

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

* 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-^{7 RWC}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 PRWO 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.