world war, wanted to rush, ideologically and organizationally unprepared, into the mass movement to organize around war. They proved that they are not worthy of being leaders of anything, for they could not concentrate correct ideas. And while they scream that you need centralized activity to centralize ideas, an obvious truth, their practice shows that they actually abandoned the centralized activity previously agreed upon as the basis for developing a line---propaganda as our chief form of activity, the Iskra plan. The abandonment



of this process, of the Iskra plan, of the basic line of the WC on party-building, is the crux of our differences with the opportunists in the WC, and is our main difference with them on May Day, including on the two lines on democratic centralism.

In "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?" Chairman Mao talks of idealists who do not understand the theory of knowledge. "When asked the source of their ideas, opinions, policies, methods, plans and conclusions, eloquent speeches and long articles, they consider the question strange and cannot answer it." (Four Essays on Philosophy, p. 136) How apt this lesson is to the WC! All the feeble attempts at justifying their abandonment of the Iskra plan and democratic centralism -- "we take our leadership from the line of the CPC," "the matter was studied, discussed, and the line unanimously adopted" by the PSC, etc, -- all these do not even make a pretense of involving concentration of correct ideas. They idealistically counterpose centralism to democracy, and thus to concentration of correct ideas. Instead of self-criticism, the opportunists try to pass the buck by blaming our district for not doing an assignment on war in January, 1976. When this was first made, the center was told we could not do it because we were already loaded down with work, including preparations for the second CC, the New York crisis series, and many other things. To have attempted it would have been rotten amateurishness, since it would not have been correctly done. At that time, there was agreement that we should not do it, although a statement by the chair now tries to make it look like it was we who did not do what we were supposed to.

Why do we make such a fuss about all this? Whether they realize it or not, the WC has actually put out a call for preparations for war to begin now, for the preparations for the actual launching of a civil war. This is, needless to say, a most serious matter. The strictest attention must be paid to the content of a line and to how it is put into effect on such major questions. Without any exaggeration, the fate of billions of people may lie in the balance. How could a civil war be carried out if there was no unity and centralization of thinking, no preparation of the organization? Either these opportunists are crazy or utterly irresponsible! Any revolutionary war, including a civil war, is primarily a mobilization of the masses, a political question. If wrong directives are put out, or if the organization is not ideologically and politically prepared enough to carry out such an important task, the criminal rule of imperialism may be allowed to last longer. There is enormous historical experience, as we know, to back this up. Thus our responsibility to the masses is that we be ever vigilant about just what we say and do, and how we say it and do it, lest the enemy, who at the outset of a struggle will have more resources (except people) than us, take advantage of weaknesses in our budding revolutionary struggle. And on any other major question such as this, failure to concentrate correct ideas and to prepare the organization ideologically can lead to disaster.

Even in their defense of autonomism and opposition to concentration as the basis of action, the WC opportunists do not oppose all centralized activity. There is a unity between their support of autonomy from below and autonomy from above. Autonomy from above means that the leadership bodies can do and advocate whatever they happen to feel like, as on May Day, with these plans not being based on concentration. The Comintern referred to this kind of centralization as "formal or mechanical centralization." (Principles of Party Organization, Third CI Congress, 1921, Calcutta edition, 1975, p. 7) In practice, what developed in the WC was not a genuine body of leaders, but an autonomous clique in the PSC -- a bureaucracy.



It is important to grasp the relationship between anarchism and bureaucracy. In one sense, they are opposites. But in essence, bureaucracy is the flip side of the same coin as anarchism. Both are cut from the same cloth and usually accompany each other. Witness any bourgeois party, like the Republicans or Democrats, where members can do whatever they please, even entirely opposing the main candidates, while a little bourgeois clique really pulls the strings behind closed doors, not responsible to the party membership. Factionalism, unprincipled maneuvering, hatred of discipline, individualism, careerism -- all these are features of both anarchism and bureaucracy. The link and unity between these two opposites is that they both rest on the same foundation of autonomy, of arbitrariness. They both oppose centralization of thinking and revolutionary activity, a reflection of rampant individualism. Thus it should not surprise us that the opponents of democratic centralism lean at one time to the side of anarchism and at another to the side of bureaucracy, for they are, in essence, different forms of the same thing -- autonomism. Further, the general chaotic conditions of the WC, the rampant autonomism and lack of rules, created favorable conditions for the autonomists at the top to try to mechanically lord over the rest of the organization. As Engels once said, anarchists are the worst megalomaniacs. And so it is, too, for our aristocratic anarchists.

Without concentration of correct ideas, it is impossible to develop a correct line. For example, it would have been absolutely impossible to write our New York crisis series if there was no participation in the struggle of the masses, scientific summing up, study, and line struggle. These articles were not the brainchild of some "genius," but a result of a correct integration of theory and practice, with propaganda as the chief form of activity. But the academicians who run the WC, who have studied in the "finest" universities in Europe and the United States, believe that they are above such mundane stuff. So the product of their thinking ends up being virtually worthless stuff, not based on reality or capable of guiding action. And the result of this idealism for the organization is not only a wrong line on war, but wrong lines on most other questions, too. Trying to avoid concentration through propaganda and developing a line "out of the blue" is idealist a priorism, and only leads to harmful results.

To cover their own defense of autonomy of the PSC and their opposition to concentration, the WC opportunist have raised the smokescreen of "ultra-democracy." But does what we have to say have anything to do with ultra-democracy? Certainly not. First of all, we do not even think that lack of democracy was the principal problem in the WC. Lack of centralism and defense of autonomy were. What we have pointed out is that you cannot undermine centralism without also undermining democracy. We have also pointed out how the bureaucratic errors of the PSC were rooted in the same source as their anarchist errors -- in defense of autonomy at all levels. If anything, it is the WC opportunists, with their opposition to rules, concentration, discipline, and the agreed upon line of the organization who were guilty of ultra-democracy.

We at no time advocated anything even remotely similar to "democratic centralism from the bottom to the top," or "let the lower levels discuss all problems first, and then let the higher levels decide." We firmly uphold that the minority must be subordinate to the majority, and the lower levels to the higher levels, carrying out directives, plans, etc. This has not been called into question by us at all. It was not us, but the opportunists, who wanted to make work around the newspaper, as on May Day, a secondary, subordinate task. If you say we did, then you must think that the Iskra plan and concentration of correct ideas are also ultra-democratic, for that is all that we have advocated. The differences between these two are clear. The Iskra plan does not mean that the leadership must wait until everything is discussed below first. But it does mean that the cadre have to be previously prepared ideologically and politically to carry out directives, and that these directives have to be the end result of concentration of correct ideas. On this basis, leadership is linked with the masses and the higher levels linked to



the lower levels. Directives should not come out of the blue. They should be based on concentration. Further, once a directive is put out on this basis, the lower levels are required to follow it. Ultra-democracy opposes this method. Since the WC opportunists didn't want their own activity to be based on the line of the organization, they were, in fact, the real advocates of ultra-democracy, by ignoring the line of the CC and Unity Conference. Ultra-democracy negates the role of leadership and of discipline. Concentration of correct ideas, on the other hand, emphasizes the leading ideological, political, and organizational role of higher bodies, while basing that leadership on the masses and the cadre.

We also fully unite with the line that the PSC has all the power of the CC when it is not in session. This is not the issue. Even in a situation where a quick, emergency decision is required, such as in a war, directives have to be based on prior preparations and concentration. If, for example, one of the superpowers launched a sneak attack on China, we could be expected to defend China adequately only if there was proper preparation beforehand in the ideological and political spheres. But in the case of May Day, there was not even an emergency. So why the big rush for a position on war, without unfolding democratic discussion and struggle and concentration? To counterpose concentration of ideas to centralized leadership and activity is absolutely absurd. Yet is it ultra-democratic to say that the WC was totally unprepared for such centralized activity around the question of war as was advocated on May Day because there was not sufficient preparation? And why was it correct in the eyes of the opportunist to discuss the Equal Rights Amendment internally first, but ultra-democratic to discuss war? Obviously, to this we have gotten no answer. Only those who had no real concern about the results of such an activity would answer in the affirmative that what we did was ultra-democratic.

The WC also tried to label us as ultra-democratic because we said that in the case of the question of war, the pages of The Communist could be used to present struggle between different lines in the organization. The opportunists said that this was permissible at certain times, but not in this case, and then proceeded to call us ultra-democratic for suggesting printing different lines! If it is ultra-democratic in this case, then why not in others? Open polemics under centralized guidance was more than once advocated by Lenin in Iskra. So why not in The Communist? And are the frequent wall-poster debates in China, carried out under the guidance of the CC of the CPC, also ultra-democratic? Wouldn't anyone serious about the international situation take the utmost care to consolidate a line through a series of articles in the newspaper and thus to encourage the cadre and the masses to speak out? In fact, when the opportunists did advocate polemics, they did not want it under centralized leadership or for the purpose of concentrating ideas, as in their advocacy of a "common editorial policy" (See "Never Forget Class Struggle" in this magazine). Again, the opportunists mechanically, idealistically, and one-sidedly counterpose democracy and centralism. They are two opposites of the same whole -- democratic centralism. They are interdependent and interrelated. One cannot exist without the other. But to raise the dialectical relationship between these two is somehow too complicated for the opportunists, who shout "centralism" when you talk about the aspect of democracy (as on May Day) and shout "democracy" when you talk about the aspect of centralized leadership (as with the "common editorial policy").

Another example of the counterposing of democracy to centralism is their opposition to our call for a new conference of the WC to solve the question of war. This particularly irked the opportunists, since they saw it as a challenge to their autonomy. Thus, they slapped the label of "ultra-democracy" on it. But why was a conference so terrible an idea? Wouldn't a conference have greatly aided line consolidation? Parties have even called congresses when needed during war-time and under fascism, having to do it underground or abroad. So what was the big obstacle for us calling a new conference? It should be obvious that anyone who really believed their line on war would want to commence a serious mobilization of the cadre and the masses. A new conference could have addressed the issues of war



and May Day straight up, and led to a consolidation of the organization around a well-thought-out correct line. But since this was a threat to the incorrect line of the leading clique, they squashed it.

The results of all this, naturally, have been disastrous to the WC. The reconciliation of the different lines never took place, even on the international situation. The Communist does not even come out regularly any more (formerly a monthly, now it is out roughly every two months), its size and quality have fallen off drastically, and its emphasis and orientation are inconsistent. By trying to substitute bureaucracy for combining democracy and centralism, the WC has been unable to either consolidate around a correct line or carry out the leadership's line on war. In fact, even the question of war is barely mentioned in The Communist anymore. Not basing their line on concentration, and not preparing the cadre has resulted in such a big failure for the opportunists on this question, that all their mighty talk of "raise the banner of civil war" has now been replaced by an empty silence. And on other questions, as we showed in the first part of this statement, they have been unable to escape the sorry fate of their paper containing conflicting lines and analyses and being reduced to a collective confuser. The degeneration of the WC and its organ is a direct result of the inability of the WC leadership to centralize the line and activity of the organization, and is a sad commentary on just what fate awaits all the other opportunists and amateurs who oppose democratic centralism.

Of course, as we have pointed out many times, these errors did not appear overnight. On the question of concentration, these errors go back to the struggle in the BWC. Take the example of the struggle over taking a position on busing. An article appeared in the December, 1974 issue of The Communist supporting busing in Boston. The right wing of the BWC, which generally did not support busing, took the autonomist line that they would not distribute the paper since they disagreed with that article. But those who later became the WC also held a wrong line. The article had appeared with no forewarning. The disagreements on it reflected the lack of ideological and political consolidation of the BWC on the Afro-American national question, including the Comintern resolutions. But instead of developing unity of thinking and concentrating correct ideas, the authors of the article just bureaucratically sprung their position on the organization. Because they carried such wrong methods over into the WC with all sorts of justifications, the WC was unable to deepen its position on busing. In the end, the issue has been almost entirely dropped, with only one short article on this burning issue in The Communist in well over a year. This is the sorry result of trying to substitute some shortcut for concentration of correct ideas.

Some people have the misconception that ultra-democracy is generally a right error and bureaucracy generally a "left" error. This is not so. Both can be either right or "left." For example, while social-democrats are generally ultra-democratic, so are many wild-eyed ultra-"left" anarchists. And who is more bureaucratic than the Soviet revisionists? In the case of the WC, both their anarchism and bureaucracy were generally right errors, since they were component parts of their overall right opportunist line.

The "remedy" offered by the opportunists for the lack of line consolidation is merely an organizational one, the issuance of a bulletin. As usual, they totally miss the mark. The CPC has written:

"The key to putting democratic centralism into practice is the ideological revolutionization of the Party committees.... Practice has proved that...when democratic centralism is not carried out well, the root cause is that bourgeois 'self' and metaphysics and idealism in one's mind are exerting their bad influence." (Peking Review #10, 1971, p. 7-8)

What the WC needed were strong leaders who could concentrate ideas and develop cadre

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who could distinguish genuine from sham Marxism-Leninism. But to establish democratic centralism, the ideological obstacles, especially the individualism that lay behind autonomism, had first to be cleared away. Not grasping that the ideological revolutionization is the key to practicing democratic centralism meant that the opportunists would only worsen the degeneration of the WC, and that a bulletin would be useless, since there would not be any concentration of correct ideas anyway. The sorry excuse for an organization that remains is proof positive of what happens when democratic centralism is abandoned.

### 3rd CC and Its Aftermath

The significance of the third CC meeting was that it adopted an all-round right opportunist program; it reversed the organization's basic line on party-building; and it was the final phase of the consolidation of power in the organization by the opportunists. Although honest revolutionaries remained in the organization (as there are in most once-revolutionary groups), the leadership and the line of the organization were now irreconcilably opportunist.

The 3rd CC made a number of important decisions. All of the major decisions at this meeting were steps backwards. It adopted the economist "deeper into the industrial masses" campaign and the capitulationist "common editorial policy" proposal (see first part of statement). Thus it formalized the scrapping of the Iskra plan as to both winning the advanced workers to communism and uniting the Leninist trend, resulting in the marked deterioration of "The Communist" since this meeting. It also ratified the wrong line on war and incorrectly supported the so-called ERA. On internal matters, it closed its ranks by condemning the resignations of the ex-PSC comrades, condemning the NY district's stand on May Day, and removing from the CC the leader of the NY district. In so doing, it not only consolidated power for the opportunists, but also justified and ratified the abandonment of democratic centralism. It also turned down the call for a new conference. Since the left wing was either out or on the way out of the organization, the opportunist leaders could end their bloc with the other rightists. Thus, it expelled Don Williams from the organization and suspended Kathy for not ending her relationship with Williams.

The decisions of the 3rd CC towards the NY district showed that any pretense of unity-criticism-unity was dropped. We were accused of being in a "panic" over the PSC resignations, when in fact we were calmly and consciously continuing the battle against right opportunism. After being unable to win us to their line, they ordered us to do a self-criticism, even if we didn't agree with that self-criticism! This was the kind of formalistic game-playing they were into. It also showed how they took away the right of members to reserve their own opinions internally on any question, since we were supposed to give this "self-criticism" at internal meetings and in internal documents. The district was given six weeks to prepare the "self criticism." When the WC chair met with us during that period, we were told that if we didn't do the "self-criticism," which we said we wouldn't, we would be kicked out. Thus, the 3rd CC decisions were a declaration of war on the NY district, a cheap set-up to kick out anyone who disagreed with the leadership. It was clear after the 3rd CC that the contradictions had become antagonistic and irreconcilable, and that an organizational split had become both inevitable and desirable.



Regarding the self-criticism, we said we would not do it because this would mean compromising on questions of principle and capitulating to the abandonment of democratic centralism and the Iskra plan. We could not compromise for any false "unity" that this might bring. To have done so would have been capitulationism and dishonesty on our parts and a gross underestimation of the degeneration of the WC. If upholding Marxism-Leninism meant that we had to be kicked out, then so be it. The only leg the WC has to stand on is that we violated a "unanimous" decision of the CC to do the self-criticism. All that this "unanimous" vote shows is the degree to which the CC had fallen prey to opportunism itself and how far down the road to revisionism it had gone. They try to cover over the fact that in order to gain this "unanimity" on the CC, over half of the CC and the PSC had to be kicked out or forced out of the organization in the less than one year from the Unity Conference to the 3rd CC. This "unanimous" capitulation to opportunism was really a sign of decay, not of strength. Further, the CC adopted a hypocritical double standard on discipline. When we attacked from the left, we were rapidly and sternly condemned. But when Williams and Kathy fought them from the right, they were allied with, pampered for months, and used until the last possible moment.

The opportunists also showed their fear of an open line struggle in the organization. During the crisis, the majority and minority views on these major questions should have been put out to the organization to settle these questions once and for all. Instead, the opportunists opposed a new conference and wanted to confine the line struggle, only bringing it up after the left wing was out of the WC. We are sure that because of such bourgeois maneuvering there are still members and supporters of the WC who have not yet heard the truth about these struggles. The inability of the opportunist WC leaders to rely on their own cadres and supporters is further evidence of their total bankruptcy.

It was in this context that the WC chair planned a trip to NY. Everyone knew that a split was just a matter of time. The chair wanted to meet with the district and the close contacts. The district requested that the trip be postponed about two weeks so that a statement could be prepared and so that the contacts should be prepared to decide for themselves which line was correct, since the chair intended to run the opportunist line. Yet the chair further revealed a great fear of the line struggle and wanted the contacts to make a decision without the facts or the documents on the two-line struggle and its history. Preparations would have been in the best interests of building strong revolutionary cadre and proletarian organization. Yet since the opportunists were not concerned with this, they decided to make the trip anyway, showing how they did not conduct themselves in a principled manner. The opportunists wanted us out of the WC while hoping to maintain contacts in the district before the struggle was unfolded. This was the purpose of their trip. They had no respect for the line and unity of these contacts, and wanted to maneuver into an unprincipled relationship with them based not on unity of line but on slavishness. This was a direct continuation of all the other bourgeois maneuvering and amateurishness, which is still justified by the opportunists. No one among the contacts wanted to meet with the chair under these conditions. The chair came anyway, although the meeting with the contacts never happened.



Another line of the opportunists is that we did not turn over the names of contacts to the center. Most of them were in direct contact with the center through work on the newspaper. People had even visited the center themselves, so all this is nonsense. But what the chair now wanted was a complete list of these people. Now, they never before wanted this or ever complained that we were keeping people from them. In fact, the opposite was true, with letters, reports and articles sent in by them often going unanswered for months at a time. The center kept themselves from the contacts. Only now, when the split was imminent, did they show such "concern" for these contacts. Those whose names they did have were often sent packages in the mail with the name "Workers Congress" written as the return address, giving the police open directions as to who did what. This was done even on correspondence to addresses we specifically said should be confidential! So we would have had to be totally out of our minds to give such a list to these irresponsible Mensheviks. Furthur, a similar lie was spread about us never doing reports. While we could have been more consistent and thorough in our reports, we did send in many reports. The reports we did do went generally unanswered. Finally, the chair even tried to lie that we refused to answer the phone when he came to NY when the phone went dead at the meeting place because of the cheapness of the phone company. He was told that if we intended to avoid him, we would have been able to do so very easily, would not have met with him at all, and would not have waited up until the early hours of the morning, as we first did.

The results of all this were obvious. We agreed to meet with the chair, and no progress was made, except that we all gained useful direct knowledge and got a good negative example of outright opportunism in the flesh. The contacts have long since agreed to meet with a WC representative, now that they have studied the two lines. But since they have all sided with the former NY district, the opportunists have lost their interest in meeting with them, even though they were told last summer that a meeting now would be acceptable.

As to the NY district, the position was taken that we would neither make a self-criticism nor resign. This was to show that we upheld the basic line of the WC, despite the justification of opportunism by the leadership. The WC further showed their amateurishness by not even sticking to its own six week limit, and waiting until August to "officially" kick us out. But for us, we considered ourselves out of the organization after the meeting with the chair in late June. We felt there was no reason to wait the extra few weeks and go through the motions of trying for "unity" when the result was a foregone conclusion anyway, and that the extra time was a farce and a charade to give the fake impression that honest line struggle was taking place and that there was a possibility of reconciliation.

Thus, the results of the 3rd CC and its aftermath saw a victory for the opportunists and the "indefinite suspension" of the NY district. It was unfortunate that the opportunists triumphed in this struggle, but their victory and the victory of all other rightists will surely be short-lived as genuine Marxist-Leninists around the country sum up the lessons of these and other struggles against opportunism.



CONCLUSION

The history of the Bolshevik Party tells us, "In its practical work, if it wants to preserve the unity of its ranks, the Party must impose a common proletarian discipline, equally binding on all Party members, both leaders and rank-and-file. Therefore there should be no division in the Party into the 'chosen few', on whom discipline is not binding, and the 'many', on whom discipline is binding. If this condition is not observed, the integrity of the Party and the unity of its ranks cannot be maintained." (HCPSU, p.50, emphasis original). This describes well what happened to the WC. The opportunists in leadership wanted to be "free" to issue directives indirect violation of the organization's basic line on party-building when it chose to, unbound by the decisions of the Unity conference and the CC. And the justifications for these errors reminds us of what Lenin said about the Mensheviks: "The mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, who regards himself as one of the 'chosen few' standing above mass organization and mass discipline, is expressed here with remarkable clarity." (HCPSU, p.50)

In fact, all the basic tenets of democratic centralism had been violated well in advance of May Day. What happened on May Day was merely a culmination of a long struggle and a series of splits against right opportunism, including the abandonment of democratic centralism. May Day was not isolated at all, but a reflection of the struggle between two lines in the WC, against the hatred of authority by the unremolded petty bourgeois intellectuals. These classical Mensheviks opposed all democratic centralism, and, as we have proved, set themselves up as a faction in the PSC and the CC, a faction directed against the Iskra plan and democratic centralism. It was sheer hypocrisy for these maneuverers to accuse us of "circle spirit" when it was they who all along had intrigued and conspired behind everyone's backs. They never developed a strong, unified and centralized leadership, or had a democratic style of work. They were unable to concentrate correct ideas and showed again how if you don't have a correct way of achieving unity of ideas, you will certainly end up achieving disunity and failure. They could not create a viable, leading center. In reality, the WC was never Bolshevized, never overcame the errors of the old BWC, and never centralized the line and activity of the organization, reflecting the abandonment of propaganda as the chief form of activity. And when they were called on their opportunism all they could do was justify the rotten, chaotic state of affairs and defend autonomism, both from below and from above, at every step and turn, getting worse at each successive CC meeting. Instead, they took the tailist course of blaming the cadre, rather than themselves, for the errors, accused everyone else of being in a panic, did no self-criticism, and abandoned the role that leadership was supposed to play. No, it was not the cadre or those who opposed the opportunists who were in a panic or who "capitulated to difficulty", but none other than the opportunists who changed the basic line of the organization because all the communist movement and advanced workers did not immediately jump into our laps after we put out the newspaper for a few months. Too unstable to undertake the long and patient work required to build a Bolshevik party, it was these petty bourgeois democrats, these Mensheviks who panicked and "capitulated to difficulty" by seeking unity with the opportu-



nist wing of our movement, by reverting to tailism and economism, and by standing in the way and opposing the struggle to once and for all Bolshevize our ranks and overcome autonomism and amateurishness.

We have now cleared up the history of these struggles. We have outlined the basic errors and the development of the struggle itself in much detail. We have responded to every charge and every lie hurled at us by the opportunists. Just let them try to deal with this struggle in a straight-up way! All we have now is their pitiful polemic in "The Communist". The WC will find itself in big trouble when it tries to consolidate people around the garbage they put out.

As Lenin pointed out: "Opportunism in programme is naturally connected with opportunism in tactics and opportunism in organization." (OSF, TSB, p. 193) Organizational errors flow from errors in ideological and political line. The abandonment of democratic centralism was thus inseparably connected to the abandonment of propaganda as the chief form of activity and the capitulationist stand taken towards opportunism in the communist movement. All this flowed from their corrupt, bourgeois world outlook, and could not be rectified unless their wrong world view also changed.

