

DETROIT REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT RECORDS

BOX 14 OF 16

FOLDER 12

CLP DISTRICT COMMITTEE
REPORT 1976

4-15-76

Report to the District Committee

Comrades,

This report is only intended to open up discussion and the struggle for line around the objective and subjective factors as they confront us at this time. We have seen how certain objective struggles played key, pivotal roles for our development of line, for our tactical plans and for our internal strengthening. Notably - the busing struggle, the DGH struggle, the Rent Strike - all of which as objective struggles have by no means faded away. However, let us leave these struggles for the moment and focus in on the struggles confronting the working class at the point of production for this is precisely the area we so sorely lack analysis and struggle around as a district.

In the past 2 weeks, newspapers have reported so-called busts of workmen's compensation violators - namely certain union officials and lawyers accused of soliciting and kickback payments. Several months ago the Detroit News ran a series of articles around the alleged workmen's comp violators. Even perceptually, this reminds us of the cries of welfare fraud by the bourgeoisie as an excuse to trim the welfare rolls. This is the same type of tactics being applied in the wc "frauds". Through raising the cry of wc frauds the bourgeoisie in the form of the Michigan Manufacturers Association with the aid of their henchman Miliken, hope to systematically eliminate workmen's comp through first attacking the retirees.

Since 1965, Michigan went from being 3rd from the bottom in the nation on wc benefits to one of the top 2 or 3 through working class struggle for better benefits in this area. In the past 2 years, Milikens task force on wc has been trying to legislate wc out of existence. Significantly, in 1964, the UAW and the Big 3 negotiated an agreement which would allow retirees to collect wc and their pensions. This, of course, was unprofitable for the bourgeoisie as in some cases workers collected as much as \$1000/month after retirement in pension monies and wc due to injuries sustained during employment.

In 1973, UAW contract negotiations for Ford and Chrysler, concluded an agreement in the pension clause called 'offset' which meant that wc settlements outside of court would be deducted from the worker's pension so that he would in effect receive no wc gains. The tactic of the bourgeoisie was to force wc cases to trial where Ford and Chrysler anticipated winning the majority of cases.

Their schemes did not work and the UAW won most of the cases in court. This is why in January of this year, the pension clause was re-opened to eliminate offset and encourage workers to settle outside of court.

Presently there are 32,000 wc cases pending before the bureau of wc and over 1/2 billion dollars are spent yearly in Michigan in wc benefits. The plant with the heaviest attack on the wc indictments was Cadillac, where 4 local officials were indicted including the President. This is objectively because of the struggles waged there by the local to obtain wc benefits for the retirees. From the standpoint of the attacks being levelled by the State on wc claims all talk of kickbacks and solicitations becomes irrelevant.

What does become relevant are the safety and health conditions that generate we claims in the first place. Clearly as ~~the~~ productivity becomes the watchword for the bourgeoisie, working conditions deteriorate even further. Conditions such as falling skids and crates of stockpiled parts, unsafe hilos, machines running too fast with little safety mechanisms and on and on. Such were the conditions that forced the workers at Ford Sterling to take action some weeks ago and close down that plant.

Clearly flowing from the demands for increased productivity for the bourgeoisie is the swelling of the ranks of the permanently unemployed. The fight of the Anglo American proletariat against this situation is stifled by the ability of the bourgeoisie to move plants to the Negro Nation where labor is cheap and without a union forced to work under even more appalling conditions than face the AA proletariat. This situation is made dramatically clear by the plight of the rubber workers whose fight for higher wages and better working conditions is weakened miserably by a low level of even trade union organization and by unorganized shops in the South. The fight for the unity of the auto workers with the struggle of the rubber workers becomes a rallying point for auto workers in preparation for the struggles they themselves must wage.

With this we see the words of the NNCQ come to life for the increased attacks on the AA proletariat and certainly on the national minorities as the 1st point of attack - evidenced in certain types of harrassment, firings, disciplines in the plants.- is directly related to the "Southern Orientation" of the bourgeoisie.

