

RED FLAG

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RED FLAG

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CONTENTS

Introducing RED FLAG!

POLITICAL REPORT: 1982 ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLES COLLEGE (AUGUST 1982)

Introduction: General Orientation

I. BUILDING UNITY THROUGH RECRUITMENT	6
II. WHERE WE'VE BEEN	
1. Dialectics of Peoples College History	9
2. Understanding the Rectification Campaign	18
Why The Rectification Campaign	21
3. Summing Up the Revolutionary Three Year Plan of Action	26
4. Why No Assembly and No Recruitment	43
5. An Assessment of 1981-82	46
6. Current Problems	48
III. WHERE WE ARE GOING	51
IV. NOTE ON FUTURE ISSUES	75

Introducing RED FLAG

RED FLAG is the official internal organ of Peoples College. It is the context for a full and open democratic discussion and debate between the rank and file membership with itself, and in that way, it will constitute a new breath of fresh air and a new challenge. The challenge will be to engage the membership in a full and open process of putting ideas and concerns on paper for review by all comrades, while the fresh air will be the revitalization that PC will get from having its members unleashed in this democratic manner.

The main themes of this journal should be taken from the 1982 Assembly:

CONSOLIDATE LEFT POLE LEADERSHIP IN THE MAINSTREAM

SINK DEEP ROOTS AMONG THE MASSES

BUILD REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION

Further, as clearly spelled out in the Assembly and the Political Report, the key problem remains the political development of the membership in Marxism and the general overall line of Peoples College. This is the main target of the next year. We are attacking this problem in two ways:

- (a) Internal political education: We are counting on RED FLAG here to unleash the rank and file, with guidance from the leadership to clarify lines, etc. This will focus on internal criticism, summing up new political experiences, reports on organizational work, etc.
- (b) External Political Discussion: This will be the main thrust

of Basic College in which members of Peoples College will educate the masses, and take PC's line into battle against other lines.

Overall, RED FLAG is to be read by only members of Peoples College; it is the main political tool for the internal life of Peoples College; and it is in the pages of RED FLAG that the membership must combat liberalism and fight for the correct line. COMRADES, can we afford not to wage a better battle for the battles yet to come? BE STRONG! The pages of RED FLAG await you! DARE to overcome our past! TURN to the RED FLAG!!

POLITICAL REPORT
1982 ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLES COLLEGE
AUGUST 1982

General Orientation

The 1982 Assembly of Peoples College comes at a very critical time. Though an assembly is scheduled annually by the Peoples College Constitution, the 1981 Assembly was not held and, therefore, this report has added significance. In addition, it comes at the final months of the Revolutionary Three Year Plan (RTYP) which has guided our organization since 1979. Further, it immediately follows a period of intense political work, a period of great victories and advances, and a period of discussions, setbacks and renewal regarding our capacity to sustain the work of Peoples College in the future. Finally, it is an Assembly in which we will grow as an organization through the acceptance of new members into our ranks.

Thus, if our practice is to continue to win revolutionary gains, we need the clarity of a new revolutionary plan to guide us over the next period. Such a plan can only come as a result of the unity-criticism-self-criticism-transformation-unity that is part and parcel of the Assembly process.

There can be many things said about the period leading up to this Assembly. While it may not be the meeting we wanted, it is the meeting we have. The materialist struggle is to approach the world and to understand it as it is, and not as we would have it to be. Further, understanding the basis for our victories and for our setbacks is a key task of this Assembly. It is the basis for our future.

We are aided in this process of understanding the lessons of our practice by the successful completion of several collections of documents on the history and practice of Peoples College. Most important

is the documentary history of Peoples College covering 1970 through 1982. We must become self conscious about our history. We should understand the ground that we have covered before. The lessons of our history should be consciously upheld or consciously repudiated--but not ignored.

This Assembly Report is the expanded Political Report presented during the opening sessions by the Chair of Peoples College, as well as the main points emerging from presentations and discussions of the Assembly. It consists of four parts:

- I. Building Unity through Recruitment
- II. Where We've Been
- III. Where We Are Going
- IV. Evaluation of Leadership (forthcoming)

I. Building Unity through Recruitment

In August 1981, we wrote a letter to comrades under consideration for membership in Peoples College, stating the following:

Peoples College extends revolutionary greetings to you and invites you to make application for membership in our organization. This invitation is both a culmination of a process and the basis for a new beginning.

As a culmination, it comes at the end of a period of several months which has included the following:

- (a) joint practical work
- (b) joint study of revolutionary theory and discussions of the critical issues facing revolutionaries in the U.S.
- (c) interactions in various other political and social contexts (e.g., conferences, cultural and political programs at Timbuktu, etc.)

Based on our summation of these various activities, we have reached the conclusion that you have a contribution to make to Peoples College and to the revolutionary struggle. And, as Lenin states, the main tasks of revolutionaries can only be carried out and fully realized in the context of a revolutionary organization.

The importance of this invitation and our desire to build the ranks of Peoples College and the revolutionary struggle is more underscored in light of the developing conditions in the U.S. and the world. The main political and economic fact is that capitalism is plunging deeper and deeper into world wide crisis. Most indicators--even those cited by the bourgeoisie--predict that the economic crisis will get worse before and if it gets better. This is the concrete basis for an upsurge in spontaneous mass struggle, and the domination of the movement by reformism and other errors which accompany spontaneous struggle. In this context, the lessons of What is to be Done? stand out--that it is precisely in the face of certain spontaneous upsurge that we need the development and strengthening of conscious revolutionary activity.

In full recognition of the critical times ahead and the challenges which lie before us, we extend to you this invitation. We hope that you will accept it, begin the application process, struggle to complete it, and thus lay the basis for a new beginning of revolutionary work on a higher level of political and organizational unity.

Much happened between the year August 1981 when that letter was written and August 1982. There have been both internal and external contradictions which slowed us down. We will explore this in detail below. But it is clear that our work and ^cvictories over the past year have resulted in increased work and more responsibilities. It is precisely as we summed up above - as the spontaneous upsurge broadens the need for developing and strengthening conscious revolutionary activity increases. Hence, the year long process of culminating the invitation to membership is something that we have been quite concerned about. Given our plans for making revolutionary gains in the future, Peoples College is quite pleased to welcome new members into its ranks.

When we welcome comrades into the organization at an Assembly we do so not so much as the end of a process, but rather as the beginning of taking on the full rights and responsibilities of the role of a member in Peoples College. We look forward to helping you get your orientation as well as we welcome your clarity as you combat liberalism and as you help us to combat assumptionism. In general, we will welcome you in the pages of the RED FLAG, our internal organ for the full debate and discussion of line as we clarify in it the context of unfolding the line as put forward at the ASsembly.

It is at times like this that we must remember the lessons of revolutionary practice:

1. Lenin defined the characteristics of a professional revolutionary ~~and~~ we should study this text and uphold its lessons (See What Is to Be Done?).
2. Mao challenged the Party to recruit large numbers of intellectuals but warned that they should be educated to respect the working classes and be educated by them in taking up

the new class stand (See several relevant articles).

3. Further, study and uphold the lessons of the Peoples College Rectification Campaign. This is a political task of unsurpassed importance.

Further, at this time it is necessary to look forward to additional recruitment. We are looking forward to building a new network of contacts out of Basic College that will constitute a new Marxist-Leninist study group for the summer. The key task is to recruit more people out of the working class. Further, we are going to build our broad network and tighten it up as a nation-wide scaffolding for a national organizational drive sometime in the future. This process of welcoming in new members is key, in more ways than one--a key to the future.

II. Where We've Been

1. Dialectics of Peoples College History:

The historical development of Peoples College remains one of our major internal theoretical tasks (as this is the summation of practice), but, in the meantime, there are several documents in our history that can serve as a guide to this organizational task:

- (a) Notes on Peoples College History (March 1972)
- (b) Summation of the October 1st Collective (Spring 1975)
- (c) Historical Sketch of Peoples College (July 1976)
- (d) Outline History of Peoples College (April 1979 & August 1979)

At this point we can basically identify two basic contradictions that represent the historical parameters of Peoples College:

1. The years spent in preparation, meaning the recruitment of new members and the political unity of old members, and study toward political line, organizational form, program of concrete action, and a critical summation of the movement, and therefore the basis for unity and lines of demarcation to be drawn with other line and tendencies, etc., versus the years spent in carrying out a definite plan of action, a series of campaigns of struggle, the development of local and national resources, and the closer linkage between political education, political exposure, and concrete campaigns, etc.
2. The contradiction, within the years of action, of preparation on the local level versus PC's full scale thrust onto the national scene of the Black Liberation Movement.

There are many more contradictions that can be observed in the work listed above, and most of them can be understood now as internal

developments within the bigger picture summed up by these two major contradictions. Only by grasping the big picture, these two major contradictions, can we understand the current situation and where we stand now.

