

International Socialists  
≡ 1975 ≡  
Special Convention Bulletin

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Democratic Centralism. . . . Summary

1. The current period of capitalist instability and crisis is the decisive preparatory period for the construction of a revolutionary workers' party. The job of the IS is to take the lead in constructing the party. The immediate step towards this is the transformation of the IS into a workers' combat group.

2. As a Leninist combat group, the IS is organized on the principles of democratic centralism. Leninist democracy demands rank and file control of the party by the workers, full freedom of criticism, the right to organize opposition, the right to form factions. Democracy exists for and is subordinated to disciplined revolutionary action. Through its democratic procedures and representative bodies the IS decides policy which is binding upon the whole organization to carry out.

3. Democracy cannot exist without centralism. The creation of a national organization with one policy and line, able to engage in unified action as a cohesive national striking force, can only be achieved through a political center - a central political leadership, staff, and organizational machinery. All campaigns, policies, decisions centrally decided upon are binding upon the entire IS. The highest central body of the organization is the convention. In its absence its powers are delegated to the NC and to the EC, which operate within its policy guidelines. Lower bodies are subordinate to higher bodies. Higher bodies are to set policy, issue directives, and secure their implementation by all units of the IS.

4. The whole organization is required to engage in aggressive combat for the policies and activities of the IS. Neither branches nor individuals can abstain from IS policy. Local abstentions or adaptations of national perspectives of directives, which significantly alter their character, require the permission of national bodies. Individual members may only abstain when they have profound opposition to an important policy or theory of the IS. In such cases they are allowed to apply, and generally when it does not unduly disrupt the work of the IS, they will be granted permission not to appear as the public advocate of the policy or theory in question.

5. Workers Power is the organizer of our work, a tool for external combat, a democratic centralist line publication. Discussion or minority articles are published only on those infrequent occasions when we decide to open our internal debate to the public.

6. Revolutionary leadership is a full time commitment. The most advanced, conscious, able, should be selected and trained for professional service to the revolutionary workers. The NC and EC members, as an obligation of office, are required to put themselves at the full-time disposal of the IS if so ordered by the NC.

7. Centralized leadership goes hand in hand with the widest diffusion of responsibility and initiative, to branches, fractions and their leading committees. In a combat organization all are trained to proved leadership commensurate with their ability, experience and devotion.

8. The leadership will be open, renewable and expanding. In this period we must prepare for rapid change in the social and racial composition of the leadership to become an effective multinational, proletarian organization.

9. To create a professionally competent national staff and machinery comrades will be brought to the center for national service, and in other cases, for a period of training. Members trained at the center, or in the most advanced branches, will be moved to other branches. Decisions on these questions will be made by the center, in consultation with the appropriate branches.

10. Organizers are agents of the national organization, as represented by the center. They are responsible for carrying the national line, policies, directives and activities in the branches. They are to be appointed by the EC in consultation with the branch. They may be moved to other branches as necessity dictates. They are to be funded nationally when the dues structure is centralized this year.

11. Our rigorous discipline and centralism can only exist on the basis of a high level of programmatic agreement, and educated, conscious rank and file, and a collaborative division of labor. Programmatic agreement encompasses the right to disagree with individual points of the IS program. Advocacy of racist, social democratic or other views which contravene the fundamental program of the IS will not be welcome or tolerated. Groups or individuals who want to enter the IS to change us, rather than the world, will not be recruited.

12. No barriers are to be placed in the path of workers active in the class struggle from joining the IS. The contradiction between open, easy recruitment of newly radicalized workers and a high level of agreement can only be overcome by a conscious, self-disciplined cadre capable of assimilating large numbers to the politics and traditions of the IS.

13. A role will be found for everyone who agrees with our program. Organizers, execs, fractions, will work to make all members part of a national collaborative team. Our strength is not individual talent or genius, but in proving in practice that working people can be strong and effective through their unified combination. Those who prove themselves in deeds and results will be advanced in the group.

14. The EC is a voluntary disciplined collective. Except on questions of profound principle, or critical importance to the IS, EC members are to subordinate their disagreements to a common collaboration. They are not, except in the cases noted, to organize the internal life of the IS around their disagreements, but are responsible for collective leadership. We reject the star system of individual leaders each representing different political views, sections or clienteles in the organization.

15. The norms of EC collaboration should in the future be extended to the NC and branch execs. The whole national cadre should view itself as internally providing leadership, raising consciousness, and winning new members to the line and loyalty to the IS. The cadre must be an inclusive, growing collaboration.

16. The constitution of the IS will be changed to be brought into harmony with this document. Wherever there is a conflict, this document supercedes the constitution.

**REVISED AMENDMENTS TO DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM DOCUMENT**  
submitted by Mike P. (NC)

**General Motivation:**

The IS has made tremendous strides in the past year towards turning the organization into a revolutionary combat group which can effectively intervene in the coming period of resurgent class struggle. The IS EC can take deserved credit in leading this.

So that there is absolutely no misunderstanding: these amendments are not in opposition either to the document as a whole or the general direction of the organization. If the amendments are defeated then the main document should still be supported as representing the correct general direction for the IS.

The amendments are directed toward strengthening the document and professionalizing the organization. They are not derived from some abstract notion of democracy but rather from the view of building a fighting workers' organization. Democracy is not a moral imperative but rather the only way a fighting workers' organization of conscious, self-confident workers can be built to lead the working class to state power.

Centralism is not in any way counterposed to democracy. Without centralism to carry out the collective decisions there can be no democracy. An effective combat organization which has the view of leading the working class in struggle requires a membership which can internalize a political line developed nationally, and apply it to concrete situations and unforeseen situations without having to wait for direction from the center. An effective combat organization also requires a membership which can critically evaluate its intervention and feed back accurate analysis so the organization can evaluate and build from its experiences.

Finally, it should be made clear that improvements in the organization along the lines of the first two amendments have begun to be made in the past month, just as much of the "turn" and democratic centralism have already become a reality in the organization. However, there is still more to do and the content of these amendments are missing from the document and should be included as an important part of our conception of democratic centralism and our immediate tasks.

The following are revised versions of those amendments submitted to the May NC meeting (using the same numbering system).

1. Insert after paragraph 3, p.16:

The move toward democratic centralism ~~is~~ works both ways. As we internalize the notion that the policy of the EC or the NC are policies of the organization just as if they had been passed by a Convention, increased responsibilities are placed on both the membership and the leadership. For the membership ~~it~~ it means understanding that leadership is difficult and that mistakes will be made. But discussion and criticism of those mistakes must wait until after the policy is carried out and there is a period of evaluation. The only exception is ~~where~~ where it is possible to correct mistakes in the course of carrying out the policy. And even here discussion must be done carefully so that it does not impede carrying out the policy as a whole. It is better to let small mistakes go by than to spend so much time trying to correct them that the policy as a whole fails to get implemented. And in the evaluation period, members will have to learn to make criticism as constructively as possible.

For the leadership, the increased authority and responsibility must also correspond to an increased ~~responsibility, to the~~ accountability to the membership.



That means a willingness to accept criticism. And it means professionalizing by having serious evaluations of its programs to learn from its mistakes and openly admit them. This does not undercut leadership but builds it. Members will have far more confidence in the leadership and carrying out its political line when they know that even the mistakes will contribute to the organization's development since we will at least learn not to repeat them.