The Constitution of the CPC says, "It is essential to create a political situation in which there are both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness." (Article 5) Obviously, the opportunists just ignored all this. The results of their opportunism was the wrecking and splitting of the WC. The opportunist leaders of the WC were fully responsible for the disunity that resulted from the abandonment of democratic centralism.

The decline and fall of the WC shows the adverse results of trying to establish an "artificial center." What was needed was a body of well-trained and experienced leaders, tested in the struggles against imperialism and opportunism, not the bunch of clowns we got. Instead, the WC pretended to build a center when it should have laid the basis for building a real one. Sooner or later, without a strong center and strong leaders, all other opportunists will perish, just as the WC did. Wasn't it true that the CPUSA once was growing and thriving, as once were PLP and RU? But where are they now? Driven into the ground, hated and despised by all true revolutionaries and advanced elements, and isolated from the masses. So we do not need another such phoney center which will fall to pieces when the first stiff wind comes along. We must make adequate preparations in all spheres so that the next venture we undertake will be a success.

The WC is dying and has already failed. The loss of the old BWC was a great blow to our movement, one perhaps not yet fully appreciated. The WC tried to make good on the promising start the BWC made. But these failures are now history and are by no means insurmountable. Our task now is to start anew and to work for the re-establishing of a national organization and to work for an Iskra-type newspaper. The WC is an utter disgrace to M-L and has actually made it harder to talk of an Iskra-type paper and bolshevizing organization by its association with these concepts. Today, the WC no longer has anything in common with these views, and is nothing but a minor hindrance to the genuine revolutionaries, useless to the working class and oppressed peoples.

Summing up this struggle is important not only to expose and defeat the WC opportunists, but, even more importantly, to contribute to the struggle to build a party. Deviations around democratic

!! self-contradictory



centralism are a problem for our movement as a whole. By summing up our experience, we think we have made a contribution to solving these problems. We hope others will likewise do so.

At present, the right opportunists have temporary hegemony in the communist movement. The genuine forces are still fragmented and scattered. But the days of the opportunists are numbered, as they are for all reactionaries. We know there are many solid revolutionaries and countless advanced workers out there, fed up with the rampant opportunism they see. Included among them are ex-WC members. It is time to once again re-assemble our forces and organize our ranks. It is time to begin to prepare for an assault on the old, dominant rotten elements who have crippled the communist movement. It is time for the honest revolutionaries to begin to gather our forces, to build a new Leninist trend, which will smash revisionism, economism, national chauvinism, tailism, and amateurishness. We can only do so if we make a determined and conscious effort to overcome the present state of affairs, to form a new organization in the course of struggle, and to tirelessly and ceaselessly dedicate ourselves to this end. If we do, we will find, just as all other revolutionaries have found, that we can sweep aside our enemies and achieve victory.

POSTSCRIPT

Since our statements on the split in the WC were written some time ago, a brief review of some of the more recent activities of the WC is required.

A survey of The Communist over the past year and a half verifies everything we said about how the WC has abandoned the Iskra plan. While they eventually got around to writing about some of the issues on which we criticized them for not writing, such as the presidential elections, they did so very late, when the exposures were no longer topical and timely, but had turned sour and stale. More importantly, they were often inadequate or wrong. Take, for example, the task of giving leadership to the ideological struggle in the communist movement. In the May 7, 1977 Communist, they purport to criticize OL's social chauvinism. In reality, their main quarrel with OL on the international situation is the formulation of "directing the main blow at Soviet social imperialism" and nothing more. They fail to tie this up to OL's overall analysis of world events.\* They thus end up with the same social-chauvinist position of, for example, supporting the neo-colonialist Panama Canal treaties that have been forced on the Panamanian people by U.S. imperialism. The most recent edition of The Communist available as we go to press, dated March 8, 1978, calls this treaty "a significant forward step in the ongoing struggle of the Panamanian people for complete national sovereignty and independence." As usual, WC waited months after the treaty was drafted to even comment on it, again showing their miserable tailing of events. They also showed their abandonment of propaganda as the chief form of activity by making their first public comments on it at their recent public forums on the international situation.

This is also related to their general failure to break with the line of OL. While they have run some articles differing with some aspects of OL's line, what has characterized their attitude to OL is, first, their deep desire for unity with OL, and, second, their minimizing the depth of OL's opportunism and its danger to the communist and workers' movements. When OL began to mouth that propaganda was the chief form of activity, but in reality did not change their economist ways, The Communist said, "Although interpretation of this line is by no means uniform, consolidation on it represents a good step forward." (August 28, 1976) According to WC, the October League had now supposedly achieved "consolidation" on a correct line, with the difference being a mere matter of "interpretation." Following this,

\* We will take this up in detail in our next issue.



the WC applied a few slaps on the wrist to the OL, saying that their Organizing Committee "has yet to take up the struggle of trends at all," (March 1, 1977) instead of identifying it as a key part of the economist, right-opportunist trend. In the same issue, they take back the gains in our movement in identifying various rightist lines, and, in describing the party-building activity of various groups, say:

"The task of winning hegemony over and uniting the scattered forces has not been genuinely posed. RU claimed it had all the 'genuine' forces mobilized, and OL, WVO, and the 'Leninist core' follow in succession. But none have gathered and organized with a vision to match the breadth of our movement. Lines of demarcation are drawn, not between Marxism-Leninism and opportunism, but between circle adherents and others. The network is established on that basis. Party-building tasks are reduced to circle size, rather than stretching our circles to meet the demands of our tasks."

Thus party building becomes a task of uniting all the groups, regardless of their line and what trend they represent, and, in essence, sectarianism becomes the main danger. This is the sad result of their "common editorial policy" line and their general bourgeois-democratic approach to party building.

The WC's denial that OL is part of the economist trend has led them to other heights of absurdity. Listen to this: "The OL/OC has failed to prepare the conditions for a party of professional revolutionaries and has failed to lead the struggle against backwardness and amateurishness in our movement. In short, they have not prepared the conditions for a decisive victory over the economist and social-democratic tendencies in our movement." (Communist, December 23, 1976) WC talks as if the economist and social-democratic tendencies were mainly outside of OL, and that they have not done enough to defeat them. But the problem with OL is that they themselves are one of the main proponents of these economist and social-democratic deviations. How can you complain that the right wing has not struggled against itself, unless you don't think it's the right wing? To ask that of the right will only build illusions, as if this were some bad policy of theirs, rather than a reflection of their essence. Instead, OL should be exposed as being completely incapable of preparing the conditions for a genuine party, and only capable of building an opportunist, economist, social-democratic party. But WC chooses to cover OL's opportunist nature.

Other slaps on the wrist include saying that OL "vacillates" between Marxism-Leninism and social-chauvinism, and that they show merely "confusion on fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, leading necessarily to social-chauvinism," (Communist, May 7, 1977) as if they haven't already gotten there. But the clearest expression of the nature of their lover's quarrel with OL came soon after the attempts by the WC at patching up their differences with OL were met by laughter and arrogance by the bigger and better organized rightists led by Klonsky. Here is the complaint of the WC:

"A year ago OL spoke of a dozen Marxist-Leninist publications and the need to unite them into one. A year later, the OC has reached none of them. No national communist organization has joined the OC. They boast in The Call about the extra miles they are going to walk in pursuit of unity, but they do not take one step. When asked at a public forum why they have been unable to win any national communist organization to their unity trend, they mumble about being on with the WC. But the OC has taken no single initiative in this respect at any time. The only "on with" involved here is our initiative in setting up a pair of meetings with OL in the face of delay on the part of these mile-walkers. Yet while OL has consistently avoided principled discussion with national leadership for more than a year, they have actively maneuvered to seek our local contacts." (Communist, December 23, 1976)

Besides throwing out the original line of the WC that it was not our whole movement that needed to be unified, but the Leninist trend in opposition to the economist,



rightist trend, this passage is an admission of the history of the WC leaders kissing OL's ass "for more than a year," and of their burning desire to merge with OL and their absolute frustration when their love was spurned. To the WC, the problem with OL is that they will not unite with them. Otherwise, they are alright. Also, although they talk of OL trying to rip off local contacts, never in the pages of The Communist have they mentioned that a Central Committee member of the WC left to join OL. This would burn the last bridge to OL's "party," something the WC leaders desperately do not want to do. It would also embarrass the WC, since this person was more honest than the WC leaders and openly admitted there was no real difference between the lines of OL and WC, and no justification for the existence of the WC outside of OL, save small-circle needs.

So, the WC's soft-peddling of the criticism of OL reveals their common right deviations. Instead of summing this up and launching an ideological rectification campaign to root out the cause of their love affair with OL, the WC leaders still leave the door open for OL to pass through any time they wish. As a result, WC's own right opportunism has stopped it from becoming the ideological leaders of the struggle against right opportunism, and stopped The Communist from becoming the leading organ of the Leninist trend.

Another aspect of their bankruptcy is the continued jamming up of the pages of The Communist with easily available reprints, usually from Peking Review. This is a cheap substitute for doing the ideological work necessary to grasp the international situation, and a direct continuation of their anti-theory activities around May Day in 1976.

Still another feature of their activity has been the drifting from one campaign to another. After their "war is imminent" campaign fizzled when there was no world war, they quietly and quickly dropped that question and ran around with their "deeper into the masses" campaign. Now that appears to have been given a quiet funeral, too. Of course, our criticism of this economist deviation recognized that it was doomed to failure like all other opportunist schemes. Now the WC seems to have embarked upon still another campaign, this time on the polemic on the international situation. Chairman Howard has been giving forums in various cities defending the three worlds theory and their version of it. This is still another get-rich-quick scheme that avoids the serious study and analysis necessary to take a position on the present debate in the international communist movement. His presentations and the similar article in The Communist have mainly been rehashes of Peking Review #45 of 1977, which lays out the position of the Communist Party of China extensively. We will comment more on this debate in the next and future issues of the Red Dawn. For now, we want to emphasize the drifting from one campaign to another by the WC, a reflection of their bowing to spontaneity. Instead of giving their work a planned and conscious character, they tail events and blow with the wind.

The sad result of this is that The Communist has even further deteriorated. It is published irregularly, usually late, and is of mediocre quality. The only thing constant about it is that it is consistently lagging behind events. It is just another run-of-the-mill paper of another run-of-the-mill opportunist group, rather than the scaffolding around which a party can be built. The WC has failed to create an ideological and theoretical center for the Leninist trend. Its inability to use the paper for the ideological work necessary to develop a common line has also prevented it from using the paper as a collective organizer and developing a network of agents around it. They have miserably failed in using the newspaper to build an organization.

Certainly many opportunists will delight in the failures of the Workers' Congress and see this as proof of their economist line that a newspaper cannot build an organization, but only an organization can build a newspaper. But the truth is that the opportunist clique that orchestrated the ruin of the WC never had any intention of carrying out the Iskra plan. It is not as simple as we first thought, and said in our statement, that these forces upheld a correct line only to later abandon it. As we find out more about what really happened in the split in the



tunism was the main danger in the BWC and in support of the Iskra plan more of convenience and for the narrow interests of the advancement of their little e, than out of genuine Marxist-Leninist principle. Control of The Communist have meant control of the BWC. After the split, Don Williams and Kathy ler realized that the promotion of their political careers was not best served aying with such a relatively small and unstable group as the WC. So, especially their affair was uncovered, they tried to get the WC to more openly veer to ight than it did. After that failed, their behavior made their being kicked nevitabile. Howard Engleskirchen chose to stay, having no place else to go with ld clique shattered. We still need to investigate this further, and much al information on the activities of these opportunists has not yet been made able to us. As our comrades formerly of the PSC have said, had we known of his, we, too, would not have joined the WC so quickly and easily. But this was all concealed from us by the opportunists, and only now can we together the pieces. Part of that process will be to publish in the future of the major documents in the split in the BWC, which have been purposely unpublished by various opportunists. At one point, the WC leaders said they going to publish these documents, but never did so. At another point, they it was unnecessary, except in a few places like New York and Los Angeles, people were interested in such matters. This reveals their belittling of y and negating the task of giving nationwide ideological leadership to the ist trend. These documents, if released then, could have played an important in rallying many communists and advanced workers against economism, and in ing the slanders of the anti-lefts in the BWC and PRRWO, as well as all the defenders of opportunism. WC's capitulation to opportunism by keeping these ents unpublished contributed to the degeneration of our movement and the ces made by right opportunism. Others who wanted these documents published o facilities to do so.\* But even though we need to reevaluate some of these ions about the BWC split, all of this in no way will change our view of the validity of the Iskra plan and propoganda as the chief form of activity, and right opportunism was most definitely the main danger in the BWC and the U.S. nist movement, and still is. All this only verifies the accuracy of our analysis of the opportunists in the It must also reinforce and bolster our determination to take up the tasks of ablishing a leading organ and theoretical center for the Leninist trend in the d States.

can make available in limited quantities xerox copies of some of these docu- nts, including "Leninism or Petty-Bourgeois Democracy?" by Don Williams, for r the price of reproducing and mailing it. Readers should inquire from us out details.

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OUR FUNDAMENTAL DISAGREEMENTS WITH THE LIQUIDATIONIST PROPOSAL FOR  
A "COMMON EDITORIAL POLICY"

# NEVER FORGET CLASS STRUGGLE!

July, 1976

Since the Unity Conference, the WC-ML has taken important initial steps in advancing its work. Where the Iskra plan was correctly implemented, as we feel it has been in New York, there were tremendous gains. Several collectives have openly declared their support of the Iskra plan, and have joined in building The Communist. In addition, almost every communist group has had, if only in words, to put forward that propaganda is the chief form of activity, a line only held by us until recently. On the other hand, while there has been forward motion, a rightist, economist line has been trying to drag the organization backwards into worshipping the spontaneous movement and capitulating to opportunism in the communist movement. The struggle against this line, which has been put forward by various forces in various forms, has led to an ongoing internal crisis in the organization. Its growing dominance has forced several important forces out of the organization. It was in this context that we studied the recent proposal "Toward Common Propaganda for the Leninist Trend."

This proposal promises to fulfill a much-needed task, to "aggressively deepen and develop our line around party-building." Yet instead of correctly analyzing the root of our errors and laying out a plan to advance, this proposal, as we will show, actually reverses our organization's line on a number of key points, especially around implementation of the Iskra plan. It has become one of the clearest expressions of the right deviationist line in our own ranks and has been vigorously promoted by our main proponents of petty-bourgeois democracy, and especially by Howard Engleskirchen, who made this proposal, and who has become the chief spokesman for opportunism in the WC-ML.

1) Howard's proposal makes a straight-up capitulation with the line of "political line is the key link to party-building." It says that we can develop a "common editorial policy" that would facilitate having one editorial board in the future attaining unity on one given political "issue" or question at a time. This position attempts to have us overlook the present ideological backwardness of the forces mentioned. Their ideological errors are the basis and lie at the root of their political and organizational errors, not just in their statements, but also in their practical activity. Howard's views on the groups that are, or formerly were, in the "revolutionary wing" idealistically ignore the present political



dishonesty and corruption of these forces. If we were to present this policy to them, they would laugh in our faces, even if we abandoned our present views. Even if this editorial policy were possible, it would only lead to another unholy alliance like the "revolutionary wing." Howard doesn't want us to demand from these forces that they change their present erroneous ideological stance before we can unite and publish a common organ. But as Lenin said:

"Before we can unite, and in order that we may unite, we must first of all firmly and definitely draw the lines of demarcation between the various groups. Otherwise, our unity will be merely a fictitious unity, which will conceal the prevailing confusion and prevent its dispersion."  
(Declaration by the Editorial Board of Iskra)

Howard's position, in essence, agrees with the line that an ideological break has already been made with revisionism, and that the chief focus should be on developing and debating political line. It bows to all sorts of lines previously defeated in our organization. For example, it says on page five that many groups spontaneously adopted the line of the Communist Party of China against revisionism in Angola, negating the struggle in the old Black Workers' Congress against saying that revisionism can be overcome spontaneously ("Leninism and Petty-Bourgeois Democracy," p. 4-5.) It nowhere lays out a concrete analysis of trends in the communist movement, and does not attempt to analyze the recent developments, especially those of forces we were formerly closer to, who have strayed from the Leninist path of party building, like Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers' Organization, August Twenty-Ninth Movement, and Workers' Viewpoint Organization. What is presented here is really a cover-up of the ideological chaos and the present dominance of economism and revisionism in our movement -- an attempt to "conceal the prevailing confusion and prevent its dispersion." Remember that when Iskra attempted to unite with Rabochaya Dyelo, the genuine forces insisted on a complete repudiation of all opportunism, and not some "common editorial policy" full of compromises on principle. (See the appendix to What Is To Be Done?) But instead of following Lenin's example and demanding that these other forces abandon their present views on party building, including their attack on the Iskra plan as "dogmatic," and "ultra-'left,'" Howard wants to capitulate to them and liquidate the ideological struggle against their incorrect lines.

2) Howard's proposal liquidates the work of The Communist in its role as the leading instrument in the struggle for an Iskra-type newspaper. In essence, this is the liquidationist position criticized at our Unity Conference, which raised that every group should develop an Iskra-type paper of its own. Howard proposes an evolutionary process for arriving at unity of Marxist-Leninists by say, "Four newspapers of different organizations could be regularly distributed and used by four organizations as well as by independent collectives, etc." While it would not be hard to organize common exchange and distribution of papers, can or should the distribution of four papers serve not only the tasks of collective propagandist and collective agitator, but also of a collective organizer? What "four papers" are you talking about, anyway? The Call? August Twenty-Ninth Movement's paper? Workers' Viewpoint's? Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee's? Congress of African People's paper? Comrades, how can we expect to use these papers, which are still mainly local, economist, and have many revisionist stands, to organize the network of agents from among the advanced workers and revolutionary intellectuals, and to train them to become leaders in building the party? How could these papers be used to lead the fight against right opportunism or prepare for the calling of a party congress? Iskra was the collective organizer for the revolutionary trend within Marxism. It developed in opposition to the economists of its day, their October Leagues and Revolutionary Unions, and attempted to win over their vacillators, their August Twenty-Ninth Movements and Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committees. Our task must be to fight like hell to build The Communist into the leading paper



and build around it the leading organization, winning to our side and line as many Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers as possible, and laying the basis for a founding party congress, as Iskra did. Yet the liquidation of the existence of trends, especially ignoring the confusion, disunity, and opportunism of forces such as August Twenty-Ninth Movement and Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers' Organization, leads to an idealist plan that throws out the history of the development of differences among these forces, resulting in their inability to cooperate closely among themselves or with us. At one time, Black Workers' Congress, Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers' Organization, August Twenty-Ninth Movement and others were developing into one common Leninist trend. Their embryonic unity was a result of their joint struggle against the right line of Revolutionary Union and the "left" line of Communist League. Yet since that time, many of these forces have gone astray, having been unable to consolidate their gains. Some vacillate on key questions of party building (August Twenty-Ninth Movement), while others have landed squarely in the marsh (what's left of Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers' Organization). In short, they play new roles today, and must be judged accordingly.

Along with this, it is a fact that you will get no one with any sense at all to distribute Palante (PRRWO's paper) unless to expose it for the rag it has become. These differences must be overcome first, not by the evolutionary method of agreeing point by point, but by seeking a radical rupture with opportunism and revisionism. Yet Howard wants evolution and not revolution, which is violent, ruthless and bloody. Our unity with these forces can only be on the basis of clearly drawn lines of demarcation, and not some least-common-denominator gimmick. Howard's proposal actually boils down to a return to reliance on coalitions as the chief method to build the party, although he has refrained from calling his plan of "joint consultations" and "unity of action" what it really is.

3) Howard degenerates to the level of a "creative" Marxist with his editorial policy. Nowhere can he find a clear example from Lenin to justify his new line. All he can do is attempt to "reinterpret" Lenin, or cite some unstated "new conditions," to attempt to render Lenin more profound. But what Lenin did say in such articles as "Declaration by the Editorial Board of Iskra," which united a number of circles and individuals to form an editorial board and build a network of agents, was that the paper should not be a storehouse of views but represent a definite trend. Lenin says it must be used to draw clear lines of demarcation, and not blur them. Now, as for the content of Howard's proposed paper, what little is offered in the proposal clearly shows that the author has no intention of taking up a sharp struggle against opportunism. We are told that the discussion around the other groups' papers should not go "into detail on every article." Instead, the focus is on unity as the key link, on writing articles on the international situation, where our differences are least. Class struggle on line as the basis for principled unity is replaced by class peace and unprincipled compromise. Howard nowhere even says who we should invite or exclude from his proposed venture, what we should do if forces which we want, would like to include forces which we oppose; if forces we want to include would like to exclude others whom we want to include; how we could have a viable and useful organ with diametrically opposed lines on such key questions as the role of propaganda, economism, busing, etc., etc. What we get is some idle dreaming that blurs the lines of demarcation and in no way helps us sort out the genuine from the sham. We are presented with three easy steps for unity that do not correspond to the depth of opportunism in the communist movement. No ideological break, no radical rupture with the past, just some meetings and general agreements that do not go "into detail on every point" and, poof! like magic, there is unity. It is clear this plan is not about our winning over these other forces, but is actually about Howard being won over by them, and wanting to drag the rest of the organization with him. The result of the "creative"



approach of Howard is, like all other attempts at revising Marxism-Leninism under the guise of "new conditions," ripping out the revolutionary heart from the Iskra plan by turning it from a plan for class struggle in the communist movement into a plan for conciliation with opportunism and blurring the lines of demarcation.

4) Howard's proposal is closely related to Kathy Chandler's attempt to change our line and drag us back into the marsh. His defense of Kathy Chandler and insistence that she be placed on the Central Committee is not isolated from the fact that they stand on common soil in opposing the fight for the leading role of The Communist, in conciliating to opportunism by painting the petty-bourgeois democrats of our movement in shining colors, by proposing idealist shortcuts instead of a practical plan to overcome the opportunism and disunity of our movement, and by replacing the Iskra plan with all sorts of "joint consultations" and coalitions to build the party. Both Howard and Kathy Chandler are right deviationist elements. Howard even wanted to ram his proposal down the throats of the organization by sending out letters to other groups, including the petty-bourgeois democrats of OL, announcing that this was our line, before the Central Committee had discussed or adopted the proposal. Fortunately, at that time, he was held back by two other members of the Political Standing Committee (PSC). Since then, these two comrades have left the organization because of the opportunism of the remaining PSC members. The reckless path taken by both Howard and Kathy Chandler, with each maneuvering in an unprincipled manner for their own ends, is an organizational reflection of their opportunism on ideological and political lines.

5) Unlike Howard, we state proudly and boldly that we still uphold the Iskra plan and the line of our organization adopted at our Unity Conference. Stalin wrote in Foundations of Leninism that the establishment of Iskra was the main link and main task for the Bolsheviks in forming their party, and put the question of determining the main link under the heading of tactical leadership (P. 95-7). We still affirm that the establishment of an Iskra-type newspaper is the main link for U.S. Marxist-Leninists to accomplish the task of building a party. Yet Howard's proposed paper, as we have shown, is clearly not an Iskra-type paper, but a "storehouse of views," a collective confuser that rests on the shaky foundation of unprincipled peace between opposing lines. Howard, in his demagogic rush to get his plan adopted, compares those who oppose his opportunist plan to the rightist Workers' Viewpoint Organization, who according to Howard, want to apply the lessons of What Is To Be Done? regarding Iskra to the U.S. by trying "to build a single newspaper into such an organ." Howard's response is "to jointly struggle to build a common organ." (p. 3) But Howard's criticisms of Workers' Viewpoint Organization totally miss the mark. For one thing, WVO does not just build its own paper, but tries to merge with other circles and groups (Revolutionary Workers' League even wanted to merge with them at one time). But WVO's errors are that they don't make propaganda their chief form of activity; that their main form of activity is putting our economist agitational garbage through their paper "coalitions"; that the line they are building their paper and organization around is incorrect; that they tail the advanced; and that they promote an American-exceptionalist line and plan of building the party around their "anti-revisionist premises." Howard gives them a lot more credit than they deserve by singling out their opposition to a joint paper as their chief deviation from What Is To Be Done? which WVO doesn't even recognize as the "ideological" foundation for the Marxist party. Again, a cheap cover-up of opportunism. WVO has never stood for an Iskra-type paper, and never will, until they break with their present opportunist line. By incorrectly criticizing WVO, Howard shows that he cannot distinguish between WVO's economist sheet and what an Iskra-type paper would really be. So much for Howard's conception of a genuine Iskra-type paper.