Dialectics of Peoples College History

YEARS	TRANSITION	STAGE OF STRUGGLE
1967-70	Origins in Nashville, Atlanta	
1970-73		Nashville: local struggle
1973-75		Nashville: National struggle
1975-77	Santa Barbara: Chicago	
1977-79		Chicago: Building local struggle
1979-82		Chicago: Building a base for National struggle

Peoples College began as a left pole formation within the mainstream tradition of community service created by Charles Johnson and his colleagues at Fisk University. More directly, it was within a juncture in the Black Liberation Movement. This juncture is critical because it reflected a shift in the class composition of the Black Liberation Movement, and a redefinition of the relationship between militant forces of the BLM and the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state in crisis. The thrust of Black workers was crucial here (preceded by an / ^{earlier} focus on the southern sharecropper by SNCC) led by the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, and Black Workers Congress, popularized by the last struggle of King, and summed up by the ideology of the working class being taken up and linked to the world as led by the Black Panther party including political and organizational questions. Further, the vicious murder of Black leaders has been a critical redefinition of what our opposition has in store for us, and ,therefore, it clarifies the error of any form of militant spontaneity.

Peoples College was developed in parts and founded in three years in Nashville and Atlanta. This was a united front effort in which the contending lines in the Black Liberation Movement were accommodated and allowed to contend-- cultural nationalism and revolutionary nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Marxism, etc. Most of the people were students who were involved in militant campus struggles over the control and orientation of Black schools, an aspect of the overall struggle around the concept of the Black University(See Black World, special issues in March 1968,69,70)

The period of 1970-75 was the first full stage of development for Peoples College. For the first three years or so the main work was on the local level, with Peoples College carrying out the first phase of

Basic College with a written curriculum. A great deal of research was carried out in Black history and the general area of Africa, especially the history and development of AFRICAN LIBERATION. Classes met on Saturday and were attended by people from several Black colleges in the area, and some community/movement activists.

The full development of Peoples College as a force in the national Black Liberation Movement took place when the work carried out on the local level with regard to Marxist theory and Black liberation, history and development of African liberation, and the methods and techniques for militant propaganda work was the basis for Peoples College getting involved in the national work of ALSC. PC served ALSC as its Research and Development Committee, and, therefore, more than in the past, PC was able to project its work on the national scene. PC was responsible for the major contribution of moving the BLM left by its creative application of Marxism and relentlessly forging ahead with the two-line struggle.

But this motion soon turned into its opposite when the middle class radicals who had taken up the banner in ALSC became "ultra-left". This turned the leadership of the movement over to the right wing opportunist nationalist forces again. At this point ideological, organizational, and political crises tore the left apart, and virtually ripped PC apart as well. The October 1st Collective is a reflection of this, as is the rise and fall of the Revolutionary Workers League, and the needed reconstitution of PC in Chicago-Santa Barbara.

The transition took place as a result of being jolted back into the necessity for Peoples College to exist, as the Ultra Left continued to degenerate. Further, the Angola crisis overwhelmed the movement since ALSC had virtually died, and the BLM fell under increasingly

opportunistic leadership. The main document written during this period was the analysis of ALSC and Philadelphia.

At first an attempt was made to boldly march into the ranks of the left guided by the ALSC analysis and the errors of the recent PC history as positive guides for the future. This backfired as the Revolutionary Communist Party turned into an equally ultra left context in which to carry out the work and we broke away. PC took up local Africa support work for a couple of years and then began to concentrate on work in the Black Studies Movement. This work has been quite successful and now has set the basis for the national Black Studies Movement.

Two key points emerge from the dialectics of PC's history: importance of line struggles and importance of the local base in building national struggle.

1. Importance of line struggles

PC has historically developed in relationship to key line struggles rooted in practice. Historically, these struggles have propelled PC forward - sometimes toward immediate crisis, but always toward a higher level of revolutionary understanding and practice.

Examples:

A. 1967-70. In the period of PC's origin, there were line struggles with right opportunism/errors and with left opportunism/errors.

(1) From the right, student opportunism to cut political work loose and go on for the medical degree at Meharry or to lead a life of leisure as artists and intellectuals were some of the key struggles.

(2) From the left, students who were too militant for PC and joined BWC (although initially, they were too conservative for PC) only to die of internal sectarian squabbles.

B. 1973-75. In the student movement, the right line of "burn down the white campuses and leave" had to be fought. This line flipped into the ultra left line that all students should leave and join the working class. (The first was a SOBU line; the latter a line of FFM)

C. 1975-77. The left dogmatism of RCP which sought to subordinate Africa

support work in the U.S. to its struggles over the line on China and the international situation. This liquidated a real opportunity to consolidate left leadership over legitimate mass based struggle.

1982. Struggle with TJ, AS and Line of March. Here we have a combined attempt to liquidate the BLM on three fronts: organizationally with AS, politically with TJ, and ideologically with Line of March.

2. Importance of local base in building national struggle. The second key point in the dialectics of PC's history is that only through systematic local base building can we build national campaigns. Essentially, we have found that rational knowledge flows from the careful study and assessment of concrete situations, the kind of practical situations we have access to in our local work.

Also, concrete struggle around resources and over power in the local setting is the basis for understanding the dynamics of the national process.

Examples:

(a) Basic College in Nashville and the study of Africa was key to PC's involvement in the National ALSC.

(b) Timbuktu, a local bookstore in Nashville--off the beaten track--was better than stores in cities like N.Y. and was the basis of PC's contribution to ALSC as Research and Propaganda Committee.

(c) It was on the basis of people struggling in a local community -- police brutality, organizing and supporting workers struggles, struggle to save and change Black colleges, etc--that the support for

national ALSC work was guided. The Chair of PC took the lead, and was the tip of an iceberg (the ranks of PC), confirming that small forces united around a correct line and leadership can make a big battle.

It is precisely this last formulation that became more and more central to our work. Were we united around the same line and the same leadership?

2. Understanding the Rectification Campaign

In the spring of 1979, a cancerous growth was diagnosed inside Peoples College -- RIGHT OPPORTUNISM. The presence of this disease was known beforehand, but its recent manifestations had taken a qualitative lead; it was not only holding back the development of important work, but had come to threaten the very life of Peoples College.

Consistent with our history, a very sharp struggle developed between two lines--one that identified right opportunism as the main danger inside PC and one that identified left opportunism as the main danger. The organization united behind the title of a document presented by the chair of PC, THE PRINCIPLE PROBLEM FACING PEOPLES COLLEGE IS RIGHT OPPORTUNISM: FACE IT, FIGHT IT, FINISH IT. This unity was the basis of a rectification campaign which focussed on 10 major questions below.

WHAT IS RIGHT OPPORTUNISM? WHAT WAS THE RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN ? It is useful to present a capsule statement of what the dimensions of Right Opportunism were understood to be, especially since its growth has not ceased. A summary statement adopted at the beginning of the rectification campaign is useful here:

The right errors are dominant and if allowed to develop would result in a fully consolidated right opportunist line and would turn Peoples College away from revolution to reaction. Right errors are in opposition to the political line put forward by the leadership of Peoples College. In general the source of this trend is the political vacillation of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie, and the reformist politics of the nationalist wing so prominent in the Black Liberation Movement and mainstream institutions of the Black community.

Right opportunism must be correctly identified and fought on every level with the revolutionary science of Marxism-Leninism.

- a. Ideology: dialectical and historical materialism versus empiricism, idealism, and mechanical materialism.
- b. Politics: two weapons (revolutionary organization and the united front) versus die-hardism, reformism, and a line of all unity, no struggle.
- c. Organization: democratic centralism and criticism, self criticism versus liberalism, individualism, careerism, and organizational ad hocism.

The development of right opportunism has been a constant feature of the Movement in the USA. This deviation has historically plagued the communist movement, the CPUSA (Lovestone, Browder, and Gus Hall) and the Trotskyite groups (especially the SWP). On the other hand, today the Black Liberation Movement is dominated with bourgeois nationalism, and it is led by a pack of consolidated right opportunist (Jesse Jackson, Hooks, Jordan, Congressional Black Caucus, etc.).

In the worldcommunist movement the danger of right opportunism has been a constant source of deviation from the correct line. A great revolutionary tradition exists of the fight waged against this ever present danger, and this is summed up in the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao. Only by having a full (historically rich and theoretically systematic) understanding of right opportunism in our entire movement can we hope to wage a successful struggle against right opportunism in our day to day work.

The rectification campaign took up 10 main questions which were identified as sources and contexts for Right Opportunism:

1. Theory
2. Leadership
3. Decision Making
4. Style of Work
5. Liberalism
6. Individualism
7. Careerism
8. Uniting the Old with the New
9. Organizational Ad Hocism
10. Building a mass anti-imperialist organization

(The content of these questions and study material on each of them will be found in DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF PEOPLES COLLEGE, pp 131-139 ; 145-148)

3. Why the Rectification Campaign?

An answer to this question is essential since the concrete reality which gave rise to right opportunism /errors and the campaign are still with us today, and perhaps more so than in the past. There are three basic reasons:

(1) Character of Petty Bourgeoisie. The rectification campaign had (and has, in the future) to be expected because of the necessity of class defection. Peoples College has historically been rooted in the class strata of the radicalized petty bourgeoisie. As was stated, "Within Peoples College the main danger has always been a rightward drift, a problem endemic to the petty bourgeois character of Black intellectuals." p. 130, Doc. History of PC

This "endemic character" demands a systematic and intentional effort toward class defection.