2. Add as first paragraph of last section, p.19:

Now that the EC has succeeded in developing itself as a collaborative leadership team, the organization must direct itself toward developing national leadership communication and collaboration. This means developing procedures so that the NC members, the NC as a whole and other fraction and branch leaders can collaborate in the formulation of policies and campaigns before the finished product is finished and "fought for" by the EC. Clearly the full-time EC will be in the lead and these procedures will only be possible for some of the longer-range campaigns and policies.. Specifics must be worked out, but it must be made possible for leadership to be moved from the center and from the EC and still play real leadership roles as well as ~~those~~ involving those whose primary responsibility is in fraction work.

Motivation: In a country of this size and diversity, a national leadership, which is truly national is essential. Clearly there is no way for an NC to substitute for or even play a similar role as the EC. But as difficult as it is, the organization must move in the direction of involving the national leadership in the real leadership of the organization, in the formulation of policies as well as carrying them out. While the procedures have to be worked out in specific cases, the kinds of things that can be done include distribution of draft EC documents to the NC and closed NC discussions before the documents are finalized, more use of NC subcommittees, involvement of fraction leadership in the formulation of perspectives, etc. 10/20/67

3. Delete paragraphs 4,5,6 on p. 19 and replace with:

We reject the bourgeois and Stalinist notion that leadership can collaborate only if it is monolithic. We seek a leadership that openly represents the range of political differences in the organization and insist that it collaborate. This means that it is responsible both for organizing political discussions around differences while placing them in perspective and also ensuring that after a vote, continued discussion is subordinated to carrying out the organization's policy.

A minority in the membership of a disciplined organization will be far more prepared to respect the authority of the leadership and carry out the disciplined decisions of the organization when it knows that its point of view is represented in the leading body which calls for limiting the discussion, than when that body represents a "single voice".

For the EC to act as a collaborative body, a high degree of self-discipline is required. This means subordinating discussion of political differences to carrying out the policy of the EC when it acts for the organization.

Collaboration and collective responsibility for leading the organization as a whole is impossible when leaders conceive themselves as "representatives" of different faction, "constituencies" or cliques. Members of the EC must strive to break any remnants of or tendencies toward clique or "constituency" politics. A factional situation and political division in elections by their very nature make political collaboration impossible. That is why we regard them as extreme measures to be used as a last resort. That is also why we seek to

build a collaborative leading body which represents the range of political differences but not clique or "constituency" differences.

The EC should be judged on the leadership it provides ~~xxxxxx~~ as a group. It is the responsibility of the NC in electing the EC to construct it as a group. But in order to carry out its responsibility the NC must not only have the choice of accepting or rejecting the EC group as a whole, it must also have ability evaluate the politics, contribution and collaboration of the individual members so that it can adjust the composition of the group accordingly. Otherwise the only choice available to the NC is between alternate leadership factions, a situation certainly not conducive to developing national leadership collaboration.

Motivation:

A) The reason that we use slates in electing leading bodies is that we are constructing a body which acting as a unit must fulfill many functions. All kinds of considerations must go into determining the individuals on such a slate, including political point of view and class, racial, sex, fraction, skill, composition. Overall there must be the ability to collaborate so that the body as a whole can lead. The right of significant political minorities to participate in leading bodies at all levels of the organization is the other side of the right of the majority to insist that minorities carry out the majority line in a disciplined way.

If members of a minority cannot function in a collaborative way they should not be included on the slate. If members can, then which should be included is subject to all the other considerations for the slate. Political division is a last resort after attempts at collaboration have failed or where the programmatic basis for collaboration does not exist.

B) There should be no misunderstanding on the meaning of the section on EC discipline in the EC document. Despite the use of the term "voluntary", the conception is not voluntary. It means that any person elected to the EC must abide by the conception that EC discipline is only to be broken when the individual member believes that the question is one "of profound ~~importance~~ principle or of critical importance to the group". While there are occasions where it is appropriate for the EC or any other leading body to demand of its members that they act in a unanimous fashion even on important questions, this should not be the model of discipline or the normal method of operation. The amendment does not prevent it when this form of discipline is occasionally necessary.

The amendment puts forward and demands a different form of discipline from the leadership--a conception to which the entire organization must be won. It is the conception of discipline which is the politics of democratic centralism: given the general programmatic agreement it is politically more important that the organization and win ~~the~~ support for its political program even with some wrong specifics than to hold back to correct this or that mistake. It is possible to openly hold differences within the organization and subordinate the discussion on these to carrying out the organization's program.

While the fears that open differences may lead to organization around these differences are not groundless, it is also true that the attempt to conceal them also encourages organizing if at a less political level. If differences are open, members will quickly learn who the bull-shit artists are and who are committed to collaboratively leading the organization. But for the leadership to rely on disciplinary unanimity is to give up its responsibility to train



the membership how to carry a disciplined line despite differences and to learn how to have disciplined discussions - i.e. how to put an end to them after the appropriate time.

One of the major failings of the EC formulation is that it only covers the easy questions. Discipline is more, not less, important on the big ("profound, critical") questions than on the little ones. How the organization handles/ the big ones will be the real test. Will it be able to schedule a discussion ~~by~~ period and at the end make a decision and then proceed to subordinate the discussion to carrying out the decision?

It is not utopian. At the NC preceding the '74 Convention, this very question of the disciplined EC came up. The NC correctly understood that the organization could not afford another internal-oriented debate at that time and that the Convention discussions were more critical. The NC passed a motion that the disciplined EC question should ~~not~~ not be debated in the organization until the NC after the Convention. Despite the tremendous heat the question had produced, this policy was carried out.

4) AMENDMENT WITHDRAWN SINCE IT DOES NOT FIT IN THIS DISCUSSION

5) Delete last ~~paragraph~~ part of sentence on p.12, paragraph 3, which reads "while at the same time they are also subordinate to their national fractions and to the EC".

Add the following to p.12, paragraph 3:

We reject the view that branches are primarily electoral units for purposes of electing Convention delegates and that they have few other political functions. Branches are fully responsible for carrying out all national policy. This is not a simple administrative task but a highly political one: How to make the national policy apply to the specific circumstances. Further, we want branches and members trained in our methodology and general line so they can act immediately in response to political developments. While every effort must be made to achieve the fullest communication with and guidance from the national center, we seek to have a membership and functioning branches which will not succumb to the form of conservatism that prevents action till direction is received from the national center.

The policy of national fractions is national policy until and unless reversed by the NC or EC. Branches and branch execs are responsible for seeing that local fractions carry out national policy. Branches are responsible for all IS political work in their respective areas including that done by members of other branches. All members functioning in an area are subject to the discipline of the local branch unless acting under instructions of the EC.

Branch organizers are responsible directly to the branch executive committee. Again, the branch and branch exec are responsible for seeing that the organizer carries out the priority work of the national organization. Where branches are not carrying out the line, the priorities, work of the program of the organization the EC must intervene and may take all measures necessary to redirect the branch including direct appointment of the organizer, placing branch work under a commission, etc.

Motivation:

I am no longer proposing deleting from the original document the section on branch organizers and how they are appointed. So long as it is clear that organizers are subordinate to the decisions of the local ~~exec~~ exec,

then the process of selection makes little difference in the real world. No EC-appointed organizer can do the job with the opposition, or even without the respect, of the branch. The exception is in extreme cases where the EC must be willing to put its entire authority and extraordinary resources behind the organizer - a situation which it cannot do often and amounts to receivership for the branch.