6) Our views on how to "aggressively deepen and develop our line around party-



building," unlike Howard's are based on an orthodox adherence to Lenin's line on party-building as applicable today, and recognition of our party-building resolutions as basically adequate as a guide to action, without needing any "creative" or "new" formulations. What we need to do is persist in our original plan, and not give up or "capitulate to difficulties" just because the world has not dropped at our feet after putting out the paper for the short time we have. Yet Howard, in a fashion typical of the petty bourgeoisie, has no faith in the ability of The Communist to build that network of agents to form the party, and is attempting to get the organization to cater to his petty-bourgeois demoralization by implementing his liquidationist proposal. Instead of being resolute and firm like a true bolshevik should be, Howard has cried out, "Difficulties have set in. Is it not time to quit?" If you want to quit, then go ahead, for no one is stopping you. But as for us, we intend to press on.

It is significant that Howard's plan ignores the question of winning the advanced workers ideologically to communism. In the past, we boldly and properly declared that this was central to party building. Now, this new "deepening" of our line drops this almost entirely. The PSC should be giving leadership in doing a sum-up of our progress, or lack of it, in developing propaganda circles and networks of agents; and of training revolutionary leaders from among the advanced; instead of dreaming up some crazy, unworkable plan as they have. The PSC's specific guidance to the organization had already for months been veering away from the Iskra plan. For example, it encouraged a loose "friends of The Communist" in New York, along the lines of the "discussion meetings" Lenin called "wholly unnecessary" in "A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organizational Tasks," because they liquidated the task of building factory nuclei. This group was supposed to be composed only of intellectuals, separated from the advanced workers. And it also was an attempt at undermining the formation of centralized organization and the leadership at the local level because the PSC wanted this group to maintain independent contact, and file its own reports with the center, instead of being under the direct leadership and guidance of the New York district. All this violates Lenin's "Letter to a Comrade." Although our district sent in a report in early March summing up this plan as a deviation from the Iskra plan, we have to this day received no evaluation of our report. Now, instead of properly concentrating the views and experiences of the districts, the PSC is continuing its march away from the burning task of winning the advanced workers to communism. And instead of intensifying and rectifying our work in implementing the Iskra plan, we get calls for national campaigns on the auto contract, for "hospital work," and to "go to the masses." Leading and summing up the work of winning the advanced has over a period of time become of little importance to the PSC; worshipping the mass movement and every strike has now captured their attention. Howard's plan is a continuation in downplaying our work to win the advanced workers and build factory nuclei.

7) What methods should we use to seek unity with other forces, like August Twenty-Ninth Movement, I Wor Kuen, etc.? Certainly, where it is possible, we should initiate or participate in various forms of joint action with these forces. But what Howard leaves out is that the basis of our work with them is the development of our own independent communist policy towards them specifically, an evaluation of the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political lines. To aggressively seek unity, we must aggressively overcome the obstacles of opportunism that today stand in the way of unity -- and that means drawing clear lines of demarcation between what is genuine and sham in each of them. Further, in order to strive to forge principled unity with these forces, we must wage open polemics that in a comradely and straightforward way, lay out our criticisms of them. This, of course, was forcefully advocated by Lenin for Iskra.

Since the author and promoters of this proposal have been running The Communist, however, what we have seen is a steady phasing-out of polemics and exposures of



the other forces. We print an article by Proletarian Unity League on the October  
 ue without comment, even though the Proletarian Unity League holds that the  
 t" is the main danger, and upholds the white-skin privilege theory. We get  
 nce on the sharp debates on some burning questions: who are the advanced,  
 ds, October League's "new" plan for the party, periods in the communist move-  
 , etc. The "revolutionary wing" collapses before our very eyes, yet our editors  
 with folded arms, content to let these important events pass unnoticed. We  
 d go on and on. But what is clear is that what we are getting already, even  
 re this proposal is implemented, is an opportunist class peace and a miserably  
ive lagging behind events in the communist movement.

In order to facilitate the work of establishing a U.S. Iskra, we must seek to  
 e with those forces already closest to us and to win new forces, especially  
 among the advanced workers, to our side. Towards this end, we must aim for  
 tionwide conference of delegates to build The Communist.\* This conference  
 ld elect an editorial board. The paper must strive to become the organ of the  
 re Leninist trend. The paper must be used to wage open and comradely polemics  
 in the Leninist trend in order to arrive at principled unity. As Lenin said  
 is Iskra declaration statement:

"...the intellectual unity of Russian Social-Democrats has still  
 to be established, and in order to achieve this it is necessary, in  
 our opinion, to have an open and thorough discussion of the fundamental  
principles and tactical questions raised by the present-day Economists,  
 revisionists, and 'critics'... But while discussing all questions from  
 our own definite point of view, we shall geve space in our columns to  
 polemics between comrades. Open polemics with the sight and hearing of  
 all Russian Social-Democrats and class-conscious workers are necessary  
 and desirable, in order to explain the profound differences that exist,  
 to obtain a comprehensive discussion of disputed questions, and to  
 combat the extremes into which not only the representatives of various  
 views, but also of various localities or various 'crafts' in the revo-  
 lutionary movement inevitably fall."

of course, the paper's main content must still be propoganda, through political  
 sures. The paper must clearly distinguish in its pages between which articles  
 resent the WC line, and which are from contributors, a practice not followed by  
 present editors of The Communist. We must strive to develop and expand our  
 work of agents around the paper, as the communists of Lenin's day did. And, as  
 of this plan, preparations must be made for a companion theoretical journal,  
 as Zarya was to Iskra. In order to fulfill our tasks, including defeating  
 rooting out the opportunist line behind Howard's proposal, we need more theoret-  
 al work than has already been done, and that can't be done through a newspaper  
 ie.

his coincides with the proposals in "Why the Red Dawn?" We always insisted on  
 he need for a high level of ideological and political unity at such a conference.  
 his should not be confused with our proposal to the Central Committee that  
 nother conference of the entire Workers' Congress be convened to deal with the  
 wo-line struggle.

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# Letter of Resignation from the W.C.

by former members  
of the political standing  
committee

April, 1976

"There are true and false friends. But through practice one  
can tell the true from the false." Mao Tsetung

Comrades, on April 17, 1976, we formally submitted our resignations from the Political Standing Committee (PSC) and the Central Committee of the WC-ML. In our brief letters we identified our main reasons as being our inability to unite with and support the resolutions of the last plenary session of the Central Committee, i.e., the decisions made regarding Kathy Chandler, and the character of the internal life of the PSC. We added that there were other contradictions, some intertwined to the forementioned two, that made it impossible to carry out our work in a bolshevik style.

From the outset, we would like to make it clear that we have fought vigorously and enthusiastically for what we maintain has been a correct Marxist-Leninist stand on the key questions facing the WC-ML and the communist movement in general. In this document, we will not attempt to speak to each and every question that was a focus of struggle between the present PSC members and ourselves. We will discuss however, several of the most important questions -- democratic centralism, the fundamental principle of party-building, criticism-self-criticism, the Iskra Platform and the Iskra organization, and issues surrounding questions of liberalism and political dishonesty. We will also show how our communist stand brought us into sharp conflict with the petty-bourgeois democratic viewpoint embraced by our counterparts on the PSC, and we will conclude by exposing the philosophical basis of the political line put forward by Howard Engleskirchen and A.

First of all, however, we would like to provide comrades with a capsule summary of the early development of the WC-ML and examine some of the initial roadblocks that confronted the PSC at its inception.

Following the split in the Black Workers' Congress, a steel-to-steel struggle was waged to divorce ourselves from the economist and right opportunist influence that had retarded our ability to move forward as communists and provide overall leadership and direction for the Leninist trend. Such notable forces as the Revolutionary Workers' Congress, the October League, and most recently the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers' Organization, labeled us everything from Trotskyists



and professional wreckers to police agents. We are sure that all comrades are quite familiar with this epoch in our historical development, so it is really unnecessary to review all of the details. The significant thing is that despite our own amateurishness and right opportunist baggage, we were able to publish The Communist once every three weeks and eventually convened a unity conference that formally gave birth to the WC-ML.

Although many comrades were exhausted from the time and energy expended to continue all of the best traditions of the Black Workers' Congress, we were confident that with patience, discipline, and a revitalized commitment to proletarian socialist revolution, we could, with hard work, bring into being a new, multinational communist party. At the same time, we also realized that the influence of bourgeois revisionist ideology, the main danger in the communist movement today, was a mighty barrier, especially in the U.S., a citadel of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The most blatant indication of the impact of bourgeois ideology was reflected at the Unity Conference where it was revealed that two leading cadre of our new organization, Don Williams and Kathy Chandler, had been engaging in a decadent bourgeois adulterous relationship for two years, and that as a consequence of its exposure and the failure of the Detroit Committee to deal decisively with this issue, B., also a leading member of the WC-ML, had threatened to resign. Everyone can recall how nonchalantly this serious issue was handled by Don Williams and Kathy Chandler's vague promises that the situation would be handled correctly, and finally Howard Engleskirchen's comment saying that "we had turned the corner on the woman question and proletarian morality." And although Don Williams and Kathy Chandler had initially been assigned the task for the Unity Conference itself, they were reassigned the responsibility to complete a full criticism and self-criticism of their bourgeois activity prior to the first plenary session of the Central Committee which was to take place at the end of September.

During the month and a half that elapsed between the Unity Conference and the first Central Committee meeting, Don Williams and Kathy Chandler maintained their bourgeois relationship. While Kathy Chandler continued to work consistently on the production of the newspaper, Don Williams steadily retrogressed. By this time, Don Williams was quite ill from a condition that eventually resulted in him spending nearly a week in the hospital for an operation and recovery. His condition was further complicated by the fact that he had been drinking quite heavily to the point that it was necessary for him to abandon his political work, turning the leadership of the organization over to Howard, until the first plenary session of the new Central Committee.

At the first CC meeting, part of the story came out regarding the overall situation in Detroit -- the contradictions in the Detroit district, the lack of leadership provided by the Detroit Committee, and the destructive relationship of Don Williams and Kathy Chandler and its detrimental effects on B., in specific. We say part or at the most a significant portion of the story because we are convinced that the whole story, particularly B.'s and C.'s side, has yet to be told. We have had access to more information than most comrades in the organization, and one thing that is for sure is that the so-called leadership provided by Don Williams, Kathy Chandler, and Howard Engleskirchen, three supposedly "leading members" of the WC-ML, fell far short of the bolshevik standard required to build and guide a communist organization. It was their lack of leadership, their petty-bourgeois individualism, their wavering on Leninist principles of organization, compounded by the instability and right opportunist tendencies of other comrades that led to the decline and fall of the Detroit District. As our comrades on the PSC say, "It is the task of leadership to lead," and as we will see later from the Detroit District, to the Chicago District, to the PSC and the Central Committee, Don Williams, Kathy Chandler, and their staunch defender, Howard, have done everything but "lead." Instead of fully repudiating their errors of the previous period and striving to transform their practice, Don Williams and Kathy Chandler have continued their



behavior that the Central Committee characterized as: "limiting our ability to win over honest forces in the Black Workers' Congress and led some comrades to mistrust the leadership of Don Williams." This problem carried over to the WC-ML and corroded and corrupted our collective life... contributed "to a lack of confidence among the masses in our leadership" and restricted "our influence and ability to win the advanced." (Minutes of 1st Plenary Session of Central Committee, p. 4)

During the period of time from the Unity Conference to the formal establishment of the PSC, there were errors committed that have since set into motion additional contradictions, that as a body have hindered the development of the WC-ML. The first error was our failure to objectively examine the nature of the Detroit Committee and primarily the degenerate character of the leadership, by focusing in more sharply on the adulterous relationship of Don Williams and Kathy Chandler. We both would like to say now that if we had understood the real nature of both this relationship and the destructive activity of the Detroit leadership, in general, we would not have, so readily, joined the organization. However, we did not align ourselves with these forces because of any allegiance to individuals, but because we assumed that since they, too, put forth a generally proletarian line, their interests were in harmony with our, i.e., with the oppressed masses. We were wrong!! And since we were mistaken, what we did in effect, was to try to build an organizational leadership on decadence, decay, and dishonesty, rather than investing in the strength and capacity of the genuine and principled forces in the organization. Coming as it did at the very end of the Unity Conference, the exposure around Don Williams' and Kathy Chandler's affair, the effects were minimized in a conscious cover-up, both by Don Williams and Kathy Chandler and Howard Engleskirchen, as well as the entire Detroit district committee. This group, in its silence, perpetrated destructive conspiracy that was already beginning to influence our direction. Genuine comrades in this organization were being deceived on every hand, by so-called well-meaning individuals, who felt that the cover-up was protecting the reputation of the newly-developing organization.

The question of the relationship that had existed between Don and Kathy was a manifestation in embryonic form of the relationship that the Central Committee was at its first session to set up between these two elements and the organization. Both Don Williams and Kathy Chandler should, of right, have been suspended or purged from the organization no matter how incomplete our line was on the Woman Question, since its main character was the dishonesty, arrogance and bourgeois degeneracy it manifested. Yet the Central Committee, which included ourselves, slapped the back of the hands of these two comrades by putting one on probation from the Central Committee (virtually promising reinstatement in that body) and suspended the other from the Central Committee as his crimes manifested grievous crimes against women, i.e., the principal aspect of the contradiction. Clearly, the contradiction that should have been weighed, was the contradiction between these two forces and the entire organization, B., and the multinational working class. If we had considered this contradiction in the primary light it deserved, our task would have been clear -- suspension from the organization for both these elements. They were at that time and are to this very day interested not in the collective forward motion and growth of the WC-ML, but in their own selfish interests. Even though there have been declarations to the contrary from both of these comrades, and Howard Engleskirchen, who has remained their ally in his unprincipled vacillation, liberalism, and blind support of these forces, this is still the case.

What we want to point out here is that **everything** is determined by the principle contradiction in a thing. Thus, the Workers' Congress development was influenced by the contradiction that existed between the destructive behavior manifested by these comrades and their right opportunist allies on the one hand, and the genuine comrades who were dedicated to building a disciplined organization capable of forging the new communist party on the other hand. The abilities, then, of



either of these comrades to give communist leadership must be analyzed in the context of their history and their influence on comrades in the organization. At the first Central Committee meeting, everyone spoke to both Kathy Chandler's and Don Williams' history in the communist movement and focused particularly on the positive contributions they had made to the development of the WC-ML.\* Far too little attention was paid to their negative traits, how both comrades were compromised in the course of the struggle in the Black Workers' Congress and in their ability to wage struggle against petty-bourgeois opportunism. (See C.C. Minutes) It is this contradiction that has continued to influence our motion during this period, i.e., the strivings of these two forces and their allies to seek their own ends versus the infant strivings of the Workers' Congress to win millions to the side of communism.

"The issues around this comrade (Don Williams) and his activity have consumed more time than any other topic of discussion (other than the newspaper) by the PSC, up until last month, has at certain times undermined the unity within the PSC, and has served to divert the work of the local district." (PSC Self-Criticism, p. 5)

And, once again, talking about Don Williams (we would add Kathy Chandler) the PSC Self-Criticism states, "The struggle has consumed an enormous amount of time and energy of the PSC at the expense of our many tasks" -- primary of which was to construct a strong center and consolidate the collectives that composed the WC-ML. Yet for reasons we will examine shortly, Howard and A. have done almost everything imaginable to sacrifice the interests of the entire organization in order to save at least one of these forces, Kathy Chandler.

DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AND DISCIPLINE

At the first plenary session of the Central Committee, "comrades agreed that the fight against liberalism and petty bourgeois opportunism had to be ruthlessly waged, and especially among our leadership, if we were to successfully bolshevize the ranks -- there can be no double standards." In this section we will review the practice of Don Williams and Kathy Chandler since that meeting and the attitude taken towards their behavior by Howard and A.

In the first of a series of meetings with Don Williams, we took up his request for the PSC to lift the ban on his drinking. Don Williams felt the ban was "wrong because it made him look like a cripple and hampered his political work." We refused his request, only to find out later that he had in fact been drinking ever since the Central Committee meeting. This was exposed when the people with whom he was staying discovered several partially filled and empty liquor bottles hidden at different locations in their apartment. And as a result of this obvious hypocrisy and dishonesty, Don Williams was issued a serious warning by the PSC. A second confrontation between Williams and the PSC came about as a consequence of a struggle that erupted in the Chicago district over the plan and direction for the work of that collective. Of particular concern was a plan for a party or workers' school, proposed by Don Williams and supported by Kathy Chandler. Although the proposal was rescinded by the PSC because of its dominant social-democratic character, at two consecutive meetings in the district, sharp struggle ensued. The first meeting concluded abruptly when the district chair became angered during the heat of debate, and the second meeting also ended early when Don Williams charged that the contradictions which arose in the first meeting were not being placed squarely on the table to be resolved. As a result, Don Williams declared that he would not fulfill his responsibilities until these problems were dealt with

\* Don Williams had a long history in the BWC. Kathy Chandler had been a leading member of the RU. Don was a member of the secretariat of the BWC.



thoroughly. Thus, it was on the basis of Don Williams' refusal to carry out his political work that he was removed from the district's life.

During the course of further consultations with Don Williams, three in all, Williams expressed his disagreement with our analysis of his first self-criticism paper, as well as with the manner in which we were dealing with him, characterizing our method as "all wrong and representing formalism." He stated that he disagreed with our decision to rescind the party school, said we had a sectarian attitude towards the October League and the Communist Party of Canada (M-L),\* and continued by declaring that the "PSC had no organizational direction, and that he had a totally different conception of how to proceed, that the PSC had abandoned national activity for integration into the Chicago district, and that we had failed to provide the WC with any overall guidance." He went on to accuse the PSC of being "afraid to lose its leadership because of its phobia and sense of self-righteousness." And finally, Don Williams concluded by stating that the PSC was "racked with petty-bourgeois democracy and that we were the same as the old ISC, although the material basis was different." (Note: The ISC, or Interim Steering Committee was a temporary leading body of the BWC during its political and organizational crisis.) After concluding his attack on the PSC, Don Williams requested a leave of absence from the organization because of "his political differences with the PSC, his inability to function under its leadership, and his desire to spare the WC(M-L) from a bitter struggle."

This aforementioned meeting was the final in about a half dozen sessions between Don Williams and the full PSC. What occurred in the meeting described above is reflective of the dominant character of all those meetings which began with his request for us to remove the ban on his drinking and ended with his request to be given a leave of absence from the organization. Although from time to time he gave lip service to having unity with the PSC and the Central Committee, no sooner were those words out than they were followed by contradictory words and deeds. Thus, we felt it would be the height of folly to attempt to continue to try to engage in principled ideological struggle with someone who had repeatedly refused to boldly and resolutely repudiate his errors but instead unleashed unprincipled attacks on the PSC, maintained a virtual position of all struggle and no unity and had once again abandoned his political work. And furthermore, when criticized for such philistine behavior, he stooped to the old trick of crying personal attack, claiming to be hurt or injured, or retaliated with criticisms based primarily in personal considerations rather than in forwarding the collective growth of the organization. Hence, it was our position that Don Williams should be immediately suspended.

Well, although it was generally agreed that a leave of absence was out of the question, there was not agreement that the comrade should be suspended. A., who had from time to time expressed the opinion that Don Williams should be purged, stated that Don Williams should be suspended, but "not right now." Howard, on the other hand, would have nothing to do with suspension, and thus, suggested that we should continue to wage ideological struggle with Don Williams, while insisting that he carry out the other tasks assigned to him. During the course of several sharp struggles around this topic, we stuck to our position, while Howard and A. wavered back and forth until they united on a position that committed the PSC to a course of bourgeois debate and compromised our ability to provide strong leadership and insist on "unity of will and unity of action of all Party members... without which neither Party unity nor iron discipline in the party is conceivable." (Stalin, Foundations of Leninism, p. 114)

At every step along the way that the PSC attempted to carry out its primary responsibility to build the center and provide overall direction for the WC, it

\* Communist Party of Canada (M-L) is a fraternal organization of the Central Organization of U.S. Marxist-Leninists (COUSML).



was consistently delayed by its differences on how to deal with Don Williams and Kathy Chandler, and the intertwined questions of how to construct a disciplined communist organization, in general. The PSC took up the question of Don Williams once again after he failed to meet his deadline to submit a new self-criticism. It was our position that Don Williams' failure to do a new self-criticism and his continued flouting of the discipline of the PSC had to result in suspension from the WC. For us the words of the first plenary of the Central Committee rang clear: "we must consider no leader indispensable if he fails to meet bolshevik standards and that strong discipline was required if leadership was to be in a position to forcefully carry forward the struggle to bolshevize our ranks." (Central Committee Minutes, p. 4) Evidently, Howard and A. did not hear as well as we did for they disagreed with our proposal, saying that the issue related to "not a question of principle, but to a tactical question and one of political judgment," and in opposing our correct stand they added that "we had to prepare the Central Committee before suspending Don Williams."

Comrades, as we stated in the introduction, this struggle around Don Williams' role in the WC represented just one in a number of debates in connection with topics of both major and minor concern. However, one thing that became obvious at this juncture, if not earlier, was that there was a two-line struggle in the PSC. There was no way in the world that we could have so many differences on such a variety of questions without this being the case. Particularly as regards the principle of democratic centralism, the cornerstone of party-building, there was a

"conflict between autonomism and centralism, between democracy and "bureaucracy", between the tendency to relax and the tendency to tighten organization and discipline, between the mentality of the unstable intellectual and that of the staunch proletarian, between intellectualist individualism and proletarian solidarity."

(Lenin, One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, P. 198)

As we will see, this right deviationist tendency, this philosophy of tailism in matters of organization, was repeated again and again, but first we will examine their three part proposal on how to deal with Don Williams: 1) that we had to prepare the Central Committee, 2) it was a question of tactics and 3) a question of political judgement.

A. and Howard's creative thesis flies in the face of the resolutions of the first plenary session of the Central Committee stating the the "PSC was to serve as the day-to-day practical and political leadership of the organization when the Central Committee was not in session." And further,

"when the Central Committee is not in session the PSC centralizes the collective of the Central Committee and exercises the functions and powers of the Central Committee, and the PSC has the power to issue binding directives to every Central Committee member and every member of the WC(M-L)." (Central Committee Minutes p. 4)

It is quite interesting that these two comrades would assume such a hypocritical, vacillating and spineless posture in light of the fact it was they who fought so relentlessly and vigorously at the first Central Committee meeting for the full and unchallengeable authority of the PSC. As a result, the comrades, B. in particular, who wanted to place certain restrictions and qualifications on upholding directives of the PSC were criticized and the Central Committee as a whole agreed that "the PSC, in every instance has the full authority of the Central Committee itself, whether exercised well or badly."

Hence, comrades, there is no question of whether the PSC had the power to suspend Don Williams. We had not only the right and the power, most importantly, we had the responsibility, because the comrade had continued his petty-bourgeois individualistic activity, had made no serious efforts to transform, and had violated a fundamental principle of communist organization by failing to "be bold in making criticism-self-criticism." (Article 3 of the Constitution of the Communist Party



of China) And finally, too much time had already been spent trying to rehabilitate this element to the detriment of the advanced cadre in the districts who were trying to implement our line and sink firm and deep roots among the industrial proletariat. We argued and pleaded that we had to be decisive and firm, lest we prolong the struggle, further compromise our leadership, and neglect the rank-and-file, who were crying for direction.