(2) Influx of New Members. One question to be answered in this period, as stated above, was "recruitment, how PC is going to grow, and development of new recruits." While new comrades bring important new skills and energy to revolutionary work, they also bring "excess baggage." There is a challenge to the organization from new revolutionary enthusiasm of young people, and the bad habits of individualism and subjectivity in matters of theory and practice.

(3) Heightening of Internal Contradictions. The crisis existing in the revolutionary movement and in the Black liberation movement was reflected inside P.C. This served to heighten the internal contradictions inside PC about the road forward. Mistakenly some see the cultural revolution as about culture; it was not about simply culture, but a struggle for / ^{proletarian} rule. Similarly, the struggle inside PC was about which

- class line would lead P.C. In identifying the method of fighting right
- opportunist, a right opportunist error was acknowledged by the chair of P.C.
- His comments provide another important insight into the factors underlying the rectification campaign.

This document contains my response to the present crisis in Peoples College. This crisis reflects the particular history of Peoples College, and it also reflects the overall crisis of the movement, the left and the Black liberation movement. This document has been written in response to the last meeting of the P.C. collective.

At that time we set our individual and collective task to deepen our criticism and self-criticism as the way to struggle for unity around a correct revolutionary line.

However, this task is only the final outcome of the meeting, and does not reveal the very important struggle that took place during the meeting. Everyone should have come to the meeting with a common understanding of the proposal being put forward. I had talked with everyone individually, and then at the beginning of the meeting I repeated the main points that I had been putting forth so that everyone was clear and had the same understanding:

1. our approach to the present situation must take into account that two different political tendencies exist within Peoples College, a trend toward two lines (ideological, political and organizational).

2. our approach should be based on unity-struggle-transformation-unity. This means that we must affirm our unity now in order to have a definite context within which to carry on our struggle for a correct line.

3. in doing this we should avoid liberalism, avoid acting as if everything is fine. Rather, our approach should be that even with the problems that we face our commitment is to unite on what we agree on; then, in the context of carrying out the work of PC, we can continue to wage struggle for the correct line.

4. There are five areas or questions that we must have answers to if PC is to move forward.
 - a. overall statement of line, what we believe on the ideological and political plane
 - b. leadership and decision making, how is PC going to be structured
 - c. programmatic areas of work, different divisions of the work
 - d. recruitment, how PC is going to grow, and development of new recruits
 - e. 2 or 3 year plan with concrete objectives for each of the above four categories

Thus, the struggle against right opportunism and the rectification campaign is directly related to three necessities which have confronted PC in the past and will continue to confront us in the future.

1. The necessity for political education: This reflects not only our need for basic training in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, but the need to search for the theory in our history as a concrete guide to action. Mass line and Communist summation are critical here. The absence of theory leads directly to right opportunism.

2. The necessity for line struggle: Important differences reflect principles that must be clarified and struggled out, so the zig-zag of our movement requires a theoretical level of line struggle. This provides the context for political education and general orientation for the future.

3. The necessity for recruitment: We must build the ranks of revolutionary forces, and this means fighting against the sectarian style of PC and drawing more forces to us, but we must replace personality with political line, and social ties with comradeship built in struggle.

The results of the rectification campaign were partially summed up and presented in ON FIGHTING RIGHT OPPORTUNISM (OFRO). We planned to publish OFRO, or at least share it with close contacts because we find there is very little theoretical clarity on these issues in the movement. The criticism of Nicholas regarding the degeneration of CP-ML is an example of these issues surfacing in the movement. But not only was the document not published, it was not completed; only 5 questions were partially summed up in fact.

In fact, the rectification campaign itself was not finished. There was a great desire to finish the campaign, to sum it up and get it behind us. This is a right error on rectification. The struggle continues because the errors continue, and the errors will be possible and probable as long as we attempt to give leadership in the mainstream.

The masses of people find ways to adapt to problems in their everyday lives (e.g. learning to dance, etc.). The left is often alienated from these forms. The left ends up being more familiar with the knowledge of building the new world and less familiar with knowledge about how to combat the tendency toward right errors that exist within the mainstream. Many of the ways in which the masses adapt are counterproductive to revolutionary work.

Increasingly our work has been and will be initiating the mainstream (Timbuktu, ICBS) and penetrating the mainstream (NCBS). A key issue in fighting right opportunism is how to be in the mainstream and still draw clear lines of demarcation, while still staying in it. This is the lesson our work in NCBS has taught us--exposing the bullshit, catching hell for it, yet "clawing" our way up to the national leadership with a broad base of support and respect.

3, Summing Up the Revolutionary Three Year Plan of Action

The need was absolutely clear for "a two or three year plan wil concrete objectives", based on the development of PC's ideological and political line; leadership decision making and structure; programmic areas of work and division of labor, and recruitment. The Peoples College New Revolutionary Three Year Plan of Action (pp. 193-218, Doc. History of PC) was adopted in August 1979 to speak to this need. This document and what it represents as a model for the future work of PC is important enough to quote the introduction.

However this was not the way things tended to work out. I must make a self-criticism for being liberal regarding the further development of Peoples College. I tried to achieve unity in the midst of serious difference without a correct approach to struggle to clarify those differences, and make a hard headed division of things into points of unity and points for continued struggle. We can't avoid drawing clear lines of demarcation, defending the correct line, leading comrades to repudiate the incorrect line as a necessary aspect of rectification, and then unity on a higher plane based on deeper knowledge of a correct line.

This is the only way to fight opportunism. And why is this? Because as Lenin points out opportunism must be fought free of liberalism to stop its snake-like wriggling:

When we speak of fighting opportunism, we must never forget a feature that is characteristic of present day opportunism in every sphere, namely, its vagueness, diffuseness, elusiveness. An opportunist by his very nature, will always evade formulating an issue clearly and decisively, he will always seek a middle course, he will always wriggle like a snake between two mutually exclusive points of view and try to "agree" with both and to reduce his differences of opinion to petty amendments, doubts, good and pious suggestions, and so and so forth. (One Step Forward, Two Steps Back 1904)

PEOPLES COLLEGE has reached a new stage in its development. As the 10th Anniversary of Peoples College approaches we have made important advances in our continuing struggle against right opportunism. These advances can only be consolidated with a plan--a plan of organization and a plan of action.

This new stage is (and must be) the third part of the basic method we used: unity-struggle-transformation-unity. We have our Statement of Unity and our On Fighting Right Opportunism. Now when these lessons are put into practice, reflecting a new organizational approach, a full transformation of Peoples College should be finalized.

Our task now is to design a plan that reflects our grasp of the correct line on the road forward. We have made a big step by developing the new revolutionary Peoples College Constitution and General Program. This is a basic document of Peoples College and should be referred to whenever it is necessary to clarify a basic organizational question.

This document is the Peoples College 1979-1982 Three Year Plan:

- Year 1: ESTABLISHING THE BASE--is focused on making a qualitative break with the past and setting up new forms of Peoples College in which Peoples College will work--a state-wide organization in Black Studies, a bookstore, and a journal.
- Year 2: BUILDING THE BASE--is focused on quantitatively developing the new qualitative things. Thus, big outreach and drawing in tight is the rhythm of the year.
- Year 3: CONSOLIDATING THE BASE--is focused on firmly uniting new forces around the line of Peoples College, developing new leaders, and preparing for the next multi-year plan.

PC Documentary History, p. 195.

The RTYP represented the effort of PC to uphold the line from the rectification campaign, as stated in the main orientation of the document, especially in deepening the left pole/mainstream analysis.

Our current direction--and correctly so--is into the mainstream.

Therefore, our objective of holding high the red banner will be even more difficult.

What do we mean by the mainstream. We are currently doing our work among Black people, most of whom are in sharp contradiction with the ruling class and their whole capitalist system. As the imperialist crisis deepens there are many questions that are raised by the vast majority of organized and developed forces among Black people of all political persuasions. Further, there are discussions among leading Black reformist forces without a strong radical voice to dissent. The consensus of leadership is created by a coalition of middle forces dominated by reformists who have direct ties to corporate and government executives.

The mainstream is defined by the masses of people, and reflected in leadership trends. Whatever the largest number of people do, and whatever contributes to that, is the mainstream. This is particularly the case when the issue is important. The mainstream has a strong magnetic pull on the masses of people. The mainstream is where leadership can be won--real leadership. Mao said that revolutionaries must be with the people like

a fish in water. Peoples College will not only dare to struggle, we are going into the mainstream and dare to struggle against the sharks which are swimming in those waters!