In addition, it is clear that the bourgeoisie is attempting to undermine the unions in every possible way such as the we situation. Another example is the umpire hearing this past week of Comrade Gen on his firing. It was the stated intent of the Ford reps at the hearing to do away with the umpire decision A184 which sets a statute of limitations for falsification of applications at 1 year. Umpire decision A184 came into existence almost with the UAW itself and to attempt to undercut it as the Ford Reps did this week is a swipe at one of the founding principles of the UAW itself - for many of its organizers, Reuther included, benefitted from this ruling.

We have in previous reports discussed the DGH and Rent Strike struggles. As anticipated, DGH struggle has indeed set the basis for an ERC in Detroit -- officially formed 2 weeks ago and called the Coalition for Equal Rights. This coalition rises off the economic struggle in particular but we should see the basis there for raising the fight against the increased attacks against the national minorities.

We should struggle for a thorough discussion of the busing struggle in Detroit. We have as a district ignored this struggle. Our discussion should flow from the original analysis of busing in Detroit set out in PT Vol 2 # 17, "However, since the unemployment rate in the Midwest appears to have leveled out near the bottom, the desperation of the bourgeoisie to divert the attention of the working class from impending economic disaster has lessened somewhat, and the tactical retreat of the bourgeoisie from a pro-busing stand in certain localities will give the fascists time to attempt to consolidate and expand their forces before the next unemployment crises begins to peak in 1976." In addition the article speaks to the role of the Party and the militancy of the class in Detroit in forcing the bourgeoisie to adopt other tactics. Recently, since the implementation of busing in Detroit, we have seen the affects of MAD in fights among students in the schools. Also on April 23 MAD was active in the mobilization march in Washington. Presently, they are active in the school board elections.

Subjective

Comrades, a key struggle for this area and the Party as a whole is the question of the role of the Party in the objective class struggle at this time. "The over--all organizational question that we have not as yet really solved is the question of the role of the Party. We are still battling against the "new left" outlook that declares that the Party makes the revolution. Every question we face boils down to this -- is the Party the leading element of the working class, drawn from and submerged into that class, nestled into every aspect of the political and organizational life of the class, or does it stand apart from the class and speak to the class from outside it? Which is our point of concentration, the Union or the

Nuclei? It should be clear that there is no answer to these questions unless we examine in a minute way what we are talking about." And again, "What is going to make a real Party is the consistent application of that line."

The key words are LINE and CONSISTENCY. We are in a battle for line in the class struggle i.e. looking at the objective struggle from all angles and then struggling t in all manners to present a clearly formulated analysis to the class based on our Party Program. There is not other way - no other magic scheme that will make us a vanguard Party if we don't struggle from the standpoint of line. In this respect, again, our shop papers are key vehicles for the line in the plants. We fall down miserably on consistency -- such consistency as will aly the groundwork for the Party to become leadership in the objective struggles. For example, the struggle for 5,000 PT subs in Michigan is a struggle for consistent contact work. The fact that the Party failed to accomplish its task ~~of~~^{**} on May 1 of furthering the objective unity of the tenant's struggle and ~~of~~ uniting the lofty ideals of socialism with this objective struggle is directly a failure of analysis of the situation and applying the line around Mayday to this struggle on the part of the fraction.

During the course of the campaign we did tighten up the organizational apparatus, reporting system, etc. The role of A&P now becomes even more important in guaranteeing consistent projection of line in our work. among the class.

REPORT OF THE FIRST DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEETING

MAY 15-16, 1976

Comrades;

The first official District Committee Meeting for the Detroit District was held on the weekend of May 15-16 and was a session filled with lively discussion. In order that the enthusiasm and resolve of that meeting is carried throughout the District, we are writing this report. We hope the comrades find it helpful and that the discussion, debate and criticism it provides will further strengthen our Party.

Each section of the paper reflects a division within the agenda of the two-day meeting.

Formation of the Committee

As the May 6 paper from the District Bureau indicates, the formation of the District Committee is an attempt to bring our organizational more in line with Peters' Manual. As it stands, we organized our District "from the top down, so to speak; that is, we had to organize our District Bureau first in order to have a collective that would have the responsibility of discussing and deciding on the best manner of forming the Sections. This is just the opposite of what Peters demands.