A. and Howard's insistence that whether to discipline Don Williams was a question of tactics in light of the principles involved is a blatant reflection of how petty-bourgeois democrats bastardize the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism. To paraphrase Marx, communists may compromise on tactics, but they never compromise on principles. And, as Chairman Mao teaches, the question of discipline is inseparably bound up to the principle of democratic centralism:

"Both democracy and freedom are relative, not absolute, and they come into being and develop in specific historical conditions. Within the ranks of the people, democracy is correlative with centralism and freedom with discipline. They are the two opposites of a single entity, contradictory as well as united, and should not one-sidedly emphasize one to the denial of the other. Within the ranks of the people, we cannot do without freedom, nor can we do without discipline; we cannot do without democracy, nor can we do without centralism. This unity of democracy and centralism, of freedom and discipline, constitutes our democratic centralism." (Mao, Selected Readings, p. 438)

Although we have from Day One recognized the importance of a new communist organization to be built on a strong foundation cemented by centralism, Howard and A. have fought for, in practice, a loose, amorphous and ultra-democratic organization. It has been their lack of firmness on Leninist principles, their petty-bourgeois wavering, and their liberalism, that extended Don Williams' political career in the WC, deadlocked the PSC, and contributed to its stagnation and eventual degeneration.

Side by side with their right opportunist and conciliatory attitude toward Don Williams, went an equally capitulationist stand taken on Kathy Chandler. Although she has given lip service to repudiating her petty-bourgeois individualism, political dishonesty, and white national chauvinism, her practice in the recent period has reflected a continuation of that activity. Earlier, we presented some of our views regarding Kathy Chandler; here, we will summarize our position of why she should not have been restored to the Central Committee and later we will review several incidents that have occurred since the second plenary session of the Central Committee, that only reinforce our views. In the main, Kathy Chandler has contributed to Don Williams' disruptive activity. That is precisely why it was such a farce and a mockery at the last Central Committee meeting when Howard suggested that we do "a scientific investigation of Don Williams' practice and that Kathy Chandler should be relied on to bring Don Williams forward." In almost every point of difference between the PSC and the comrade, Kathy Chandler stood solidly with Don Williams in opposition to her own primary collective. She supported with Don Williams the proposal for the workers' school even after the PSC rescinded it. When he abandoned his work in the district, she continually raised questions in the district regarding why he had not been reintegrated into the work. In a meeting prior to the extension of her probation she was warned against raising questions that should have been discussed first among Central Committee members, but afterwards she persisted in violating the directive of the PSC. Based on regular reports from A. and his wife, who was the district chair, we know that Kathy Chandler took on little initiative to develop the local work, but instead played a divisive role here. Of particular importance, however, was the halfhearted manner in which she chose to move in rectifying the errors of the previous period. In fact, during the three month period of her initial probation, she failed miserably in carrying out the tasks assigned to her by the Central Committee and the PSC. As a result,



a proposal was made to extend her probation. Although we cannot go into all the details of the debate here, the general thrust of it was quite revealing. Howard opposed the continuation of Kathy Chandler's probation on the grounds that "she had made an effort to carry out the tasks, that the decision to extend was contrary to the line of the Central Committee, and finally since our performance had not been all that good, it would be bad political judgment to take such action." Initially A. had a very hard and firm position. For some time he had suspected Kathy Chandler and Don Williams of factionalizing and had even suggested that Kathy Chandler be removed from the Central Committee, then. However, as the struggle proceeded, A., as usual, began to vacillate. This was Howard's cue, for when he saw that the extension of probation was imminent, he did the next best thing -- unite and take the lead in drafting a proposal that would be watered down and imply that the PSC needed more time to investigate the situation, as occurred recently with Don Williams.

The most vivid indication of Kathy Chandler's determination not to abide by the directives of the Central Committee was her failure to make any attempt to build a firm political relationship with B. While she admitted that she helped destroy the relationship between Don Williams and B., because the relationship with Don Williams was something "I just wanted," she still claimed she had "political respect" for B. Nevertheless, at no time from the Unity Conference to the last Central Committee meeting, did she make any effort to resolve the contradictions between B. and herself. Although she was instructed by the PSC to write the comrade and go visit her in Detroit, neither was done. A contributing factor to this failure was Howard's instruction that "she need not bother because it would not make any difference anyway," but, in the main, this lack of concern is indicative of her lingering white national chauvinist sentiments. Kathy Chandler felt that "90% of the Black women in the WC(M-L) did not trust her." Although she has since denied making the statement, her denials will not erase the words that were spoken. Such a view is not only subjective, but it also belittles the consciousness of Black women, and projects narrow nationalism, instead of white national chauvinism, as the primary obstacle to the ironclad unity of the multinational proletariat.

Comrades, in a letter written to A. and Howard, we stated in connection with Don Williams and Kathy Chandler that:

"we must try to put the negative aspect of the contradiction behind us, build on the positive attributes of both comrades, and help them move forward so they can play an instrumental role in the growth and development of our organization. Key to all of this, however, is the firm and constructive leadership we exercise in directing their remolding. Don Williams has historically been a leader without any leadership. We must change that. While we must encourage the comrade's leadership abilities, we must lead."

Chairman Mao says that we should "learn from mistakes and cure the illness to save the patient." However it is impossible to remold someone that does not sincerely believe they have erred, to cure someone that does not admit they are sick. Thus, the combination of Don Williams' and Kathy Chandler's refusal to see themselves as patients, compounded by Howard and A.'s failure to act like doctors by relying on the science of Marxism-Leninism, made it impossible for the PSC to deal firmly and decisively with these elements. Because of their lack of confidence in our political judgement, their overemphasis on these two individuals, and their own inexperience and political narrowness, they embraced the theory of overcoming some day, and made a blind commitment to ideological struggle, thus capitulating in the face of Don Williams' and Kathy Chandler's blatant opportunism. In Foundations of Leninism, Stalin warns against the pitfalls of having petty-bourgeois democrats and opportunists that come out of the same mold as Kathy Chandler and Don Williams in the party, and urges communists to deal decisively with these forces or they will under-



mine the unity of the leadership and the rank-and-file cadre:

"The theory of "defeating" opportunist elements by ideological struggle within the Party, the theory of "overcoming" these elements within the confines of a single party, is a rotten and dangerous theory, which threatens to condemn the party to paralysis and chronic infirmity, threatens to make the Party a prey to opportunism, threatens to leave the proletariat without a revolutionary party, threatens to deprive the proletariat of its main weapon in the fight against imperialism."

And again:

"Our party succeeded in achieving internal unity and unexampled cohesion of its ranks primarily because it was able in good time to purge itself of the opportunist pollution, because it was able to rid its ranks of the Liquidators and the Mensheviks. Proletarian parties develop and become strong by purging themselves of opportunists and reformists, social-imperialists and social-chauvinists, social-patriots and social-pacifists. The party becomes strong by purging itself of opportunist elements." (p. 116-7)

Instead of insisting on building the WC(M-L) on a solid framework and foundation with the highest of bolshevik standards, Howard and A., in the name of being tolerant, patient, and objective have attacked and compromised the fundamental principle of party building, democratic centralism. Instead of requiring that the WC(M-L) have complete freedom of factions and opposite lines, they have railed and cried against our insistence that it is anti-Leninist to have cadre on the Central Committee with blatant political differences with the leadership. A and Howard, in particular have consistently in practice shown that they, like all revisionists and right opportunists "conceive of the party as an inn with two doors, as a talking shop and they consider this as the climax of democracy." (See Foto Cami, Objective and Subjective Factors in the Revolution, Albania Today #1 1973, p.23-4).

#### THE SECOND CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETING AND OUR "FUNDAMENTAL UNITY ON LINE"

The second plenary session of the Central Committee came at a stage when resignations and disillusionment was occurring on a number of fronts. The both of us, at the time, were mentally and physically fatigued and spent owing to our attempts and frustrations in trying to make sense out of the disorder and the hundreds of hours invested since September struggling against the opportunism of Don Williams and Kathy Chandler and the empiricism and ineptness of their conscious ally Howard and their unconscious ally A. Contrarily to the recent paper presented by the two remaining members of the PSC, we have struggled incessantly for a strong and determined leadership position inside the PSC, criticising both the work of these comrades and our own. No one who has known us can say that we do not fight for principles and against opportunism, yet we are now painted as spineless and whimpering pups with our tails between our legs, "resigning ourselves to our fate." A struggle on a host of issues had continued unbroken until the Central Committee meeting, sometimes very emotional, but always on our part principled and unrelenting. We have been criticized at times for our constant struggle, with primarily Howard, who has manifested deeply rooted commitment to salvage Don Williams and Kathy Chandler at any cost.

By the time of the meeting the internal struggle in PSC had reached its highest pitch. The work that was carried out by the PSC in the days and weeks leading up to the Central Committee meeting was accomplished because



more than a month earlier a division of labor had been established. Thus, in spite of our inability to provide unexampled collective leadership certain gains were being made. Nevertheless, Don Williams, Kathy Chandler, and Howard had been constantly singing their refrain that the PSC was a passive body, balancing this charge with the charge of political narrowness. The fact that the real reasons for this seeming passivity were not dealt with by these comrades was because they themselves, Howard included, were the forces that had tied the hands of the organizations' leadership. Our last official act was to painfully grind out the PSC Self-Criticism, which would not have reached the light of day had we not compromised in order to produce a document that would generally inform the rank and file of the situation in the organization. (Note: The PSC Self-Criticism was a document summarizing the work of the PSC).

In the meeting itself the major tasks of the Central Committee should have been to resolve the question of Don Williams and Kathy Chandler's role in the organization, which until this day still influences the direction of the PSC, and begin to plot the course for the Leninist trend in light of the imminent danger of war.\* However, because we had become an obnoxious thorn in the side of Howard and A. for their vacillation and nihilism, the primary struggle against Don Williams and Kathy Chandler and all the other right opportunists was sacrificed to mount a campaign against us. One of the reasons that things were so turned around was because we had allowed ourselves to be disarmed, first by illness and then by frustration and stress as a result of the lengthy struggle. Even though the PSC was set the task of objectively analyzing the practice of Kathy Chandler and Don Williams, there was no way that this could have been done given Howard's blind support and political dishonesty regarding these two elements and A.'s failure to prepare a report on Kathy Chandler's activities in the Chicago district. Although reports had been made to the PSC by the district chair of Kathy Chandler's disruptive actions, and while this comrade's husband on the PSC constantly cited examples of this divisiveness and violations of democratic centralism, he was either unable or unwilling to prepare an objective report of these practices for the Central Committee meeting. Eventually, he threw his hands up in despair and called for this comrades reinstatement to the Central Committee because his report "did not hold water." We found this to be a despicable and cowardly position from a PSC member who had constantly decried (and has until this day) Kathy Chandler's unprincipled behavior and inconsistent work in the Chicago district. Though it was not the task of either of us to prepare the case for Kathy Chandler's removal from the Central Committee, we know now that in view of A.'s vacillation it was idealistic to have done otherwise. In fact while Don first raised the proposal to remove Kathy Chandler from the Central Committee, a position we had maintained for sometime, prior to the Central Committee meeting A. asked one of us to write the proposal because he stated, "I have vacillated on the question." We as well as the other members of the PSC had specific assignments flowing from a division of labor for the Central Committee meeting. Nevertheless all of us should have been, in light of our experiences, in a position to make an objective appraisal of the situation, however, in view of the wavering, we did fail to prepare our case adequately.

In the same meeting, the chairman of the organization was a better spokesman for Kathy Chandler's reinstatement than Kathy Chandler herself. He, too, was fully aware of the opportunism of Kathy Chandler and the reports of errors the comrade had continued to commit. Yet in the Central Committee meeting he piled accolade on top of accolade, he praised Kathy Chandler, and commended her for her contributions to the organization saying that "her skills were much needed in the WC because of her broadness of view, because she had almost single handedly constructed the line of the WC, and she had submitted more reports than anyone else in the organization." Comrades, not once did Howard list one

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\* Note: These comrades are deepening their study of the international situation. This reflected their views in Spring of 1976.



of Kathy Chandler's weaknesses or make references to the errors she had committed, or allude to the struggles that the PSC had had with her. We should, however, mention that he did make a comment about the battles that A. and one of us had with her by implying that they had been "interrogating Kathy." And Howard concluded his testimonial by saying that he had gotten a clear indication of Kathy Chandler's work through the "consultation he had with her." Incidentally, the other PSC members have not to this day received one written report on Howard's so-called consultations with Kathy Chandler!

While there were, as we stated, certain limitations to the presentation made by A. and our supplementary statements calling for Kathy Chandler's removal, we feel that there were at the very least enough questions in the air to warrant extended probation pending further investigation. That is at the very least, but there was certainly enough information, if comrades had been honest, to remove Kathy Chandler from the Central Committee; for the burden of proof lay with Kathy Chandler and her defenders to show objectively how she deserved to be a respected member of the Central Committee. Nevertheless, Kathy Chandler was restored to the Central Committee. We should point out here that it was not more than several weeks after the Central Committee meeting that Kathy Chandler displayed many of those "great virtues" that Howard extolled her for at the Central Committee meeting. In a meeting with Don Williams, attended by Howard, one of us, and Kathy Chandler, our restored and "remolded" Central Committee member, she joined Don Williams in his attack on the line of the Central Committee:

"Don Williams stated that he would attempt to carry out the terms of the directive, but the bulk of the meeting was spent in struggle over his position that our views as to how to proceed generally and in his case was incorrect. He feels that the proposal is anarchistic in that it relies on his initiative rather than putting forward a nationally coordinated plan of action. He does not feel that building a newspaper and building factory nuclei are a nationally coordinated plan of action, since these are only tools to accomplish something else.....In the meantime, the question was whether he would take up the tasks outlined in a disciplined way. He said he would certainly try to, though he didn't see very well how.

"Kathy Chandler participated in the meeting. However, she did not support the line of the proposal, but supported Don Williams in his attack on the line. I suggest Kathy Chandler be formally censured for this. Whatever confusion may have existed in her mind regarding the character of her participation should either have been taken up beforehand, or resolved by her silence. If this has also characterized her district role, this should also be added to the censure, making clear that her reinstatement does not mean that we have given up the fight against her errors. On the question of Don Williams her first loyalty is to her collective and to its leadership." (Howard's Weekly Report to the PSC, 4/17/76)

First of all, there should have been no question in Kathy Chandler's mind of where her allegiance should be, for all the way back in January, in a collective meeting with the PSC, she was told that Don Williams was in the main responsible to us, and that any questions she had about his future, or any other differences she had around line or policy should be taken up with the PSC. Furthermore, it was clearly stated that her primary collective was the PSC and the Central Committee, and she had the responsibility to be disciplined and uphold the line of the Central Committee. The fact of the matter is, that ever since that day, she had continued to flagrantly and blatantly violate that directive. It has been Howard's refusal to call her errors just that and to fight against them that has enabled her to be in the position she is in now. No, Howard certainly has not, as he said, "given up the fight against her errors," because he has never admitted that she has, down



the line, committed serious errors, and he has never begun to fight them.

Also, let us say that Howard was well aware of the continuation of Kathy Chandler's disruptive activity in the district. In several meetings following the Central Committee meeting, there were discussions centered around where Kathy Chandler should work. While she was now a full-fledged member of the Central Committee, with impeccable character, there was apprehension about her doing newspaper work. A., in his weekly report of 4/10/76, a week before the aforementioned meeting with Don Williams, said that:

"I believe we must do a better job of giving Kathy Chandler a collective life. The way it is now the only place she can struggle is within the district, and already the both of us have been criticized for having differences that shouldn't exist among Central Committee members. The line differences that have existed between Don Williams and Kathy Chandler on the one hand, and the Central Committee on the other are nothing new. The line differences between us and Kathy Chandler, in particular, should have also been reviewed prior to her restoration. I am sure that comrades have disagreements over her appraisal of the PSC and Central Committee, her suggestions for preparation for War,\* and her proposal along with Don Williams for work in the local African Liberation Support Committee, headed up by DB. Initially Howard supported this proposal and told Don Williams that he would fight for it within the PSC. Kathy Chandler not only pushed it in the organization, but 'sought contact with the Central Organization of U.S. Marxist-Leninists.... and was planning to raise with them the question of African Liberation Support Committee' prior to a decision being made by the PSC." (See A.'s report of 4/10/76)

A. not only went on to raise concern about Kathy Chandler's plans and warned her not to contact COUSML because of their fiasco around the Zimbabwe African National Union, he later struggled with her around her views on the PSC handling of Don Williams. He concluded that:

"Kathy Chandler does still encourage Don Williams' backward aspects by still uniting with him that there are legitimate political differences he has with us that could legitimately result in demoralization, etc., which I believe is based on pure subjectivity and represents a form of capitulation even though on the other hand she might struggle with him on various issues like his attitude." (Report of 4/17/76)

Despite all that has occurred since the Central Committee meeting and all that went down prior to the Central Committee meeting, A. and Howard, by word and deed have displayed the rankest kind of liberalism and political dishonesty, fanned the flames of Kathy Chandler's opportunism, and attempted to cover their errors in the field of ideology, politics and organization by turning everyone's attention to our statement on the lack of unity in the PSC.

When the question was posed as to whether the PSC as a unit was characterized by unity or disunity, our position was that, in the main, it was disunified, whereas these two comrades, along with some other members of the Central Committee said it was characterized by unity. We at no time said that everything done by the PSC was negative, but we did say that the work as a collective was characterized by

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\* Note: A proposal that we should join with OL, RCP, etc., in a united front against war and fascism.



fierce struggle and disunity on ideological and political line. A., Howard, and Kathy Chandler attempted to take the resolution of the Central Committee saying the PSC was in the main united, a little further to indicate that for us to put this forward was a manifestation of subjectivity, flew in the face of our fundamental unity on the Iskra Principle, and that we were the "main danger to the unity of the PSC." While the majority agreed with the first two points, they refused to give credence to the last. It is a clear sign of A.'s liberalism for him to base part of his blistering criticism of us for our failure to expand our thesis on the disunity of the PSC by calling for a change in the composition of that body, and then turn around and declare we are the main danger, call for our removal from the PSC, and full repudiation of our errors.

Of course, we would not have united with their position anyway. To this day, we maintain that it is easy enough to talk about "unity on line" or unity in the abstract where everyone, as was the case at the Unity Conference, declares, "WE AGREE WITH THAT," yet it is totally another thing when this agreement, as we have seen in the last six months, is practically implemented in a plan or program. There is, as these comrades have said, a dialectical unity between theory and practice. And we know that anyone can give lip service to unity and Marxism-Leninism and yet act in the most opportunist fashion, such as Don Williams, Kathy Chandler, Howard, some of the comrades that left the organization, Lin Piao, Teng Hsiao-ping,\* CPUSA, CLP, etc., etc., etc., claiming that everything is relative and there is no definite path and way to proceed that flows directly out of theory. In the Central Committee meeting these comrades said this was an immutable principle of Marxism-Leninism -- that if we are unified on line, our unity in practice is a principle, not a question of fact. (Also see the PSC's letter on our resignations, 4/27/76)

Comrades, our position is that principled unity on ideological and political line does not exist solely on what we see in black and white, or from verbal commitments, and it certainly does not fall miraculously from the sky. The test of whether unity is a figment of some foolish metaphysician's imagination, or something that exists for real in the objective world, is determined not by rhetoric or lip service, but by one's practice in attempting to make proletarian revolution.

For a further explanation of this point, comrades should consult two important works, Stalin's little pamphlet "On Organization," and Mao's classical work "On Practice." Addressing those comrades who speak at length about "our fundamental unity on line," Stalin said:

"Some people think it is sufficient to draw up a correct Party line, proclaim it from the housetops, state it in the form of a general thesis and resolutions, and take a vote and carry unanimously for victory to come of itself, spontaneously, as it were. This, of course, is wrong. It is a gross delusion."

It is the right opportunist who overemphasizes the level of unity, belittling the level of struggle, as A. and Howard have done in relation to us, saying that the differences were minor or a result of our political narrowness, and thus raising unity to the point of being a principle. They have compounded this error, by negating the fact that "Good resolutions and declarations in favor of the Party line are only a beginning; they merely express the desire for victory, but not the victory itself." Stalin said this because he realized that there also had to be a sharp and fierce struggle for the application of the Party line. It is certainly true that "there are going to be differences," and as Mao says these "differences in the party are a reflection of class struggle," but unless these differences are resolved in a manner that is favorable to the proletariat, the line of the party and the correct solutions will be seriously prejudiced. Furthermore, said Stalin, "After the correct political line has been laid down, organizational work decides

\* This was written shortly after Teng's ouster from the Central Committee of the CPC.



everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its success or failure."

A. and Howard will admit that differences have and will emerge concerning the application and development of line. But what they fail to understand is that it is the resolution of these organizational questions, "the proper selection of personnel and the way a check is kept on the fulfillment of the decisions of the leading bodies, etc." that will determine the success of your ideological and political line, regardless of how correct it may be. No matter how much you subscribe to the correct line of the Communist Party of China, unless your practice is in harmony with your line, you will be disappointed by constant failures and setbacks.

"That is why practice is the criterion of truth and why 'the standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge.' Stalin has well said, 'Theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if tis path is not illumined by revolutionary theory.'" (Mao, Four Essays on Philosophy, p. 15)

Comrades, just as there is a correct and revolutionary communist line on a given question, regardless of the varying views, there is only one correct and Leninist manner to apply and implement that line.

Thus, for anyone to bluster about "our fundamental unity on line," to talk about our unity on the written word without speaking to the transformation of these words into deed, i.e., the transformation of revolutionary theory into revolutionary practice, is a blatant manifestation of a one-sided, static, vulgar evolutionist and metaphysical idealist world outlook, the perspective of the bourgeoisie. As the Albanians say,

"The unity of the ranks of the Party consists in the unity of thought and action, in the unity of word and deed, in the mobilization of all the communists to achieve a single aim: the faithful implementation of the program, tactics, and organizational rules of the Party. 'The Party is not merely a union of people of one mind,' comrade Stalin says, 'it is also a union of people who act and fight relying on a common ideological basis.'"

(The Party of Labor of Albania On the Building and the Life of the Party, p. 146)

#### THE ISKRA PLAN AND THE JOINT EDITORIAL BOARD

Our lack of unity with A. and Howard was not only manifested in relationship to points already mentioned, but also in connection to a number of other issues, the foremost of which was the further development of our line and program for building a new multinational communist party in the U.S. The chairman's proposal for a joint editorial board was the topic of numerous discussions and debates within the PSC. Uniting with the proposal, A. stated that "we might as well try it to see if it works since nothing else seems to." While we pushed for consolidating our ties with collectives like the San Diego Organizing Committee, the Party Building Committee (two local collectives that joined the effort to build The Communist) as well as other collectives and individuals that had written to our Post Office box from all over the U.S., Howard in particular had come up with a scheme that would have presented overtures to everybody from the OL and the RCP to PRRWO, ATM, RWC, Resistencia and MLOC. Of course, comrades that have read the proposal now know that it has been refined to include primarily MLOC, PRRWO and a number of other organizations. Although all the mechanics of this proposal are not clear, two things are obvious: 1) it is incorrect and a deviation from the Iskra Plan, and 2) Howard and A. are empiricists who do not really understand the task Iskra set for itself, which was to develop around it an organization capable of constructing the Bolshevik party. Howard wants to throw in the towel after six months because "nobody is listening to us." In its place, Howard would like to substitute a plan



to pull together newspaper after newspaper and make them better.