Our going into the mainstream means several very important things:

(1) We are staking out "turf" and must be prepared to give correct leadership to it and be recognized by the masses for it. This will require openly competing for the leadership of the masses with a correct revolutionary line and consistent revolutionary practice.

(2) We must assume the responsibility of being the best that Black people have developed in the areas we work in. This requires the dual responsibility of (1) mass outreach and (2) excellence in our work. We must unite with the many and lead by example.

(3) We face the ambiguity of compromise, i.e., we will be in concrete situations in which we will have to define our relationship to the Black petty bourgeoisie. The main issue here is the political definition of all-class unity in the Black liberation movement. This is united front work; overall, we must never compromise our principles, but we will have relationships limited to a specific issue or event.

Our key task of entering the mainstream will be opposed by right opportunists and "left" dogmatists. The right opportunists will not want people in these contexts raising up the red banner without flinching or apologizing because it will expose them by comparison. Most of the Black Studies leading forces, i.e., those in key leadership positions, will be in this category. But we can overcome this if we are disciplined, hard-working, and loyal to the correct revolutionary line of Peoples College. In Black Studies, we will build maximum unity in the context of dealing

with the actual contradictions that face most people in the Black Studies movement. So when we produce curriculum materials like Intro, even though people don't unite with all of the line, the text both meets a need they have and is sufficiently rooted in the Black experience to make it difficult to reject. In addition, the same mandate holds for the program of the Illinois Council for Black Studies (I.C.B.S.). We must build an organization that meets the needs of the masses of people in Black Studies while at the same time using the organization to build a base of strength led by the correct line of Peoples College. There must be constant concern for the dialectical relationship between the mass line and the correct application of Marxist theory.

On the other hand, there are the "left" opportunists. They will condemn Peoples College because they will interpret entering the mainstream as subordinating oneself to the line of the leading forces in the mainstream. This is false, mechanical materialism. Yes, it is true that the dominant ideas in the society are the ideas of the ruling class. But for revolutionary fighters to be in the mainstream does not mean to be subordinated to it. It means being in the arena to fight against the mainstream. The left phrase mongers always appear to be sectarian: they don't seem to deal with the same issues that the masses are dealing with. They don't seem to be around when the masses are stirring, though even the most dogmatic show up at the big dramatic events like Humboldt Park or Marquette Park.

In Black Studies this means that the left will have an incorrect line on doing United Front work among the Black petty bourgeoisie. This results from doing a 2 into 1 with political and ideological line. On the other hand, John Henry is correct in making a clear distinction between

the two. For students, our approach will be to go straight at two aspects of the campus. First, we have to find the more revolutionary student (through PC contact, Intro classes, etc.). And secondly, we have to penetrate into the Black student mainstream. This means that when we pay attention to numbers, we have to take the advanced few into the context where they can interact with and influence the many. This means that we have to consolidate our few forces so that we can go into the mainstream and maintain a solid left critical stand. The bottom line is that we have to gain more influence and the only way to do it is to take the correct line into the mainstream.

But the main danger comes from within Peoples College. If we relax at the political level then we are doomed to be dominated by a right line. We must always triple check our line of argument and reasoning, making sure that we have (1) taken the interests of the masses first, (2) made maximum use of our freedom to raise the red banner, and (3) presented our line (material) in excellent professional manner. There is only one corrective to fight this danger. We must be led by the correct line of the organization, or we must consciously fight against it. Thus, all of the basic documents of Peoples College must be actively used. (Examine Peking Review under the leadership of the Four and there are many examples of the correct usage of the correct line to make an analysis and fight the right deviationist winds.)

Further, this has been discussed in another document:

The key aspects of a revolutionary programmatic line involve both the structure and process of revolutionary organization (organizational form of unit and their relationship, membership procedures, communication, secrecy, etc.) and the concrete mass struggles carried out to educate the masses and win all immediate gains possible. These struggles can be carried out with the greatest revolutionary gains if there is clarity of thought & action, and this about both the revolutionary thrust and the broad objective and immediate interests of the masses. This is the issue of the left pole and the mainstream.

Lenin in What Is to Be Done? put forth the strategic organizational line for building a party capable of leading socialist revolution. He makes many key points:

- (a) militant mainstream struggle (spontaneity) will only lead to reformism unless it is guided by the steered leadership of a communist party.
- (b) the revolutionary left pole should be professional and not amateurish and primitive;
- (c) the revolutionary left pole should always be represented by developed theoretical positions and be rooted in systematic political exposures;
- (d) the revolutionary left pole should link up a national network as the basis for national organization and activities.

This analysis by Lenin is especially important for our movement as the overall spontaneity of the 1960s burst forth without the active leadership of a revolutionary vanguard. The mass movement produced many young people thirsty for revolution, and prepared to work hard to grasp firmly the basic revolutionary tools. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of Peoples China was the bright red star in our sky, and it led us to the works of the great Lenin and Mao Tse-tung.

The overall problem in the U.S. movement has been a rightward drift due to the absence of a solid revolutionary vanguard, and the pervasiveness of a middle class style of thought and action. However, in the new communist movement of the 1970s there has been a "left" opportunist danger as well. (Examples of this are the dogmatism of the Communist League and the Black Workers Congress). The right error is all mainstream, no left pole, while the left error is all left pole, no mainstream.

The main issue of a tactical orientation is the correct handling of the mainstream-left pole contradiction.

B. What is mainstream?

The question must be answered effectively, or no plan of action is sure to link up with the masses, no decisive struggle can be waged against bourgeois lines. The mainstream is the people, not the enemy. So, grasp of this concept requires an understanding of class and national forces (See Mao, Analysis of Classes in Chinese Society). Our main problem of class analysis at this time is the Black petty bourgeoisie, while overall it is the interaction~~onal~~ of class and nationality as the crisis deepens. For now we table precise class categories and empirical description (See ALSC documents for preliminary work, and recent U.S. Census publication) and refer to "friends" as the masses of people.

There are 3 key aspects of the mainstream, we can use them to make a determination of the mainstream at any time:

- (1) quantity of people: In this sense the mainstream is wherever the largest number of people are.

Mao instructs us to pay attention to numbers. Here we rank the action of the masses by size, so sports are very important as is church, school, etc. If we used this as the only relevant criteria we would be narrow empiricists who foolishly think that regardless of other factors, biggest is best. The main ~~xxxx~~ point here is that if large numbers of people are doing something, we should be aware of it and seek to understand it.

- (2) quality of issue: What the people are doing, the substance of their action.
- (3) Form or organization: How is it being done, the socio-political form of the action. Is it a formal permanent form or informal and spontaneous? Is there stable leaderships and continuity overtime? What are the conditions of membership, etc.

The main thing is that the mainstream is an objective fact to be described. The definition is to be applied as part of the mass line, "from the masses." People should be asked about these things, everyone's ^{val}percept~~ed~~ knowledge should be admitted as evidence, especially in trying to get to the "facts."

In sum, the mainstream is determined in three ways:

- (1) What are people doing?
- (2) How many people are doing it?
- (3) How are these people doing it?

C. What is the left pole?

This question is the same as "What is the revolutionary leadership?" Clearly this is a question of supreme importance, a question dealt with extensively in our recent rectification campaign and summed up in the basic document On Fighting Right Opportunism. Two aspects of this question must be dealt with: What is the left pole? and How to plant it in the mainstream?

Lenin and Mao left great teachings on the left pole and exemplified in the great revolutions they were part of as supreme leaders, especially What Is to be Done? and The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War. Here, that ideological, political and organizational definition of the Party must be thoroughly studied (also see Lenin on "The Revolutionary Proletarian Party of a New Type"). The key is that the party is revolutionary leadership: "a party is the vanguard of a class and its duty is to lead the masses, not to reflect the average state of mind of the masses."

The issue of the left pole is not only one of definition and conception, it is one of process and development. So, while we know what it is (has been in other revolutions) in the abstract, implementing a plan to bring it ~~into~~ being at the helm of a revolutionary process can only come through the trial and error method summed up through the mass line and especially the revolutionary theory of Marxist-Leninist analysis. So, how do we plant the left pole?

- (1) Revolutionaries must be disciplined students of the science of making a revolution and must be actively engaged in some form of mass struggle. The unity of theory and practice is key, with theory being the principle aspect in the process of forming and consolidating the left pole. In planting the left pole, while guided by theoretical clarity, practice is principle over theory (while in the practice the essential question is what class line is in command.)
- (2) The left pole must be planted into
 - (a) central issues
 - (b) the majority or large segments of the various classes and nationalities among the people;
 - (c) all forms of mass organizations. This means that revolutionaries must be where the action is.
- (3) Lenin calls for "all round political exposures," and Mao calls for us to "combat liberalism." These reflect the revolutionary style of planting the left pole and keeping it left. One danger is that once planted it will degenerate.

- (4) The left pole must create a tension to propel us forward in unity with progressive advanced forces, and create a light to attract all who are interested. Also, it does this in combat against darkness, against incorrect lines. Some form of line struggle is always at the heart of our practice, and we should be conscious of it and teach people about it.