It was further decided that the Sections will organize their work in a similar manner to the State and District. That is, the Section Committee will be formalized and the Bureaus will become the bodies responsible for carrying out the day-to-day implementation of the Committees' decisions.

State Committee Report

We would like to state that we cannot separate the dictatorship of the proletariat from the development of the united front against fascism. A lengthy debate ensued over this question during the discussion of the state report. In the course of the struggle it was clear that there is a limited understanding of the program of the Communist Labor Party internal to the Party. Our program states that "the United Front Against War and Fascism is the cornerstone of our policy." (p. 13) How else are we to fight for a socialist oriented people?

Of course we must be clear that we are not suggesting the United Front as an end in itself; it is the means of moving from the defensive to the offensive. But we are certainly not in a position to fight for the unity of the class without a United Front. To separate the two would be to separate our theory from the concrete conditions of the proletariat in the U.S.A. and throughout the world at this time.

In relation to this, several points were raised. The first of these was some additional information about the attacks on the unemployed where the welfare cutbacks coupled with the housing reductions make the struggle to survive far more difficult than it has been for more than 5 years; 8 to 10,000 have been cut from the General Assistance in Wayne County alone! Medicaid, dental cuts and reduction of ambulance service under Social Services are also in effect and the new food stamp reforms are supposed to "save" Michigan millions at the expense of the unemployed.

In the midst of this, the U.A.W. has endorsed Jimmy Carter, a candidate from a state with a "right-to-work" law, calling him the "new Southern man." We must see, however, that the U.A.W. is planning and in some cases ~~fixing~~ fighting to organize in the South against the General Motors corporation. We cannot allow ourselves to fall back into the trap of simply attacking Woodcock, but must unite with this progressive motion to unionize the South and smash this fascist motion within the U.A.W. Ours is the struggle to bring class consciousness to all the struggles of the working class.

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In this regard the elections were also discussed. Comrades, we must once again clarify the position of our Party as stated in the People's Tribune, Vol 3 #4: "The bourgeoisie is afraid to mount the platform, now is the time to take the platform from them and use it to awaken and mobilize the millions and tens of millions of proletarians...." Whenever the questions of the elections are raised, again it is our duty to expose the reactionary nature of imperialism and the role of the bourgeois candidates. Further, we must use every avenue the elections afford us to raise the consciousness of our class, whether that is a discussion of candidates, running delegates, running precinct delegates, agitating for or against a referenda, etc. The Organizational Commission will be asking for plans around the upcoming elections in November and August.

One more point needs to be raised about the elections. As the P.T. explains, the bourgeois use the elections as their platform, too. We cannot let them have it to themselves, and we must certainly expose whatever they raise. The E.R.C., the call to Free the Negro Nation, etc. are all ways to polarize the struggle against Carter, Reagan, Ford and the rest. These are the instruments of the proletariat and they cannot be tied to any one individual, especially to a bourgeois candidate!

The Campaign

The second phase of the campaign is to be used to consolidate our work from the first phase. Consolidation means bringing people close to the Party; that means subscriptions to the Party press. We will be checking on this work over the next few weeks to insure that it is being followed through.

One additional point: in the last phase of the campaign their was a tendency to develop a bourgeois campaign apparatus -- talking about the candidate, raising questions of numbers and votes rather than raising class consciousness. In this phase of the campaign the struggle will be between the line that says, "Further popularize the Party" and the line that says, "Recruit!" Is the Party going to be successful by kissing babies or by fighting militantly for the demands in our program? We must insure the victory of the latter.

See the State Committee report for further discussion/clarity.

Busing

Some discussion about the errors we had made in the previous struggles were raised here, but the principle point was that there will be some activity again this spring around the question of busing. Already we can see this motion developing as the Justice Department has been instructed to use Boston as another test case to re-try the Constitutionality of busing. We must again raise the struggle and once again raise the United Front against Fascism. This is simply to underscore the urgency of developing the E.R.C. and the defense of the Negro People.