The roots of this bourgeois democratic view on party building can be traced all the way back to the Unity Conference. It was there that a number of comrades, us included, criticized some for the timid and half-assed manner in which they approached telling the communist movement that we were going to build the Iskra-type newspaper. We thought The Communist came closest to resembling the Iskra, and consequently we wanted all genuine Leninists to join us and build The Communist in order to lay the groundwork for bringing into being the new party. Hence the task was, and still remains, for us to insist, struggle for, and demand, in a bold and principled fashion that those who call themselves Marxist-Leninists, that those who see What Is To Be Done? and One Step Forward, Two Steps Back as the ideological and organizational foundations of the Marxist party join with us in combining our human and material resources to build The Communist. In the recent period, we began to see both individuals and collectives come out openly and express their unity with the Iskra Plan, showing that like Iskra, The Communist, too, can be a collective organizer. The Communist, also, had begun to provide common activity -- through distribution, reporting, and correspondence -- upon which we could patiently unite the Leninist trend. However, The Communist must not, as is with the case with Howard's proposal, be seen as something in and unto itself. It is precisely "with the aid of the newspaper, and through it, a permanent organization will naturally take shape..." (Lenin CW, Vol. 5, p. 22) Thus instead of trying to build some nebulous editorial board, we should have been uniting with the correct, as well as struggling with the bankrupt, views contained within the columns of papers like Palante, Revolutionary Cause, Unite, and so on, but most of all, we should have struggled against the very existence of what amounted to regional and local newspapers. Instead, we should have been calling for a greater centralization of a common ideological center and relied primarily on those comrades who, through thought and action, displayed a commitment to build the Iskra organ and most importantly, an Iskra organization. The task before us, was and remains to build The Communist to be utilized as a mechanism to build a disciplined Iskra organization for the expressed purpose of constructing a genuine party. As Lenin said, it is necessary to place:

"special emphasis on the demand for the unification of, more accurately the actual restoration of a united all-Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, by means of joint work which should begin with a rallying around Iskra so as to convert it into an instrument of genuinely nationwide agitation which would lead to the creation of a militant all-Russian organization capable of launching a determined onslaught on the autocracy." (Lenin CW, Vol. 6, p. 176-7)

The proposal for a joint editorial board, leads us away from this lofty goal.

#### CONCLUSION

Our history is as long as any comrades presently in the organization. We think one would be hard pressed to show that we have been cowards or passive in the struggle for clarity of principles and developing a strong organization. Individualism has not been one of our characteristics, and we have striven from the very beginning to immerse ourselves into Marxism-Leninism and the life of the class of the proletariat -- though we both originate, by education only, from the strata of the intellectuals. We have always considered our interest as the interests of the class, but now we are "liberals" who cringe at the thought of criticism and self-criticism, although both have always been in our arsenal since inside the BWC and the WC(M-L).

We resign from the WC(M-L) not only because we will not uphold the decisions of the second plenary session of the Central Committee, but also because we no



longer have any trust or confidence in several of the people who were involved in the passage of those resolutions. Included in that list is Kathy Chandler, A., and Howard Engleskirchen, the organization's chair. We are mentally and physically exhausted from what these comrades would have you believe has been an imaginary struggle, concocted and fought in our own subjectivity. It became impossible for us to continue the struggle inside the WC unless we were to lose our principles. However, we have done nothing that we, at this time, desire to repudiate, other than the position of supporting the Detroit Committee (Don Williams, Kathy Chandler, and Howard Engleskirchen) which caused the loss of a number of genuine forces, and others will surely be lost.

In the document circulated by the remaining PSC members, in which they lay out quite a mysterious account of the resignations of the last period, there is only a hint that this goes back to the bankruptcy of the BWC. Indeed a part of it does -- but the great majority of this corrosiveness has its origins in our failure to deal decisively with opportunism and nihilism that was born of the Detroit Committee. This trend will not be reversed, as they insist, by writing letters to the two of us.\* It will only be reversed with the purging of these forces from the ranks of the organization -- it will only be under these circumstances that this so-called trend will be reversed.

As for our political future, we know we will continue to study to further grasp the science of Marxism-Leninism while continuing to sink deep roots among the working class. That is for sure. We will not, however, in the foreseeable future, seek membership in the Workers' Congress.

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\* Note: The PSC organized a letter-writing campaign for people to write and denounce these comrades without studying the issues.



# UNITY CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

August, 1975

## RESOLUTIONS ON PARTY BUILDING

1. The central task of all communists is winning the vanguard to communism, that is building a genuine multinational communist party and thereby taking the first step in fusing communism with the workers' movement. We hold that the development and victory of the revolution depend on the existence of a revolutionary party built according to the revolutionary theory and revolutionary style of Marxism-Leninism.

We further hold that the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) has become a revisionist and bourgeois reformist party. Since the betrayal of the CPUSA the principal task of the proletariat has been to build a revolutionary party of a new type which reclaims the revolutionary heritage of the U.S. working class and its vanguard.

We must subordinate all our work to uniting the foremost representatives of the proletariat ideologically on the science of Marxism-Leninism and, transforming ideological unity into the material unity of organization, weld the main core of the proletariat into a genuine communist party of the Bolshevik type. Only a bolshevized core can assume Marxist-Leninist leadership of the practical actions of the masses and it is therefore only by forging this core that we lay the reliable foundation for expanding our political activity.

2. Winning the vanguard of the proletariat to communism means winning the foremost representatives of the proletariat to the consciousness of the struggle of the entire multinational working class as a single working class engaged in a struggle directed, not against individual employers or groups of employers, but against the entire capitalist class and the government that supports it. It means welding the best elements of the working class into a bolshevik core, mobilizing the experience, revolutionary spirit, and selfless devotion of those who show their readiness and ability to win the confidence of the masses, who accept communism consciously and who devote themselves entirely to the education and organization of the proletariat.

3. We hold that accomplishing this task requires a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism, revisionism, chauvinism, narrow nationalism and all manifestations of bourgeois ideology which arise spontaneously under capitalism and which are imposed on the working class. It is opportunism in all its forms which keeps the advanced of the proletariat from communism and which is the primary obstacle to welding the core. The chief form of our activity must therefore be propaganda in order to win the vanguard to communism.

4. The primary defects in our work which prevent us from winning a complete ideological and political victory over opportunism and from carrying out the tasks of party building are (1) ideologically, a failure to recognize the mobilizing, organizing and transforming role of Marxist-Leninist theory, (2) politically, tailism and the restricted scope of activity that comes from bowing to the spontaneity of the workers' or mass movements, (3) organizationally, amateurishness, fragmentation,



the local circle spirit, and liberalism, (4) on matters of leadership, bowing to the sentiments of the average or backwards elements and failing to identify the advanced or to strengthen its leadership role in everything and rely on the advanced to win over the broad masses of workers and oppressed people.

The fundamental principles which we take to guide our work in correcting and overcoming these errors are the following:

- 1) We insist on the leading role of the ISKRA principle,
- 2) We insist on disciplined organizational consolidation based on democratic centralism and taking factory nuclei as the primary unit or organization.\*

RESOLUTIONS ON THE ISKRA PRINCIPLE\*\*

5. We insist on the leading role of the ISKRA principle in all our work. The basic principles that Lenin's ISKRA organization stood for are the foundation of a vanguard party. The four basic tenets of the ISKRA principle are the following:

- i) to unite on the science of Marxism-Leninism and put proletarian ideological and political line in command of everything we do;
- ii) to work out and implement an independent communist policy on all our tasks;
- iii) to consolidate ideological unity in the material unity of communist organization, strengthening the centralized leadership of the vanguard in everything;
- iv) to provide communist leadership on every task by uniting with the advanced and relying on the advanced to win over the intermediate and the backward.

We hold these tenets should guide every Marxist-Leninist organization and individual in the U.S. If we unfold our theoretical and practical work on the basis of the ISKRA principle we will develop, through common struggle, the essential ideological and political foundation we need to unite. *Backwards.*

6. A CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE ISKRA TYPE. The primary practical means to implement the ISKRA principle at this time is a central organ of the ISKRA type -- a collective propagandist, a collective agitator, and a collective organizer directed primarily to the advanced and taking up every tactical, political and theoretical problem of international communism.\*\*\* Propaganda that is consistent in principle and nationwide in scope requires a frequently-published national newspaper devoted to topical political exposures. By unfolding work around such a newspaper we will learn to be always prepared, theoretically and practically, to support every protest and outbreak of resistance of the proletariat and oppressed masses.

\* See our note on the resolutions on factory nuclei.

\*\* The "Iskra" principle is a set of general Marxist-Leninist principles. Calling them the "Iskra" principle, and including the discussions of the newspaper under the same heading, served to confuse these general principles with our particular tactical plan for party building, based on an Iskra-type newspaper. It reflected a dogmatism which belittles theory by assuming all theoretical work has already been done.

\*\*\* After our experience with the WC-ML and The Communist we have come to the conclusion that there is today no single organization capable of developing an Iskra-type paper. We believe that a theoretical magazine can lay the groundwork for such a paper.



6.1 Comprehensive political exposures are the chief means to train the masses and ourselves in political consciousness and revolutionary activity. They are the means to learn to apply a communist point of view to all aspects of life and to the activity of all classes.

6.2 We emphasize the importance of developing specialists in propaganda and newspaper work who are capable of using the science of Marxism-Leninism to systematically appraise what is going on around us. The ability to make an independent revolutionary estimate of everything that affects the class struggle of the proletariat does not arise spontaneously but must be consciously learned and fought for.

6.3 PLAN FOR AN ISKRA-TYPE NEWSPAPER. We call on all Marxist-Leninists to unite to build a single common ISKRA-type newspaper for the Leninist trend. Our movement today remains scattered and disunited, restricted by the local circle spirit. It suffers above all from a lack of centralized ideological and practical leadership, that is consistent in principle and national in scope. As a result, revisionist and petty-bourgeois distortions of Marxism-Leninism remain dominant. It is the duty of all Marxist-Leninists to unite against such distortions and draw firm lines of demarcation between the Leninist trend and the Economist trend. We must develop common propaganda and stretch a common political line that speaks for the Leninist trend. No one organization or circle by its own efforts can achieve such a task. Only by a united effort, by pooling the resources and centralizing the leadership of our trend, can we establish the hegemony of orthodox Leninism and defeat Economism. An ISKRA-type newspaper is an essential weapon in this fight, a means to unify, centralize, and consolidate the Leninist trend. By uniting in the common practical activity to build a single organ, we can gather together the now-scattered forces, establishing common propaganda and a broad network of collaborators and correspondents. By uniting to stretch a single common line, the ideological unity of the Leninist trend can be forged, and in a step-by-step way, this unity can be transformed into the organizational unity necessary to unite Marxist-Leninists into one common organization-- a genuine communist party.

6.4 The Workers Congress (Marxist-Leninist) resolves to base ~~THE~~ COMMUNIST on the model of ISKRA. To this end we open our columns to all honest Marxist-Leninists and will exert our best efforts to develop a newspaper that every comrade can use as his own. We shall conduct THE COMMUNIST in the spirit of orthodox Marxism-Leninism, and while we intend to discuss questions from our own definite point of view, we open our columns to polemics among comrades. In the same way, while we rely on the cadres of the WC (M-L) as the core to distribute and use THE COMMUNIST in a disciplined way, unfolding their common activity around it, we put THE COMMUNIST at the disposal of all comrades, class-conscious workers, study circles, organization etc. We will do our part to make THE COMMUNIST a means to unite the best forces of the Leninist trend, and build it as a mighty instrument in the struggle for a single common organ which speaks for all U.S. Marxist-Leninists.

We call on all Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers to join with us in building THE COMMUNIST. We call for reports and correspondence on factory and political exposures, trade union struggles, the fight against national oppression and for democratic rights, etc., and especially encourage workers to write us. Broad distribution of THE COMMUNIST, reports on its use and criticisms of its content are all valuable means by which comrades can contribute. We ask that comrades serve as collaborators and join in the tasks to develop a broad network which enables THE COMMUNIST to respond to the struggle and needs of the proletariat and oppressed people. Our ability to improve our common work and formulate common policy that is national in scope depends on the closest collaboration of all Marxist-Leninists. Only in so far as we succeed in uniting Marxist-Leninists and class-conscious workers from throughout the nation can we establish THE COMMUNIST as an



organ which speaks for the Leninist trend. We call on each of you to take up THE COMMUNIST as an instrument of unity in the struggle to build a common ISKRA-type newspaper.

7. CADRES TRAINING. We emphasize the practical importance of cadres training at this time. It is impossible to implement the ISKRA principle or to weld the bolshevik core without the utmost attention to arming cadres at every level with the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism, enabling them to find their way in any political situation. In our daily activity we must become good at learning and overcome the U.S. tendency to empiricism, pragmatism and disregard of theory. Socialism is a science and must be studied like a science. We master the science of Marxism-Leninism in order to guide our practical revolutionary work and base cadres training on the principle that the sole purpose of mastering Marxist theory is to apply it. We must guard against the dogmatist error of divorcing study from concrete practice or of making theoretical training an end in itself.

We must learn to use all forms of ideological and political education -- training schools, touring propagandists, independent study, etc. It is essential to develop a national cadres training school and to promote common programs of political education through the Central Organ.\*

8. DRAFT PROGRAM. We stress the practical importance of a Draft Party Program as an essential aspect of the ISKRA plan. A draft party program which briefly and scientifically formulates the aims and objects of the struggle of the working class is an indispensable tool for uniting all Marxist-Leninists in the struggle to build a vanguard party.

9. ORGANIZATION. It will be impossible to undertake any of these practical tasks to implement the ISKRA principle without a professional style of work. Organization is key\*\* Only improved organization will make it possible to extend and deepen the content of our propaganda and agitation. To this end we will step up our efforts to develop the disciplined unity of the entire organization under its centralized leadership. This means decentralization with regard to keeping the center informed since without information, centralization is impossible. Without the maximum decentralization in regard to responsibility to the center we will be unable to achieve the greatest possible centralization of the ideological and political leadership of our revolutionary work.

#### RESOLUTIONS ON FACTORY NUCLEI

10. We hold that the basic unit of a communist organization is the nucleus or cell in the place of employment (factory, workshop, mine, office, store, farm, etc.) which unites all members of the organization in a given enterprise, and we will

\* A cadre training school requires a high level of organization so that work will not be disrupted by sending comrades to the school. It requires good leadership that can provide a worthwhile program for students. It requires the resolution of certain security problems so that police surveillance of the school will not immediately expose all our best cadre. It is not immediately feasible.

\*\* We will not use this slogan, because it can be misconstrued to suggest that organization is the key link, and that we want organizational unity without ideological and political unity. This confusion was evident both among opponents and members of the WC. On the other hand, we must reiterate that in order to strengthen the ideological and political unity of scattered forces, we need organization. We need organization to centralize the exchange and distribution of theoretical work and practical experience on a nationwide basis.



build our organization on that basis.\* We must make every factory our fortress.

10.1 We base ourselves on the industrial proletariat in the large factories and mills as the decisive sector of the revolutionary proletariat in regards to numbers and concentration, breadth of outlook and influence, and strategic position and fighting capacity to overthrow monopoly capitalism. At the present time our whole task must be to go lower and deeper among the working masses and to consolidate our position in the working class.\*\*

10.2 Factory nuclei are the essential means to achieve the closest contact with the working masses in the factories, to ensure our active participation in the everyday struggles of the class and to secure the leadership of these struggles, to connect the immediate economic struggles of the proletariat to its long-term revolutionary interests, and to develop the mass political struggles of working and oppressed peoples in a revolutionary way. The cell is the primary organizational link between a communist organization and the working class, and the mechanism to join communism with the workers' movement.

10.3 Factory nuclei are small, conspiratorial units of approximately 3 to 7 members working in the same plant. Nuclei must take up all general problems of the organization, participate in working out policy, carry out the decisions of the organization, and apply its line and policies in all its work. It is the organizational tool to implement the ISKRA principle, to forge the unity of all Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers, to turn organizational plans and policies into a material force in the working class, and to win the vanguard to communism. In struggling to make nuclei the primary unit of organizational life, we must strive to develop nuclei in every department, groups of departmental nuclei, and a plant-wide nucleus, capable of giving centralized guidance. We must learn to establish a division of labor which enables the nuclei to accomplish all their basic tasks. Nuclei must be skilled in conspiratorial work and trained in conditions of illegality, but security must never cut the nuclei away from the masses of factory workers.

10.4 The main tasks of factory nuclei must be to form strong and close connections with workers in the factory. All workers must realize that the nuclei exist and react immediately to every event in the factory and country. Every manifestation of discontent, every grievance, every occasion for factory and political exposure must be utilized in order for the nuclei to gain leadership of the defense of the daily interests of the working class. To provide this leadership, the establishment of plant-wide nuclei and the widest variety of factory organizations is essential. Directing the work of fractions in the trade unions and other mass organizations is particularly important for establishment of close connections with the working masses. In striving to create such nuclei, cadres must utilize THE COMMUNIST, distributing it, forming study groups, gathering worker correspondents and collaborators around it. In addition, shop papers, leaflets, pamphlets, etc. should be used. As a basic

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\* Factory nuclei are our goal. Until we have won the advanced workers, however, we will not just declare a group of our cadre to be a nucleus. We will organize Marxist-Leninist workers' circles on an industrial basis as a step toward factory nuclei. These will include both advanced and intermediate workers and revolutionary petty-bourgeois intellectuals. It should be clear that these resolutions present a discussion of factory nuclei without saying how to build these nuclei. This question was never correctly resolved in the WC. It should also be clear that nuclei are appropriate for party work, bringing the party to the plant and to the masses. This is not our task just now.

\*\* This formulation was the seed of the later "To the Masses" line of the WC. While generally correct, it cannot be our "whole task" now.



unit it is essential for nuclei to lead members and non-members in studying Marxism-Leninism and criticizing opportunism, petty-bourgeois liberalism and revisionism. Cadre should seize every opportunity to expose reformist and revisionist agents of monopoly capital, and their efforts to betray the class interest of the proletariat and spread opportunist ideas of class harmony and class collaboration.

10.5 Factory nuclei must apply communist methods of leadership and be good at uniting with the advanced and relying on them to win over the broad masses of workers. Members of the nuclei must first of all acquaint themselves with their fellow workers -- they must learn to know who is advanced and revolutionary, who is an honest proletarian, who is opportunist or has a philistine disinterest in politics, and who is an agent or fascist reactionary. On that basis they must develop their daily work and wage an uncompromising struggle against opportunism.

10.6 We must strive to recruit primarily through the factory nuclei. If we recruit through the persistent day-to-day work of the nuclei, the best and most progressive elements of the working class will be won over, those with a clear understanding of the everyday work of communists and of its connection with our revolutionary tasks, those the most capable of carrying out communist policy and mobilizing the masses in struggle. To insure the proletarian character of our leadership we must concentrate on training and bring forward leaders through Factory Nuclei.

10.7 Factory nuclei are essential to bolshevizing a communist organization. In the Bolshevik Party, work was centered in the factory cells and rested on their responsibility and initiative under the Party's centralized leadership. Social Democratic traditions of basing the party on electoral or neighborhoods were never fully repudiated in the Communist Parties of Western Europe and North America and the principal defect of their structure was the failure to build permanent organizational connections in the factories. These social-democratic traditions are perpetuated by the petty-bourgeois democratic trends in our movement today which has emphasized organizing broad coalitions and economist forms of workers' organizations rather than undertaking the more difficult job of establishing nuclei in the large factories and mills as the basis for unfolding our political and organizational work.

The test of our seriousness in taking on the task of winning the advanced to communism and building a vanguard party of the Bolshevik type will be measured by our ability to break with this stubbornly rooted opportunist tradition and by our ability to make factory nuclei the primary unit of our organization. We hold with the Fourth Congress of the Comintern that "no Communist Party can be regarded as a serious and solidly organized mass party if it does not possess strong Communist nuclei in the factories, workshops, mines, railways, etc."

#### RESOLUTIONS ON DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

11. Organizational consolidation depends on strict, class-conscious adherence to democratic centralism. Centralism expresses the unity of aim, the unity of will, and the unity of action of the proletariat. Democratic organizational life is essential to the full expression of revolutionary vigor, initiative, and responsibility of every cadre. We hold that centralism makes possible the highest level of participation in struggle and is a prerequisite to the full flowering of democracy in organizational life. We hold that proletarian democracy is the prerequisite for the firmest and most disciplined centralism, for it is only conscious discipline that can be iron discipline. At all levels we must strive for unity in thinking, policy, plan, command and action as the indispensable precondition for victory. The development and extension of organizational democracy is fundamentally for the purpose of achieving still better centralization. It is essential to establish a



political situation in which there are both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness.

Leading bodies at all levels shall be selected through elections and cooptation on the basis of democratic consultation. Every member must actively participate in the daily work of the organization. Every leading body and organizational unit must report regularly on its activity and give an account of its work.

Every member of the organization must observe the rules of unified discipline:

- 1) the individual is subordinate to the organization;
- 2) the minority is subordinate to the majority;
- 3) the lower level is subordinate to the higher level;
- 4) the entire membership is subordinate to the Central Committee.\*

Whoever violates these articles of discipline disrupts organizational unity.

At this time we place particular emphasis on the practical importance of improved centralization to overcome organizational fragmentation, the local circle spirit, amateurishness and the disease of liberalism. We insist on a resolute break with menshevik and petty-bourgeois democratic tendencies on matters of organization. Centralism is an indispensable tool to create the conditions for genuine proletarian democracy in our organizational life and to develop the specialized skills of cadres throughout the organization in a planned, professional and comprehensive way.

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\* We want to refer the reader to our article on democratic centralism to see how the opportunist leadership violated these principles. It should also be noted that this passage, taken verbatim from the 1973 Constitution of the Communist Party of China, did not also include some statement on the authority of the organizational conference. The constitution of the Chinese party says, "The highest leading body of the Party is the National Party Congress and, when it is not session, the Central Committee elected by it." By omitting such a statement from its resolutions, the Workers' Congress left the door open to the leadership to reverse the line of the Unity Conference.

In this pre-party period, in which we have no program that we have all agreed upon, we should be bound by discipline on programmatic points which we have agreed on. Questions of the ideological and political basis of the party should be decided by discussion and debate, not by commandism.



# Party Building and The Struggle at Gouverneur Hospital

May, 1977

## INTRODUCTION

When those of us who now put out the Red Dawn were still members and supporters of the Workers' Congress, we began, along with other contributors, a series of articles on the New York fiscal crisis. The aim of these articles which appeared in The Communist from the second half of 1975 through the middle of 1976, was to develop a comprehensive communist policy on the NY crisis and our tasks. These were mainly propaganda articles, focusing on showing how this crisis was an inevitable result of the general crisis of imperialism, how the ruling class was shifting its own crisis onto the backs of the people, and what should be the role of communists. Modeled after the kind of political exposures put out by Lenin in Iskra, they were written at the level of the advanced workers and primarily intended to win these vanguard workers to the side of communism. As the series progressed, we started to move towards more agitational articles that showed the effect of the budget cutbacks on the people, and to articles that started to develop a tactical line for the present movement. Inseparably connected to this was exposure of all varieties of opportunism, both within the broad people's movement (class collaborationist trade union bureaucrats, poverty pimps, etc.), and within the communist movement (WVO, PRRWO, etc.).

As we explained in our Statement\* the WC as a whole was never consolidated on the analysis we started to develop. Further, they obstructed the series by not permitting exposures of opportunism in the communist movement. A good exposure of WVO was edited out of the article on the open admissions struggle at City University in the April 1, 1976 issue of The Communist. Even though the political points were mainly left in, the opportunists they were directed against, WVO, were left unnamed by the WC. Even worse, although the article on the hospital struggle in that same issue promised an analysis of the his-

\* page 10



tory and lessons of that struggle in the next issue, the WC opportunists refused to print that history. Although they complained about "weaknesses" of that article, what they really wanted to do was remain silent about WVO and PRWO, as seen both by the selective editing they did in the open admissions article and their total silence at that time on the opportunism of the so-called "revolutionary wing." If these "weaknesses" in the article were decisive, as they claimed, they could have edited this important article, as they had previously done with other articles, rather than hiding its valuable lessons from the communists and advanced elements. Another purpose in suppressing this article was to hide our activity among the working class from the movement, to lend credence to the lie spread by the WC leaders, and picked up by other rumor-mongers and meddlers like LPR (formerly Resistencia), that we "did not mass work." This is the old tired cry of those who oppose propaganda and party-building -- "you're ignoring mass work." Our line, which was entirely consistent with what we had already been doing for months, was that we should continue and update the series, deepen our analysis, and mercilessly expose those so-called "communists" who stood in the way of the people. But the opportunist WC leaders explicitly stated to us after we were out of the WC that what we should talk about in the series was "what to say on the shop floor," meaning our articles should focus on the narrowest economic agitation to the masses. This was in line with the economist "go-to-the-industrial-masses" scheme they then pushed. What they advocated was literature restricted only to getting "palpable results," the kind the Russian economists wanted, which Lenin opposed in What Is To Be Done? True to their economist nature, the WC opportunists totally belittled the degree to which political exposures serve to arouse the masses to action and thereby showed their rightist underestimation of the mobilizing effect and role of theory.