D. Some Problems Encountered in Our Practice

- (1). Initiating vs. Penetrating the Mainstream. This is the question of unity and struggle in the united front.
 - (a) When we initiate the mainstream (e.g., Timbuktu, Census Conference) self criticism and mass line criticism propel us forward.
 - (b) When we penetrate we unite below, struggle above, unite in the fight for reforms but fight reformism.
- (2) How to fight opportunism in the mainstream, while remaining in the mainstream?
 - (a) be honest, self-critical, work hard, practice mass line, and listen to masses, be open and fight for unity.
 - (b) be prepared, use our science to show its superior ability to grasp "essences"
 - (c) keep as the key themes, "involve the masses", "constant democracy" and "proletarian internationalism."
- (3) How to manage day to day organizational (mass work) details and to continue revolutionary communist development?
 - (a) reach out and recruit
 - (b) grasp revolution to promote production in a revolutionary manner.

In taking up a three year plan, we stated that "planning ahead for three years gives everyone in PC good tactical and strategic orientation. It is a necessary time period in which to test ideas and make mistakes, but also to have time to rectify errors.

We need a plan that moves us into a leading role among Black progressives, Black intellectuals, and the Black liberation movement. That will be a significant step forward. Then the issue will be building greater unity among progressive forces. Now we must enter the mainstream."

In general, we are on schedule with regards to the overall plan laid out, through we have not achieved several specific projections. We are definitely in "a leading role, among Black progressives, Black intellectuals, and the Black liberation movement." The critical weakness is the continued failure to launch MAYBELL, but this is offset by the overwhelming gains of our Black Studies work.

Year 1: Establishing a BAsE in Chicago: The main overall objective was to set up the basic structure of PC's key programs. Our main focus was on building three key tools of struggle: MAYBELL, ICBS, Timbuktu.

Maybell was not launched, not because it could not be initiated but because the internal political consolidation of PC around ideological and political line raised serious questions regarding our capacity to sustain such an important effort.

ICBS was initiated and while it did not achieve all projected (e.g. summer trip to Africa), it laid a basis "to coordinate resources and begin to impact on larger numbers of people, standardize Black Studies programs, spread INTRO and PC publications and set up a lobby to government and private organizations."

Timbuktu became the main Black bookstore in the Midwest and continues "to be the main mechanism for the mass distribution of all our materials."

Black Liberation Month News was expanded, but we did not meet our recruitment target.

Year 2: Building the Base in Chicago. The task here was "developing networks of communication and influence to build the base" that was established in Year 1, "making it stronger and more firmly planted among the masses. Year 1 is more of a qualitative shift, while Year 2 will be a quantitative increase within the new quality."

In general, our practice revolved around sustaining what had been established in Year 1. Timbuktu expanded its Year 1 customer base and did "concentrate more on outreach through literature tables," as called for in Year 2. ICBS interacted with more campuses around the state, but fell short of paid memberships on 35 campuses. BLMNews stayed at 50,000 (not 100,000) and PC membership remained at the pre-RTYP number.

Year 3. Consolidating the Base. While RTYP called for us to consolidate our base, to establish it on even a stronger level," as compared to Year 2, our practice resulted in our consolidating it on a higher level than pre RTYP and the Year 1 level.

Maybell was projected now as a quarterly with 2000 subscriptions. Black Liberation Month News, projected at 150,000 copies with a United Mass Committee in Chicago, was sustained at 50,000. Timbuktu, projected with a full catalogue, full staff, facility and program, struggled to sustain its daily activities and fight a rightward drift.

In Black Studies, two important Year 2 targets were met: hosting a national conference (though not with "2500 participating") and a summer seminar on Black Studies (NEH). "The leading role of ICBS and Peoples College within Black Studies in Illinois," and in the U.S. was established. Membership remained at the pre-RYTP level, though doubling our membership became de facto reality by coopting a number of people into the organization.

The key shortcoming was our failure to achieve this point in the Year 3 projection: "The main feature of this new level of unity will be the expansion of leadership, both within and without Peoples College. This will allow PC leadership to engage in a process of summation of the last period and to develop the next multi-year plan." This failure clearly sets a key task for the next multi-year plan.

Some assessment must be made of other organizational aspects of RTYP.

PC Units: The unit plan as implemented was good at some organizational tasks, but weak in giving each cadre the freedom to politically develop. Overall, the line of PC was overwhelmed by practical tasks.

The Work Groups: The main weakness here was not using the work groups to unite others not only in the tasks, but also around politics and not personalities, and around the overall line and leadership of Peoples College.

United Front Work: Our efforts have been strong here, but we have not followed through with our criticism and fought for principled unity.

Communist Unity: We simply have not given much effort here although we do a fair job of monitoring groups.

Financial Plan: Our plans are sound, but our organizational effort has been ad hoc, and we have not maintained routine practices well enough.

Internal Organization: Overall, the main aspect of the RTYP that needs much more criticism and further development is the lack of internal political life. The attempt to initiate RED FLAG was correct, as it will be in the near future. Rank and File members lacked the basis for carrying out discussions in the organization, unless they talked with a member of the political committee. This short-circuited a full democratic life within the entire organization and fed the "let the leadership deal with it" type of thinking. Further, the leadership was not functioning up to standard and, therefore, many particular political questions have not been dealt with as they might have been had cadre been organized to contribute to a democratic organ in which debate and line struggle could be carried out with the full participation of the entire organization.

This is a critical question of the meaning of democratic centralism (DC). There can be not DC with a full democratic discussion in which the membership become knowledgeable about the different lines on questions, take up the debate as their own, and get persuaded by the leadership of the line to be taken up by the organization. There will never be complete and total unanimous views, but at the point of decision at least everyone will know the point of view of the leadership, be clear on the line that DC requires them to uphold, and be in a good position of evaluating the decision by the leadership at the appropriate time.

Overall, DC must have democracy for otherwise the decisions of leadership are not worth very much, the rank and file will not know what's behind the decisions, and the rank and file will have a difficult time taking up the question as an important one and win the masses over to it as well.

4. Why No Assembly and No Recruitment?

The PC Constitution and the Revolutionary Three Year Plan call for (1) Annual Assemblies and (2) Recruitment with a projected growth rate (triple in year 1, double that in Year 2, etc.). The 1981 Assembly did not occur and no recruitment took place. This is a serious shortcoming and requires analysis if the lessons of the past are to guide us in the future.

There are four main reasons underlying these errors:

(1) Lack of internal unity. Considerable struggle and disunity existed within PC, especially in 1979-80. This disunity was not absolute. In fact, a great deal of unity existed overall which enabled us to make the gains which we did. The problem was why or how could we recruit new comrades into such contradictions.

(2) Weak Organizational Capacity. Reflecting the organizational ad hocism summed up in the 1980 Assembly Report, PC did not structure a mechanism to pay careful and systematic attention to recruitment. The "buddy system" was initiated as a response to this problem, but this mechanism was submerged by other contradictions (mainly, the developing line struggle between PC and the renegades who were then still in our midst).

(3) Creeping Liquidation of Revolutionary Organizational work. Our mass work, especially Black Studies and Timbuktu, as well as the March to Save the Children Campaign, became all-consuming. This subverted a principled struggle to give attention to the protracted process of preparing for an assembly and recruitment.

(4) Weak Political Leadership in following Mao's teaching "Dare to struggle, dare to win."

The key factor was # 4 above.

(a) The leadership of Peoples College was afraid of a split. The overwhelming responsibilities of our agenda and projections led us to conclude that all comrades have an important role to play. A sharp struggle to root out "bad" lines might have some immediate value, but may split the organization and harm our capacity to meet our goals. Finding a context where struggle could be unfolded while unity rooted in struggle/^{was}being deepened was the preference.

(b) The leadership was afraid of breeding chaos.

(c) The leadership of PC was over-protective, facing the inherent danger of moving right after ten years of struggle.

In fact, we were being liberal with ourselves. A better understanding of Mao's slogan "Dare to struggle; dare to win" may have led to an Assembly that would have put us in a better position to unite around a correct line and make bigger gains.

There were two aspects of what we did that might actually be considered de facto assembly and recruitment:

(i) A two day organizational conference was held in order to place the key issues on the table and struggle them out. This was held and resulted in a short run plan to continue the work.

(ii) There was, in fact, an ad hoc cooptation of close contacts into

the work and some of PC's internal life. This resulted in ambiguity.

Some people were brought more into the discussion than others.

This reflects the three sources of recruitment:

- (a) re-activation of former membership;
- (b) reaching unity with veterans of the movement;
- (c) developing unity with new recruits to communist organizational activism.

5. An Assessment of 1981-82

Despite tremendous difficulties, 1981-82 was a year of great achievements and some serious errors from which we can draw lessons. In a real sense, PC operated on "automatic pilot," struggling hard to achieve goals which had been laid out, goals which represented gains for the revolution.