Our lack of consolidation and the necessity to "tighten up" this aspect of our work must lead us to another discussion of busing at our next District meeting; we were unable to really capture the motion here and the discussion was not satisfactory.

Rent Strike

The Mayday demonstration was a clear indication of our errors in the rent strike. We must first of all examine the leading bodies and look to correct the errors made in this important struggle.

There can be no question that the political mobilization around the rent strike was limited at best. Once again, it proceeded from organization rather than politics. What we must realize in this strike is that it is a direct attack on housing; on ALL housing for the proletariat. It, when coupled with the redlining and the limited number of housing starts, and the increase in mortgage rates, shows that the bourgeois has said, "We don't give a damn where people live until we get the crisis solved!"

Comrades, the lack of militancy that the Party has demonstrated here is

too reminiscent of the line in the Organizer, March, '76, p.6: "We are declaring war on . . . those who ~~would~~ spread passivity." We must take a militant stand against the end of the Brook amendment which insured rents in public housing would not go beyond 25% of a person's income. We must defend the people in the projects and make them the first line of defense in this battle to keep roofs over our heads!

A further error seen in the development of the work around the rent strike was the problem of the Party's relationship to the ~~the~~ class, something that has plagued us thru many aspects of our work. We must again assert that we are in the struggle to raise the consciousness of the class, not mobilize them ~~for~~ for particular events. The Mayday picnic, for example, was used not in the political sense of explaining to ~~people~~ people the historic role and destiny of the proletariat, but as ~~a~~ a happy event held on a Saturday afternoon! What relations of production govern a picnic?

Concentration Work

Comrades, in beginning this section of the report it is necessary perhaps to say that communists must measure their development and success not in terms of months, weeks or even years, but in terms of ten and fifteen years. We ~~are~~ are doing well and we are developing a good deal of influence in the plants and throughout the working class. At General Baker's Umpire Hearing, the Vice President of Ford Motor Company's North American division showed up and stayed through the entire proceedings! That did not happen because he had nothing to do! -- He was clear that the Communist Labor Party is an important and influential organization!

But communists are also highly self-critical and it is no secret that we do not have the kind of organization and influence we would like to have at the point of production. In this regard we must firmly assert our determination to unite communism with the objective struggles within the plants; win the vanguard to communism and imbue the masses with the lofty ideals of socialism.

In order to do this we must develop consistent shop papers that speak to the concrete conditions of the people in the shops; we must be consistent and force ourselves to make assessments, politically analyze situations and make decisions. Because of the ~~heavy~~ responsibility we have in Detroit in regards to the rest of the Party, we must be extra certain that this work is done well and that it is reported throughout the Party. Where we misassess, we must be ~~sure~~ sure ~~of~~ of the rest of the Party and each comrade in the unit is well ~~aware~~ aware of the errors so that we learn from them. This is the only method whereby we can insure the development and understanding ~~of~~ of the line of the Party. Whenever we enter a struggle, we must be sure we SUM UP OUR WORK and that it is reported. How else will we judge our own development? How else will we learn from our errors? How else will we correct our mistakes? There is too much at stake to let this ~~is~~ aspect slide!

Further, we must assure each and every comrade who comes into our factory units -- and each and every person around ~~us~~ us -- an education in Marxism, a definite understanding of the line of the Party. Without this, our work will surely end in reformism and further demoralization.

Make Cadillac Our Fortress!!

By far the most exciting discussion of the weekend was the discussion on the plants in which we are ~~to~~ to concentrate in this next period.

This discussion was moved forward especially in two ways: (1) from the point of view of military strategy, and (2) from the point of view of the line of our Party and the importance of the Negro National Colonial Question. We will proceed from point two first:

Although there can be no question about the historic role of the Rouge complex in the development of the communist movement in this country, and although there are a number of factors which make Rouge ~~and~~ focus of much attention at ~~this~~ this time, it is clear that General Motors is the key to the question of the drive to further develop the industrialization of the South, and is equally important to note that the U.A.W. President always needs a substantial

4

base in GM to get elected. At the present time, the U.A.W. has developed some Southern strategy for organizing, but it is clear that they have been found lacking in many instances, especially when push came to shove in Clinton, Mississippi where they lost their most recent election. These things point to GM as a much more important struggle in order for us to move the question of the Negro Nation.