All this made it clear to us that, as a component part of the degeneration of the WC, there developed two diametrically opposed lines on how to continue the New York series. Because of the overall degeneration of the WC, it was no longer possible for us to continue working with The Communist, which had ceased to be a vehicle for fulfilling our tasks for party building. Now that the split is over and done, we are faced with the task of resuming our theoretical and literary work on the New York crisis. For those particularly interested in this series, we can make available, in limited quantities, copies of these articles.

The article presented below continues the series where it left off, with a summation of some history and lessons of the struggle of the hospital workers, especially at Gouverneur Hospital. Although some of the events summed up happened some time ago, the lessons of these are still very valuable today, both because these struggles have never yet been properly summed up in our movement, and because the same errors continue to be made. It is our hope that this article sparks some healthy, comradely struggle and criticism among genuine communists and advanced workers.



GOUVERNEUR HOSPITAL.

Gouverneur Hospital has always been a thorn in the side of the ruling class in New York. As we explained in the New York crisis series, the new building in which it is presently located was only opened after years of militant struggle by workers and people from the community, the Lower East Side. And now that the cutbacks have come, it has been one of the main targets of the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB).

Why is this so? The answer is not hard to find once we know who Gouverneur serves. The vast majority of its constituency are oppressed nationalities -- working-class and poor Puerto Ricans and Blacks from the Lower East Side and Chinese from Chinatown. In addition, it is relied on by many elderly working-class and poor Jews from the Lower East Side. None of these groups can afford to rely on private doctors or private hospitals, so Gouverneur is their main source of primary health care. In times of economic boom, the ruling class needs to expand health care to make sure that there are enough workers who are sufficiently healthy to sell their labor power to the capitalists. Thus, a minimum of health care is, to a certain extent, in the interests of the capitalists. Of course, this is never adequate for the real health needs of the masses, and especially the oppressed nationalities, who swell the ranks of the unemployed. The point is that in order to run their system and make profits, the capitalists need some health facilities. But in times of economic crisis and high unemployment, as today, hospitals and health care are less and less needed by the ruling class, since fewer workers are required by capitalism, and, hence, fewer healthy people are needed. Thus when the EFCB was faced with choosing where to cut the city's budget to put it in balance, such services that make the working class "fit" to be exploited -- the schools that prepare the youth to enter the labor market, the hospitals that heal the ailing, the subways that take people to work, etc. -- were the least important to the needs of capitalism and the first to be severely slashed. More people had become economically useless to capitalism, a "surplus population" or reserve army of labor. So what was it to the ruling class if they were sick, illiterate, or died early? As long as they weren't producing or aiding in the production of surplus value, they didn't matter. And for the oppressed nationalities, for whom the crisis had hit the hardest, and who often relied solely on the municipal hospitals like Gouverneur for all health care, the cutbacks took on a genocidal character, as so many more of them, especially the youth, were condemned to the miseries of joblessness, disease and death. These are the brutal results of the savage capitalist system that, as Lenin said, denies people the right to live once they can no longer make profits by selling their labor power to the capitalists.

In addition, the sharp attacks on the oppressed nationalities must be seen in the context both of ruling-class strategy in general, and the tactics they adopted in enforcing the cuts in New York in particular. In order to carry out the wide-ranging cuts over the three-year span of the EFCB's financial plan, a conscious divide-and-rule policy was adopted, aimed at dividing the white workers from the oppressed nationalities. First cut were the budget items that most directly affected the oppressed nationalities. In the City University, this meant that open admissions went first. Those services -- public schools, municipal hospitals and subways -- which were less relied on by white workers were drastically cut while rates skyrocketed (bus and subway fare went from 35 to 50 cents). Yet all this was in preparation for the even broader cuts to come. Perhaps the clearest example of this was in the City University, where the defeat of open admissions without a massive upsurge paved the way for the defeat of free tuition. Once whites were divided from the Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Asians, and other oppressed



nationalities, and convinced that the "price" that had to be paid to maintain the services they relied on was the sacrifice of those services relied on by the oppressed nationalities, they were sitting ducks for the next round of cutbacks. It was clear that this sinister ruling-class offensive and divide-and-rule game was aimed at splitting the proletariat from its main strategic allies, the oppressed nationalities.

These plain facts have been ignored by the opportunists in the communist movement. The genocidal character of the cutbacks for the oppressed nationalities is never mentioned by such self-proclaimed "vanguards" as Workers' Viewpoint Organization, Communist Party Marxist-Leninist, or the Revolutionary Communist Party. All their infrequent talk about national oppression says is that "Blacks and Latins are hardest hit," which, presented by itself, as it is, is entirely acceptable to the liberal bourgeoisie. These opportunists ignore the qualitative effects of national oppression of all the oppressed peoples, and present the national struggles as a minor variety of the economic and trade union struggles, and not revolutionary struggles aimed at overthrowing imperialism. They ignore the strategic importance of work in the national movements, since they do not really grasp that the oppressed nationalities are the main strategic allies of the proletariat. Instead of focusing on the political lessons of the crisis, all they give us is stale economist agitation, sprinkled with a few touches of Marxist vocabulary for appearance's sake. Workers' Viewpoint Organization (WVO) for example, despite the fact that they have recently started trying to cover themselves by calling for self-determination for the Black nation at every possible opportunity, belittled the national question so much that they were not even aware of when open admissions was scrapped! In their July, 1976 newspaper, they say it was ended in June, at the same time as free tuition was ended, when in fact open admissions had been ended in December, 1975, six months before free tuition was killed, as we reported in the April 1, 1976 issue of The Communist! Thus, what we get is economism on two fronts: chauvinist liquidation of the national struggle for fear it might "divide" the workers' economic struggle, and tailist liquidation of political propaganda, for fear it might "divert" us from the "drab, everyday struggle."

Another reason the ruling class aimed its axe so often at Gouverneur was the influence of communists and revolutionaries among the workers over a period of years. Knowing this, one might have expected some of the most militant and righteous struggles to be waged by the workers and patients of Gouverneur. But, while there was certainly much resistance to these attacks, the struggle was unable to advance very far. In fact, there is still not even a rank-and-file group at Gouverneur. Thus the sell-out leaders of the union, District 37, have not had to face a serious challenge to their influence. Further, even fewer workers than in the past have been won to communism. At present, the workers see no alternative or way out, and a certain lull in the movement, coupled with demoralization, has temporarily set in. The reasons for the failures of the communists at Gouverneur and the setbacks to the struggle can be seen by examining the history and development of the struggle.

#### WORKERS' SICK-OUT: SEPTEMBER, 1975

Early in September, 1975, Gouverneur workers were informed that over fifty workers were scheduled to be laid off on September 29. The hospital was already seriously understaffed, having lost 300 workers in the three years the new hospital building had been open. The podiatry and dental clinics had been ordered closed as part of the city-wide budget cuts. And



the hospital was in danger of being completely closed.

In the face of this, the union leadership of District 37 offered no opposition. In fact they even supported hospital closing as a "solution" to the city's crisis. Thus, any resistance could only come from the rank-and-file workers.

A broad group of rank-and-file workers, including members of the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers' Organization (PRRWO), WVO, Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), I Wor Kuen (IWK), and the Workers' Congress (WC) began meeting. This budding rank-and-file group was composed of advanced, middle and backward workers. The basis for a truly multinational caucus, with communists playing an influential or leading role was being laid. White workers were taking up the question of the oppressed nationalities, and even the more backward workers were defending the right of communists to be in the committee and to distribute independent communist literature. It was certainly a favorable situation both for winning advanced workers to communism and consolidating a mass, rank-and-file group.

Nevertheless, the efforts to build this group and win the advanced came to nothing. This was chiefly due to the errors of the so-called "communists", both in relating their activity to party-building and carrying out the sick-out itself.

#### PRRWO -- Rightist Scabs

The PRRWO was the most openly bankrupt. To begin with, they had no adequate analysis of the city's crisis. The articles in their newspaper Palante on the crisis were a hodge-podge of facts and theory pulled out of context, that neither explained why the New York crisis was inevitable under capitalism, nor was capable of guiding anyone. For example, they spent much time showing how crises caused greater concentration and centralization of capital, failing to point out that the New York crisis had more to do with the merger of finance capital and the state apparatus than with the concentration and centralization of private capital. And although PRRWO criticized everyone else for not having done propaganda or adequate consolidation of advanced workers, they themselves did not use Palante as an organizing tool, thereby not being in a position to make propaganda their chief form of activity or to win over advance workers.

In the rank-and-file meetings, PRRWO totally isolated itself. They at no time offered a plan for this group. Instead, they attacked it for supposedly being composed of the most backward workers, while they were working with the most advanced. When the committee first suggested, then invited, and finally demanded that they bring their "advanced" to the meetings to express their views and take an active part in the struggle, PRRWO became angered and accused everyone else of just wanting to know who their contacts were. But the fact was that they were not working with any advanced, and used the old trick of crying "security." Now all this was just nonsense because not bringing their "advanced" had nothing to do with security. Security doesn't mean divorcing yourself from the masses and their struggles. All these clowns wanted to do was find an excuse to avoid their responsibility to build this group.

But the betrayal by PRRWO had not yet reached its lowest depths. All throughout the struggle they did the job of the hospital administration. When the workers decided to call a sick-out, PRRWO opposed this. When the administration tried to scare the workers by threatening anyone involved in the sick-out with being the first laid-off the next time there were cuts, PRRWO, instead of exposing these cheap tactics, joined in a chorus with the adminis-



traitors and warned there would be "grave consequences" for the workers. But no one listened to them. At the last minute, just a day before the sick-out, PRRWO called for a "tactical retreat," and proposed the much less militant action of a slow-down. While less militant than a sick-out, a slow-down also requires a very disciplined and well-coordinated plan and core to carry it out, which was impossible to organize on such short notice. And it also would have hurt the patients in the hospital waiting to be treated. All this jumping about reflected just how unprepared PRRWO was to lead the workers and how they miserably tailed the workers instead.

When the workers rejected this last-ditch effort by PRRWO to sabotage the struggle and proceeded anyway with the sick-out, PRRWO said they disagreed with it, but would support it and help organize it. They did neither. In fact, they organized against it. The day of the sick-out, PRRWO crossed the picket lines and scabbed on the sick-out! Some vanguard!

All this shows how, at that time, PRRWO was dominated by a rightist line. Their belittlement of theory and propaganda, their tailing the movement without a plan or a guiding analysis, their call for a "tactical retreat," their rank amateurishness, and finally their open scabbing testify to this. And this is further borne out by the fact that some weeks after the sick-out, PRRWO, with others, tried to save face by organizing a broad group of workers, doctors, and community residents for a noon-time picket and rally. This shows that, at that time, far from counterposing party-building to mass work, they were isolated and ineffective because of their tailism and overall rightism. While there were certain ultra-"left" aspects to their line that later became primary (the line that the sick-out was premature because more propaganda was needed), their chief feature was right opportunism. PRRWO had been at Gouverneur for a long time, and has had several cadre there, putting them in a position to do good communist work. But, instead, their ideological, political, and organizational errors placed them in opposition to the interests of the workers.

#### WVO -- Economism, Capitulationism, and the "Revolutionary Wing"

WVO was really no better than PRRWO -- only slicker. This made these opportunists more dangerous, since they didn't automatically make idiots out of themselves or act as openly disruptive.

WVO had been paying a lot of attention to the budget crisis. Yet they were never guided by a Marxist-Leninist analysis. Marxist political economy proceeds from the analysis that crises in financial, budgetary and other spheres of circulation are reflections of the crisis in production. Yet for WVO, it was the inflationary crisis that lay at the root of the city's problems and was the cause of the breakdown of capitalist production. They wrote: "Inflation now has reached epidemic levels with no signs of retreat, directly threatening the whole of the capitalist economic order with 'runaway inflation' and total collapse." (WV Journal, Sept. 1974, p. 60) Instead of being a factor that aggravated the crisis of over-production, the basic crisis of capitalism, inflation became the cause of the crisis.

Later on, they developed more fully their bourgeois political economy that belittled the importance of the crisis of production being at the root of the city's crisis. Around the time of the sick-out, in September, 1975, the newsletter of their front group, the Public Education Committee, told us, "The finance capitalists who lend money to the city now say that the New York City debt is more than the city can realistically afford and they are fearful that New York will default on the loans and interest." (p. 2)

It was not until August, 1976, that WVO finally admitted that this view of the root of the city's fiscal crisis was not only that of the finance capi-



talists, but also their own. On the question of the government's deficit spending and debt financing, which is aimed at preventing the overproduction crisis by increasing the spending power of the masses, WVO says that this:

"has led to the compound crisis of recession and inflation, and has brought home the inevitable result: the city was no longer able to pay the interest from its revenues and the banks were forced to step up their attack on the working class to maintain their profits."  
(WV newspaper, Aug. 1976, p. 23)

In other words, according to WVO, the cause of the city's crisis was that the city had more debts than it could afford.

This view cannot at all explain why the banks did not merely refinance the debt by rolling over loans (giving new loans to pay for old loans) as they had already been doing for many years. It also cannot explain why, as late as December, 1973, the bond agencies were raising the city's credit rating, even though the city's tax base had been eroding continuously since at least 1969. At the time of the sick-out, WVO was totally unable to explain why the Big MAC bond plan had failed when the city was unable to sell the MAC bonds. As we explained in the earlier articles in this series, it was the overproduction crisis of 1974, leading to increased loan losses and a crisis in banking; a massive shift of investment funds from government to both domestic and international corporate investment to try to offset the fallen rate of profit; and the tightening of the money supply; that made it impossible for the city to continue its reliance on outside financing. The decisive factor was the crisis in production, leading to the other crises mentioned above. The city's own inability to pay and its shrinking tax base were problems which had existed for years. Thus, they were secondary and not decisive, and only meant that New York was hit first and hardest of all the cities by the other crises. WVO's analysis comes down to the same as that of the bourgeoisie -- the city had spent too much. By resorting to bourgeois economics, WVO covers up the real contradictions in capitalism and offers nothing with which revolutionary leaders can be trained.

Without understanding the crisis in production and its relationship to other spheres, one cannot show how crises such as the New York fiscal crisis are inevitable in the system of capitalist production. Without this, one cannot show that only changing the system of production, by revolution, to a socialist one, can end this crisis. The attempts of the bourgeoisie to shift the crisis onto the backs of the masses are thus viewed as a bad policy that can be reformed without changing the system of production. This approach hides the necessity for a proletarian revolution that aims at seizing the means of production and establishing a proletarian dictatorship which masters and organizes production. Thus, a justification is created for advancing reformist slogans and structural reforms of capitalism as a solution to the crisis, and lays a basis for a whole series of reformist and social-democratic errors.

Naturally, since WVO started with a revisionist analysis to guide their work, they had revisionist practice. Unable to do propaganda that could show how the crisis was inevitable under capitalism, they spewed out tons of reformist garbage. They raised the unsound slogan of "make the capitalists pay," as if the system can be made to "share" the burden of the crisis between exploiters and exploited. They even sank to appealing to New York chauvinism, an arch-petty bourgeois stand. At a rally called by Mayor Beame to show "love" for New York, one of WVO's front groups put out a leaflet with the slogan: "If You Really Love New York: Fight All Cuts and Layoffs!"

This treachery is a reflection of WVO's overall rightism, belittling of theory, abandonment of Marxism-Leninism, and economism. Throughout the early part of the crisis, their main activity was building paper front groups like their "City-Wide Coalition Against the Budget Cuts." This was not based among the advanced workers, or any workers, but was composed mainly of WVO supporters



and members masquerading as "irate workers." Instead of winning the advanced to communism and raising the overall ideological and political level of the honest forces they attracted at one point to that coalition, instead of uniting on a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the crisis with those communists and advanced elements in the coalition, and instead of tying this to party-building, they brought everyone in on the basis of, and to carry out, militant reformist work, similar to OL's "fightback" groups or RCP's "intermediate" groups. And instead of making propaganda their chief form of activity, the literature they did have was either ignored or kept well in the background. WVO did not know why the crisis had developed and they didn't care. This was unimportant to them, since organizing around a Marxist-Leninist line and winning the advanced to communism was not their concern.

At a conference on the budget cuts organized by WVO through its paper coalition in April, 1975, attention was placed on more "mass work." The WVO invited James Butler to be a panelist in one of the conference workshops. Butler is president of Local 420, a large DC 37 hospital chapter. He is a rabid anti-communist whose tactics range from "country preacher" to physical violence against workers who resist anti-worker trade union policies. WVO had no plan on how to focus on Butler and expose the role of DC 37. At that time, their line of "unite to expose" meant to tail misleaders. As a result of all this opportunism, WVO's get-rich-quick scheme, which did bring in advanced elements in the beginning, could not be consolidated, and the coalition began to wither away. The line of WVO was pure economism and tailism, with mass work and agitation the main form of activity.

It should not be difficult to understand why WVO's coalition was unable to get off the ground. Since it could not give communist leadership to the workers and train revolutionary leaders from among the advanced workers, it remained isolated from the masses and soon dwindled to obscurity, especially after the mass upsurge of strikes and rallies that engulfed the city in the summer of 1975. Instead of changing their economist line and issuing a self-criticism, they merely shifted pragmatically to emphasizing less ambitious forms of economist front groups than a city-wide coalition. They focused now on different areas of work and set-up an education committee, a hospitals committee, etc., as their main front groups, and again issued reams of economist literature. It was at this time that the sick-out came.

With an incorrect analysis and using no propaganda, WVO could only tail events. While they did work in the rank-and-file group and did take part in the sick-out, they did not use the struggle as a school for communism or subordinate their mass work to party-building. Even their work as "militant" reformists was shoddy and inconsistent. They left the real leg-work of organizing the sick-out to others, even showing up very late to the workers activity on the day of the sick-out.

Further, their role was characterized by capitulation to PRRWO. At this time, PRRWO were still in the midst of their unholy alliance. These were the glory days of the foul "revolutionary wing," which was based on economism and held together by the careerism of the snakes who ran its groups. So when PRRWO embarked on its disruptive and pessimistic activity in the rank-and-file group, objectively doing the work of the administration, WVO was silent. For example, when PRRWO was called on as communists to put forth their criticisms and to identify the "opportunists" they had been talking about in private to WVO members, WVO played deaf and dumb. WVO did not unite with those struggling against PRRWO's opportunism because that would have meant confronting their own right opportunist line, which was the same as PRRWO's.

The open betrayal of the PRRWO coupled with the continued undermining by WVO did irreparable damage to the work of consolidating the workers after the sick-out. WVO at no time had the perspective of consolidating this newly-emerging group of workers into a rank-and-file mass group. For one thing, they



couldn't, since their economism, tailism, and vacillation had placed them in no position to be able to lead or influence the advanced. For another, they wouldn't, both because this would have conflicted with their original scheme of front committees, and because they had to satisfy their opportunist partners from PRRWO, who would have opposed such a move. When the rank-and-file workers started meeting, WVO opposed establishing firm principles of unity for the committee. This revealed the utter bankruptcy of the "wing" and its members, and their deep-seated small circle spirit that placed the interests of their own circle, dutifully carrying out their latest crackpot schemes for organizing, ahead of, and in opposition to, the interests of the workers. WVO had proven itself totally incapable of providing any communist or even mass leadership.

#### PSP

As for PSP, they were incapable of taking on the struggle against opportunism because of their own ideological, political, and organizational opportunism. They watered down the ideological struggle, characterizing what was a class struggle against a rightist line as a fight among the "new left" for hegemony. While they did get some people to the sick-out, especially Latin workers, they were unable to do this in a revolutionary way and unite with those struggling for a correct line among the rank-and-file workers. Their own opportunism, reflected in their subservience to the CPUSA, made them unable to provide any leadership. And, like the others, they had no propaganda.

#### IWK

IWK was not involved in organizing the sick-out initially. Despite some tactical differences, they participated in it and did not scab, wreck, or become obstructionist. But while fighting for the immediate partial demands, they did not take up the task of propaganda or do a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the fiscal crisis.

#### Workers' Congress

Our activity at that time was limited by many factors. We were still in the process of developing our analysis. This was both because the New York district was just being formed and because we were still in the process of bolshevizing our work and correcting the errors left over from previous organizations, especially on belittling the role of propaganda. Being only half-prepared restricted the work we could do, especially among the advanced. While we were off to a good start, the work was limited. And there were certain errors: not concentrating enough on the consolidation of the advanced in the workers' committee; too much emphasis on trying to unite the communists to do joint work based on the error of thinking common mass activity will lead to greater unity; and not preparing the workers enough to struggle against the disruptive activities of the PRRWO. A strong point was that, although we had only started our analysis, we did advocate aiming the struggle at Big MAC, the predecessor of the EFCB, and pointing out how this struggle should be directed against the bourgeois state apparatus with the goal of smashing it.

What fundamentally distinguished our role, however, from that of the opportunists was that we had a correct guiding line and began to apply it. Instead of justifying our errors, as WVO and PRRWO did, we deepened our study and propaganda, and intensified our use of the newspaper, our propaganda, as our chief form of activity. Still, at this time, our influence was not great enough to counter-balance the continued counter-revolutionary wrecking of WVO and PRRWO.

We have gone into such detail on this struggle, especially on the activity of WVO and PRRWO, because it is important that our experiences be shared with



the communist movement all over the country. These groups have departed from Marxism-Leninism. It is essential to expose their line and activity both to be able to isolate and defeat their evil influence and to avoid making similar errors in different forms. The activity of these forces only led to demoralization among the workers, some of whom thought that these groups had been put up to their antics by the administration. By sabotaging the struggle, they objectively aided the bourgeoisie in their effort to place the entire burden of the crisis on the backs of the people.

Summing up this experience not only revealed the awful consequences of the degeneration of PRRWO and WVO, but also confirmed that the way forward for this work was to rally and unite with the advanced workers, making propaganda the chief form of activity. Only through this work can circles of advanced workers be developed on an industrial basis to lay the foundation for the party, to give conscious leadership to the workers' movement, and to divert it from its spontaneous path.

#### AFTER THE SICK-OUT

The results of the sick-out were mixed. On the one hand, the layoffs took place anyway. But on the other hand, no one was penalized or disciplined for the action, which reflected the strength of the workers. This fully exposed those pessimists like PRRWO who had predicted defeat and so seriously belittled the strength of the workers and overestimated the strength of the administration. Further, the sick-out forced DC 37 vice-president Lillian Roberts to come to the hospital to listen to the workers' grievances and be exposed for all to see as a traitor to the working class. Lillian Roberts attacked the sick-out and its leaders. She told us we were stupid and refused to give us any support or aid, a position that has been consistent to this day. Our success at not having had anyone brought up on charges for participating in an independent work action made it impossible for the union not to support the workers at Lincoln Hospital who also held an independent job action and were being penalized by the Health and Hospitals Corporation.

The spontaneous militancy of the Gouverneur workers, even after the sick-out, was still strong. In fact, the conditions still existed for communists to take big strides forward both in winning the advanced to communism and in taking the initiative against the union bureaucrats. Yet once again the opportunists stepped in and squashed the initiative of the workers.

It was at this point that PRRWO tried to clean up its act. Having earned the disgust of the workers for its scab role in the sick-out, PRRWO had to change its tactics to renew its influence. Still persisting in its rightist line, they circulated a petition against the cutbacks, although they never used it. When workers asked what had happened to the petitions, PRRWO just made excuses and avoided answering. In addition, they now began to present an "alternative" action to the sick-out -- a noon-time rally against budget cuts, including the closing of the podiatry and dental clinics. By itself, this idea was not a bad one, although PRRWO saw this less militant action as a substitute for escalating the struggle. Towards this end they were assisted by their allies in WVO, who still did not want to ruffle the PRRWO's feathers lest their whole alliance be exposed. Thus, aided by WVO, PRRWO was able to bring itself back from total disgrace and lead a rally.

