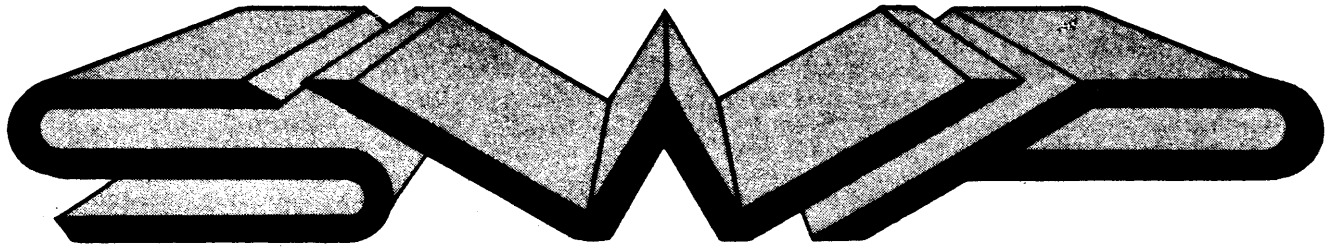


Allen



# Discussion Bulletin

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## THE POST W.W. II SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

(A Contribution to the Discussion on China)

by Stephen Bloom, Denver Branch

For more than the past half century there has not been a single revolutionary transformation carried out under the leadership of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard party. As a result of the international crisis of revolutionary leadership, there have been an uncounted number of tragic defeats for the world revolution, and the few victories have resulted in only partial advances. Nevertheless, as a result of the social transformations in Eastern Europe, China, and Cuba, hundreds of millions of persons are living in post-capitalist societies. Each of these revolutions took place despite the absence of a Marxist leadership.

This phenomenon -- revolutionary transformations without a revolutionary leadership -- cannot be considered merely as a series of individual exceptions or aberrations on the historical process, but rather as a generalized historical detour. When a phenomenon occurs as frequently as this, and under such varied circumstances, it is necessary for the Marxist movement to analyze them together and see if there is any underlying pattern to these events. I do not believe that the ideas which will be presented in this document are outside the understanding of our movement today; but I also do not believe that they are effectively codified and formulated. Although we have occasion to allude to this understanding, it should become more explicit. This is an attempt to begin that process.

I also believe that an understanding of these phenomena may aid in the resolution of the discussion on China currently taking place in the International. This discussion focuses around the character of the current Chinese regime. One of the main stumbling blocks here is the contradiction of a Stalinist party, which is completely counterrevolutionary, being at the head of the Chinese revolution and carrying out socialist measures after taking power. I think we will see how this is possible.

\* \* \*

There are two basic unifying factors in each of the social transformations since W.W. II: 1) The fundamental dynamic of each of these has been the same -- the dynamic of the permanent revolution. In each case we are faced with a leadership which was not Marxist, and which began with not

a socialist but a bourgeois reformist program; and in each case this leadership, pressured by the objective inability to carry out such a program, was forced to empirically adjust to the dynamic of the permanent revolution and carry out socialist measures. 2) In each of these revolutions power was able to be consolidated in the first place only because world imperialism, and the native bourgeois regime, were caught weakened or off-guard. The existence of these two circumstances -- a weakened imperialism and a leadership which empirically adjusts to the pressures of the permanent revolution -- are not simply a matter of coincidence in each of these cases, but were essential to the carrying out of these revolutions.

This is not, of course, to say that the result in each of these cases was the same. The basic difference can be found in the political motivations and needs of the leadership involved; from the sincere revolutionism of the Cubans, to the needs of the newly formed bureaucracy in China, to the cynical manipulations of the established Soviet bureaucracy. But this in no way contradicts the fact that in each of these cases the leadership was forced, for different reasons, to carry through the social transformation. The Cuban, Eastern European, and Chinese experiences all fit this basic pattern.

