

# **The Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL)**

## **Or as was said in the “Bronx Tale,” There’s Nothing Worse Than Wasted Potential**

**By Ron “Slim” Washington**

The transition from the Student Organization for Black Unity (SOBU) to the Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOBU) to the Revolutionary Workers League (RWL), I’ve written about in other articles: In “*Four Periods in the History of the Afro-American People’s Struggle for Complete Liberation,*” (4/16/09), I wrote:

### *On the leading role of the working class*

*One of the most important political and ideological gains of the great upsurge of the black liberation movement in the 60’s and early 70’s was the eventual realization for large numbers of activists that the leading and most revolutionary force in the black liberation movement was and is the black working class. This development came about as a result of 1) the black working class itself becoming a powerful force in the struggle and 2) a fierce ideological and political struggle over which class and social forces are capable of leading the movement through to the end. The question of which class could or should lead the black liberation struggle is a recurring historical debate because it is a manifestation of the struggle between the different classes in the black community.*

*We can go back to one of the original debates on “which class should lead the movement?” and start with Dubois’ early call for leadership of the “talented tenth.” Or we can jump forward to our most recent history and witness the position of the Black Panther Party, that the black lumpen proletariat (street people) were the vanguard of the struggle. Other forces held that the students/youth were the vanguard force. One of the great victories of the black liberation movement was the emergence of forces such as the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, the Black Workers Congress, The Black Workers for Justice, Fightback Organization, The Revolutionary Workers League (out of SOBU/YOBU, Peoples College, and Malcolm X University), the League of Revolutionary Struggle, the many forces in the African Liberation Support Committee, and black worker activists in the New Communist Movement (NCM), in organizations such as the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), the October League (Communist Party-MI), Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRRWO), August Twenty Ninth Movement (Chicano, ATM), I Wor Kuen (Asian, IWK), Workers Viewpoint Organization (Asian, WVO), The Communist League (CL), etc.*

*The above cited organizations emerged out of the great cauldron of the various movements... student, Chicano, Asian, Puerto-Rican, and black liberation movements, and old activists that had split from a degenerated CPUSA. Though with many differences, what they had in common was coming back to a historical Marxist orthodoxy that in an advanced capitalist country, the working class is not only the main force but also the leading force in the fight to overthrow the capitalist system. What is essential to understand is that many of these forces eventually made up the “New Communist Movement” in this country and attempted to carry out the historic task of building a revolutionary working class party and carrying out the task of “fusion,” that is merging the socialist and working class movement. For a brief period great advances were made toward the task of “fusion.” Many of the activists left the college campuses and went to work in the factories and fields to help build a new and revolutionary workers movement in the US. If my memory serves me right, the RCP had a number of members working in the Post Offices (particularly here in NYC), the PRRWO had a number of members in the schools and unions in NYC, the RWL had members in the chemical plants in NJ, the textile industry in NC, the auto plants in Fremont, Cali., and Detroit. Of course the most well known efforts were those of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in auto in Detroit who gave us a model that we still need to recreate, the great work of “Fightback” in NYC in the construction trades, and the organizing work of the Black*

Workers for Justice in North Carolina, the work of the October League in the mineworkers and other struggles in the south. There were countless smaller organizations and collectives all over the US engaged in the same activity. I cite these efforts because they represented the apex of the black and left efforts during the **"fourth period"** as Marxist circles and organizations developed all over the US. I remember reading an article in "Time" magazine by someone from the "Woodrow Wilson Institute" warning that the main danger to America was not from the student radicals like the "Weathermen and Black Liberation Army," dedicated to urban terrorism, but the danger of the "new communist movement" integrating itself into the US working class movement, giving it a kind of Russian "Bolshevik" character.

In addition to the carrying out the task of **"fusion,"** a great effort was made toward merging all of the above efforts into building a new communist party in the US. Both efforts failed...building a revolutionary party and fusing socialism with the working class movement. Of course, the question is why? There is no simple answer, but attempt to answer it we must.

The new communist movement, fighting for the future does so with baggage of the living. Within the various movements and organizations were many degrees of sexism, white chauvinism, narrow nationalism, careerism, jealousy between different organizations, weaknesses in theory and practice, all of which got in the way of building unity between the organizations and circles and integrating with the working class movement. The most important reason for the inability to carry the historic task of **"fusion"** was the movement's class and social basis. The new communist movements were for the most part composed of revolutionary students and intellectuals, divorced from the working class. For those who emerged out of the oppressed nationality movements, there was a slightly higher degree of those from working class backgrounds. Nonetheless, the NCM had to find its way to the US working class to carry out the historic task of **"fusion."**

There was no other way. If the conclusion that revolution in the US could only be led by a class conscious revolutionary working class, then the revolutionaries had to merge themselves with the working class movement. Lenin had already taught that socialist thought did not emerge from the working class movement itself, but must be brought into the working class movement from the revolutionaries, grasped by the workers and made their own weapon in struggle with their capitalist enemies. During the great upsurges the US worker's movements in the 30' and 40's, that built the great trade unions in this country, many of the organizers were workers themselves and communist workers from both here and abroad.

The NCM, being from student and intellectual origins, the task of attempting to integrate into the working movement was shaky. Although many brothers and sisters did good work, actually listened and learned from the workers themselves, many with so much student and intellectual baggage made many errors, not learning from the workers and often times trying to "impose" what many workers considered a "foreign" ideology upon them. Trying to take issues of concern between competing leftwing organizations into a workplace, but issues of no interest to the workers themselves, many workers were turned off by the new communists. What's interesting is the qualities that made brothers and sisters such great organizers in their communities and on their campuses were completely forgotten in the "swing to the left." This situation, given time could have been overcome, but the recession (oil crisis) of 1974-75 put many out of work, coupled with the great splits in the world wide communist movement that filtered down to the local organizations, that once again incorrectly handled, led to the split up and fragmentation of the various organizations. Such by the early 1980's the "New Communist Movement" was dead. Many organizers went back to school, and became doctors and professors. Others continued to soldier away in their unions and workplaces, albeit individually and without organizational support.

The political vacuum was soon filled. In the black liberation movement battered by the Reagan era backlash and assault on some of the previous gains of the movement, and as a result of an overwhelming sense of "no fightback," Farrakhan's Million Man March was able to bring great masses to new sense of euphoria. But once again, the Nation of Islam (NOI), was in no way opposed to the capitalist system and had no fight back program for the masses. In fact the NOI had called the masses to DC to "atone." Without a clear program of struggle for the masses the euphoria soon dissipated, the new black bourgeoisie settled in as the leaders of the movement and we find ourselves in this sorry state of affairs today.