The point of this amendment is to correct a weakness in the document which tends to counterpose branch organizers as the national EC agents to the exec and does not clarify the relationship between the organizer and the branch in the chain of command, let alone politically. In fact, the only way the branch organizers can succeed is if a ~~xxx~~ collaborative branch leadership is built which sees its responsibility as carrying out the national policies. The branch organizer must see her/his role as part of the collaborative team with a division of labor.

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OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

BRANCHES- Branches must pay \$20 per member in advance (it can be brought in with delegates or sent to N.O.) before delegates will be seated. (There will be no assessment for non-IS Red Tide members).

DELEGATES- As soon as delegates are elected the NO must be informed of who they are.

TRAVEL- We are currently in process of working out financial arrangements for the convention and branches will be notified of exact details in short order. However, you should be immediately aware of the following:

1) All reimbursements for air fares (delegates only) will be on the cheapest available basis. This means midnite flights or whatever other arrangement costs the least amount of money. To be perfectly clear about this, reservations should be made to get these flights in advance of delegate elections, once you have a rough idea of how many air fares your delegates will need. So make your reservations now. If any of your delegates are for any reason unable to make the cheapest flights, we must be immediately notified with good explanation or we will not make up the difference.

2) Immediately following delegate elections we will need to know how many delegates will be flying to the convention from your branch. It is imperative that this be only those delegates who must fly because of jobs, not preference or convenience.

3) In all probability we will not be making arrangements to pick up delegates at the airport, as this practice has become an ~~intolerable~~ intolerable strain for the Detroit branch. Instead delegates can get downtown easily by the Greyhound bus from the airport; we will make arrangements for transportation from the bus station. We should be notified well in advance of your arrival times so we can set up a schedule based on knowing when you will get downtown.

REGISTRATION - We will charge registration fees for delegates and observers.

The charge will be:

For people from Detroit, \$5 per day or \$10 for all three days.

For people from other cities, except West Coast - \$5 for whole Convention.

For people from West Coast - No charge.

The registration fee for members and sympathizers of the Red Tide who are not members of the IS will be one-half of the above.

DIRECTIONS to Convention site will be sent out in the next National Report.

HOUSING: Everyone should bring their own bedding in the form of sleeping bags, etc. We must be notified immediately of any special arrangements you require - i.e. if a bed is essential, you are allergic to cats, you want to be housed with your contacts, etc. Housing is difficult enough without any last-minute hassles!

Last year about 25 motel rooms were rented for comrades who preferred not to be housed "a la sardine". This seems to be a good idea; if you want a motel room you must notify us immediately so we know how many to reserve.

OTHER ARRANGEMENTS - Comrades who arrive early should be prepared to help out with Convention preparations when asked.

The Convention ~~will~~ will be attended by contacts and friends of the organization who are close to the IS, work with us in caucuses etc. and are serious about their relations with us. This does not include loose contacts or those whose main political loyalties are to opponent groups, etc. The list of contacts you wish to invite should be drawn up now and submitted to the EC for approval. Members should be actively building the Convention among those contacts who are to be invited, and make a serious political effort to get them to attend,

Each branch organizer is responsible for gathering the necessary information and transmitting it to the NO right away. Enclosed are copies of all Convention documents which have not previously been sent out. Because of desperate time pressures they have not been individually collated. Branch organizers should arrange to get them to the members immediately. Additional copies will be for sale at the Convention for those who forget ~~to~~ or lose theirs before coming.

Conventions are difficult enough to organize as it is - if we don't have information on time it's impossible. Please be considerate of those comrades in the NO who don't want to go bananas over this convention!

--Merry P., for the temporary arrangements  
committee

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SUMMER SCHOOL

This year's summer school is on Black Liberation.

DATES: Tuesday, July 8-Saturday, July 13.

PLACE: Proud Lake Recreation Area in Milford, Michigan

COST: \$35 for whole school, \$6 per day ~~xxxxix~~ for individual days.

CLASSES: Listed in IS National Report Vol.III #18. There will be two classes per day in the morning and evening, afternoons will generally be free. There will be plenty of good food - beds are provided, but bring your own bedding. Maps to the recreation area will be available.

CHILDCARE: will be provided for infants and very young children. (NOTE: We inadvertently forgot to mention above that there will be childcare for the Convention also!). There is a recreation area with plenty of space for children to play where they should be comfortable. Because special provisions have to be made for childcare, WE MUST KNOW WELL IN ADVANCE HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE COMING AND WHAT AGES. (THIS ALSO APPLIES TO THE CONVENTION).

Branch organizers must have information in to us on summer school attendance by the first week in June. Include: how many members and contacts are coming, how many children of what ages, which will need childcare, etc.

CONTACTS: Same policy will apply as for the Convention. Only those contacts considered close to IS, serious about their relationship to us should be invited. Within this context the summer school should be actively built as a serious and exciting event. Attendance of contacts must be cleared through EC as per Convention.



## ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES

1. 1. The long term character of the crisis of world capitalism, and the decline of American imperialist hegemony have been analyzed in previous convention documents. They remain our perspective on this period, their predictions well confirmed by subsequent event. Within the context of long term stagnation and decline, there will be different business cycles, booms and busts, of varying intensity. In the next three years we will experience an internationally coordinated boom - bust cycle of great volatility. Its rapid oscillations are a testament to the rot at the underpinnings of world economy. While our strategic tasks are worked out by our fundamental documents on the nature of world economy and politics, our tactics will be based both on our overall analysis as well as the shifts and turns due to the tempo of the coming cycle. A revolutionary organization based on firm principles, and democratic centralist functionings, can have the tactical flexibility to make rapid turns in harmony with the unfolding cycle whose overall character it comprehends.
2. By all indexes, the depression we are now in is the worst in post WW2 history, the worst since the depression of 1937-38. In the last 6 months in the US industrial production has declined by 14%, and profits have fallen by 35%. US plant is now functioning at 65% of capacity compared with 92% in 1973 at the height of a boom. Unemployment by official statistics is the highest since the end of the Great Depression in 1940 -- 8.9%, and with the inclusion of "discouraged" workers official figures are now slightly over 10% -- and will continue to mount to 11 or 12% by the end of 1975. Last year when we predicted 10% unemployment we were considered wild-eyed. Yet even with such unemployment and industrial production figures, there is no deflation, inflation is only lowered to 8-9%, figures which were once thought intolerable in a boom. The depressions' seriousness and depth are intensified by its international character. All the major capitalist powers entered slump simultaneously, destroying export markets in each others' countries, intensifying the depression and making the recovery more slow and agonizing.
3. The depth and seriousness of this depression internationally have destroyed the original employer-government plan to deal with it. Capital's strategy as expressed by the Wall Street Journal, by Simon and Greenspan, Wall Street's major spokesmen in the cabinet, and by Ford administration policy was that a depression should be allowed to perform its traditional capitalist function -- to wipe out inflation, destroy inefficient capital, cheapen the elements of capital, rationalize the system for its future growth. Their fear was not of this depression, but of hyper-inflation in the next boom and an even more devastating depression. Their program was so-called old time religion -- balanced budget, tight money, tight credit, cut in welfare payments and high unemployment. The hope was that this would cut material prices and wages and rationalize capital. Collapses would be prevented by a process of capital concentration through which inefficient capital would be bought up on the cheap.
4. The severity of the depression made the price of old time religion too painful. It threatened to disrupt cooperation with even a plian labor bureaucracy, which finds mass depression and mass unemployment sapping the stability, dues base and power of the bureaucracy. Without being able to deliver concessions, the bureaucracy's willingness to cooperate in measures for wage restraints and productivity declines, and its fears of a more restive rank and file grow. More important, too many important sections of