Cuba is perfectly clear in this respect. In fact, it is the basic analysis of what happened in Cuba that enables us to see this pattern in other cases. The Castro leadership was able to take power on the island, despite its lack of a Leninist understanding of the role of the party, because it was faced with an irresolute Batista regime, and because U.S. imperialism was not fully aware of this potential threat to its rule in the Caribbean. Even after taking power the revolutionary government continued to propound a program of reforms; and it was only when it became clear that the choice was either to capitulate to the U.S. and sell out the Cuban masses or carry out the necessities of the permanent revolution that the Castro regime began to take the necessary socialist measures. It was their consistent nationalism which forced the Cubans to become socialists.

The developments in Eastern Europe were quite different, of course, from

those in Cuba. But we can still see the same forces at work. Here the Soviet bureaucracy was faced with the need to defend its own position in the U.S.S.R. after W.W. II. To do this it sought to set up buffer states between the Soviet Union and Western Europe, the original conception being to set up liberal bourgeois regimes friendly to the U.S.S.R. However, the political necessities of the situation forced the Soviet ruling caste to transform these states and to carry out partial revolutions. This was done simply to defend the interests of the bureaucracy, but it illustrates that even this caste, which had no interest in creating new workers states, but rather in stifling their creation, could not escape the historical dynamic of the permanent revolution. And once again in this case we had a situation where world imperialism (mainly U.S.) was unable to intervene after the ravages of W.W. II. This was a result not only of the physical exhaustion of the imperialist countries after the war, but also of the sentiment of the masses, which was completely opposed to involvement in another imperialist venture.

The Chinese revolution faces us with a more intricate situation than either Cuba or Eastern Europe, but once again the same dynamics are at work. The Chinese C.P. was able to take power, against despite tremendous mistakes and a completely un-Marxist understanding, due to the complete degeneracy and collapse of the Chiang Kai Shek regime, and because the U.S. was unable to come significantly to his aid. The "Coming Home" movement by American G.I.s in the Far East, supported by civilians in the U.S., played an important, perhaps even decisive, role. Another important factor was that although the Chinese C.P. was completely Stalinist in its ideology and program, it was not subservient to Stalin and the Soviet bureaucracy. (Undoubtedly the roots of the Sino-Soviet split can be seen this early.)

The program projected by the Mao leadership was not for a Socialist transformation of China, but rather for the "New Democracy." In this respect it was similar to the ideas of the Cuban revolutionaries some ten years later. It was only when faced with the threat of imminent counterrevolution by the U.S. invasion of Korea that the Chinese leadership found it necessary, again completely empirically and for the sole purpose of defending its own bureaucratic interests, to carry out a mobilization of the Chinese masses and a socialization of the Chinese

economy. In a broad sense this turn by Mao can be compared with the empirical shift made by Stalin after the N.E.P. In fact, the forced collectivization of the peasantry in China was taken directly from Stalin's book, with some of the same disastrous consequences in China as in Russia. Again we can see the permanent revolution at work despite the conscious will of the Maoist bureaucracy which, like its Soviet kindred, could not escape historical necessity.

In summary, then, we can see that three different regimes carried out social transformations in three different areas of the world, with different motivations, basically because they were forced to respond to the pressure of the permanent revolution. Each of these transformations was possible, furthermore, despite non-Marxist and in some cases non-revolutionary leadership because of the strategic unpreparedness of imperialism.

\* \* \*

What conclusions can we draw from this analysis? Let me begin by taking up an objection which might be raised by some: Doesn't this conception bring into question the need for the party and for a revolutionary Trotskyist vanguard? After all, if workers states can be formed through this process why should we bother with party building?

This possible objection is wrong on several counts (in fact it closely resembles the criticism raised by Wohlforth and company in regards to the Trotskyist position on Cuba). The fact that social transformations following this dynamic have been so few and far between, and that even when they do occur they issue into existence workers states with significant deficiencies, is enough to make it ludicrous for anyone to suggest that we rely on such possibilities.

In addition there are other factors. For one, the U.S. has also learned its lessons from the experience of Cuba, and it will be much more difficult to catch Imperialism napping again. Also, the times that even sincerely revolutionary regimes, and movements, without a Marxist understanding, have failed to carry out the necessary measures to bring about a social transformation and have slipped into neo-colonialist status far outnumber the times when such a transformation has taken place. The examples of Bolivia and Algeria should suffice to illustrate the point. Lastly, it would be absurd to believe that there would be any significant chance of this process taking place in any of the advanced

capitalist countries. Indeed, rather than bringing into question the need to build the party, an understanding of this phenomenon reinforces it.