Today, we still have many brothers and sisters situated in the working class movement, and many in other areas willing to answer the call again. I submit that the task of **"fusion"** is still the main task of the revolutionaries in the US, and that the key tactical task for carrying out this **"fusion"** is the building of a US labor party. The US working class is still the only Western country that does not have a party at least in its name. Building a Labor party would be a great step forward for the US working class in breaking with the Democratic Party and building its own strength, unity and organization. Setting our tasks as building our own party and getting rid of the "Congress of Millionaires," would be the strategical and tactical imperatives that help to shape and define our work. This would mean organizing in the factories and neighborhoods to carry out the electoral work of electing working class representatives to congress and local positions on our own progressive Labor Party platform. In this way the workers are taught that it's not about our individual careers, and finding

ways to rob the public treasury, but politics of a new type, of which serving the working class is our only objective. But of course, a Labor Party would not just be an electoral machine, it would also serve to organize the unorganized, fight for leadership in the existing unions against the current corrupt, non-democratic, non-struggle leadership. It would be a great school to train workers in political economy, history and becoming "proletarian statesmen." Such a great undertaking would unleash all of the energy and inspiration that guided our movements in the last upsurge. A whole new generation of youth, students, intelligentsia and workers would have to be won over to Marxism and Socialism, just as our generation was. It would necessitate a new effort to employ all those "directly" at the point of production, and all those not directly at the "point." For example, our progressive intellectuals should have their hands full teaching and directing workers schools, institutes and unions in labor history and helping to "pull the cover off the capitalist system." We will need the activists and artists to help raise the cultural level of the workers, and provide the workers with uplifting literature and plays. As Chairman Mao said, an army without culture is a dimwitted army. There is a roll for all. We must build a US Labor Party, utilizing all the forces at our disposal, and with the same spirit and energy that allowed the black liberation movement to achieve such great heights, it inspired peoples the world over. Why Can't We Win?

The current crisis makes all of this possible. We must offer a different alternative. The "**fourth period**" must complete the process of "fusion," if we are to contend with our enemies on "what has to be done to save the American people."

Mao Ze Dong, the great Chinese revolutionary in addressing some of the same questions, as to why the Chinese revolution had not been triumphant, in the (12) "Orientation of the Youth Movement (1939)" posed the question at a conference of revolutionary youth, "**over the last fifty or so years, despite some triumphs, why has the Chinese revolution not won complete victory?**" He answered it thus: "Because one side was strong and the other side weak, the revolution did not succeed. ...our weaknesses, and consequent failure to fulfill...our task are chiefly due to the fact that the laboring people, the workers and peasants, constituting 90% of the population have not yet been mobilized...Only by mobilizing and organizing the workers and peasants, who comprise 90% of the population is it possible to overthrow imperialism and feudalism....Unless we mobilize the workers and peasants of the whole country it will be impossible for us to defeat Japan and build a new China."

We can easily say the same thing about our own situation. **Looking back on at least the last 50-75 years**, why have we not been able to defeat US capitalism and racism? The answer is the same in English as it was in Chinese...we have not organized the majority of black workers and merged our movement with overall working class movement. "**Fusion**" still remains the number one task of all black and progressive revolutionaries.

And in "**Basketball to Revolution,**" the introduction to the forthcoming book: **Twenty First Century Handbook for the Revolutionary Black Worker**, I wrote:

*From SOBU to YOBU to the RWL*

At about this time, 1971, with the gods smiling on me once again,(I) we came into contact with brothers and sisters from SOBU, the Student Organization for Black Unity. Based in North Carolina, but having built an organization composed of the best and brightest black militant students in the country, we immediately threw in our lot with them and became its Mid-West representative. SOBU was composed of the best sons and daughters of the Afro-American people. The governing board had begun to go through a transition. With the original Carmichael influences on their way out (Cleveland Sellars) and original black power advocate Willie Ricks, it was now composed of such persons as Mark Smith, the brilliant student organizer and theoretician who was at Harvard at 16; Tim Thomas, the Washington, DC representative who bridged both periods: Tim early on lectured the organization on Pan Africanism, its roots and history, but was crucial later on as part of the trend that took the organization towards Marxism; Victor Bond the brilliant organizer from Boston University; the professor, John McClendon, who was tireless in moving the organization away from Utopian African Socialism represented by such forces as Amiri Baraka, towards the more Marxist oriented Scientific African Socialism of Kwame Nkrumah, such that for awhile we described ourselves as "Nkrumaist." And of course, Nelson Johnson, our National Chairman, whom we called "the boss." Nelson was not one of the theoretical leaders of the organization but was able to see further ahead and through sheer will and organizing skills able to lead the organization through tremendous twists and turns, "getting rid of the old and taking in the new," while keeping the core intact. It was quite easy joining forces with SOBU. Our mutual contributions served to raise everyone's level

We enjoyed great influence at the University of Kansas. Now as representatives of SOBU, we rebuilt the KU BSU chapter into a SOBU chapter and traveled throughout the Midwest region (Colorado, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, etc., meeting black students, organizing conferences and setting up chapters or "spheres of

*influence.” Of course by this time I had to drop out of Law School and had consciously chosen a life of becoming a professional revolutionary.*

*With transformations taking place in SOBU, we changed our name to the Youth Organization for Black Unity (YOBU), as a reflection that black youth were more than just students. Our newspaper, “The African World” at the time was the premier paper of the black student and Pan Africanist movements. It brought the organization great prestige, as YOBU was one of the leading organizations in the Pan Africanist movement, which included the other black nationalists organizations, such as Amiri Baraka’s CAP, Don Lee’s “Third World Publishing Co and Institute in Chicago (Haki Mahabutti); Ron Daniels and his OHIO coalition; and many others. Milton Coleman the founder and editor of the “African World” had to be purged as he attempted to raise the newspaper above the organization. He attempted to float a proposal that an editorial board be created composed of people outside of our organization, thus making the paper no longer the voice of our organization, but the voice of many persons that we did not agree with. Milton, later as a writer for the Washington Post reached infamy as the one who dropped the dime on Jesse Jackson’s “heimy town” remarks, Later when asked to explain his position he claimed he was a journalist first and black second, which is why we purged his ass. After Milton was purged, I was the only one in the organization with newspaper experience. Being in Kansas, from a fiercely independent chapter, it was finally negotiated that I move to the Greensboro headquarters and take over the editorship of the “African World” until I could train someone. I spent about a year working out of the headquarters before returning to Kansas. As someone used to “field-work,” type organizing, being stuck in the national office headquarters was excruciating pain, and I couldn’t wait to get back to Kansas.*