ternational monetary crisis, balance of payments problems, trade warfare, blows to the unity of the Common Market, and a bigger bust. Unemployment will remain high during the boom -- approximately 8%, double among blacks, 4 times among teenagers, and likely to reach more than 50% among black youth in the midst of an inflationary boom. It is from this level that unemployment in the 78 bust will take off. To recapitulate, the coming cycle will be very volatile, occurring over a 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 year period. We will go from depression to recovery beginning this fall, to boom in the latter part of 1976, with hyper-inflation in 1977 and slump in 1978. The normal business cycle of Marx's day was 8-9 years. We have entered a period of instability, of volatile shifts and turns in the economy, within the context of stagnation and decline. Even after a generation of economic and political stability, these abrupt economic turns are already starting the process of working class radicalization as consciousness begins to overcome its lag from the previous period. The revolutionary Marxists must be prepared for the coming shifts in the economy, for the ups and downs in struggle and consciousness, always understanding how this fits into the overall perspectives of the next few years.

8. The boom will come at a very propitious time for us. Just as the economy is striding into recovery, and picking up towards boom, the major contract bargaining round, including our industrial priorities, begins. The IBT contract comes up March 31, 1976, followed in April by Rubber, in June by electric, in Sept. by UAW, and in 1977 by aluminum in May, CWA in July, USW in August, and the mines in November. This 18 month period should be politically key for us. It also includes a Presidential election and in the winter and spring of 1977 conventions in auto, steel, the mines, and teamsters, some of which will be over succession struggles. It is in this period that national rank and file groups must be built as recognizable forces in the unions, and the IS be consolidated as a workers' organization in the leadership of the rank and file movement.

9. The contract round may allow for greater generalization and political consciousness than the more fragmented struggles of the past. While the bargaining issues will be the standard ones, there should be a greater emphasis by the union on trying to win COL against inflation, and greater protection against unemployment through better SUB funds and at least the posing of cutting the work week to 35 hours. The employers offensive on productivity and greater restrictions on the right to strike will be stepped up. The most likely issue of the bargaining round will be a wage explosion. The decline in real wages in the last 2 1/2 years, the continuing inflation, its wild character during the boom, will all produce a drive to catch up on wages. Stronger corporations, with full order books, will be prepared to meet high wage demands to be passed on in the general inflation. Weaker corporations unable to meet these wage demands will start the call for wage controls. In every industry we will have to be much more precise about our wage demands than in the past. Already IBT officials are projecting a contract with virtually no new money. While this will probably shift by next March, a poor money settlement may open the possibility of wildcats against the contract similar to 1970. As a bargaining pattern, the IBT and other contract settlements will probably be continually overturned by the drive for big wage increases, as workers feel more secure as the economy picks up, as other sections get big wage increases, and as inflation mounts. What will count is how hot inflation gets, and how hotly the ranks respond to it. As the contract round goes on, it may continue to open the



developing split within the bureaucracy.

10. Within the union the economic crisis is opening a rift in the bureaucracy to its biggest point since the split in the CIO. It is real, but slow in developing because of the slow tempo of rank and file pressure. The entire union officialdom, committed to capitalism, have accepted wage controls, productivity drives, protectionism, cooperation with the employers and the government, and enormous restrictions on the right to strike. This is the only union movement which has allowed a drastic cut in real wages and has refused to fight it. The secret program of most of the bureaucracy is to take such a cut to keep American capital competitive. But not all the pro-capitalist bureaucrats can accept the current situation. Based on the ranks they may be able to deliver concessions for labor peace and to retain their control over the ranks. In some unions the crisis and cutbacks have so raised the level of discontent as to threaten the bureaucracy if it does not produce some concessions. Therefore, Gotsbaum of District 37, Wurf, Jennings and others were impelled to call the April 26 march. Arrayed against them on April 26 (and in internal DP fights) were the Meany and Shanker forces. While they all represent slight variants on a fundamentally conservative, class collaborationist program, the impact of the economic crisis widens their narrow differences, and opens things further for political struggle and the intervention of class struggle forces in the arena, as witness April 26 and the Rank and File Coalition. There will be succession struggles in the UAW and USW, and possibly a rank and file challenge to Miller in the UMW, which will further develop a more political atmosphere in the unions.

11. As inflation develops, and a wage explosion mounts, there will be calls for wage controls, productivity drives, and some version of social contract floated. Some minimal reforms on unemployment and the increasing crisis of social services and the cities will be promised to the union bureaucracy in return for their cooperation in holding down wages. It is most likely that the Democratic Party will be the focus for such a program. It will be one part of the developing "reform" fight in the DP. As the struggle heats up, and as the crisis of the cities is intensified well beyond that of the late 60s, there will be a revived danger of racism, and a fight on race questions within the DP. It is most probable that the DP will win the Presidential elections in 1976, introduce wage controls or some other form of wage restraint in 1977, and preside over the bust in 1978. If so, the first real sentiment for a labor party in a generation will develop out of the current crisis.

12. Internationally the crisis will continue the process of polarizing politics. What occurs in Portugal is crucial. But even defeat there will not set back for very long the growing pre-revolutionary pressures in Spain, Greece, Britain, Italy, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and elsewhere. The capitalists' weak links and danger list will grow in the next 3 years, as will the threat of right wing and semi-fascist coups. Trade, tariff, monetary warfare, the break in the Common Market, the break up of the international monetary system and a war danger are all likely as the next boom begins to bust. Meanwhile the process of forming revolutionary workers' parties will continue internationally and will have influence on the development of the revolutionary left in the US.

13. The experiences of the last years have well prepared the IS for the next economic-political cycle. It is in this 3 year period that we will become a workers' combat group in the lead of a growing rank and file movement, or be set back severely. We are confident of our ability to meet the test. We have developed the program, organization, press, and cadres, and trade union experience which should allow us to emerge as the core of a workers' party at the end of this period. The strengthening of democratic

centralist norms will allow the IS to make the rapid turns required by the period, and to intervene in the large number of campaigns in front of us, as one cohesive national force.

In the rank and file movement we must have the skeleton of national rank and file groups within the year, so that they can take on muscle in the 18 month bargaining round, and the period of succession struggles in the unions. The rank and file groups must be small, recognizable forces in the unions by the end of the bargaining round. They must be recognized alternative leadership, and must form the basis for a national rank and file movement above any industry. Our April 26th intervention was a small first step towards this. There will be others. But it is the development of strong rank and file groups in the next cycle that will make it possible for us to make the first moves toward the formation of national movement above industry at the end of this three year period.

In the immediate future our fractions in teamsters and auto must be well organized on a national level and develop clear perspectives and demands for the contract next year, which they should start to project well in advance. The resources of the organization must be directed to the development of strong fractions, fraction leadership, and program for the rank and file in these industries. The advanced character of our work and publications in these industries means that in addition to industrialization attempts, we will try where we cannot secure jobs to use our publications to build fractions from the outside before and during the campaigns around these contracts. While we have a longer period ahead before the CWA, steel and miners' contracts, our fractions, work, publication, and rank and file groups are all less advanced in these areas. Here our perspective must be to immediately industrialize large numbers to create the basis for strong national fraction and rank and file groups within the next 18 months. These are fortunately the industries in which job opportunities are better, allowing us a margin of time to catch up. We should be well prepared by the lessons from the IBT and UAW campaigns, for a well developed fight at the height of the boom. In steel this may take the form of overthrowing the BNA in 1977.