Three facts help explain why Peoples College could continue our work with an assembly:

- (1) The strength of the Revolutionary Three Year Program was a key to our success. This underscores the necessity for a multi year plan because it lends clarity to our work and helps sustain work even in the face of difficulties.
- (2) The strength of individuals to persevere and "find one's bearings" was also a key to the gains of this period.
- (3) The fact that some comrades tenaciously hung on and made contributions was important, and also fueled our desire to maintain PC and keep it on the revolutionary road.

The main victory occurred in our Black Studies work. In very real terms we have "maxed out" on the mainstream in this regard, having put the leadership of the national organization in the hands of communists for a two year period (1984-86) with substantial input possible over the coming two years (1982-84).

Beyond this, however, the task of leading the major Black Studies national motion far exceeds the limitations of Black Studies.

Based on our experience in ALSC, it is clear that we can make a major contribution to the development of the Black Liberation movement and to the communist movement as well from this position of leadership in the Black Studies Movement.

The major setback was clearly the split in Study and Struggle, and we should include here the impact and importance of the struggle with TJ and with Line of March in this regard. All are key.

There was a consistent struggle against lumpen tendencies, against blatant male supremacy and physical abuse of women, and with "North Shore Calvin Kleinism" and other petty bourgeois tendencies and vacillations. While the split hampered our work, it was positive that it was provoked in January around the Student Summit and not during the March NCBS conference. While we are fewer in numbers, Lenin's statement about "better fewer, but better" is quite appropriate here.

Finally, the Line of March polemic is our opening shot in swimming back against the mainstream and more boldly planting the left pole and raising the red flag. This paper should remain a living document in the ideological and political life of all members of Peoples College.

6. Current Problems

Our analysis suggest that the current problems facing PC fall into three main categories.

A. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEFT POLE

1. PC must develop more line, both ideological and political.

There are many important issues for which we have no more than general theoretical/strategic formulations. An example is the woman question in the Black liberation movement where we put forward triple oppression but nothing on pressing political questions like ERA, childcare, battered women, and the like. Especially useful would be primers on key areas. Some examples include:

(a) Some issues facing Black women

(b) Why is Communism the answer for Black people?

2. We must put out the line that we already have developed.

The philosophy lectures/paper is a good example of this, as well as the work we have done in summing up ALSC, & the Search for a Vanguard series .

3. There are a series of long overdue polemics we must engage in. As Mao says, a room will stay dirty unless it is swept. Priorities should include polemics against certain leading opportunists in our movement.

4. We must continue to try and unite the Black left, especially using the NCBS network to play a key role here.

5. A United Front of advanced forces from all nationalities is essential here in Chicago. Important steps have been taken in this regard. A summation of this recent effort will be printed in RED FLAG.

B. CONSOLIDATION OF MAINSTREAM GAINS

History develops through contradictions in the struggle. While we can be criticized for certain aspects, the reason why there was no holiday after the NCBS conference and the NEH workshop and victories was quite clear: the greater the victory and the gains, the greater the responsibilities imposed upon us, and the more costly an error we make. Hence, there is a great need to remind us of this fact after each victory. Both the NCBS and NEH workshop were real victories, but there can be immediate setbacks. In fact, basic dialectics argue that we should prepare now for the attacks that are certain to come.

There are several areas in which our mainstream gains need to be consolidated:

1. ICBS- The key here is to increase the number of schools and individuals who always participate, and yet develop a second generation of leadership to take on responsibility. Also we need to standardize the curriculum around INTRO and BLACK CHICAGO.

2. NCBS- The key here is to build a national left fraction around the conference, work on elections in local areas, etc.

3. Curriculum Development- We have received over \$300,000 from the state. If we understand the concept of breeding, these funds argue that the ruling class would carefully monitor us and our contacts on the left in the U.S. and the world. The key is for us to actually produce a left curriculum for the mainstream -- rather than breeding the left. We're after the mainstream!!

4. Chicago Rehab Network. While this is base with some potential, Byrne is threatening to cut off agencies which do not support her. This may lead to cuts in the program and we must be clear that our priorities in that context are to build a community basis for struggle that can survive Byrne.

5. Timbuktu. Facing internal problems which reached crisis proportions in some instances, Timbuktu has not been attacked externally. We must prepare for it because there is no way that the state will allow us to develop into a more effective information center--the best in the U.S.--without an attack (e.g., taxes, contract violations, brick through the window, etc.).

6. Black Liberation Month. A smear campaign can keep BLM News out of the public schools, for example. A key aspect of consolidation is to go broader and more deeply and this is made more possible with our 1983 plans to do a one into two with the BLM News and take the calendar/Black geneology piece into the public schools, with a committee of teachers, librarians, and others in Chicago and Illinois serving as advisors/distributors of the paper.

C. RECONSTITUTING PEOPLES COLLEGE ON A REVOLUTIONARY FOOTING

1. We must develop RED FLAG as a democratic tool to use in building a meaningful internal organizational life for PC.

2. We must reestablish a solid plan for the financial support and financial planning of PC, toward greater self-reliance and greater freedom to carry out our program.

3. We must routinize meetings of PC in order to consolidate democratic centralism.

4. We must continue and escalate our recruitment efforts.

5. We must keep an open face to the masses.

III. WHERE WE ARE GOING

1. General Orientation. As Stalin said in FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM: "Theory is the experience of the working class movement in all countries taken in its general aspect. Of course, theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory." (p. 22) Similarly, the projection of the road forward for PC must be rooted in a careful summation of where we have been and where we are in the context of where the world and U.S. movement have been and are, and a careful assessment of current conditions and the problems we face. Based on this, three internal slogans sum up our general orientation for the next four years:

CONSOLIDATE LEFT POLE LEADERSHIP IN THE MAINSTREAM

SINK DEEP ROOTS AMONG THE MASSES

BUILD REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION

A. CONSOLIDATE LEFT POLE LEADERSHIP IN THE MAINSTREAM

1. This is an offensive slogan, not a defensive slogan. As was stated in THE REVOLUTIONARY THREE YEAR PLAN: "Overall, these are conditions which still have liberal democratic characteristics, and Peoples College must seize the time and move decisively to get in more of a leading role in the overall movement. In fact, we should never volunteer ourselves out of the mainstream; that is always where we should want to plant the red flag. If we are going to be out of the mainstream, the authorities must put us out!" (Docu. History of PC, 196)

2. There are three dialectics involved in the above slogan (and we have underlined the principal aspect in each contradiction for our next period of work):

- (a) consolidate vs. initiate
- (b) left pole vs. mainstream
- (c) mass vs. leadership

The focus on the principal aspect in each contradiction must be carefully applied to our work in each area over the next four years. In short, our main enemy to overcome is weak grasp of Marxist theory and the line of PC in our mass work.

3. CONSOLIDATING LEFT POLE LEADERSHIP IN THE MAINSTREAM is our main slogan for 1982-1983 and 1983-1984. This is mainly a question of political line. As Mao said, and as our practice bears out, political line is decisive. "Some form of line struggle is always at the heart of our practice, and we should be conscious of it and teach people about it," says PC in "On Flying the Red Flag in Black Revolt," (Docu. History of PC, 292). This quote is important for understanding the main thrust of our work over the next two years. There are many important guidelines for "planting the left pole in the mainstream"

found in the internal documents of PC. IT IS ABSOLUTELY IMPERATIVE THAT ALL COMRADES SPARE NO PAIN IN MAKING OUR DOCUMENTS--THEIR STUDY, CRITICISM, APPLICATION AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENT--THE VERY CENTER OF OUR ONGOING WORK.

B. SINK DEEP ROOTS AMONG THE MASSES

1. Objective vs. Subjective. Both our analysis of the masses (subjective factor) and our practice among the masses (objective factor) must be deepened. The masses themselves embody both the objective and subjective dimensions--they engage in concrete practice (objective) and they engage in thinking and analysis (subjective). We must pay attention to both these aspects in our work.

2. Plan vs. Process. This is the contradiction between consciousness (plan) and spontaneity (process). In general, our orientation is precisely the same as stated in the REVOLUTIONARY THREE YEAR PLAN :

Our main orientation is to deepen the fight against right opportunism while we march into the mainstream. Our first practical contradiction is between the spontaneous motion of the masses and our planned activity. We must never let the spontaneous movement become the main thing. Our plans must be carried out. On the other hand, we base our program on love for the masses and a strategic orientation that relies on the masses to make revolution. Therefore, we must allow for spontaneity in all areas of work--bulletin board and free literature table in the bookstore, a corp of students who go to all demonstrations (a la CCFA), ICBS mechanism for sending letters, setting up investigative committees, and, if necessary, mobilization. Again, spontaneity is the seed bed of right opportunism. Therefore, we must not bow down to it.

PC Documentary History p. 205

But it is also the seed bed of revolution so we must never ignore it either. This section of the REVOLUTIONARY THREE YEAR PLAN should be carefully studied because what follows the above quote is an effort

to discuss areas of work so as to anticipate the spontaneous motions in the context of fulfilling our plans. This kind of assessment should be completed for each area of work.