*At about this time great changes were taking place within our organization reflecting changes taking place in the world. Through study and practice we began to question the ideology and philosophy that guided our Pan Africanist perspective. Many in the organization were taking up the study of Marxism-Leninism, and a great battle developed for the soul of the organization. As the Marxists minded forces gained an advantage, many of the old nationalist Stokely Carmichael influenced forces quit or were forced out. By 1973 the organization had made the transition to a communist organization, the “Revolutionary Workers League.” As a communist organization believing in the leading role of the working class, we began to demand that our membership leave the campuses and get jobs in the working class to begin organizing workers.*

*We went through an intense period of “proletarianization” attempting to transform our formation from student based to work (factory, office, etc.) placed organizing. We were of the opinion that in order to put theory (grasping the leading role of the working class in the socialist transformation of society) into practice (the necessity to focus our main energy on integrating with and learning from the working class movement) word had to become deed. Thus the main character of our work changed and we become part of the new international communist movement. Of course many mistakes were made in forcing and persuading many of the future doctors, lawyers, and other professionals to give up their potential careers to join the working class movement, but most agreed due to their revolutionary commitment to the black freedom struggle and working class movements.*

*Now, as part of the Revolutionary Workers League, we had built up a huge chapter at the University of Kansas. Still under the leadership of the original core, we decided that the new brothers and sisters that had developed at KU could not go any further with the original leadership still in control of the chapter. At that time, 1972, we decided upon expansion and dispersion of the original leadership so that we could kill two birds with one stone: allow the new leadership at KU to develop and make its own decisions and expand our sphere of influence into the Mid-West region. Having developed chapters or cores of student activists throughout the Mid-West region, we sent Myself and my wife to the University of Colorado at Boulder, John and Eve along with Phyllis Jones to Omaha, Nebraska, Duane Vann and his wife Brenda to Kansas City, Mo., and left Darryl Bright to help maintain continuity at KU.*

*The game plan for Boulder was to take a year and win over the student revolutionary contacts, then move to Denver and attempt to get jobs in the rubber industry, or whatever was available, following the process of “proletarianization” of the organization.*

*But of course real life never goes according to plan. We were able to build the RWL, based upon the extensive and nationwide chapters of YOBU, unity with Abdul Alkalimat’s People’s College folk, Owusu Sadukai’s Malcolm X University forces and a few other revolutionary Marxists forces that we had built unity with in the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC). In addition, RWL sent the first all black Marxist delegation to China in 1974 to build unity with the then leading party of the worldwide anti-revisionist communist movement,*

*the Communist Party of China. The trip helped to cement unity between the old and new forces that came to make up RWL.*

*In making our entrance into the US communist movement and developing relationships with the other US anti-revisionist communist organizations, at the time, most of the organizations had their headquarters in NYC, LA, Detroit, Chicago, etc. We had representatives in most of the areas except NYC. Our national standing committee called a meeting and asked for me to be re-located from Colorado to NYC to carry out a 3 point agenda: do liaison work and develop relationships with the other communist organizations, work with the NYC ALSC chapter, and build a RWL district organization with the contacts in the area. I opposed the resolution, as I had felt that we had done good work in the year we were in Boulder, having built a chapter and won over a core at the university and developed relationships and unity with many of the progressive Chicano student activists and revolutionaries. I was out voted and hence moved to the east coast.*

*I persuaded some of the students from Colorado to come east with me. I explained that if I left, there would be a good possibility that they would "wither and die." The brilliant student (on the road to being a doctor) and ex Colorado basketball player Douglas Layne decided to take the revolutionary road and come east. Chuck Sutton (recently departed) of the Percy Sutton family, and his wife, the Chicano sister, Patricia came with me. Another Chicano activist, Jorge ? also made the decision to come east. Along with the long time comrade Darryl Bright whom we had left at the University of Kansas, he and his wife Jo were also reassigned. This core, along with brothers and sisters out of the Princeton student movement, Harambee, and a few revolutionary students in YOBU from Columbia were the elements that I had to weld into an East Coast, RWL district committee.*

*The first year, DB and I stayed with Babatunde, the son of the great baseball player Roy Campanella, as he and his brother were members of the NY YOBU contingent. Our wives, Jo and Bernice stayed in Colorado until we could get situated on the east coast.*

*We, in keeping with the organizational thrust of "proletarianization, began to study the East Coast demographics and located the big workplaces with the greatest number and concentration of black workers. Places such as the auto factories in NJ, NJ Bell and Western Electric, some of the larger chemical plants and factories. But we ran into the 1974-76 recession, the Middle Eastern oil embargo, and all the plants were laying off or closing down as opposed to hiring. Eventually, due to comrade's economic health and the need to "get busy" the call went out to "find a job anywhere." We eventually developed concentrations in some of the chemical plants in NJ, and had the brilliant ex-Princeton student activist Larry Adams embedded in the NY Post Office. He carried out some of our best work, eventually taking over the Mailhandler's local.*

*I personally was unable to work on a consistent basis due to my organizational responsibilities as a member of the Standing Committee of the RWL.*

*Due to many different reasons, by 1977 the RWL had collapsed along with most of the US anti-revisionist communists organizations. At the same time the broader black freedom movement and anti-imperialist movements in the US had suffered serious setbacks. For many revolutionaries it was a time of great confusion and disillusionment. But the struggle continues. I got a job in a factory (Ideal Toy in Newark) and continued the workplace organizing. Building up a rank and file committee brought a number of black workers into the larger struggle. It was the base developed at Ideal Toy that allowed us the few forces that made up the "Newark Black Workers Education Center." After being fired (and defeated) in a wild -cat strike at Ideal Toy, with the help of the great black auto- worker activist Wilbur Haddock, I was able to get a job at NJ Bell (later Bell Atlantic and then Verizon), and later founded the " Black Telephone Workers for Justice." This was the road traveled...from basketball player to black worker activist.*

**These earlier efforts were quick and less substantial efforts in explaining some of the positives and shortcomings of the NCM in general and the RWL in particular. I hope the following essay can help deepen our understanding of the failure of the great potential of the NCM in general and the RWL in particular.**

## **The Revolutionary Workers League: The Largest Black Marxist Organization in the History of the US.**

With the transition from YOBU to the Revolutionary Workers League in 1973, RWL automatically became the largest black Marxist organization in the history of the US, with great potential in the struggle for the socialist transformation of the US.