Our comrades must be aware that they will be industry for 2 1/2 - 3 years before they face long term layoffs. In this period not just the rank and file movement, but the IS must be built as a workers' organization. Our members will have to be more combative, aggressive and political than they were in the past if they are to meet the test of the tempo of this cycle. Our core worker leaders for the next decade must be recruited in this boom and bargaining round. By the end of the round, at the start of the bust they must have the roots to launch a campaign against layoffs. The people who are entering the rank and file movement have to become a revolutionary group. By 3 years from now we want them to be the leadership of the IS, a working class and black leadership which has already started the process of constructing factory branches. In that context the worker membership campaign this fall will lay the basis for changing the internal atmosphere of the IS, making it a group first habitable for workers, and then a workers' group, as they take it over and make it possible for a rapid expansion within the working class. The people who will enter this fall have a lot to teach us, to share their experiences in the working class and the black community, how they function in them, how they discuss revolutionary politics in those areas, and to integrate us into the working class and black community. But we also have a lot to teach them of Marxist politics and revolutionary functioning. It is the cadres of the group who will be charged with assimilating the new members we expect to recruit this fall. We want to

double our membership by the next convention, to reach over 500, and to have over a thousand members in the next 2-3 years. By that time we want to have the core of a party -- worker cadres, factory branches, national rank and file movements, a weekly paper, a theoretical journal, a strong youth group, and a working class and black leadership.. It is from these guidelines and timetables that specific plans and perspectives, and demands, will have to be worked out for branches, rank and file groups and fractions.



Convention - July '75

Entering the Black Movement  
Jack Trautman

Two phenomena fundamentally frame the movement among blacks which is taking shape today: the defeat of the black movement of the sixties, and the long-term economic crisis of capitalism and the coming revolution that it heralds. One feeds into the other to create a new movement, politically quite different from its predecessor. Material reality forces a turn to the class struggle.

The black movement of the sixties reaches its height of development in the ghetto rebellions, which attained insurrectionary proportions in 1967 and 1968. Blacks were the vanguard. The other movements of the sixties were catalysed and led by the black movement which, as it radicalized, dragged them along in its wake. But they never went as far as the black movement did. Out of the immense black struggle a revolutionary organizations were created.

But the movement was isolated from the working class. It certainly found a reflection among black workers. But many of them were drawn into the movement not as workers with a working class outlook, with the aim of using their social power as workers, but through the communities, divorced from the workplace. Where this was not the case, as in LRUM and its offshoots, their actions found no sympathetic response among white workers. As a result, they became more hostile to these workers and began to see them as the enemy. Although this was in part a failing in strategy, it was fundamentally a result of the continuing prosperity of American capitalism, which did not impel white workers into society-wide struggle.

Period of Defeat

As a result, the black movement went as far as it could go and then collapsed. The most significant setback was suffered by the Black Panther Party, which was the most politically advanced organization. But its defeat only mirrored the defeat of the whole movement. With the defeat began a turn inward, as militants assimilated the lessons of the movement and its failure. Defeat was temporary and it lay the basis for a new movement, with a greater chance of victory.

The defeat was first and foremost a defeat for the most advanced, for the most militant and for the most conscious. It was in particular a defeat for the Black Panther Party and all it had stood for: a break with the Democratic Party, collaboration with whites on a principled basis, the need for revolution in America and the need to struggle today against all aspects of oppression.

With this defeat came a rollback in black consciousness. Disbelief that victory here was a possibility; disbelief that cooperation with ~~whites~~

whites was possible. Important lessons remained: the government had been exposed during the course of the ghetto rebellions. Blacks were aware of this rotten social system, though the defeat left very uneven consciousness. They stand far in advance of whites. But these lessons weren't reflected in organization. Instead, a retreat into angry cynicism.

During this period nationalism, and in particular Pan-Africanism, were the dominant political tendencies. They expressed the defeat: keep away from whites; the struggle isn't here, it's in Africa. The ideology was in-keeping with the lack of activity.

As the effects of the defeat were somewhat diminished, as activity began again it went to two separate, yet related poles.

The organized black movement began under the framework of Pan-Africanism. The various black left collectives were brought together in the African Liberation Support Committee. They saw the necessity for a struggle for black liberation and did not believe whites could be won to it. So they turned their backs on whites.

Black workers, like all workers, were forced to fight back against the wage and productivity offenses. As the black workers struggled they hesitated to raise black demands. They did so for the same reason the black left gravitated to Pan-Africanism -- white racism. Black workers understood the necessity for a unified workers struggle and did not believe whites could be won to black demands. So, they put them on the back burners.

A synthesis was required. Powerful forces were working to create that synthesis.

### Toward the Class Struggle

A return to activity necessitated a strategy: do what? how? That raised once again the questions that had been raised in the last movement: through what agency? with what allies? As with the white left, the working class exerted a strong pull, particularly on these most active sections. This tendency has been greatly accentuated with the treachery of crisis to capitalism.

The black gains of the fifties and sixties were based on capitalist prosperity. As the prosperity disappears gains such as breakthroughs into jobs become endangered. The economic struggle becomes more desperate.

At the same time economic crisis fundamentally changes the conditions of struggle of the fifties and sixties. White workers are being pulled into the struggle, are becoming radicalized and

open to revolutionary ideas. They are starting to move in struggle, though still in small numbers. But the direction is clear to anyone with eyes. The potentiality, even likelihood, of a black-white class struggle is unavoidable. Sections of the black left which have industrialised perceived this. One of them, Mark Smith of the ALSC, stated:

"We believe that most white people are racist. We also believe that this racism can be overcome and that the basis for the transformation is in the common interests, which most black and white people share." (Black Scholar, Jan-Feb., 1975, p. 46)

Material necessity is creating the basis for unity. Capitalism is creating its own gravediggers. The new movement among white workers makes a whole new direction both possible and necessary. Smith continued:

"We'll tell you why we fight for working class unity. Because fascist police repression in the black community is growing daily and we think it is better to have white allies against these than not to have any. Because the ruling class is constantly attacking the living standards of all people in this country, especially black people, through unemployment, inflation, speed-up and high taxes and we think working class unity is necessary to fight these attacks. Because Ford and Kissinger are increasingly rattling their missiles, threatening another war to protect U.S. imperialism's world position and extricate the bourgeoisie from their economic crisis and we want to build unity against the next Vietnam before it starts. Because, finally, working class unity is a daily question, a meat and potatoes question, a life and death question to many black people who don't have the "privilege" of full-time movement & 'activists' to moan that 'coalitions are premature'". (Ibid., pp. 51-2)

Among black workers we see the same tendency. The few black groups that still exist are not in the areas that had been most politically advanced in the sixties. Thus, in Detroit there are no black caucuses that we are aware of. This is no accident. In Detroit, the scene of the most developed black organization, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, was where the greatest gains for blacks had already been won. Black foremen and supervisors, black union officials are commonplace in the auto plants in Detroit. And it is clear that they differ little from their white counterparts. The problem is deeper than one of race and the racial victories cleared away the obstacles to that recognition. On the other hand there are black groups in Louisville, Kansas City, the Bay Area, Cleveland, Mahwah, and Seattle, where the Detroit experience did not occur. But, almost all of them are either evolving away from a black nationalist tendency toward one of cooperation with whites, or they had that attitude when formed. This is not a completed picture but it is an unmistakably

strong tendency.