I think that we can conclude, however, that social transformations following this pattern are still possible in the future. In fact, the developments in Vietnam are taking place along these lines. The victory of the Provisional Revolutionary Government is possible today due to the weakened power of U.S. imperialism resulting from the American antiwar movement. The program which the PRG presents follows in the classic lines of the "New Democracy," but the revolutionary dynamic of the situation is such that in fact socialist measures must be taken in the liberated territories.

We can also see clearly now how the Maoist Chinese C.P., while retaining its Stalinist character, could be at the head of the Chinese revolution and

empirically undertake the creation of a workers state in China.

Our party must be consistently clear in our understanding and explanation of how these social transformations took place. When presenting these developments we must explain the dynamic behind them -- one which only our movement understands. Without this understanding it is inevitable to fall into one of the following mistakes, which each of our opponents makes: either 1) There was a revolutionary Marxist, or at least a centrist, leadership in Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, and Vietnam (Stalinists, Guevarists, etc.); or 2) There were not really revolutions and social transformations in these countries (Social Democrats, State Caps, Wohlforthites, etc.). Only an understanding of these revolutions in the light of the permanent revolution can satisfactorily explain their occurrence.

June 11, 1971

## ON THE PANTHER SPLIT

by Tony Thomas, Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

I wish to reply briefly to Comrade Arthur Maglin's confusion on our attitude to the recent Black Panther Party split. In his article in Discussion Bulletin No. 7, he has unearthed a dispute between myself and Joseph Hansen on the Panther split. He claims that I, in a series of Militant articles, see the split as an organizational question and Hansen, in his recent contribution to the current international discussion entitled In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building [International Information Bulletin, No. 3 in 1971] sees it as a political question.

This is untrue. Hansen for the purpose of this article attempted to deal with one aspect of the Panther split -- the importance of guerrilla warfare in the discussions of the ultra-left fringe in the U.S.A. and the tendency of many former guerrillistas to differentiate themselves from terrorism.

I attempted to draw the lessons relevant to building a Black party from the split in the Panthers, not from their organizational set up but from their retreat from the type of approach outlined in The Case for a Black Party and the Transitional Program for Black Liberation. In these articles, as in my article in the 1969 pre-convention discussion, I pointed out that the organizational conceptions of the BPP flowed from their political conceptions.

The April 9 Militant article states: "Recognition of the revolutionary dynamic of Black nationalism and the promotion of a program to mobilize and organize the Black community around its nationalist demands are a touch stone of revolutionary action in the Black community. It is the Panthers' failure to meet this test that provided the basis for their demise."

The article then went on to catalogue the political development of the Panthers -- a hasty retreat from the building of a mass Black nationalist movement independent of the ruling class. It pointed out that the seeds of the split were sown by the many zigs and zags on a political level: "Unfortunately, the leading cadres of the BPP were unequal to the task. Their main political characteristic was vacillation between ultra-leftism and reformism."

It was in this context that I attempted to show a) that neither side could be given the blame for developing the ultra-left or reformist deviations they ultimately split over; b) that

flowing from this political bankruptcy, organizational bedlam proceeded to be the Panthers' style; c) that neither faction surmounted the political obstacles that led to the BPP's demise.

As far as is known, neither group has repudiated anything the united BPP did or said before the split. Neither group has proposed something along the lines of The Case for a Black Party or the Transitional Program for Black Liberation. Each group has taken the different deviations to their extremes -- Cleaver, ultra-left abstentionism; and Newton, reformism. Neither is repudiating the organizational methods that flow from these two variants of rotten politics.

Comrade Hansen's article concentrated on placing the political dispute in the Panthers in the light of the relevance of the discussion on guerrilla warfare to the U.S. He did not say that the Panthers led by Newton had turned toward Leninist party-building -- if he had his quality as a leader of our movement would be somewhat dubious -- but rather that the Panthers felt the question of guerrilla war was important enough to split about.