By 1972/73, YOBU was a nationwide student/youth organization with chapters stretching from Greensboro, North Carolina to Houston, Texas. With a newspaper “the African World” that enjoyed wide prestige and influence in the black student, Pan Africanist and progressive black movements, SOB/ YOBU was able to attract and train a large cadre of experienced organizers. The community organizing work in the South like the Pan African Summer Work Project, which sent student organizers to work with southern cooperatives and other activities, cemented our influence in the South. The community organizing work in Washington, DC under the leadership of Tim Thomas, and the historic, deep ties that Nelson Johnson had in the Raleigh, Durham, Charlotte, and Greensboro, North Carolina communities were examples of outstanding community organizing. The great student organizing work done in the “Save and Change Black Colleges,” campaigns, solidified our presence and influence in black colleges all over the South. In the North, many of the SOB/ YOBU cadre were the leading student activists in the struggles for black self determination, black studies and black power on white university campuses, such as Ed Whitfield at Cornell University, the YOBU cadre at the University of Kansas and throughout the Mid-West, and the great organizer Dawulu Gene Locke in Houston, Texas. This led to a proliferation of YOBU chapters and influence all over the country.

Malcolm X University in Durham, North Carolina, although under the direct leadership of Owusu Sadukai, was in fact joined at the hip with YOBU. As a secret member of YOBU, Owusu was a regular in our meetings, and all decisions made on the direction of Malcolm X University and YOBU were done collectively. This was a result of the historic unity of that stemmed from our Pan Africanist roots and identification with all things progressively African.

When Owusu, returned from his now famous trip to Africa, in which he brought back the demands from the African liberation freedom fighters that they did not need our physical help in fighting for their liberation, but the political support of the Afro-American masses in opposing the racist policies of our government, the concept of African Liberation Day (ALD) was born.

Why is this important? Many do not realize that the original rationalization for the establishment of Malcolm X University was the training of Afro-Americans with technical skills to go back and serve and help build Africa. This is important in two aspects: 1) the Marxist oriented liberation movements helped our organizations to turn the corner from petty bourgeois African nationalism towards Marxism and seeing our main struggle in the US and not Africa, and 2) provided the political orientation for organizing ALD, in 1972.

When Owusu returned and made his report, YOBU decided on the course of organizing a broad demonstration of black people in America to support the liberation movements in Southern Africa and to oppose the racist policies of the US government on the this question. We decided to call in all the Pan Africanist forces to help build this broad effort. Amiri Baraka, Ron Daniels, Haki Mahabuti, Kwadro Akpan, and many others were called to a meeting and all agreed to get on board. Thus the African Liberation Day Coordination Committee (ALDCC) was born. What is important to realize is that at this stage, no one believed the blacks would come out in large numbers to support African liberation. Most of the black bourgeois, Democratic Party hacks stayed away from the motion. Only Congressman Diggs, because he was a chair or sub-chair on Africa in the House expressed interest. The NOI, Jesse Jackson stayed away, as well as forces going through crisis like the Black Panther Party. They only came onboard when it became clear that the masses were going to respond and roll down on DC in force.

Why is this important? Although many organizations united with the motion, it was the wide-spread, nation-wide infrastructure of YOBU that allowed for the development of ALDCC chapters in the North, East, South and West, whether they were actual YOBU chapters or students under our influence. The superstructure of the event was heavily influenced by the YOBU infrastructure. On the national level, the national coordinator for the March was Mark Smith, a member of the YOBU governing council. The national headquarters was set up in DC in a YOBU office. The

demonstration was built strictly through local organizing efforts. In the same way the “Million Man March” was built mainly through the national infrastructure of the NOI, ALD was built on the national infrastructure of YOBU.

May, 1972 saw 30,000 black people march in Washington, DC; 10,000 came out on the West Coast; 10,000 in Toronto Canada, and 10,000 in Antigua. With the overwhelming success of ALD in 1972, the majority of participants decided that the effort to create support for the liberation struggles in Southern Africa and the education of the black masses in the spirit of struggle should continue and not be a one time thing. Thus was born the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC). This became the largest black united front organization in the US since the Garvey movement. ALSC chapters were established all over the country, of which the majority were YOBU influenced. With the two line struggle taking place in ALSC over Marxism and Nationalism, the YOBU forces were able to win over the majority of revolutionary activists and find unity with other Marxist organizations.

Thus when in 1973, RWL was formed based upon the YOBU infrastructure, the Abdul Alkalimat led People’s College forces, the West Coast “Black Workers Organizing Committee,” led by Bobby Johnson, formerly of YOBU, and other Marxist forces won over in ALSC, it automatically became the largest black Marxist organization ever in the history of the US. Of course, I don’t know the actual numbers, but looking at the over all depth and width of the work as exhibited in their publications and in discussions with other comrades, I would say that RWL was more comprehensive than either the Black Workers Congress (BWC) or the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. Of course size in and of itself is not the end all of potential. But having size helps in ability of implement line and policy beyond local areas. What was more important about the potential of RWL was that it had a sizable number of experienced organizers, deep roots in the black community and college campuses (North and South), and a fierce devotion to Marxism that helped to win over a whole new generation of black activists to Marxism., which helped raised the black liberation movement to new heights, and as “Gary” had indicated was now in a position to actually contend with the black bourgeoisie for leadership of the black liberation movement.

Thus in 1973, the RWL emerged on the scene with great potential as part of the New Communist Movement (NCM) to help build a multinational anti-revisionist communist party in the US and merge socialism with the working class movement (fusion).

## **Building a US Multi-National Communist Party: War on the Circles!**

The period 1966-72 in the US was a revolutionary period not unlike that of Russia, 1902-1905. The revolutionary upsurge of all the popular movements had given rise to a proliferation of Marxist Circles, some of whom exhibited similar tendencies in outlook and methodology, and others that exhibited wide differences in such. Nevertheless, they all claimed to be Marxist and at least “in word” opposed the status quo.