Thus the Black Workers' Coalition in Louisville, a group based in the Ford plant, was originally quite hostile to white workers. They saw them only as another enemy. But their militancy in the struggle for black rights won them some significant victories and the grudging respect of the white workers. They found that when they called a job action against speed-up they were able to get whites as well as blacks to join them. White workers approached them to run for steward. That would be a step forward in extending a power base for blacks, but white support was necessary. The plant is 80% white and steward elections are plant-wide. The result of all of this, as well as the conscious intervention of the IS has been to make the caucus much more open to black-white cooperation.

#### Nationalism vs. Stalinism

The black intellectual left both reflects and gives more conscious expression to this tendency. The result of it all has been a seep split in the black left. On one side there has been a remarkable transformation in which leading black intellectuals who had been identified with extreme nationalist positions did an about-face and leaped to a Marxist position. These include Ron Karenga, whose organization, US, was noted in the sixties for its hostility to the Black Panther Party's classlike approach. The hostility culminated in a shootout in Los Angeles. Also, Imamu Amiri Baraka, who had joined up with Newark's Mayor Gibbs in an effort to set the black community against the AFT and break the union. Both of these have proclaimed themselves revolutionary Marxists. Nor are they alone. A whole section of the ALSC, including the above-quoted Mark Smith, are Marxists.

Baraka and Karenga have both taken the attitude that "...our approach must be dual -- one of nationalism and social revolution," (Ibid., Nov., 1973, p. 15) Baraka correctly criticizes the Black Panther Party for focusing on the lumpen-proletariat and turns instead to the workingclass. "We believe the leading force of revolutionary development and action is the whole working class in the US U.S." (Ibid., Jan-Feb., 1975, p. 7) He states that the struggle is here in the U.S., and puts it squarely to the nationalists with the same force that the Black Panther Party activists did: "...for somebody to say that there is no possibility of revolution in the U<sup>N</sup>ited States, to liberate all the people here from capitalism, is finally to be a collaborator with this system . . . an enraged working class in alliance with all the oppressed nationalities in the U.S. could deliver blows of such force and deadliness to imperialism within its own body, directly at its heart and jugular vein, that would kill it instantly and forever." (Ibid., pp. 7-8)



This onslaught on the nationalists produced tremendous dis-  
sension. The nationalists had been pushed aside in the sixties,  
especially by the Black Panther Party. With the defeat of the black  
movement they had attained hegemony over black thought in the  
early seventies. Now they were under attack by very effective  
spokespeople from their own movement.

Striking back, Haki Madhubuti (Don Lee) charged that the split  
was a result of the infiltration of the ALSC and CAP by the white  
left. Madhubuti hits out in all directions, and often strikes quite  
wide of the mark, such as his absurd contention that Marx and  
Engels were pro-slavery.

Nonetheless, one of his barbs strikes close to home and is a  
point to which Baraka and his supporters have no answer. Their  
Marxism is irrevocably tainted by his adherence to Stalinism and  
Maoism. Thus there is little they can truthfully say when Madhubuti  
points out that "Communism as it has developed under Russian leaders  
is in itself colonialism in a new guise." (Ibid., Sept., 1974, p. 50)

Or, as he goes further:

"What took us off the black course was the use of 'revolution-  
ary' examples who were not working for the Black Cause. Basically,  
the extraordinary pushing of Mao tse Tung and the Chinese Revolu-  
tion and their brand of Marxism-Leninism was essentially the inter-  
mediate step to pull us into the real-white thing. That is, Marxism-  
Leninism for most young blacks came about through the study of  
Mao tse-Tung, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara -- the heroes of the  
'Third World.' Yet, Brother Carlos Moore, a black Cuban in his  
perceptive essay, Cuba, The Untold Story blows away the 'raceless'  
19es of Fidel Castro and his white ruling elite which speaks most  
potently to the myth of the raceless Third World and specifically the  
Socialist World:

"Look here, there have been racism in Cuba for centuries and this  
cannot be changed overnight. First of all, this seemingly logical  
statement serves to corroborate the contention that racism, contrary  
to the view held by most white 'Marxists', has become a phenomenon  
independent of its economic and political raison d'etre. If this  
weren't true, the simple elimination of its raison d'etre would, ~~logically~~  
logically, eliminate it. This argument in the hands of people who  
call themselves 'Marxists' is obviously self-contradictory, considering  
that these people hold racism to be a phenomenon circumscribed to  
societies of capitalist infrastructure. Their contention that race  
has nothing to do with it and that it is merely a 'class struggle' --  
a premise repeated over and over with the monotony of either insin-  
cerity or sheer blind stupidity -- has been the protecting shield of  
white 'Marxists' the world over; but as they themselves should know,  
~~and~~

as 'Marxists', this is nothing but a fallacy, a fallacy to which they cling with their fervor of those who are guilty.

"Cuba is no longer capitalist but socialist, according to the leaders of the Revolution; why then does racism still hold its own there? The answer lies in the fact that the 'Marxists' at the head of the Cuban 'Revolutionary' Government did not find anything in Marxism which would compel them to surrender their deeply entrenched feeling of superiority over non-Western peoples. One can easily see that the reason why they cannot find in Marxist thought anything that would definitely break the continuity among them and the whole history of the racist white West, is that such a thing does not exist. For, it seems that the only change taking place in a white man's mind, once he has become a 'Marxist' has to do with the reasons why he has a right to feel superior, and not with the legitimacy of the feeling of superiority itself." (Ibid., Sept., 1974, pp. 52-3)

What can the ~~black~~ stalinists say when Madhubuti quotes approvingly: "What they need now, therefore, is neither Black Capitalism nor Black Communism -- both of which benefit those at the top and exploit the masses -- but what is needed is an ideology of 'Black Africanism', operating within the framework of the traditional African philosophy of life and the best of its value system." (Ibid.)

This is the Achilles' heel of the new black "marxists". Their stalinism gives a great issue to the nationalists who can legitimately say, what have Russia and China and Cuba done for us? The answer, of course, is that they have provided and will provide a history of treachery. The black struggle as well as every other gets subordinated to the needs of the ruling class in those countries. The stalinists cannot answer this question.

But this debate has enormously progressive significance. For the first time in decades black leaders are putting forward the idea that the solution to black oppression is working class revolution in this country. They have explicitly rejected the old lumpen ideas, Third-Worldism and any concessions to nationalism or petty-bourgeois ideology. Their doing this opens up the debate on these questions to us. Since the Black Power movement, when ~~looked~~ there were no blacks in the organization, we have been frozen out of the black movement. The ideas of the marxists legitimate us. Whites are no longer out simply because they are white. Today, even as a predominantly white organization we can get a hearing on the basis of what we say and do.

Marxism and the Debate

And we have something to say in this debate: that the attack on nationalism is a great step forward for the movement because nationalism is a dead-end. It can produce no viable strategy for revolution, class struggle or even black liberation in this country. Blacks are not a colony, like Puerto Rico; Eldridge Cleaver's reference to the black colony and the white Mother country is just off base. The fate of the black movement for freedom and equality is tied up with the working class movement in America.