3. Collective vs. Individual. It is not a question of how many people we know personally, but of how many people we can turn on to the collective organizational thrust of Peoples College. There have been several deplorable instances where new contacts working in an area of work in which PC comrades were giving leadership reacted negatively toward other PC comrades, as if any area of PC work is the private preserve of their personal contacts and not organizational terrain on which all PC comrades must be recognized and respected.

C. BUILD REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION

1. We must make the Constitution of PC a living document. It should be reviewed periodically and used as a point of departure in developing political and organizational line on all questions.

2. We must fight petty bourgeois tendencies of right opportunism in the spirit and with the intensity of the rectification campaign. It is only through revolutionary organization that we can fight the onslaught of the capitalists. Right opportunism damages our will and capacity to respond and it must be viewed as a direct aid to our enemies if we do not fight against it. AS LONG AS RIGHT OPPORTUNISM AND RIGHT ERRORS LIVE, THE RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN AND ITS LESSONS MUST LIVE,

3. We must fly the RED FLAG, our monthly internal organ to be initiated as a priority task emerging from this Assembly, as a chain of knowledge and use it to make maximum collective input into decisions being formulated and laid down (chain of command). Younger cadre may be primarily sharing important raw perceptions in the initial stages,

while seasoned comrades will be expected to go to the essence of political questions and put forward line.

Of the three slogans above, the principal one is CONSOLIDATING LEFT POLE LEADERSHIP IN THE MAINSTREAM. The key to this is the internal political development of Peoples College. Thus, we will unfold our new four year plan concentrating on our internal political development (especially through Basic College and RED FLAG).

2. The International Situation.

It is customary for the left to start general political presentations with the international situation. We did not, though we have historically paid a great deal of attention to this question. A brief statement of our current line follows:

A. War and Revolution continue on the world scene, with the forces of reaction clearly having the upper hand at the moment. This is reflected in the following situations:

(i) In Africa, there is a tremendous upsurge of Marxism, but also growing repression. Comrades who have worked closely with PC comrades are imprisoned in Zaire, Ghana, and Kenya. There have been many coups in Africa as well and obvious attempts to destabilize progressive regimes (Zimbabwe). The analysis of Africa we presented in BLM News 1981 still holds true and should be carefully reviewed.

(ii) There are other current struggles we must also review:

Beirut/Lebanon

Jamaica

Argentina

El Salvador/Nicaragua

B. There are two categories of key questions which we have to investigate:

(i) History of Socialism in the World:

Soviet Union

China

Cuba

Albania

(ii) National Liberation Struggles, particularly

Africa

Caribbean (Jamaica, Grenada, etc.)

C. Our approach.

(i) It is a mistake to jump out there with a simplistic formulation because it "sounds" good and seems to explain the phenomenal/perceptual form of reality that we experience (e.g. Deng's three worlds theory first enunciated at the UN). But it is also true that not to study and to develop a clear line is opportunist. But we can not make the international situation the central question.

(ii) We must build a strong anti-imperialist line and unite people around it making political exposure the key link.

(iii) We must build international contacts and linkages and renew old contacts through the following mechanisms.

- (a) travel
- (b) using the mail
- (c) bringing people here

3. The U.S. Movement.

The recent struggles of Peoples College to stay on the revolutionary road reflects the general situation of the U.S. movement. In fact, if you think we are in bad shape you could almost cheer up after you assess how pervasive the crisis is.

A. On the Left

(i) CPUSA

(ii) RWH

(iii) Family line of NOAR (Boggs)

(iv) League of Revolutionary Struggle -- no second issue of the Black Nation journal

(v) RCP -- no publication of their political economic analysis of U.S.

B. A similar crisis plagues the reformist movement.

(i) Urban League -- At its national convention, Chicago, their largest chapter, was suspended for non-payment of dues.

(ii) NAACP--Involved in suing the Legal Defense Fund to prevent the continued use of the NAACP name.

(iii) PUSH--Jesse has been accused of shaking down ministers in St. Louis and has filed a \$3 million law suit.

(iv) United League of Mississippi--Skip has defected to the Nation of Islam

(v) NBUF and NBIPP--After a "grand" beginning there has been little happening after two national meetings.

C. On the immediate side, we witness the continued degeneration and fragmentation of the independent left in the U.S.

- (i) Black Liberation Press
- (ii) OS in Milwaukee
- (iii) BD in Atlanta
- (iv) MM in Nashville

In general , a storm in brewing. The masses are going to rise. The movement is weak and most will not be ready to respond and give leadership.

THE CHALLENGE IS BEFORE US!!

4. 1982-1983 PROGRAM OF ACTION

The program for Peoples College over the next four years will seek to apply our three main slogans and the lessons of the REVOLUTIONARY THREE YEAR PLAN in several basic areas of work as listed below:

A. (Ideological and Political) Left Pole

(1) Consolidation

(a) RED FLAG

(b) Basic College

(2) Development

(a) Curriculum

(b) Periodization Theory

(c) Search for a Vanguard

B. Mass Work

(1) Basic College

(2) Black Liberation Month News

(3) ICBS

(4) NCBS

(5) Lecture Series

(6) Chicago Rehab Network

(7) Timbuktu

(8) Conferences

(9) Decatur

(10) International

(11) Black Liberation Month (NBIP, NBU, etc.)

(12) Publications

C. Organization

(1) RED FLAG (keep pole in command)

(2) More Marxism-Leninism in the BLM

(3) Professionalization

(4) Joint Work

(5) Unity Building

(6) P.E. Summer Project

A brief discussion is included for a few areas and others will be presented in RED FLAG. Each area will have to produce a more de-

tailed description (e.g., a Handbook of Struggle). What follows here is a short discussion of the general line and key projects.

The main concern is the unfolding of a Transition Year (1982-83) in order to put PC in the position of carrying out the planning process of a multi-year plan (1983-86). The actual implementation of this PA 82-83 will be guided by the active struggle waged in the pages of RED FLAG, a totally proletarianized approach to the mass line method, and the creative energy and disciplined work style of Peoples College!

The 1980's will be a decade of a new mass movement rooted in class and cultural responses to the economic crisis, war and the nuclear threat, social dislocation and moral degeneracy, and the intensification of national and gender oppression. Our program of action is a major contribution to left leadership of this spontaneity leading to greater gains, fewer losses, and a swelling of the ranks of seasoned revolutionary fighters.

RED FLAG

The internal journal has as its main thrust providing the vehicle for the democratic internal political life of Peoples College. Each major area of work should submit a monthly 2 page report, and all comrades are encouraged to contribute political comments (especially a deepening of the Assembly Political Report based on planning or summation, and a critical appraisal of PC work). Each comrade is expected to seriously study each issue (monthly schedule to be announced) and contribute to the fuller and deeper grasp of the issues raised and the lines contending.

PC will have RED FLAG as its life line, as well as monthly meetings. We will meet less, but write more--the RED FLAG will be our proxy for talking with each other. The PC will issue special issues when necessary. The Editorial committee consists of PC and comrades coopted into the process.

BASIC COLLEGE

For the first time since Nashville, Peoples College will engage in its Basic College program (see PC Documentary History). The main purpose is to maintain an active open public face, a basic extension of or foundation for the Annual Black Liberation Month Forum. Basic College will (a) involve every member of PC as leader and study group participant, (b) be oriented to Basic masses-- leaflets, hand-outs, and raps (Working class or Petty bourgeois, but not movement rhetoric, etc.) and (c) focus on/^{the}primary contradiction of reform vs revolution, and secondly^{on} contending lines within the revolutionary movement, to include key empirical data for each line clarified.

Everyone in PC (Chicago) will have one of two roles for each 3 week session: (a) Study group leader or (b) member of support committee. The SGL has a handout for each session and a 10 minute opening rap-NO MORE!. The main method is opening rap 10 minutes, discussion 60 minutes, polemic 15 minutes and summation 10 minutes. Remember we're trying to develop our capacity to listen and grasp PC line in ways that can help us communicate with and influence people. The main overall purpose of Basic College is for PC to more firmly and deeply grasp the Marxist method of propaganda work, and the line of PC including INTRO (Intro essays). This means mainly to do propaganda work with the broad masses, but it also means to stand toe to toe in line struggle against opportunist lines in the movement.

The Support COmmittee will do outreach and publicity work,

mainly phone calls to mailing list and distribution of leaflets. This includes helping to set up and breakdown chairs before and after Basic College sessions. Minimum for Basic College is total of 10 non PC, but by end of year, the last session should average 25 non PC for each of 3 Saturdays. A special team will be formed to assist out of Chicago Basic College sessions. (RB, JM, SCJ)

The PC coordinator of Basic College is the main administrator and is overall in charge of basic schedule and organizational process, including chair of the support group. The coordinator collects sign-in sheets and makes all general announcements. The coordinator is also responsible for summations and reports.