The famous Leninist tract, “What is to be Done?” was written specifically to deal with the features of that period in Russian Social Democracy. The existence of numerous Marxist circles and organizations, all local, all suffering from “narrow parochialism,” amateurishness in work, duplication of activities, meant that only the elimination of the circles and their amalgamation into a nation-wide, All Russian Party could lay the ground work for an all around assault upon the Tsar and Tsarism. It was a difficult but necessary task that Lenin took up. It was what he called “war upon the circles and the circle mentality.” The circles must give up their existence and unite in an all Russian Communist Party in order for the revolution to go forward.

With the fragmentation and defeat of all the popular movements, the current situation is different than it was in 1970. Today, there is no proliferation of Marxist circles and great debates between them. Today’s situation will mean that we have to find another path to building a revolutionary communist party and carry out the “unfinished” task of fusing socialism and the working class movement.

But 1970 was different. The particular history of the US gave rise to a situation in which the social ferment resulted in most Marxist circles emerging from the national movements as Marxist organizations either **accidentally** or **consciously** in “national” forms. Hence, of all the major players, most were Marxist in outlook and deed, but “national” in form.

Thus we had the major regional or national organizations such as RWL which was primarily Afro-American, League of Revolutionary Struggle, primarily Afro-American, Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRRWO), primarily Puerto Rican, I Wor Kuen (IWK), primarily Asian, Workers Viewpoint (WVO), primarily Asian, August Twenty Ninth Movement( ATM), primarily Chicano, Black Workers Congress (BWC), primarily Afro-American, the October League (OL), primarily white, and the Revolutionary Union (RU), primarily white, etc. Then there were hundreds of other local circles and collectives, of whom most were national in form.

Despite the right wing criticisms of the “party building” period of the NCM, there in fact was no other way. Grasping the correct line of the need for a single, US, multi-national, revolutionary communist party, most organizations at least paid it lip service. There had to be “war on the circles.” The only road to building a unified party was to give up your circle for the broader interest of the US working class and revolutionary movement in the US. Hence the “Party Building” period ensued in the US NCM.

Thus began an intense period of summing up the different lines and work styles of the different organizations; the differences in domestic and international positions on key questions, endless meetings seeking a basis of unity between the different forces; open forum discussion on the differences in political lines, or as we said, “sharpening the lines of demarcation before we can unite. For awhile, for a movement as young, immature and divorced from the working class movement as the NCM, it was inevitable that eventually the discussions and debates would digress so far from reality that it made your “eyeballs roll back in your head.” You know: the kind of feeling of “where the fuck am I and where is this discussion going?”

In addition to the “normal” careerism, petty jealousies, defense of circle mentality, that characterizes the struggle for unity in all movements (China, Russia, Germany, Mozambique, Cuba, Vietnam, Ghana, etc.) in the US, *narrow nationalism* on the part of the Marxists that emerged from the oppressed nationality movements and *white chauvinism*, characteristic of many of the Marxists in the predominantly white organizations, the struggle for unity proved exceptionally difficult in the US. **This was a tremendous setback for the world revolutionary movement!** When it became clear that the NCM was not going to overcome its circle mentality and the different organizations unite into one party, each of the major organizations

moved to declare itself the party...the vanguard of the US working class, won by virtue of its declarations as opposed to its work. Thus the RU became the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), the October League became the Communist Party USA (ML), the Workers Viewpoint became the Communist Workers Party (CWP), and most of the others withered against the vine.

By 1976 or 80, imagine being able to broadcast to the rest of the world that in the US the revolutionaries from all nationalities and walks of life have been able to overcome all difficulties and form a “general unified command,” a new anti-revisionist communist party that could now set its sights on fusing with the working class movement and fighting the world’s most reactionary predatory power from within its own womb. Its like Chairman Mao, said, “Dare to win, Dare to Struggle, Dare to Scale the Heights.” The potential was wasted.

The problem with the NCM was that the circle mentality won out over the needs of the masses. Let this be a lesson for future generations. This is a lesson paid for in unimaginable sacrifice, blood, prison and even death.

### **Settling Some Accounts! Elbaum and Early on the NCM**

There is nothing worst than pot-shots from the right...criticism of the revolutionaries by persons who are nothing but “professors” without a revolutionary bone in their bodies. It’s no revelation that revolutionaries make mistakes (hopefully not ones that cost us our lives) in the course maneuvering the US revolutionary terrain. It’s no accident that as Lenin said, when a revolutionary trend is fighting for its life, exaggeration of differences is necessary, or as Ho Chi Minh said, in order to make a point, sometimes we have to “bend the bamboo.” After bending the bamboo, in time it straightens up on its own.

Given the lack of overall summations of the NCM, Max Elbaum’s book, “*Revolution in the Air*” is pretty much the work that everyone vibes off. A revolutionary white student member of SDS, its Revolutionary Youth Movement II (RYM II) trend, as opposed to the RYM I “Weatherman” tendency, Elbaum eventually made his way to Marxism and joined up with the “Line of March,” a so-called communist organization. With the collapse of the movement, Elbaum went back to school, became the “professor” he

was always destined to be, and exposed his experience in attempting to integrate with the working class movement as an “episode” in his life.

This summation of RWL and the NCM can't all be about a “complete” summation of “*Revolution in the Air*” but a few things have to be pointed out. First and foremost, Elbaum establishes his wholesale lack of understanding of the NCM, by saying,

*“Between 1968 and 1973, layer after layer of young people went in search of an ideological framework and strategy to bring that revolution about. Inspired by the dynamic liberation movements that threatened to besiege Washington with ‘two, three, many Vietnams,’ many decided that a Third World-oriented version of Marxism, (sometimes explicitly termed ‘Third World Marxism’ and sometimes not) was key to building a powerful left in the US, within the ‘belly of the beast.’”*

And he continues,

*“Third World Marxism, in contrast, promised a break with Eurocentric models of social change, and also the political caution that characterized Old Left groups, communist and social democratic alike.”*

Both of these statements reveals the fact that Elbaum has no clue on the nature and physiognomy of the NCM, and more importantly reveals that the “Line of March” organization was never considered part of the NCM by the so-called major players, anyway.