At the same time the nationalist attack on stalinism hits home because they are not talking about socialism but about Bureaucratic Collectivism. We must explain why these regimes have failed to eradicate racism and oppression; and why the CP has provided nothing but a whole history of betrayal. Baraka explains his late-coming to "Marxism" by the revisionism of the CP. That same revisionism drove thousands of blacks out of the party in the thirties and forties and made it impossible to unify the black community under revolutionary leadership. Yet, in adopting Maoism he is embracing that history.

The black stalinists will not destroy the nationalists. Black nationalism as a tendency is likely to persist as a competitor to Marxism and in the future to present us with real competition. Nonetheless, the political tendency that shows it can best cope with black oppression is the one which will win. In this respect the nationalists are in poor shape. Madhubuti has little to offer. His program is four points: 1) a development of a black national ideology; 2) study black nationalist thinkers; 3) give some time to black organizations; 4) love black people. There is no action perspective.

Nor does Baraka have much to say. Despite his commitment to the working class he has no strategy and little understanding of the strategic importance of the shop floor or of how to build a base there. We do. We have a strategy for black liberation that is related to our industrial strategy.

This debate has not yet filtered down to the masses of black workers. We can be sure that it will and that its effects will be deeply felt. Today, even as they tend toward a class struggle approach, most black workers are not marxists. But some of them are open to joining the IS and they will be an important and necessary part of our recruitment drive.

X Recruit the Vanguard

The time is fast approaching when the recruitment of blacks becomes a matter of life and death for the organization. It is vital to root ourselves in the most oppressed sections of the working class. Blacks will be a crucial section of the vanguard.

We do not mean by this that blacks are a 'chosen people', nor do we mean what Madhubuti bitterly charges us with: "we must be the front line not for our own liberation, but for the liberation of the world: white people, yellow people, and perhaps black people. The problem with this is that if we are the vanguard for the world revolution, we are bound to get wiped out for the interests of others and not even for the interests of ourselves." (Ibid., p. 46)

The "vanguard" is the most conscious section of the working class which is actively in struggle against its own oppression and against all oppression because they understand that an injury to one is an injury to all. Blacks are and will be a crucial section of that vanguard because as they feel the oppression the most they are forced out of necessity to fight; and they have a long history of struggle which has brought them to a more advanced consciousness.

Unless we root ourselves among blacks we will not be able to go forward. This is not only true directly in terms of the IS. It is also true in terms of our rank and file work. In Detroit it is difficult to go much further in our auto work without a black cadre working with us. ~~It is difficult to go much further in our auto work without a black cadre working with us.~~ The rank and file coalition that we pulled together in Washington is ~~important~~ an important step forward for the working class movement. But its great failing is that it is still basically a white phenomenon. The relative absence of blacks in our contingent and our meeting in Washington was striking. We stated in our basic document on black liberation that without unity among blacks and whites there would be no socialist revolution. We can go farther and state that without that unity there will not be much of a rank and file movement.

It is time we start acting on our analysis. A major part of the turn the organization is making must be the turn to recruit blacks.

The Black Commission

In order to do that we are taking the first steps in the center. Three EC members have been ~~added to the Black Commission (BC) in addition to those comrades already on it.~~ ~~Two more EC members have been added to the Black Commission (BC) in addition to those comrades already on it.~~ Two more EC members have been added to the Black Commission (BC) in addition to those comrades already on it. This is because we see the BC as playing the same kind of important role in the organization as the industrial commission.



The BC will follow the intellectual debate in the black movement and it will prepare a program for intellectual intervention. This program will consist of pamphlets, regular and expanded coverage in WP, possibly articles in Radical America, the Black Scholar and other suitable publications, and possibly discussions and/or joint forums with black groups.

Our aim here is to develop a dialogue with the emerging Marxist tendency in the black movement. We want to join them in their attack on the nationalists, and to win them away from Maoism and to our rank and file strategy. We see the recruitment of a core of black intellectuals as critical to our development as a revolutionary organization, and as necessary to recruit and hold black workers in large numbers. We will, therefore, take this debate quite seriously.

The BC will oversee the black coverage in WP. That coverage will be expanded from what it currently is to be a much more substantial part of the paper. We will give more emphasis to black events, and to issues of interest to blacks, although we recognize that the black coverage in the paper will only appear "real" as our black work becomes more real and generates articles itself -- just as was the case with our industrial work. When an issue is of general interest and is also of particular interest to blacks we will emphasize more the black character of the issue. We will periodically run articles in the "Road to Revolution" column as part of our contribution to the debate on the direction for the black movement. (This is not to say that WP should be oriented to the black Marxists; its orientation remains to the rank and file movement.

The BC will attempt to keep on top of developments in the black movement and to provide guidance for our work. For this purpose the branches must provide the center with feedback and inform the NO of black issues that arise in local areas. One person in each branch should be made responsible for this communication.

#### Black Liberation as an Integral Part of our Work

Black Liberation must cease to be merely one of a whole list of good things we support. It must be given major emphasis in WP, in our industrial work, in all of our activity. But we must be clear: it is not a question of our industrial work in one place and our black liberation work some place else. Rather, our black work must be integrated with our industrial work.

In reality black liberation has not sufficiently been brought to the fore in our industrial work. It is not enough to tack it on to our work. It must become a central part of it. We must understand that we will not recruit blacks, even black workers, solely on the basis of bringing Marxism to the union struggle.

Precisely because blacks are more politically advanced, because

they feel their oppression intensely in all areas of their lives and not just or even mainly on the job, we must be prepared to discuss and have answers to a multitude of social questions: jobs, housing, war, police, merchant-gouging, rats, schools, etc. We should present our total social program: we have an answer to oppression -- it is the end to capitalism, the end to class society. We must communicate this vision.

Moreover, we have answers to these questions as they come up today -- it is not simply a question of waiting for the socialist revolution. We must raise these issues aggressively. In this respect the motion that was passed by UAW local 6 to construct a defense guard for a black member of the local whose home was being firebombed, and the implimentation of that motion are an exemplary beginning. Issues of racism and racist discrimination, whether on the job or in the community, must be a major part of our agitation in the rank and file movement whenever possible.

This is not merely a question of emphasis; it is a political question which we must clearly understand and be able to communicate.

Our industrial strategy is the key to our work. Virtually every thing we do revolves around it. This is so because the strength of the workers lies in their organization as workers. But the interests of workers are not limited to the workplace -- they extend throughout society. The workers must be concerned about what happens in the community. A workers movement against oppression in the community will be strongest if based in the work place. The actions of local 6 clearly indicate this to be the case. This is the case because of the power that workers have to underscore their political position with industrial action. Moreover, the work organizes workers and gives their organizations a stability that community organizations rarely can attain. Finally it is in the workplace that workers come to understand the necessity for solidarity. That solidarity must extend to concern about black issues in the community just as it extends to black issues in the plant, and for the same reasons.

We must be prepared to argue this case to blacks (both to black workers and to blacks who do not share our industrial perspective), and to prove it. To do so necessitates certain important changes in our work.

1. The rank and file caucuses with which we are associated must become much more aggressive in pushing black issues. They must become known as the voice of the the vehicle for the struggle for black equality in their plants. They must demonstrate that black oppression can be most effectively fought our rank and file strategy.