Of course, many workers were still just as disgusted as ever with PRRWO, and some even refused to join the rally. Nevertheless, the rally took place with some participation of workers and community residents, although much less than in the sick-out. Already the maneuvers of the opportunists had begun to dampen the spirits of the workers.

What is important to note about this rally is that it further shows how



at that time, mass work, coalitions, and agitation were the main forms of activity for both WVO and PRRWO. Neither group had corrected its economist and tailist errors by emphasizing propaganda. In fact, at the rally itself, WVO switched their analysis, now claiming that the reason for the cutbacks at Gouverneur was that the richer private hospitals were more and more monopolizing the health industry. While this was certainly a result of the crisis, it in no way explained why the city's budget was being cut, which is why Gouverneur was being cut. Again, this fuzziness of mind did not bother the WVO hacks, who were just interested in attracting bodies to use as bargaining chips in their maneuvers in both the communist movement and with the union bureaucrats and petty politicians.

PRRWO also contented itself with militant tailism, trying to cover their lack of work around propaganda and ideological preparation of the workers over a period of time with slogans in their speech about ending capitalism, etc. But such phrase-mongering, so often resorted to at public events by economists who want to show the world their red colors while avoiding the long and serious job of training revolutionary leaders, is only a sorry mockery of propaganda. Far from having abandoned mass work or agitation at this time, as some have said, they were really immersed in it, trying to hatch new schemes to tail the movement at Gouverneur, hold it back, and lower its aims. Further, to save face, they had to switch tactics at the rally in throwing mud on the sick-out. To do this, they told the rally there would be a speaker who was a "worker" from another hospital to show solidarity. This "worker" was then introduced as a member of the "Revolutionary Bloc," PRRWO's close cronies, and the former right wing of the old BWC. The Bloc member proceeded to attack the neo-trotskyite Progressive Labor Party for ultra-"leftism" in calling an action at Morrisania Hospital when only one department was ready to act, while the rest of the workers were not. This unstated analogy with the sick-out was obvious. Still, while not all the workers participated, well over a hundred did, and not just one department. Of course, this "lesson" in correct tactics included no mention of what was the main danger in the communist and workers' movements -- right opportunism.

In contrast to this amateurish bumbling, the WC began to make some modest steps forward in this period. Applying the Iskra plan and using the newspaper to build up organization, we began to develop a network of agents. The series on the New York crisis became a regular feature in The Communist, a circle was formed to specialize in this field, and the analysis was brought to and discussed with advanced workers, including at Gouverneur. In connection with the overall topical political exposures on international and domestic events and study of Marxism-Leninism which was unfolded around our propaganda, our work both at Gouverneur and in the New York district began to be bolshevized. While never abandoning mass work, propaganda became in practice our chief form of activity. The articles produced in this period speak for themselves, and helped create a cohesion in our work that greatly deepened our understanding of just what propaganda was. Nevertheless, since our work was just beginning we were still unable to counterbalance the strength of the opportunists among the most active workers and consolidate enough to seize the initiative.

As a result of the inability of the opportunists to consolidate a core of advanced workers, their consistent sabotage of the mass movement, and their continued upperhand over genuine communist and advanced forces, including the ganging-up and collusion of PRRWO and WVO, not only did the party-building tasks remain unfulfilled, but, once again, no rank-and-file group was consolidated. A key moment of time, when the workers working closely with communists were in an upsurge and were creating their own forms of organization born out of the struggle itself, was lost. The opportunists were unable to capture the enthusiasm of the workers and give any leadership. Thus, this emerging force of workers died a quick death, murdered by the right opportunism of WVO and



PRRWO. The treachery of these dogs now cleared the way for the union hacks, petty politicians, and phony "people's" administrators to take back the initiative in the workers' movement.

#### INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY 1976

The zigzags and maneuvers of WVO and PRRWO at Gouverneur were a reflection of the overall situation in the communist movement. As is well known, IWWD 1976 was the occasion of the first public airing in New York of the split between WVO and the rest of the "revolutionary wing" led by PRRWO. At the same time, WVO was desperately trying to shore up its eroding influence at Gouverneur. In these circumstances, it chose still another disguise to peddle its shoddy goods -- a "coalition" for IWWD that held a public rally at Gouverneur.

What was most evident at this rally was WVO's failure to train its cadre and supporters in the science of Marxism-Leninism. Although there were several long speeches given, not one of them explained the root cause of women's oppression being class society and the system of private property and its development. Without this understanding, the advanced cannot be ideologically won over to communism. The responsibility for this falls on WVO, whose line of making coalitions and mass work the main form of activity left the speakers unprepared theoretically and, therefore, unable to fulfill the tasks of political education required of communists. And, needless to say, none of WVO's literature even resembled what propaganda should be or touched on any of these basic questions.

The speech by WVO at this meeting clearly reflected their opportunism. It was a liquidationist, economist job from start to finish, not even once giving a communist analysis of the roots and solutions to women's oppression. The speaker started by saying that WVO was a "revolutionary" organization, "forgetting" to say that it was communist. Next, when the history of IWWD was brought up, all we were told about was the Triangle Fire, and nothing about the role of the great German communist Clara Zetkin or the then-Marxist 2nd International in establishing IWWD. When the speaker got around to mentioning socialism, we were told that this meant the workers would "dictate to the ruling class," instead of the workers becoming the ruling class and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Finally, after calling for some more reforms, the speaker brought up the need for a party, but only in a hesitating and embarrassed way. This cheap attempt at "popularizing" Marxism not only robs it of its revolutionary content, but also reflects the extreme fear and hatred of the proletariat and the oppressed peoples by the petty-bourgeois opportunists of WVO who think that the masses are too stupid to grasp scientific socialism and that it can only be understood by the bad intellectuals and college-educated "geniuses" who swell their ranks.

This ugly performance showed clearly that WVO's intention in parading so publicly those workers still close to them was not to train them to be revolutionary leaders, but to use them in the old numbers game in their contention with PRRWO. Further, WVO's avoidance of propaganda was even more blatant than OL, which at least made a pretense of putting out their own "analysis" and pamphlet on women's oppression. In the context of their failures at Gouverneur and the increasing exposure of their blatant right opportunism to the entire communist movement, WVO found its backs to the wall and needed still another maneuver to salvage itself.

#### MARCH 26 RALLY

The next chapter in the ongoing struggle would occur shortly after IWWD. The EFCB, having taken over the management of the city, announced it would



close Sydenham Hospital in Harlem, close in-patient care at Gouverneur, and lay off a total of 1500 hospital workers around the city.

These proposed cutbacks naturally aroused great opposition from among the workers. But in addition to hurting the masses, these cuts and closings would also have meant that some administrators would also lose their jobs. In order to save their own skins, from their own narrow class interests, the administration at Gouverneur decided to call a mass rally against the cuts on March 26, 1976, and to lead a march to the city's hearings on the proposed cuts. Their purpose in calling this rally was to mobilize the people and to use their support for their own ends ... and to sell them down the river once these were met. Naturally, in their mad scramble for "their" piece of the pie, the administrators at Gouverneur emphasized saving Gouverneur and had their rally downtown, while the administrators at Sydenham emphasized saving Sydenham and had their own rally in Harlem. At this time, primarily because of the treachery of WVO and PRRWO, and also because of the constant betrayal of the union hacks, the workers were not organized into any independent group that could counter the influence of the liberal-sounding administrators. Thus, the workers were left without an alternative in this situation and remained under the influence of the administrators.

At this time, WVO was under great pressure in the communist movement. It needed to restore its falling influence, reinspire its cadre, and try to disprove the widely accepted charge of right opportunism. But instead of correcting its basic line, WVO merely made a cosmetic change and shifted its tactics. Previously they had argued that communists must "unite" with opportunist leaders to "expose" them, which had meant in practice very little exposure at all, and emphasis on coalitions and winning the masses instead of propaganda and winning the advanced. Yet now, in an apparent (though unadmitted) concession to their critics, they adopted the tactics of all-out attacks on such misleaders.

At the March 26 rally, WVO showed up in an even newer disguise -- the District 37 "rank-and-file" committee. What their shift in tactics meant was that they would now publicly shout down any and all opportunists, instead of exposing them and explaining how they betrayed the masses and served the bourgeoisie. For example, one WVO speaker at the rally outside the EFCB hearing began by screaming that city councilwoman Miriam Friedlander, who claimed to oppose the cuts, was always an enemy of the workers and had to be smashed. This aroused anger from what was left of the crowd, isolated WVO, and drove middle forces to the side of opportunists who were running the sound system and who grabbed the microphone away from WVO. They then became engaged in a shouting match on the sound-truck, with WVO supporters vainly trying to whip up a chant of "let them speak." But most in the crowd just stood by in disgust, not really on either side.

All this clowning was really a cover for WVO's lack of prior preparation of the workers in a communist fashion. Instead of focusing on all-around political exposures before this public rally, they ran around promoting their ever-changing front groups. Now, where their activity had to be out front for everyone to see, they put on this mad charade of what a communist should do, looking more like animals in heat, or spoiled brats throwing tantrums. One speaker from one of WVO's front groups angrily screamed at the crowd that they had to study The Communist Manifesto, drawing confused stares from the people. This kind of phrase-mongering was meant to cover up their previous outright tailism and economism and lack of propaganda. This was WVO's answer to the growing attacks on their right opportunist line -- a little public dogmatism to cover up their consistent economism, to make them appear quite revolutionary. It was another pragmatic maneuver that revealed that WVO was actually very confused, blowing with the wind, and, without a word



of self-criticism, rapidly switching from one scheme and front group to another. Clearly WVO was acting much more like a frenzied, petty-bourgeois sect than the "vanguard" they claim they have become.

WVO was still trying to find one shortcut after another in doing propaganda. Just like a bourgeois salesman trying to peddle shoddy goods, they switched from the "soft-sell" approach to the "hard-sell"; but the stuff they are pushing is still the same old junk. Both their earlier, openly liquidationist, smiling face, "irate" worker approach, and their later, more hysterical, browbeating approach are merely different forms of the unwillingness and inability to bring and teach the science of Marxism-Leninism to the advanced workers. Both reflect their petty-bourgeois prejudice that the workers are too stupid to understand scientific socialism, so either they must be tricked into accepting it or else forced like an unwilling baby screaming in a high chair. Further, this reflects no faith in Marxism-Leninism, for they fear it cannot be appealing enough to the advanced for them to take up, study, and put into practice.

Now if one had the perspective of doing political exposures, all this would be unnecessary. But for those like WVO who oppose emphasizing exposures, a point can be made only by fooling one into agreement or by coercing them. And when one method fails, the other is tried, as WVO's shift in emphasis shows.

Take the example of the rhetoric they threw at Miriam Friedlander. If they had the perspective of doing exposure, even mass exposure, they would have concretely analyzed her "solutions" to the crisis and showed how she actually does oppose the workers and serve the class enemy. This, despite her super-liberal cover, is not hard to do. For example, she proposed that the EFCB's life be extended from three years to at least five on the pretense that this would "spread out" the cuts. In fact, this extension would actually facilitate the dirty job the EFCB is doing. Instead of working to smash the EFCB and the capitalist system it represents, Friedlander is working to save its life. Now, Friedlander could only be isolated if she was first exposed. More importantly, her class position and a clear analysis of precisely the role she and others like her are playing could be laid out to the advanced only through propaganda, chiefly political exposures. No amount of mindless screaming could replace this type of work. So WVO's general belittling of propaganda left them absolutely useless and even as big roadblocks, both in winning over the advanced workers to communism, and in exposing opportunists before the masses.

Another example of WVO's treachery involved the question of the hearing itself. A member of the WC attended this hearing and used it as a platform to do propaganda and agitation on the hospital cuts. This was a component part of our work, and gave us a chance to reach forces at the hearing with our line and analysis. But, at a forum held by WVO for May Day in 1976, WVO attacked the WC for attending this hearing since supposedly the workers had organized a "boycott" of this hearing and were there to expose it. Now this was just ridiculous or a lie. No such "boycott" had ever been even mentioned, let alone called by any workers. None of the workers' literature even hinted at such a "boycott." Either WVO had secretly called this "boycott," or else they were just lying in a cheap, unprincipled attempt to oppose our correct line and practice. And besides, why must an exposure of this hearing as a diversion exclude such an exposure at the hearing itself? Once again, WVO is unwilling and unable to carry out political exposures.

Finally, this fetish with the hearing also reflects WVO's belittling at that time of the importance of the struggle against the EFCB. Still running around like chickens with their heads cut off, WVO's avoidance of propaganda had robbed them of an analysis of the developments in the city's crisis and



the emergence of the EFCB. As late as July of 1976, they labelled the EFCB as merely a "fiscal watchdog of the monopoly capitalists." (WV newspaper, July, 1976, p. 4) Miserably tailing events, they only later discovered what most people in New York already knew -- that the EFCB was making the major decisions in running the city. So WVO's preoccupation with mass work deprived them of the theoretical work necessary both to develop a correct analysis and to train the advanced workers.

As to PRRWO, by this time they had sunk to the depths of their insanity. They opposed even participating in the rally, even reporting for work that day although they could have been excused to go to the rally, even if they distributed communist literature. Their reasoning was that it was led by opportunists and that party building had become our only task! PRRWO had flipped from its previous rightist line to its present ultra-"left" line by this time, thus rendering them barely noticed by anyone at Gouverneur at this point.

Now that the rank-and-file had been increasingly splintered owing primarily to the opportunism of WVO and PRRWO and with the various agents of the bourgeoisie firmly in the driver's seat of the masses, the administrators were in a position to deal with their superiors. Clearly the EFCB had proposed cuts far in excess of what it intended, in order to see just how much it could get away with, and also to let the people blow off some steam and then "give up" by reducing the cuts. This would make the opportunist leaders look like heroes; get some cuts enacted while painting this as a "victory" for the people; fatigue and demoralize the masses through this round of frustrating struggle; and, principally, create better conditions for the inevitable next round of cuts. Like a yoyo, they would let the people down on a string, only to draw them in later. The way this game worked this time was that they "conceded" to lay off "only" 800 instead of 1500 workers and to drop, for the present, the closing of Sydenham and Gouverneur. But as soon as possible, they would try to get even these token reductions in cuts back.

#### DC 37 DEALS -- CONTRACT BATTLE AND THE AUGUST HOSPITAL STRIKE

Since the union contract ran out on June 30, the contract became the next focus of the struggle. With efforts by the rank-and-file to organize itself floundering, and with the carrying out of the deal agreed to by the administration, the union bureaucrats were now in a position to maneuver the workers and "lead" them from one sell-out to another.

Towards the end of June, the city and the union agreed to a contract that was an all-out attack on the hospital workers. The workers were to get no wage increase until 1978. The union hacks tried to deny this was a wage freeze, although the mayor and the bourgeois press openly said it was. In addition, while there was to be a small cost-of-living increase (6%, although the actual rise in the cost of living had been much higher) it was to come from increased productivity of the workers. In other words, the workers would have to work harder for what were actually lower wages.

The city had achieved a number of objectives in this contract. They succeeded in enforcing the attack on the living standards of the hospital workers and in introducing measures like demanding increased productivity that further depreciated the quality of health care. Further, they succeeded in pulling this deal off with the union hacks without an organized opposition from the rank-and-file. The strong and vocal resistance in the union was still without any cohesion. The city had actually strengthened union head Gotbaum's hand among the workers, assisting him in portraying himself as "saving jobs." Since the union leadership actively collaborated with the



bourgeoisie and the state apparatus, and since they are their agents in the workers' movement, strengthening their hand actually means weakening the strength of the workers and setting them up for an even greater attack. And this was exactly what was to follow very shortly.

The contract deal had been barely digested by the workers when the city announced it was going back on the previous deal it had made in the spring, and that layoffs and hospital closings would again take place. Feeling that Gotbaum had sufficiently lulled the workers to sleep and misled them, the ruling class now thought it opportune to resume again its offensive against the workers. But again, it is doubtful that they actually intended to implement all these proposed cuts at this time. Instead, they felt that some new cuts were needed, and the best way to accomplish this was to announce sharper reductions than intended, let the workers blow off some steam, and then reach a "compromise" that called for some new attacks, ended the workers' struggle, and further weakened the workers.

The union bureaucrats only called a strike because of rank-and-file pressure. If the hacks did not call a strike and then sell it out, then the rank-and-file would have taken the initiative in their own hands and possibly swept aside the old, sell-out leadership. But since the rank-and-file was still disorganized, the union leaders could once again march at the "head" of this upsurge.

On the first day of the strike Victor Gotbaum visited some of the picket lines. Gotbaum is quite aware of the kind of exposure that has been done on the union leadership in general and on him and Lillian Roberts in particular, but we doubt that he was prepared for the welcome he received at Gouverneur. Instead of smiles and cheers and gestures of unity, he was confronted by workers shaking their fists and screaming, "No sell out!" He was so scared, seeing his escape to his car cut off by at least fifty workers, that he signalled the police stationed at the picket line to get the workers off him. This was a big mistake on his part.

Seeing their so-called "union leader" siccing the cops on them -- the same cops who were there to break the strike, the same cops who shoot our children down in the streets -- was just too much. Gotbaum was punched, punched and shoved, while the workers yelled: "Bastard! Sell-out! Son of a bitch! Traitor!"

Workers taunted him to call for the police to help him now, if he dared. Instead he moved cautiously in the direction of his car, which was by now on its way to two flat tires. He was not allowed in his car until he agreed to take one worker with him to discuss the demands for a united strike by the whole of DC 37.

Of course he never intended to meet any of our demands and only made that concession to get away in one piece. The important thing is that there was a clearer understanding among the workers of Gotbaum and Company, and that the workers' willingness to strike against the Emergency Financial Control Board and the Health and Hospitals Corporation did not mean that they were going to conciliate and treat Gotbaum as anything else but their class enemy.

After four days, the strike was sold out. The union leaders, in a continuation of previous sell-outs, agreed to give up the meager COLA money won in June to provide funds to postpone the layoffs until January. The union was to help set up productivity committees to make the workers produce more, doing the job of the administration and squashing the resistance of the workers. Again, the ruling class was chipping away at the rights and living conditions of the workers, making one deal that promised one thing in exchange for another, and then taking even that away to "prevent" something even "worse" which would eventually happen later. This was not surprising, as the



city had a three-year plan in which to balance the budget through cutbacks. All this juggling around was purely premeditated, with the union leaders as accomplices in this criminal plan.

By the time of the strike, WVO had begun regular publication of their newspaper. Two articles appeared on the strike, one in the August, 1976 issue, and the other in the September-October, 1976 issue. The first article paints the strike in glowing colors, calling it "a shining example of how workers and oppressed nationalities are rising up in resistance against capitalist attacks." It is typical of economists to glorify these trade union struggles, to try to "lend the economic struggle a political character" by talking about such a modest, short strike for reforms that eventually ended in defeat with high-sounding phrases about fighting capitalism, as if it was like the Paris Commune or the defense of Stalingrad. WVO's tailism and character is even more evident in their statement that, "The strike is even more significant as the first major municipal workers' offensive against the monopoly capitalists in NYC..." (p. 22) Now the strike is part of an offensive of the working class! Clearly an offensive is part of a strategic and tactical plan. WVO knows this. But who made this plan? Gotbaum, who called the strike? Where was it carried out? Clearly there was no plan. And not only was the strike purely spontaneous, but it was also mainly defensive, an attempt at defending the living standards of the workers against layoffs and cutbacks, rather than an offensive, much less a revolutionary one, at making new gains.

Instead of using the strike as a "school for communism" and a "school for war" against the bourgeoisie, WVO is content to tail the consciousness of the workers, turn this defeat into an offensive, and avoid giving a correct Marxist-Leninist analysis of the role of this strike in relation to the need for proletarian revolution. While WVO in its September paper tries to cover itself by attacking OL for calling the strike a victory, WVO's own description of the strike as a "shining example" and an "offensive" were really no different than OL's open tailism.

It was around this time that WVO finally discovered the EFCB. Although their July newspaper merely referred to it as a "fiscal watchdog," by August the "watchdog" had become the master. They now said that the monopoly capitalists were "ruling the city directly through the open dictatorship of the Emergency Financial Control Board." (p. 22) Without even a hint of self-criticism for tailing events, since the EFCB had set up shop in the fall of 1975, WVO just switches its analysis of the role of the EFCB. But, alas, there analysis is still wrong.

First, they ignore that as part of the federal plan for loans to the city, the congress and the president also have effective veto power over the city's budget, since they can withhold or set conditions for the federal loans. The EFCB directly manages this process, but is not alone in it. There is no more an "open dictatorship" of the EFCB than there is of Carter or the House and Senate Banking Committees. Perhaps WVO will discover this next year. Since they are not interested in doing propaganda and having a correct analysis, both to train revolutionary leaders from among the advanced and to guide the struggle, but are content to tail the struggle, they remain trapped in their local parochial blinders. They are unable to see beyond the city's borders and grasp the nationwide and international aspects of the city's crisis and the bourgeoisie's "solutions."

Second, by saying that the monopoly capitalists are "ruling directly" through the EFCB, they imply that there has been a change in the form of rule of the bourgeoisie; that, somehow, they did not rule "directly", but only indirectly before the EFCB. WVO openly says, "Previously, the monopoly capitalists exerted their rule indirectly through all the politicians and



bureaucrats they control in the state and city government." (p. 22) Now, what really has changed is that some monopoly capitalists are directly managing the city's affairs, bypassing the elected executives and thus starting to scrap the charade of elections and bourgeois democracy. But this does not mean that previously their rule was not direct. It was very direct, since the politicians are merely representatives of the bourgeoisie, doing the job of the bourgeoisie in governmental affairs. This is why the EFCB was set up by these very politicians, and not an armed coup. To talk of some sort of change of rule as the same as a change of management is to merely build illusions about the nature of the state. Under the "freest" and "most democratic" of elections, where no one ever heard of any such thing as a financial control board, the state apparatus under capitalism is nothing other than a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. But instead of explaining this, all WVO tells us is that before the EFCB, the bourgeoisie only ruled "indirectly!" WVO's formulations can only hide this Marxist-Leninist truth, and only build up illusions for a return to "democracy" and the so-called "rule" of elected officials. Once again, they took the correct, immediate demand for smashing the EFCB and made the movement for this reform everything, subordinating the revolutionary struggle to this reform, and distorting the class nature of the bourgeois state.

WVO's role during the strike can only be labelled as treacherous, and the account of it in their paper, pure fiction. WVO tells us that "Workers on line were battling the cops to stop ambulances and scabs from entering the hospitals," (p. 22) making it appear that WVO approved of this. But WVO had sunk so low that they could not even tail this militancy, but actually opposed it. At Gouverneur, which they cite as one example of militancy, WVO came to the picket line each day in a different disguise. One day they were there as "workers," another as a "community strike support coalition," and still another as AAFEE -- Asian-Americans for Equal Employment. Consistently, they had their own separate picket lines. When workers asked them to join with them in blocking the driveways, they refused! As to the scabs, after one day of trying to persuade them to join the strike, the workers adopted the tactic of throwing tomatoes at them. But WVO also opposed this, because not all the unions had officially called the strike!

Now this was supposed to be a strike, not a picnic. Part of a communist's role is assisting the workers in organizing the economic struggle, not opposing it and tailing strike-breakers. Clearly WVO's separate picket line was not aimed at raising the level of struggle, but at splitting and holding it back. What is also noteworthy is the comparison with WVO's 1976 May Day rally which ended in a battle with the cops after WVO "militantly" charged into the street through the police lines. They called this adventurist action a "victory." But when it was not just to "prove" that the bourgeoisie attacked WVO and that therefore this proved they were genuine revolutionaries, when it was not just to serve the narrow interests of their group but to serve the people, WVO could not seem to find its previous "militancy." And to cover up their treachery, their wrecking from within the communist and workers' movements, WVO is forced to lie outright to the movement in their newspaper.

WVO's "DC 37 Rank-and-File" group is isolated from both the advanced and the masses of workers who are fed up with WVO and want nothing to do with them. Still, WVO is trying to pass off its activity in this strike as exemplary and worthy of a vanguard. In a leaflet addressed to hospital workers for its 1977 May Day rally, WVO, in calling for a new communist party, informs us that "WVO is the foundation to this party because we have shown that we have taken the lead." The reason?