What is with this concept of “Third World Marxism” that the NCM based itself upon? Elbaum, like a typical professor, is so off-based that it's almost comical.

Any quick perusal of the literature and main political lines of those forces that made up the NCM would exhibit that the struggle was for a **return** to Marxist orthodoxy. Coming out of a period of intense eclecticism and bastardization of communist principles by the Soviet Union and the Communist Party USA, the main NCM organizations were not embracing a “Third World Type Marxism (whatever that is!), but were fighting for a return to orthodoxy. This is why, and what Elbaum fails to understand, that those forces that made up the NCM, claimed to be part of the new “anti-revisionist” communist movement. **This is most crucial.** “Anti-revisionism”

was what the NCM claimed separated themselves from all other movements. Anti-revisionism was the “line of demarcation.”

Despite their many differences, what united the main NCM forces were two realities:

- 1) That after the death of Stalin, the Soviet Communist Party under the leadership of Khrushchov, begin the all around revising of Marxist-Leninist principles such that it became a communist party in name, and not in deed; this led to its capitulation to US imperialism; and thus began the all around restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union by the late 1960's, early 70's.
- 2) That in the great 1960's polemic that took place between the Soviet Communist Party and the Chinese Communist Party, on a revolutionary line for the international communist movement, most if not all the NCM forces sided with the CPC. The CPC accused the Soviet Party of abandoning Marxist orthodoxy and Leninist principles. The CPC, far from advancing some vague “Third World Marxism,” took the lead in fighting to adhere to Marxist-Leninist doctrine and orthodoxy.

And the second reality, was that the NCM emerged in a situation in which the Communist Party USA had become a completely revisionist party, repudiated its principles and had degenerated into a liberal party tailing after the imperialist Democratic Party. In the absence of a revolutionary party that could give leadership to all the various movements developing in the 1960's, the NCM forces had no alternative other than building a new anti-revisionist communist party in the US.

Many of Elbaum's criticisms of the positive and negative virtues of the NCM, its rise and fall are helpful and on point. But his failure to grasp that the heart and soul of the NCM was its “anti-revisionist” political line, makes it difficult for Elbaum to have a deep understanding of the period. Hence the bourgeois formulation of “Third World Marxism” reveals more about his own political tendencies and outlook than it does of the NCM. Why do I say this? The “Line of March” was never considered a NCM organization by the “major” players because it never united with the view that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had degenerated into a revisionist party and that capitalism had been restored in the Soviet Union. As well, it never decisively broke with the Communist Party USA, and criticized its treacherous role of abandoning the US working class.

When the Party building frenzy began to take place in the US, “Line of March was not part of it.” Of course it took place in some of the early

debates, mainly because of its close relationship with Irwin Silber of the “Guardian” newspaper, but it was never a “desired jewel” coveted by the NCM organizations.

Third Worldism, was on the one hand a reflection of the great blows and defeats being levied against to old European colonial powers and the new emerging US empire (attempting to step into the shoes of the old colonialists) by the movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The peoples of the entire world drew inspiration from the anti colonial struggles of the Chinese, Vietnamese, South African, peoples of Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, the Cuban revolution and urban guerilla movements throughout Latin America. During such a great upheaval, many of the anti-colonial leaders became models for revolutionary youth the world over. Although, many of the movements were not consistently Marxist, the eclectic pronouncements and writings of the anti colonial leadership were digested by many.

In the US, due to the historic racism of the US working class, many activists, black and white, had no confidence that white workers in the US would or could step up as the natural leader for socialist transformation of America. Hence, many sought leadership and inspiration from the anti-colonial movements in the “Third World.” The formulation went so far as to claim that the third world movements would eventually strangle US imperialism thus forcing the US working class to move into action. This led to the strategic view of writing off white workers, and supporting the anti-colonial movements through armed actions against the US empire. This was the theoretical basis for the RYM I faction in SDS, the “weathermen,” and their complement in the black liberation movement, the “black liberation army.” These were the main proponents of “Third Worldism” in the US revolutionary movement. Although Elbaum was a member of the RYM II faction, that opposed the weatherman, it’s clear that he has never understood or broken with early “white-radical” petty-bourgeois formulations of reality that gave rise to tailing the oppressed nationality movements and shying away from struggling with white workers in this country.

**Steve Early: Love the Bureaucrats, Hate the Revolutionaries!**

Another example of bourgeois, professorial criticism of the NCM is illustrated in Steve Early's recently published, *"Embedded With Organized Labor."*

Here, I must digress...Steve, don't take what follows personally. I hope that you'll still help me get my book published. Like the comedians say, "its only comedy."

Early is a labor journalist who has written extensively on the labor movement, and has come down on the side of rank and file democratic movements fighting against the labor bureaucracy. While also criticizing the corrupt trade union bureaucrats, he has found it lucrative working for them also, as staff writer for various union publications, assistant to union reformer Ed Sadlowski of the steel workers union, and some twenty years as a CWA official and eventual assistant to the CWA, district one Vice-President. Early has kept "one foot in the trade union bureaucracy and one foot out," as he himself says,

*"Thanks to my CWA career, I was able to develop an insider's view of the difficulty of institutional change within national unions, while maintaining a not-always-popular connection to various "dissidents" (i.e., Teamsters for a Democratic Union, Labor Notes, the Association for Union Democracy, UAW New Directions, et. Al)."*

Early's views on the NCM are quite clear. He also vibrates off Max Elbaum's *"Revolution in the Air."* He writes,

*"In the interest of full disclosure, I must admit that I was never a big fan of the 'new communist movement' (NCM), whose rise and fall is chronicled so exhaustively in Max Elbaum's 'Revolution in the Air.' The doctrinaire shenanigans of the NCM did little to build durable rank and file organization in any unions or industries targeted for colonization in the 1970's by its various alphabet soup groups."*

And, he continues,

*"Much of the emancipatory spirit of the sixties, so full of hope and new political energy, ended up being channeled here into dreary sectarianism of the 1970's and 80's---thanks in no small part to the NCM and it many little would-be Lenin's, competitors all."*

Early ends this section of his book with the snide,

*“Left-wing activists may not have Lenin, Mao, Che as their guides this time but, based on the evidence in Elbaum’s book, that may be one more factor in their favor.”*

Is this last statement dripping with anti-Marxist bias or what?

