



"Writing for the Worker"

## WRITING FOR THE WORKER

1. One of the decisions taken by our Party soon after its formation in 1968 was that the main Party organ would be a newspaper, not a theoretical journal. In this way we would insure that our theory, Marxism-Leninism, was always applied to the concrete conditions of Britain. Theory and practice would not be separated: the theory would be in every news story we printed, determining its selection, guiding its treatment and informing its conclusions.

As our Party developed in struggle, the application of Marxism-Leninism to conditions in Britain has yielded such statements as "The British Working Class and Its Party" unanimously adopted by the Party's Second Congress, complemented by the document "Burning Questions For Our Party."

Before writing any major news story for THE WORKER one should briefly review the Party statement and see how this particular event to be covered is related to our analysis of the situation in Britain today and to our task of changing the ideology of the working class and attracting into our own ranks the most militant working class representatives. If this relationship is not apparent, then it is probably not, for us, a major news story after all.

If we are thoroughly grounded in the line of our Party, our theory will guide our presentation of the facts and their political implications and will not have to be tacked on to the end of each piece like an after-thought.

In covering the news in this way we not only serve our class but raise our own level of political understanding. To write authoritatively of the class struggle in Britain which is making news every day we have to know what is happening and be able to interpret it in correct revolutionary terms. For this our membership of a Marxist-Leninist Party is essential so that we can draw on its collective wisdom which is a distillation of proletarian experience. No individual can do it on his own, nor can anyone who is not involved fully in the activity of the Party.

2. In producing a Party newspaper we are working journalists. We must become good journalists, using journalism as a vital tool in our task of revolutionising the ideology of the working class. Our readers, our fellow workers, deserve the best we are capable of in the way of clarity, conciseness and readability. We start with a political advantage in terms of knowing what to say. We must learn also how to say it, so that the style of our writing, like the style of our work generally, is worthy of our great message of working class emancipation.

A slogan or witty phrase that precisely expresses the needs of workers or aptly lampoons our class enemies can be useful in mobilising opinion. Keep in mind the courage, humour in adversity and working class culture of our readership and write up to it, never down.

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Clarity is not a mechanical business of simple words, short sentences and a flat style. It comes from knowing a thing so clearly oneself that one finds no difficulty in communicating it - with conviction and enthusiasm.

3. Generally speaking a good news story is the opposite of other forms of narration. In a short story or a theoretical article one works towards one's main point by the accumulation of events or of arguments. In a news story one starts with one's main point and then adds further details in descending order of importance.

The usual order of a news story is;  
The headline which should be arresting as well as informative. It is the way the reader is button-holed and made to listen to what one has to say.

The intro which sets out the facts placing the event and states the events main significance.

Successive paragraphs further explaining what has happened and its importance to our class, taking the most significant aspects first so that a reader gets the most vital information at the beginning and, if the item has to be cut for space the least damage will be done by chopping off paragraphs from the end.

(In some cases it will be found necessary to draw political conclusions in the last paragraph or so, but as explained before the politics ought to be in the whole story and the way it is told, not just the end.)

4. THE WORKER in a large measure is the public face of our Party and its voice to the working class. Every member has the right to participate in its preparation, publication and distribution and the duty to make it as good a vehicle of our revolutionary line as it can possibly be.

Get in the habit of thinking what subjects a particular issue of the paper should be dealing with; what items of importance to the working class are being neglected, what new features would make the paper more attractive.

In reading the capitalist press be on the look-out for items which betray or can be made to expose the nature of the ruling class. Often such items with ironic headings or even left to speak for themselves can say volumes about the kind of society we live in. Articles giving useful background material on subjects of concern to us should be cut out for our files- so that anyone writing about such subjects can fill himself in with all the relevant factual details.

In the course of the Party's normal work material of use to the paper is constantly being generated- public meetings which often involve statements by our Party leaders on current topics, Party schools which provide studies in depth on various fields of struggle, various committees of students, teachers, women, construction workers etc.

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Our paper like our Party is based on the mass line; from the workers to the workers. Only those who can learn from the working class have the right to teach. In all cases of action in which workers are involved, we must consult those workers in struggle to find out what the issues are and how we can help - if only by insuring that the struggle is known about and understood by other workers. Interviewing militants in class struggle not only yields material for THE WORKER but also helps to implement our Party task of bringing such militants within our ranks.

We need the assistance of comrades who can take notes of what is said at meetings, interview workers who are in struggle at points of production and help our own industrial comrades realise in ways useful to the paper their rich experience of class conflict when they are too pressed to write it up themselves.

5. Every Party branch should have (as some of them already do) a WORKER correspondent who writes or collects material for the paper and passes on from the branch comments, criticisms and suggestions. Criticism should be constructive. One way of eliminating captious criticism is to include with any fault-finding suggestions as to how such mistakes can be put right.

The appointment of an active correspondent is particularly necessary for branches outside London. Only if they are doing their job properly in covering local events, either on their own initiative or at the request of THE WORKER committee, can our national Party claim to have a national paper.

Clippings from local papers are useful but it is preferred that news items should be written by those on the spot. All items submitted should be typed if possible with a carbon copy. Try to supply an eye-catching heading and set the article out in a readable, journalistic style, broken up into paragraphs and, if it is a long piece, provided with suitable sub-headings.

Do not embark on a major news article of a relatively non-topical character without informing the WORKER Committee. Someone else may have been assigned the same subject and a joint effort could be made, or there may be additional material on the subject which could be made available.

Do not submit theoretical articles. There is no political subject of importance to the working class which does not have a news peg to hang it on and which cannot be written up as a news story. "News" is naturally used in a broad sense in terms of the time scale. It covers a lightning strike or a development in the corporate state which may take a long period to mature.

6. Taking on the complicated tasks of producing the whole paper ourselves and making it a fortnightly publication is at once a challenge and an opportunity for us. Writing, like other aspects of the operation, will be much more a collective activity than before and will be much more centred on the Party premises. Indeed among its other functions our headquarters will now become a newspaper office with all that that means in terms of professionalism of approach and the easier working of the democratic centralism which governs the production of THE WORKER as it does all other Party activity.

Many of the tasks in connection with this expansion of our efforts will necessarily fall most heavily on our London cadres. But while the London editorial staff will also have special responsibilities, the writing of the news that fills our paper and helps it come closer to being all that workers need in the way of a fighting news organ can be done by Party members anywhere who have or can acquire a talent for this form of service to the working class.