Similarly, the battle around workmen's compensation is currently centered in Local 22, a Cadillac local. The rising cost of workmen's comp due to the increased productivity in Michigan has once again offered the bourgeois a means of further division along national lines as they threaten to move plants South and at the same time attack the comp system in Michigan. We should be clear that this is a multi-million dollar business which brings out agents for particular lawyers internal to the shops -- that is, many lawyers hire people to refer cases to them and this often is divided up geographically. Politically, these lawyers support some candidates over others in elections internal to the U.A.W. since their election could mean several million dollars if they make the right referrals.

At the present time, the sometimes reactionary president of local 22 is at the center of this struggle. He has been a consistent fighter to get comp for everyone at Cadillac. Much of his adjacent leadership is white chauvanist and Klan-tied, but his motion around workmen's comp is progressive. Similarly, he has been a leader within the U.A.W. for the short work week.

Let us be clear, however, that our struggle is with the bourgeoisie, and not with any particular leadership or misleadership. Again, the fact that GM must move to the Nation is the key point here. That is the thing that links the struggle to the struggle for workmen's compensation, and thus to the question of the retirees.

As far as military strategy is concerned, we must again consider Rouge. Here is not just a plant, but a complex with many plants. It is huge, and it is difficult. With few seasoned troops, are we capable of such an assault?

At Cadillac we have many things going for us: seasoned troops, the only factory representation on the ERC, some influence in the union, a militant union that has feelers and influence reaching into every aspect of plant life, a union that mobilized 2,000 for a short work week demonstration on the 2nd day of the UAW bargaining Convention and mobilized 5,000 to ring the GM bldg in 1973. (At Ford's Local 600 the leadership was barely able to muster 200 people for their last demonstration against the closing of the engine plant)

What we need is a place where we can take our troops, develop them and win an important victory.

On this basis, the decision was made to focus the District's attention on the work at Cadillac and struggle to MAKE CADILLAC OUR FORTRESS!! This is the point of unity for all the current struggles in Detroit; it is the battle that can move the whole war forward!

Negro Nation Day

The struggles around Negro Nation Day have been many and varied. This is only expected since this year the Negro Question is clearly asserting itself in the rubber strike, the UAW contract struggle, the rent strike and the growing attacks on welfare recipients. At the heart of all these struggles stand the Negro People; their defense is an unquestionable aspect of the revolutionary struggle within the USNA.

Our task is to raise the call for equality -- FREE THE NEGRO NATION. In all aspects of our work we must fight for this understanding. We realize that the District Bureau has been letting the decisions around this important event slide, for which we are self-critical. We urge all the comrades to begin to formalize plans and fight for support for the following immediately.

The event will be celebrated with a parade that will begin at Connor and Mack at 12 noon on June 19. The parade will proceed to Chandler Park through

the Parkside Projects much as it did last year. It is being called by the Negro Nation Day Committee and will be co-ordinated internally by a fraction headed by Comrade Russell.

Comrades, we believe that Negro Nation Day this year brings us great opportunities to consolidate work we have done in manner areas and expand work in other areas. We believe that the ERC can be greatly strengthened by this event, but we can do none of this if we are incapable of gaining the support of our class. From last year's celebration as small as it was we are now experiencing feedback and expectation. Surely we are in a better position than we were a year ago. With a determined effort, we can make this day a landmark in our struggle to FREE THE NEGRO NATION.

Leadership Changes

The following leadership changes were united on: Comrade Jim D will assume Theresa S's responsibilities as Org Sec to facilitate her leaving. Lynn M is the new director of the Industrial Commission. Comrade Judy W will assume Jim's previous assignment as head of Membership, Pam will take her place on the W East Bureau. Henry H ~~will~~ has been appointed to the SW bureau in charge of agit/ptop.

The next meeting of the Committee will be June 13.