Earley has written a whole book, some 266 pages long, and not once mentions 1) the evil system of capitalism, or how and why the working class is exploited by capital, 2) imperialism and its effects on the US working class, 3) the role of the working class in the socialist transformation of society, or even if socialism is an objective of the worker’s movement, 4) the treacherous role of the trade union bureaucracy in keeping the workers confused and tied to capital, and hence why there can be no revolutionary movement without isolating and overthrowing the trade union bureaucracy and 5) his role in helping to build a worker’s movement **independent** of the trade union bureaucracy.

The index does not even contain the words capitalism, socialism, imperialism, etc. So what is this book about? As far as I can tell, and as much as I can stomach, **a luke-warm criticism of the trade-union bureaucracy**, that never rises above the level of outlining the differences between labor bureaucrats Andy Stern, John Sweeney and other officials. All of whom are enemies of the working class, a fifth column in our ranks and appendages of capital in the working class movement.

So, Early in fact reveals that he is less hostile to trade union bureaucrats, whose objective is to run interference for the capitalist ruling class, and as Lenin said, **“have become better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeoisie themselves,”** than he is to revolutionary trade union activist, who made great mistakes in attempting to integrate themselves into the working class movement, but always stood on the side of the workers and not the bureaucrats.

The answer for this is that Early is hostile to Marxism, like your common professor. The anti-Marxist bias makes it impossible for him to see the treachery of the trade union bureaucrats as a class question and not a question of their “bad policies.” This is why he can have “one foot in and one foot out.” We usually sum this up as wanting to “run with the hares and

hunt with the hounds.” This is the dilemma when one has yet to figure out the difference between reform and revolution.

## **Some Internal Dynamics in the Demise of the RWL**

The whirlwind activity that took place between the founding of the RWL in 1973 and its demise by 1977 was a period so intense that it was if ten years were compressed into one.

The Marxist forces in RWL were united in routing the narrow nationalist minded forces. But of course in the end different tendencies emerged or “bloomed” amongst those same Marxist forces as the RWL developed.

In making our intro into the NCM, it meant studying the lines of the different organizations, meeting and engaging them in various types of discussions, since we were all united that we were in a period of “Party Building” and that our RWL circle eventually would have to be liquidated into a larger multinational communist party in the US. As a member of the RWL Standing Committee (SC), a smaller more administrative subset of the broader RWL Central Committee (CC), I was privy to most of the meetings, conversations and party building activities.

Having just been reassigned and re-located from Boulder, Colorado to the East Coast (Jersey City), my apartment became the defacto headquarter for the new RWL CC. People were coming in from all parts of the country and locally, at all hours of the night and day, that once I was forced to move, as my landlord accused me of running a “drug operation.” I tried to explain that I was a college professor and these were my students, but he didn’t go for it.

Trying to meet with all the organizations and study their lines, it was easier for that process to take place between RWL, PRRWO, and WVO as we were all headquartered in NYC and in many instances were working in the same areas of industry (municipal) or involved in common economic or political struggles in the area. PRRWO and RWL sponsored joint forums on the same day Ponce Massacre in Puerto Rico, and the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa.

We had comrades meeting with the October League, the Revolutionary Union, PRRWO, and WVO. I don’t remember us getting a chance to meet

with the ATM or the IWK. It was a question of studying their literature and their lines.

Eventually three different tendencies emerged within the Standing Committee of the RWL. The first to emerge was a tendency that wanted us to merge with the October League. The person that led the charge on the SC was eventually beat back, for by this time the majority of the SC had established that our political line had more in common with WVO than any of the other prevailing major formations. In addition, this majority viewed the RU and the OL as formations with serious rightist deviations on a number of questions. The person that led the charge to get us to merge with the OL was defeated and eventually purged. The second struggle took place as another very strong member of the SC was meeting secretly with the RU and eventually tried to get the organization to merge with the RU. This effort was also voted down and that person was also purged. With the way cleared, victory belonged to the majority tendency that declared “common” unity with the “Revolutionary Wing” of the NCM...WVO, PRRWO, and ATM. The question became, how do we unite with those forces?

Without the appropriate documents in front of me, it’s difficult to remember at exactly what times of the year these events took place, but the pace was dizzying.

The process of how to unite the Revolutionary Wing was never well defined. We were in the process of trying to set up a meeting involving all of the forces to discuss such, when I and other members made a proposal to our SC. In the course of working with PRRWO in the NYC area, and studying their literature, although having a better base of unity than with the RU or OL, we felt that PRRWO in many instances exhibited “left-dogmatist” tendencies. Although not having met with the ATM, having studied their literature and lines, we felt that they exhibited just the opposite, “rightist” tendencies on many questions. Of course all of this was open for exploration, discussion and education at future meetings. In the meantime, we felt that **on matters of principle**, we had complete unity with the WVO, so that there was no further need for two different organizations. Our SC was in unity, so we called a meeting with the WVO to propose merger. At this time, no meeting had been set up for the entire RW.

The meeting with WVO was euphoric. We both felt the significance and contribution that a historic merger between the largest black Marxist organization in the US, with deep roots in the black freedom struggle, and the premier Asian communist circle in the US, would mean for the overall

struggle for socialism in the US. We both felt that it was a big step forward in the Party Building motion and that all **genuine** communists would applaud it.

When we set up a meeting with PRRWO to announce the future merger with WVO, PRRWO “hit the ceiling.” They accused RWL and WVO as conspiring against the RW. Their position was that until a formal meeting could be held between the entire Wing, no one could unite. Ganging up on the Wing, stacking the deck, etc., were epithets that were hurled at us. They wanted to impose some kind of dogmatic formula that ‘we must all stand abreast’ until convention time. So much for real life!

PRRWO’s position was a classic non-proletarian, petty-proprietors outlook on the situation. The proletariat is for amalgamation. Unity between any of the proletarian forces is a good thing. It is this outlook that leads to the Marxist slogan that “workers have no country.” But for the petty-proprietor that sees itself in competition for markets and influence with other proprietors, the unity of other proprietors puts him at a disadvantage. This was precisely PRRWO’s position: that the unity of RWL and WVO would give us greater advantage and influence in the Wing. It was at this point that we began to check out how utterly petty-bourgeois PRRWO was in its outlook and orientation. We tried to explain to PRRWO that if one or two members of the wing found themselves in unity, that it was a good thing for our movement. The leadership of PRRWO did not want to hear it, and the shit only got worse from there.