"During the hospitals strike last summer, WVO was the only communist organization which put out leaflets daily and fought



the union sell-outs because we tried to organize the rank-and-file to take leadership of the strike and of the union!" We have shown how WVO really played a cowardly, rearguard role in the strike. But what this also reveals is that WVO feels that doing a lot of trade union, reform, and economic work, with frequent agitational leaflets, fulfills the task of party building. The basis for a party will be laid when the vanguard of the proletariat, the advanced workers, will have been won ideologically to communism, united around a correct program, and consolidated in a common organization.

But this is not WVO's perspective. There is not even a hint here of propaganda being the chief form of activity. Instead, WVO's line on our literary tasks is to see the newspaper as a collection of militant strike articles supplemented by lots of local leaflets. Nowhere is there to be comprehensive political exposures. To them, socialist consciousness arises from the realm of relations of the employers and workers -- economic reforms plus calls for socialism. So to WVO, building the party merely means building WVO, and not winning the advanced to communism. All they are doing is building the basis for a larger, economist sect, and not a vanguard party. Clearly, WVO has proved itself to be anything but the basis for a new communist party.

The other "vanguard," PRRWO, also played a bad role. They refused to participate in the strike since it was called by the union hacks, although this time they had enough good sense not to report to work, as they had done in the sick-out. They raised the bankrupt theory of the productive forces by arguing that growing technical improvements in capitalism meant that there would be unemployment, and that it was therefore useless to strike. This ultra-"left" line of liquidating the struggle for reforms under capitalism was basically ignored.

PSP did not even support this strike. Their pretense was that it was not led by the workers and that the city would use it to save money for the days the workers were out. This was just an excuse for passivity, as they let this struggle pass without doing anything, not even organizing around their line.

Our own role in this strike must be seen in the context of the struggle in the Workers' Congress. We had already been robbed of our main weapon in party building, The Communist, as the opportunists who headed the WC abandoned propaganda as the chief form of activity in general, proposed an economist plan for "national hospital work" as a substitute for building a network of agents around the paper, and censored out our articles, particularly the polemics with WVO and PRRWO. We were without a propaganda weapon even before the split in the WC. By the time of the strike, we were no longer in the WC, and in a process of summing up and reorganization. At this point, our work had just begun to develop, but the degeneration of the WC now became the key factor in holding it back. Our work was restricted to using the past propaganda and helping lead the strike. This naturally limited its advance, since we no longer had a regular voice or organizational apparatus at our disposal. What is significant is that despite all these obstacles, our work did not go backward, with only its advance halted. This is because we had correctly begun to apply the Iskra plan.

Given all these factors, the sell-out of the strike was a big victory for the bourgeoisie and a defeat for the workers. The rank-and-file were again unable to be organized. Since it is the advanced that determine the character of a movement, and the advanced were still scattered and divided both in ideas and organization, the workers' movement withered. The betrayals by the WVO, PRRWO, and the opportunist leaders of the WC meant that the advanced workers were not trained as revolutionary leaders, so the masses



again remained without correct leadership.

#### AFTER THE STRIKE

The door was now fully open for the bourgeoisie to institute a new round of attacks on the hospital workers. In contrast to the sick-out, which was called without union sanction but ended in no disciplinary action, the striking workers lost six days pay and may have lost one year's seniority. The union hacks, of course, offered no resistance to these attacks. This shows that the workers can better protect themselves when they are united and rely on their own initiative than when the union hacks lead.

Since the strike, the "productivity committees" have been overseeing a big speed-up. Instead of open layoffs, the more covert method of "attrition" has been used to get rid of workers. Forced retirements at age 65 were introduced last year. With more work, fewer workers to do it, and the same hours and money, workers resisting the speed-up have been accused of "insubordination." Conditions are being made so intolerable that many workers are forced to leave their jobs. In addition, instead of hiring new workers, the city is bringing in workers from the CETA program, which is federally funded. These workers are also paid less than city workers. All this has been used to reduce the workforce and generate revenue to avoid open layoffs in 1977.

Another factor is that 1977 will see a mayoral election, and Beame wants to postpone more drastic cuts until after the election, which will also be in the final year of the EFCB's 3-year plan. The public claims that the budget will be balanced with no big problem is the usual garbage the politicians give us around election time. What is significant is that those bourgeois officials not running for office have found it necessary to admit and warn that further cuts will be needed. First Deputy Mayor Zucotti, who will resign in June and return to his private law practice, said that the city's workforce would have to shrink for at least another five years. MAC chairman and EFCB member Felix Rohatyn, who will resign by July 1, warned that without more federal money soon, the city was still in very serious financial trouble. Since the federal loan program is due to end in 1978, it is clear that the city's budget crisis is not at all close to resolution, and that the more drastic measures are merely being postponed a few months.

Various other forms of attacks have also been developed. Although North Central Bronx Hospital and the new Lincoln Hospital have been opened in the Bronx, the amount of care is much less than before, when Morrisania and Fordham Hospitals were still open. The "new" Lincoln is even worse than the old Lincoln. In addition, the removal of Dr. John Holloman as head of the Health and Hospitals Corporation in January, 1977, was part of a further preparation for more cutbacks. Holloman, a Black doctor who went along with and carried out many of the cuts, but had contradictions with the EFCB and opposed the most drastic of the cuts, had to be removed so the cuts could be carried out in the future more efficiently.

Instead of preparing for a new battle against cutbacks and layoffs, District 37 focused its main efforts on getting Carter elected. Of course, nothing has changed under Carter, except that the crisis has continued to get worse. Now they are deciding which mayoral candidate to beg from. This treachery has led to a demoralization among the union members. With the attacks continuing, the politicians giving more lies, the union hacks selling out, and the sham "communists" betraying them, many workers see no



alternative to this mess. Consequently, about 20% of the workers have spontaneously quit the union since the strike in disgust with the continuing sell-outs and class collaboration. But such demoralization has two aspects. While in itself it cannot lead anywhere, it is still based on discontentment, and not contentment. Communists can take advantage of this situation if they correctly carry out their tasks.

#### CONCLUSION

We have spent a great deal of time presenting the lessons of these struggles and summing up both the positive and negative examples of the communist movement in order to help develop a correct line. Only through struggles against an incorrect line can a correct line develop. And this correct line will guide our work in a revolutionary manner.

What stands out in our analysis is the necessity to make propaganda the chief form of activity and how deviation from the Leninist line on party-building has led from one setback to another by the opportunists in the communist movement. Without focusing on propaganda and consolidating the advanced, we can not accomplish either our party-building tasks or our tasks of diverting the spontaneous movement of the masses. Of course, we cannot fully give leadership to the masses in the absence of a party. But the lack of consolidation of advanced elements and the chaos in the workers' movement at Gouverneur are testimony to the complete failure of the methods of the opportunists.

It is only now that the workers' movement is recovering from the combined assault of the EFCB, the union, and the phony "communists," and starting to re-emerge as a potent force. We are inevitably heading for another class showdown and upsurge of the workers' movement. Now is the time to get prepared.

In summing up our own role, our work was mainly positive, both in making propaganda our chief form of activity and giving leadership in the mass struggle. Our attitude to our errors is to face up to them openly and to correct them, which we have been doing. But whatever secondary errors we did make were, as we have shown, fundamentally different from the many errors of principle, from the outright opportunism that characterized such bankrupt forces as WVO and PRRWO.

In addition, throughout this series, we have summed up other key lessons:

- 1) The fight against the cutbacks by the city and EFCB must be directed against the state apparatus. It must be seen as a component part of the revolutionary fight to smash the bourgeois state and replace it with the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism.
- 2) Particular attention must be placed on welding the key, strategic alliance for proletarian revolution in the US -- the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and the oppressed nationalities. Our tactics must be guided by our strategy. The struggle must be linked in a living way to the struggle for self-determination for all oppressed nations, including the Black nation in the Black Belt South, and the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico.
- 3) We must use mass struggles and organizations as schools for communism and carry out the reform struggle in a revolutionary way. The work in and to build mass organizations should be seen as a component part of building a united front against imperialism and building a mass, revolutionary movement.
- 4) We must fight to expose all the class collaborationist traitors



in our ranks, such as trade union bureaucrats, poverty pimps, big-mouth politicians, etc., who are representatives and bribed servants of the bourgeoisie. We must drive them from our ranks, including driving the misleaders out of the trade unions.

5) The struggle must be carried out as part of the revolutionary struggle to prevent fascism. We must oppose both the steps towards fascism "from above" in the state apparatus and "from below" through fascist and chauvinist ideology and organizing reactionary mass movements.

6) We must tie the struggle to the struggle against the growing danger of a new world war between the two superpowers. We must link the struggle to the national liberation struggles, and tie the city's crisis to the general crisis of capitalism.

Certainly none of our tasks can be accomplished easily. In the RED DAWN we will continue to update this series and deepen our analysis. We hope to elicit comments and criticism around this and the other articles. Our guarantee to success in our work is if we have a correct line and begin to carry it out. Guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism, focusing on party-building and propaganda, and struggling mercilessly against all forms of opportunism, we will continue on the correct path we have already started, if only modestly, to follow.

#### POSTSCRIPT

We have made references in this article to our analysis of the specific features of the economic crisis that led to New York's fiscal crisis. Since then, there have been some changes in the economic picture that have affected the course of the city's continuing crisis.

The municipal bond market made a big comeback in 1977. The sale of municipal bonds increased more than it ever had in a one-year span, up 30% from 1976 to 1977, to \$44 billion. (New York Times, January 1, 1978) This was due to several factors. First, the banks' crisis levelled off, with less loan losses, because of the slight increase in industrial production, and the big increase in the profits of the corporations to whom the banks lend money and from whom they collect interest. In addition, although production was slightly up in 1977, it still was, at best, sluggish. The expected boom in spending by the industrial capitalists never appeared. All this left the banks with more money to invest and lend elsewhere. At the same time, all-around cutbacks by local governments resulted in budget surpluses assuring the bankers of repayment without refinancing the debt. The percentage of the gross national product for local government spending declined from 15.2% in 1975 to 14.1% in 1977. This was the first big decline in that percentage since 1960. It is in line with the trend of increased capital directed to private corporations to try to offset the falling rate of profit. The result was that there was more money available for these safer investments in municipal bonds.

These fluctuation in the bond market are in themselves nothing unusual, and come and go with the cyclical crises of production. So it might be expected that New York City might have taken advantage of this situation and re-entered the bond market from which it had been squeezed out. New York State did take advantage of these relatively favorable conditions and successfully re-entered the market. But the city's attempt ended in total failure. A proposed note sale in November, 1977, was cancelled when the investment rating service Moody's gave the city's notes its lowest credit rating. They said that even though they saw no problem with repayment of this particular note issue, the "general credit" of the city was destroyed by the debt moratorium of 1975, and the possibility of bankruptcy in the near future. (New York Times, November 11, 1977)



Although the city's inability to pay back its own debts was only a secondary cause of its being squeezed out of the credit markets in 1974 and 1975 and its resulting fiscal crisis, it was assuming a more prominent role in the ability of the city to reestablish its credit and again enter the bond market. This leftover damage from the height of the crisis in 1974 and 1975 that has not yet been solved is but one example of how cyclical crises no longer result in booms, but start anew before the previous one is over and its effects are counteracted. The fact is that the debt moratorium of 1975 was an organized bankruptcy, an organized default on its debts by New York City. Since this has not been corrected, and since outside sources such as the federal government and the banks are still not in a strong enough economic position to prop the city up as much as they did in the past, the city must demonstrate its ability to pay back its debts on its own before any investors will risk a loan of their precious capital.

It should be emphasized that, as we pointed out all throughout this series of articles, when there was a change in the conditions that led the banks to prop up the city long after it had passed its ability to pay back its loans, the city was squeezed out of the credit market.\* Its ability to pay back was secondary.\*\* There were other causes for this. But now when it is a question of re-entering the market, under the present economic conditions, the ability to pay back plays a more critical role. These are facts the bourgeoisie is trying to cover up. Now city officials are blaming the bond rating people for being too cautious today to make up for being "too tardy in downgrading city securities two-and-a-half years ago." (New York Times, November 11, 1977) But this was no mistake or mere "tardiness." This really reflects the anarchy of capitalist production, the unplanned nature of capitalism that makes wholesale wrong calculations inevitable and results in crises.

The need for the city to prove its credit-worthiness by balancing its budget has led to a continuing attack on the working people of New York. The openly anti-union demands by the city in the contract negotiations with the unions, along with demands by the federal government for an even tighter budget to guarantee some sort of federal loans or loan guarantees, verifies our analysis that the crisis is still on and a new showdown between the people and the bourgeoisie is approaching. Mayor Koch has been publicly and openly attacking the unions in a way that would warm the hearts of Henry Ford and Ernest and Julio Gallo. Koch has pledged budget cutbacks to put the budget in balance,

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\* Many of these same banks are going through a similar scenario with increasing loans abroad, both to oppressed nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and to other capitalist and revisionist countries, such as Italy and Poland. Many of these countries are bankrupt. Some have already defaulted on loans, and most need refinancing. But since this is to protect the export of capital and imperialist investment and strategic influence in these countries, the banks are still rolling over these loans, despite the inability to the borrowers to pay them back.

\*\* The reasons we gave were the overproduction crisis leading to the crisis in banking, the rush to the bond market by corporations to gather capital to offset the falling rate of profit, and the need to tighten the money supply to control inflation, all of which squeezed the city out of the money markets. Nevertheless, we should have emphasized more the city's own financial situation, even though it was secondary, and explained why the tax base was so hard hit, and why this meant the "squeezing out" hit New York first and hardest. The deterioration of the tax base reflects the overall decay of the big cities, a result of the general decay caused by imperialism. This tremendously drags down the living standard of the



and demanded "give-backs" from the workers. The Emergency Financial Control Board will terminate at the end of this year, and undoubtedly be replaced by a similar, less temporary body. The tendency is to institutionalize such a body. This process is already underway, with key EFCB figures, such as former EFCB director Steven Bergen, who was named a financial advisor to Koch, taking traditional posts. The institutionalization process is also seen in the union contracts which have clauses, agreed to by the union hacks, that allow layoffs if the EFCB so orders, and that make approval of the contract by the EFCB mandatory for its implementation. Further, the city still has a budget deficit of \$1 billion, and inflation is once again rising. Without a new federal loan program of some sort, the city will face open bankruptcy. While it is not our purpose now to do a full commentary on the scope of the next phase of the city's crisis, the handwriting is clearly on the wall for a stormy year of confrontation and sharp struggle. A new round of cuts and layoffs will not only result in a new upsurge of mass struggle, but also in heavier repression, as the city desperately tries to demonstrate that it can "tighten its belt" and "hold the line" against the working class and the oppressed peoples.

What stands out in the midst of this deepening crisis is that the opportunists in the communist movement have once again utterly failed in their tasks. The ability of the communists to cope with this crisis is actually less than it was in 1975.

Take the PRRWO and the "revolutionary wing." Its work at Gouverneur Hospital and throughout the city has totally collapsed. Its mad purges have destroyed its organization and scattered many of its old cadres to the wind. Its "propaganda only" line has in fact meant a liquidation of propaganda to the advanced workers. Palante became Bolshevik, and, until very recently, declared it "rightist" to do topical political exposures, since that supposedly meant making a line for each movement, tailing the spontaneous movement, etc. They have thus been left with nothing to say to the advanced workers, about New York, or anything else. Judging from recent editions of their organ Bolshevik, they have shown signs of once again veering to the right, with new emphasis on local leaflets and shop newsletters. But even if they resume regular exposures in their paper, their few remaining cadre will be as theoretically unprepared to win over advanced workers as they were in the past. A resurrection of the 1975-model PRRWO will only repeat the situation when little or no study and training of cadre around use of the newspaper went on. Both right and "left" versions of the "political-line-is-the-key-link" line belittle our ideological tasks which supposedly have been mainly completed, and have crippled the "wing" beyond recovery.

The activity of Workers' Viewpoint Organization has also resulted in failure. The collapse of their "budget cuts coalition" scheme set them back. Their economism has also led to a virtual abandonment of work at Gouverneur, although they may pop back up via some front group when the mass struggle perks up again. Even though the years of tricks and maneuvering by them has earned them the distrust of many workers, they aren't as openly exposed or hated as PRRWO, and can make a brief and temporary comeback. Still, their analysis is as bad as ever. We criticized them in the article for ignoring the role of the federal government when they talked of the "open dictatorship" of the EFCB, and commented, half-jokingly, that, "Perhaps WVO will discover this next year." Well, it is now next year, and right on schedule, WVO breaks its long silence on the budget crisis in the March, 1978 newspaper. But while they now acknowledge the existence of the federal government, a fact that six months of daily badgering by the bourgeois press, and two-and-one-half years of the federal loan program make hard to ignore any longer, they can still offer us nothing

people. We tended to downplay this factor, and gave the impression in our series that an overall improvement in the municipal bond market would allow the city back in.



but militant reformism. They further copy from the RCP and the OL by raising the slogan "jobs or income now," and add it to "make the bosses pay." They say, "It is the banks who, through years of high interest rates have pushed New York City to the brink of bankruptcy, and it is they who should be forced to pay to bail the city out, not the workers." As if this were possible under capitalism!

There is still no talk of the crisis of production by WVO. Instead they have discovered another "cause" of the city's crisis -- parasitism. But their article, "How Parasitism Causes NYC Budget Crisis," gives a very narrow definition of parasitism. They say, "This situation, where more profit is gained by gathering interest off bonds and through speculating on monetary exchange rates rather than more risky and slower returning investment in production like railroads or steel, is called parasitism."

But is parasitism, as WVO claims, profits and investment in bonds and money markets versus investment in production? And is it the cause of the budget crisis? No, it is not. In one sense, the examples mentioned by WVO are aspects of parasitism. But parasitism is a general feature of imperialism, and much broader than this. Parasitism means the creation of a class of "rentiers" who are themselves isolated from the process of production, and who "live by 'clipping coupons,' who take no part in any enterprise whatever, whose profession is idleness." (Lenin, Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism, p. 120) In the era of imperialism, the majority of capitalists become such parasites. But this is manifested in more than just investment in bonds and in the money markets, but also very importantly in stocks and export of capital, which is the "investment in production" which WVO sees as not parasitic. Lenin pointed out:

"The export of capital, one of the most essential economic bases of imperialism, still more completely isolates the rentiers from production and sets the seal of parasitism on the whole country that lives by exploiting the labor of several countries and colonies." (Ibid.)

These rentiers are isolated themselves from the process of production. But ultimately they derive their profits "by exploiting the labor" of the world's people -- from production. Lenin examined the capital invested abroad by the British capitalists in his day, and concluded, "The income of the rentiers is five times greater than the income obtained from the foreign trade of the biggest 'trading' country in the world. This is the essence of imperialism and imperialist parasitism." (Ibid. p. 121) Thus, parasitism is much broader than WVO's definition, and is directly related to investment in production through stocks, export of capital, corporate bonds, commercial paper, etc., even though the rentiers themselves are separated from the production process. WVO actually counterposes investment in the financial and money markets to investment in production, and hides that the source of all capitalist profit is the unpaid labor of the workers in production. It is no accident that they did not mention stocks or export of capital, since in general they belittle the role of production in capitalism. They talk as if capitalism can develop to a point where it no longer needs production. And, after all this, they still do not tie up how the parasitism of the money lenders led to the crisis, citing only vague truisms that the banks benefitted from the increase in the debt at the expense of the workers, and that the debt piled up tremendously. This incorrect analysis of parasitism is a continuation of their bourgeois, reformist political economy, and still in no way explains the cause of the city's crisis. Thus, their perfect record of wrong analysis and bad propaganda is unspoiled.\*

\* A very similar theory to WVO's on parasitism can be found in Theory of the Leisure Class, 1897, by Thorstein Veblen, a bourgeois reformist economist.



The Worker, which is the organ of the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters (RWH), the recent split-off from the RCP, offers an analysis of the city's crisis in its debut issue of March, 1978, although it says nothing about the RCP split or its line. Their analysis of the cause of the crisis drags out the old "shrinking tax base" line of the bourgeois press. Not surprisingly, their articles do not transcend the bounds of militant trade unionism. The RWH appears to be trying to out-economist its economist relative, the RCP, and, if it can continue to exist as a separate organization, is bound to even more belittle the role of theory and propaganda.

OL-CPML has an even simpler solution for the city's crisis. They have now ignored it for several years. The Call on rare occasions makes mention of budget cuts or a possible strike or rally, but has never even attempted an analysis, either agitation or propaganda, of the city's crisis itself. It should therefore be no surprise that this "vanguard" will have virtually no influence on the workers' movement as the crisis heats up again.

So from various angles and with various justifications, a sampling of the literature of the opportunists reveals that they are still unable to do propaganda and, hence, train workers in revolutionary activity. Since many workers, advanced and others, have had a chance to see these opportunists expose themselves over the years, they are in general less effective than they were a few years ago in New York.

Nevertheless, the lack of a party and the continuing crisis of our movement, seen in the dominance of right opportunism and the scattered, relatively weak state of the genuine forces, remains to be overcome. Such a situation is fraught with grave dangers for the working class, who stand even more exposed to the butcher's knife of the bourgeoisie. The tailism and amateurishness of the opportunists is no laughing matter, and will help the ruling class carry out its severe austerity measures against the people. The interests of the masses demand that we combat the results of this right opportunism harder.

The coming months may see an upsurge in the workers' movement and big strikes. This possible upsurge contrasts with the inability of our movement to deal with it, and the movement's lack of preparation for the major tasks required of it. To chart a course out of this predicament, we must remember well the words of Lenin:

"And so, we have become convinced that the fundamental error committed by the 'new trend' in Russian Social-Democracy lies in its bowing to spontaneity, and its failure to understand that the spontaneity of the masses demands a mass of consciousness from us Social-Democrats. The greater the spontaneous upsurge of the masses, the more widespread the movement becomes, so much the more rapidly, incomparably more rapidly, grows the demand for greater consciousness in the theoretical, political and organizational work of Social-Democracy. (What Is To Be Done? p. 64)

Only by combatting the theory of spontaneity, and only by more theoretical work and propaganda will we be able to lay the basis for a vanguard organization that will break with and end the primitive and scattered state the opportunists have left the communists and class-conscious workers in. The situation at Gouverneur and in general demands more consciousness. Only in this way can we repair the damage done by the treachery of our present-day worshippers of spontaneity.



MORE ON THE ARRESTS OF DAVID PEREZ AND VICENTE "PANAMA" ALBA

In August of 1977, we published a pamphlet entitled "The Arrests of David Perez and Vicente "Panama" Alba and The Struggle of the Puerto Rican People for independence and National Liberation." After some months of struggle and exposure, the state was forced to drop these trumped-up charges. This represented a victory for the people, however small. As for our pamphlet, there are a few copies still available, and we hope to reprint it in the future.

But the harassment of the Puerto Rican national movement continues. In March, 1978, Vicente "Panama" Alba and three other members of the Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Nationalist Prisoners were arrested while attending a court hearing in the Bronx for another person. Panama was recognized among the spectators, and an incident was provoked when the trial was stopped mid-way so the guards could search Panama and the three other brothers. They were arrested on some phony charges, with Panama being charged with weapons possession and held on \$25,000 bail. All four brothers are now out on bail.

Imperialism cannot change its nature and it cannot reconcile itself to those struggling for national liberation and socialism. The struggle against the oppression of the Puerto Rican people will continue until victory, and we will continue to support it until that victory is achieved.

INDEPENDENCE FOR PUERTO RICO!

FREE THE PUERTO RICAN NATIONALIST PRISONERS!

STOP THE HARASSMENT OF THE PUERTO RICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT!

WORKERS AND OPPRESSED NATIONS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!



The Red Dawn Committee (M-L) sees active ideological struggle as essential to building a new communist party. To achieve this clarity and principled unity on line, we are encouraging letters, comments, and criticisms from our comrades and friends. In future issues, we may publish comments and polemics in appropriate cases.

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