The rank and file caucuses have not on the whole been sufficiently conscious of the need for this stress. They have tended to see their job as building the rank and file movement, and in general have seen the building of the movement for black equality as coming out of the black movement. This is largely because of the political ambiguity of the IS itself on this question, which tended to stress these phenomena separately. What we are saying here is that this separation must cease.

Each of the fractions must discuss this question and discuss how to implement it in consultation with the BC. This is not a rhetorical injunction. Preliminary discussions should have been held by Labor Day in each of the national fractions.

2. We must place more of a stress on black community issues in our rank and file work. It is through our actual practice that we will be able to demonstrate that we do have a winning strategy for black equality, and that white workers can be won to that fight. Our success will have a big impact on the movement, and it will be what will induce black intellectuals to give us a hearing.

Once again local 6 provides the example. We can expect and should be on the alert for more fights to desegregate housing. There is a supreme court issue coming up which involves putting federally-financed, low-income ~~housing~~ integrated housing in the white suburbs. That will be an issue alongside of which busing will ~~rise~~.

This perspective provides the general outlines for the direction in which we wish to move. It will have to be discussed concretely fraction and fraction and city by city in carrying it out. There is no intention to shift the concentration of the organization from an industrial to a community orientation. The whole basis of our perspective is the industrial strategy. Without the viability of shop-floor groups a turn such as is suggested here would not be possible. We are not proposing an ultimatic approach to these questions. In some areas it will be much more difficult to bring the rank and file groups into the black community work -- because they are predominantly white and because they don't really have an organic link to the community. In general, we don't wish to break groups up over this question. Nonetheless, it is generally the direction in which we wish to move these caucuses. Local fractions should discuss their plans to move in this direction with the BC.

### Busing

Busing will be the main community issue that we will take up this year. In each branch where there is to be busing we will take an active involvement.

At least in Detroit and Louisville the busing issue begins with the black community generally in opposition to busing. What sometimes gets raised as an alternative to busing is community control of the schools, building a black political base, black control of black education.

We have never clearly dealt with this counterposition. In our original black perspectives document we stated we were both for busing and for community control and that we did not wish to impose one or the other on the black community but to leave it up to the community to make the choice.

Now the time has come when the sides are being chosen, when in fact busing is becoming the order of the day. Where do we line up on these complex questions?

We are for busing, and our point of view is that we are for the black community being for busing.

We reject the notion that the busing fight is a plot by the ruling class to divide the working class. In fact, that is not its origin. Busing is a continuation, by the petty-bourgeois blacks, of the struggle against forced segregation. It is being instituted as a result of the past black struggles.

The alternative to "forced busing", as the ROAR advocates call it, is forced segregation. Of that there can be no question. The fight for busing is the fight against state-enforced racist segregation. The fight against busing was never against busing but against integration. Busing has a long history in this country. In particular, busing has been used to foster segregation. For years white and black pupils have been bused long distances to avoid their attending the same schools. So opposition to busing now rings hollow.

We are for busing as opposed to community control. In the sixties community control was a fighting issue. It mobilized the black community in a struggle against the state and against racist control that said blacks couldn't and shouldn't control their own education. Today, it has none of that character. It is an excuse to avoid the struggle. It is an excuse for the black petty bourgeoisie to build up not a black power base but its own power base. The struggle for busing in the struggle against racism and forced segregation in this society. (None of this is to say that we are in political opposition to community control as a demand or a fighting slogan. The point is that in the sixties community control meant a challenge to the racist structure. Today, when it is raised in counterposition to busing it is a way of holding back that struggle.)

The struggle for busing/ is, furthermore, not a struggle for



quality education which is not really attainable under capitalist for most people. (Nor are most people under the illusion that it is attainable.) It is a struggle for the right of blacks to get an equal education, with equal facilities, equal textbooks and teachers, equal amounts spent on the students. Because the reality is that so long as there is segregation there will be inequality. Separate but equal has never existed and will never exist under capitalism. This is not to say that busing will produce equality of education, but that it is a step toward it.

All of this is so and the black community is or will be soon aware of it. Because as the busing program begins there will be only two choices. To be against busing and with the racists, or to be for busing and against racism. There is no third position. This was so clearly shown when "left" groups like the RU attempted to take a stance of opposition to busing and to racism and ended up in demonstrations merged with the racists. As the busing program proceeds the black community will line up in favor of it.

One of the main, yet often unspoken reasons for the opposition to busing among blacks is their fear for the safety of their children. This is a quite legitimate fear and one to which we must and can have an answer.

In Boston we called for the formation of defense squads on the part of the black community and the trade union movement. This "call" was quite abstract. Due to our minimal presence in Boston and our complete absence from the trade unions there was no one to hear it.

But in Detroit, Louisville and elsewhere the situation is different. There our strategy must be to involve the rank and file caucuses with which we have relations. They must fight within the unions to win political support for the busing program, for the struggle against racism.

And they must actually begin to organize themselves for a community defense movement. Where possible this should be carried out under the auspices of the unions, as in local 6. This means resolutions in local meetings, petitions, etc. Getting official local union support for this is quite important.

Whether done through the unions or not, what we should aim for is a worker-sponsored community defense effort. The groups should organize themselves to provide a public political defense of busing ("We're against segregation," and explain why) via a press conference, leafletting, etc. They should also prepare for the physical confrontations: they should ride on the buses and along with them, and should be at (and in) the schools to protect the students. In Detroit

and elsewhere where there are several rank and file groups we are for uniting them into a city-wide organization. In any case we are for making a public call to the community for people to join us. An effort such as this, of blacks and whites, can go far toward undercutting the political as well as the active physical opposition to busing.

In order to carry it off effectively we must begin to prepare the groups now, before busing has become an emotional issue which will rend apart the still-fragile groupings. We should discuss with them why the fight for busing, a fight in the community, is vital to their work. We should point out the necessity for black-white unity in the union struggles we are jointly waging, that for blacks the question is the same in the community and in the shops: equality; that the enemy in the community is the same enemy we are fighting in the shops, and that in order to forge the unity we need whites must also join in the struggle for equality in the schools. This is not an abstract question. It is the children of the black workers who are at stake, whose persons are in danger, who the racists are fighting to keep in their place. How long can a coalition of blacks and whites who are at odds on this issue keep together?

While making the rank and file a key part of our strategy we must also recognize their weakness in this period. Even if we win official union support we understand that real mobilization will be created largely by what we ourselves are capable of mobilizing. Therefore what will be vital is the organization of the black community for this fight. We will attempt to mobilize it through the unions, but will be too weak for what will be needed. We will call for its independent mobilization and organization to defend the black children.

#### Black-White Unity

We stated earlier that there had been a certain ambiguity in our politics with regard to the integration of black work and our industrial work. In part this was inevitable given the weak state of our industrial work at the time. It was difficult to raise anything more concrete.

In part, however, it was a result of a political ambiguity. We had the rank and file strategy on the one hand, and we had the strategy of a black workers' organization on the other hand ("The key strategic conception that guides all of our work in the present period is building a black workers' organization.") We stated the black workers' organization was not on the agenda now, but we never clearly stated what we do in the meantime. This ambiguity left a hole, a vacuum into which our black work frequently fell. We did not build a black workers' organization, and yet such an organization was to be the vehicle for the fight for black rights. And so that fight was often left behind.

There were some phrases in the black perspectives document which suggested another possibility. It stated that the black workers organization