As we continued to meet, the meetings began to take on a “strange twists.” Formal meetings with PRRWO began to develop “informal” qualities. There was now a lot more “music” in the background, a lot more “high-fiving,” “fist-bumping,” and worst, appeals to narrow nationalism, as statements to the effect that the Asians weren’t as close and “down” as the blacks and Puerto Ricans. It soon became clear, that Gloria Fontanaez, the Chair-Person for PRRWO, set her guiles upon John Spearman, the least “socially developed member of our SC.” When Gloria started shaking that fine “Latina Ass” in front of John he was gone. With a lot more “social” mixing going on the drive to unite with WVO slowed down and PRRWO was effectively causing a split in our organization.

Witnessing the bullshit, I demanded a meeting to proceed with the merger. In response some members of the SC responded with a document accusing

WVO of essentially being rightest and not a member of the Wing. The document was fueled by personal desires, indefensible and totally un-Marxist. I then called for a meeting of the entire Central Committee to debate and decide the two views and was told that it was in the process of being set-up. Then in one of the worst anti-democratic moves ever made, I was purged from the organization without explanation. I attempted to go around the country with a document explaining the situation, but by this time the PRRWO and RWL leading bodies had pretty much merged and an all around wrecking frenzy began to take place.

Internally, the dogmatic line began to feed upon itself (of course fueled by speculation that Gloria and John Spearman were secret police.) As the “Bolshevik” tendency began to accuse of everyone else of being “Mensheviks” comrades not only were purged left and right but were physically assaulted. Eventually, most members left in droves and the RWL collapsed in a “petty-bourgeois left-wing internal shark like feeding frenzy.”

Still having unity with the line of the WVO, I joined their organization. Enjoying some prestige amongst the ex RWL members, I ran around the country and persuaded them to follow me into the WVO. This is how WVO gained such a large in-flux of black Marxists. To this day, I regret having done that, for it wasn't long before I observed the well known negative qualities of the WVO leadership, particularly its Chair, Jerry Tung.

Having just come out of a situation in which the “philosophy of struggle” was essential to development, I could not stomach the WVO style of leadership in which everyone was subservient and did not challenge the positions of Jerry Tung. Being placed on their Central Committee, and editor of the newspaper for awhile, I challenged Tung on many different occasions and eventually resigned before being purged.

The existence of many ex RWL cadre now gave WVO some breadth. It allowed for the ALSC work to continue, but the dogmatic tendencies soon played a key role in the collapse of ALSC. In addition, it also gave WVO our work in the South in the textile mills and various community organizing efforts led by Nelson Johnson. But with the formal declaration of WVO becoming the Communist Workers Party (CWP), the work in the south soon suffered. It is well known that the “Greensboro Massacre” had much to do with the petty-bourgeois leadership of CWP as it did with the KLAN. The

CWP soon closed up shop, and Jerry Tung became a big time real estate developer in NYC from what I heard.

Despite the cynical carping of reformist professors, right wing defenders of the status quo, and members of the NCM who were members in word only, but not in deed, the failure of the party building effort of the NCM was a great setback for the world revolutionary movement. Whatever mistakes that were made, and whatever mistakes that were going to be made in an attempt to navigate a revolution in the belly of the most powerful and reactionary ruling class the world has ever known, the existence of a revolutionary multinational communist party, or even the influence of a black Marxist organization on the black freedom struggle, and its historic influence on all other struggles in the US would have been tremendous.

## **Wasted Potential**

I compare this to the lost of the great Maurice Bishop in Grenada. His brief appearance on the scene, and his murder by dogmatist members of his own party, was a great lost for the world revolution. Bishop led an all black, English speaking, socialist government in the Caribbean, with the closest of ties to the Afro-American people's struggle. The Cuban Revolution, although Spanish speaking and mainly white led, enjoyed great prestige and influence in the black liberation movement. Imagine the influence Maurice Bishop and the New Jewel Movement would have had. It was certainly "Wasted Potential."

And, as I said earlier,

*"The new communist movement, fighting for the future does so with baggage of the living. Within the various movements and organizations were many degrees of sexism, white chauvinism, narrow nationalism, careerism, jealousy between different organizations, weaknesses in theory and practice, all of which got in the way of building unity between the organizations and circles and integrating with the working class movement. The most important reason for the inability to carry the historic task of "fusion" was the movement's class and social basis. The new communist movements were for the most part composed of revolutionary students and intellectuals, divorced from the working class. For those who emerged out of the oppressed nationality movements, there was a slightly higher degree of those from working class backgrounds. Nonetheless, the NCM had to find its way to the US working class to carry out the historic task of "fusion."*

*There was no other way. If the conclusion that revolution in the US could only be led by a class conscious revolutionary working class, then the revolutionaries had to merge themselves with the working class movement. Lenin had already taught that socialist thought did not emerge from the working class movement itself, but must be brought into the working class movement from the revolutionaries, grasped by the workers and made their own weapon in struggle with their capitalist enemies. During the great upsurges the US worker's movements in the 30' and 40's, that built the great trade unions in this country, many of the organizers were workers themselves and communist workers from both here and abroad.*

*The NCM, being from student and intellectual origins, the task of attempting to integrate into the working movement was shaky. Although many brothers and sisters did good work, actually listened and learned from the workers themselves, many with so much student and intellectual baggage made many errors, not learning from the workers and often times trying to “impose” what many workers considered a “foreign” ideology upon them. Trying to take issues of concern between competing leftwing organizations into a workplace, but issues of no interest to the workers themselves, many workers were turned off by the new communists. What’s interesting is the qualities that made brothers and sisters such great organizers in their communities and on their campuses were completely forgotten in the “swing to the left.” This situation, given time could have been overcome, but the recession (oil crisis) of 1974-75 put many out of work, coupled with the great splits in the world wide communist movement that filtered down to the local organizations, that once again incorrectly handled, led to the split up and fragmentation of the various organizations. Such by the early 1980’s the “New Communist Movement” was dead. Many organizers went back to school, and became doctors and professors. Others continued to soldier away in their unions and workplaces, albeit individually and without organizational support.”*

After leaving, WVO, I knew that the struggle continued. I, in 1977, eventually got a job at Ideal Toy, and attempted to put all of my organizing experience at work in developing a fightback amongst the workers there. For the first time in many years, I was on my own without organizational support. That is another story.

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