The general schedule includes the following for each year:

1. 2 Fall Introductory Sessions
2. 2 Fall 3 day Sessions
3. Special BLM Sessions
4. 2 Spring 3 day Sessions
5. 3 Summer 3 day sessions

Mass level recruitment is to get Basic College participants to assist in distributing BLM News. Overall we're looking for recruits to an ML political education program for the summer of 1983.

TIMBUKTU

Our bookstore is a major center of our mass education work. We must expand its effectiveness by creating a better market through our mass work, by developing consistent professional management procedures, by greatly expanding its stock, and by maintaining a united front scope while deepening ties with the working masses of Afro-American people. Three key areas are financial security, customer relations, and stock development. The first priority is that the collective of Peoples College, its line and its class orientation be fully consolidated and put in command. In sum, we continue to uphold Mao's slogan "Grasp Revolution, Promote Production."

(a) Grasp Revolution: Of course Timbuktu should be a constant feature of RED FLAG, both reports by the PC leadership in Timbuktu, or criticism by others. Also, it must become much more guided by the political line of PC in struggle even while maintaining its mainstream base. It must develop a much broader coverage of struggles being waged in the U.S.

The main lesson to be learned is how to make Timbuktu more of an active weapon in our drive for the consolidation of left pole leadership among wider and deeper masses of our people.

(b) Promote Production: We must turn our bookstore into an efficiently run small business, contributing economic surplus to Peoples College, and the distributor of Peoples College Press.

Our general direction is to put out a series of monthly stock brochures and the general line orientation of the bookstore. Basic College will contribute to the focusing of a political market, and

Black Studies will continue to shape the general stock scope. Timbuktu will function as PC's administrative Center, coordinate the February lectures, and the production and distribution of Black Liberation Month News. Senior Cadre is JW, assistant is DM. Every member of PC is expected to work 2 four hour assignments per month in Timbuktu.

BLACK LIBERATION MONTH NEWS

As the major regular publication BLM News has been two things in one: (a) the New Years Editorial of PC, and (b) the Calendar and mass articles. We will now separate them into two separate news papers.

The PC Editorial will be a major political statement to be responded to by a panel for the BLM forum. The focus will be "Lessons from the 1960's and 1970's for the 1980's"

The mass newspaper for 1983 will have its main feature on Black genealogy, working with ICBS contacts.

Major mass outreach will include fall order forms, and major effort to get into Chicago public schools.

LECTURE SERIES

During Black Liberation Month, we will have two lecture tours--in Illinois and in California--to build ICBS and NCBS respectively. The objectives are to mobilize a broader base of participation in Black Studies organization, put forward a left pole line, and raise funds.

(a) Illinois: popularize the IBHE findings and all relevant publications, specialization in periodization theory, BLM News, PC Summer School, 2 comrades (JM &RB) for 20 raps.

(b) California: build for NCBS Conference, spread line on Black Studies, Search for a Vanguard, Theory of the Black Experience. AA for 10 raps for 1 week.

The funds will help pay for Black Liberation Month News and travel to NCBS National Conference. Booking to be done from October 1 to November 15, by mass mailing and selected phone calling.

PAPER WAR

The main thrust is the development of a general "school of thought," the struggle for intellectual hegemony of our paradigm of unity. There are several levels to this:

- (a) Continue NEH workshop by circulating PC paper on our paradigm.
- (b) Publish basic unity building reference works in Black Studies (Guide to Journals, Guide to Illinois, Bibliographies, etc.)
- (c) Publish anthologies of others pushing our line (NEH presentations, NCBS proceedings, Chicago lecture series, etc.)
- (d) Publish a series of paradigmatic reviews of the literature (historians, slave trade, literary criticism)
- (e) Publish INTRO as a fully mature text
- (f) Search for a Vanguard Series
- (g) Research Design (guts of a proposal) for Aorta project
- (h) Major specialization articles (Slave Trade, Hughes, Wright, Black Sociologist, Philosophy)
- (i) Major publication focus on Chicago (bibliography, text, etc)
- (j) Publish key chapters of INTRO Blue as pamphlets (Like 15-17 together)

Overall, we are trying to promote a materialist view and approach drawn from a dialectical summation of Black intellectual history and linking Black Studies to the Black Liberation movement. Our public face is one two levels--the unifying personification of our school of thought is the PC Chair and therefore the Chair is to be put forward in all contexts as the leading figure, while in special areas the key figures to carry on the struggle to plant the pole (polemics, conferences, etc.,) will be based on a technical division of labor.

We intend to become a major voice in all Black Studies Journals, while mainly focusing on NCBS conference and organizational building.

After our main periodization paradigmatic literature reviews are done, we will write a PC polemic on "Marxist lives in the Black Liberation Movement and Nationalist Criticism." Chapters will be assigned to be completed by the next Assembly. Afterwards a mimeo (50 copies) will circulate in the fall, winter revisions, then a book to be published by Summer 1983.

*Consolidate line of unity and draw
Sharp lines of demarcation*

1. Marxist Movement
2. BLM
3. Black Studies

*dialectics between
Politics & Ideology*

ICBS

The main material base of our work in Black Studies is the quantity of organizational strength of ICBS and in the quality of PC political leadership. More participation and people accepting responsible assignments are two key priorities.

The key 1982-83 publication is the Guide to Black Studies in Illinois; the current form and style of the newsletter must be continued. New leadership must be highlighted. The main membership drive is in February with/^{an} annual Springfield conference and an Illinois lecture tour.

A phone survey for BLM News distribution will be conducted.

We will announce a Summer Study program in February. The cost is \$100 per person, with scholarships available. Each ICBS member would set up a 3 person Chicago leadership study group.

NCBS

The key task in 1982-83 will be the rallying together of a left tendency. Key aspects are:

1. Publishing of the 1982 Conference Proceedings
2. Broad PC participation in the 1983 conference sessions
3. California tour
4. Afro-Scholar Newsletter
5. Building a Progressive Network

PC will build the NCBS base by issuing a Black Studies catalogue(brochure) on publications of Black Studies academic units and the Journals. (Cornell, UCLA, Portland, St. Louis, Univ. of Texas-Austin, Urbana, ICBS, etc.)

The Progressive Network will have "Academic Excellence and Social Responsibility" as the key slogan and ^{the} Guide, the Ranking Report, and the NCBS Conference Handbook as tools of unity. A Brochure should be published by February with about 20 names. The main point is to use documents to build a movement underneath.

CONFERENCES

Our main focus is on ICBS and NCBS. The maximum involvement should be in NCBS, limited in ICBS.

1. For ICBS February 1983
 - (a) JM and AA on *Douglas Center*
 - (b) DG and AA on Chicago Course (present bibliography)
 - (c) RB on Chicago's Black History in the Making (or use video)
 - (d) SCJ on Decatur
2. For NCBS
 - (a) On Black bookstores - JW
 - (b) On Black Literature in honor of G. Kent - MEG
 - (c) On Black Philosophy - JM
 - (d) On recent nationalist movements - SCJ
 - (e) On Eric Williams thesis controversy - RB

Our next major conference is on "Blacks and Presidential Politics: Crisis in the Legitimacy of the Capitalist State" In general, the time table is:

1. Fall-Winter 1982-83 Planning
2. Spring-Summer 1983 Announce
3. Fall 1983 Conference
4. Spring 1984 Publish Proceedings
5. Fall 1984 National Seminars & Election

CHICAGO REHAB NETWORK

This is a mass organizational context for PC left leadership. It is currently a federation of over 20 organizations. Our orientation is to identify and mobilize a study group of activists connected to some community organizational work -- this will be a group for the Basic College organizers breakfasts. DG will be the Senior cadre in this work. The organizers study group will form the basis for a regular class in Basic College.

Also, DG is responsible for mass distribution in Chicago for all materials, e.g. Black Liberation Month News, flyer for Annual BLM forum, and Basic College outreach. DG is to maintain Black community Revolutionary Black Power research files.

DG will help organize a locally based unity political economy group and deepen our basic analysis of Chicago for Basic College curriculum.

NOTE ON FUTURE ISSUES

This is the Inaugural Issue of RED FLAG and we are right on time with our projected production schedule. A plan and method for publishing and sharing our various responses will be outlined, but in the meantime, please forward all responses in whatever shape they will be in to MEG. We should use the PC P.O.Box address.

Future issues being projected include:

- RF # 2: Assembly Evaluation of Leadership
BackgroundMaterials to RED FLAG
- RE # 3: Report on Europe
Report on Basic College
Response to #2
Summation of ICBS/NCBS Meeting
Summation of All Peoples Congress
Listing of Mass Documents and Brochures we've Issued
Comment on Left Press
Summation of Atlanta Curriculum Meetings
Profile of 1 or More Community Organizations
State of Equipment
Black Liberation Month Plans

Peoples College Press
P.O.Box 7696
Chicago, Il 60680

RED FLAG

PEOPLES COLLEGE #1