My article, rather than projecting the split as an organizational matter, went deeper into the political background that led to the split, evaluating it as a political not an organizational question. This was important because many new-left and Black groups, especially the Guardian, attacked the Panther groups for using bad language and expulsions against each other while failing to deal with their political positions.

This was why the Militant article stated: "The answer to these problems is not primarily in criticizing the organizational moves made by both sides. The organizational life of a political group is related to and flows from its program."

"The only answer is the repudiation of the political confusion and vacillation of the Panthers and the adoption of a strategy of mobilizing Black people to 'control the institutions of their community,' as Malcolm put it."

June 12, 1971

## CULTURE AND THE STRUGGLE OF OPPRESSED MINORITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

by Dick Garza, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local

At the party's plenum this past Spring a discussion about the Chicano family arose. It was a minor point but it made me realize how much we have yet to learn about the national minorities in the U.S. The point under discussion was whether the Chicano family was "reactionary" or "progressive." The point came up because some of our Chicana comrades had had to deal with the role of the family in bourgeois society. Our literature on the nuclear family and its abolition was subject to misinterpretation by Chicanas. Among Chicanos and Chicanas the sentiment for the family was very strong because of the role it played in keeping Chicanos together and defending them against the hostility and rejection of Anglo society.

My own recollection of Puerto Rican family life was one of advice to serve in the armed forces of the U.S., to get an education so that I could integrate into "American" society, of not making too much fuss over injustices in order not to be labeled a trouble maker, etc. This is probably similar to the advice many Chicanos received from their families at that time. However, personal recollections are no basis for arriving at an objective estimate about a social phenomena. Perhaps some of the Chicana or Chicano comrades with greater knowledge and insight into the subject will be able to make a contribution on this subject. I think it could prove very instructive.

During the above discussion some of the comrades used the term "Chicano culture." What they were pointing out was the rejection of bourgeois norms in "white" society by Chicanos. They were pointing out the party's need to be extra sensitive to the growing national pride, self confidence, and particular demands put forward by the Chicano movement. The demand for bilingual instruction for children from Spanish-speaking homes; the demand for community control of schools, hospitals, etc.; the struggle to abolish all traces of chauvinism towards the Chicanos so prevalent in the U.S.A.

We support all these demands and join and support the struggles of the oppressed national minorities. However, the struggle for national identity and the existence of a separate culture are two different things. Perhaps we are a little vague on this subject because of the contributions of people like Oscar Lewis who wrote about a "culture of poverty." In addition

the popular press talks about a "youth culture," or a "drug culture." I don't believe such cultures exist, in the true sense of the word.

Culture is predicated upon a control of society. It must have the material means to develop. Leon Trotsky in his Literature and Revolution said the following:

Every ruling class creates its own culture, and consequently its own art. History has known the slave-owning cultures of the East and of classical antiquity, the feudal culture of medieval Europe and the bourgeois culture which now rules the world. It would follow from this, that the proletariat has also to create its own culture and its own art.

The question is not as simple as it seems at first glance... History shows that the formation of a new culture which centers around a ruling class demands considerable time and reaches completion only at the period preceding the political decadence of that class.

Trotsky went on to point out that the proletariat would not have enough time to create its own culture because the dictatorship of the proletariat would not exist that long and its own logical development was the establishment of a classless society. He went on to say "...there can be no question of the creation of a new culture, that is, of construction on a large historic scale during the period of the dictatorship... This seems to lead to the conclusion that there is no proletarian culture and there never will be any and in fact there is no reason to regret this."

I think the point is worth pondering and being clear on because of our experience with "cultural nationalists." At the Chicano Youth Conference in Denver in 1970, when the debate about building La Raza Unida party came up all our opponents gathered together around the slogan proposed by the "cultural nationalists" of "Proclaim Aztlan." Their argument was that the Chicanos were already a people and that all that had to be done was to proclaim it and fight gun in hand if necessary for it. They proposed sending ambassadors to Latin America and setting up a separate government. They rejected the notion of independent Chicano electoral action

because that was a "Gringo" thing. In the early period of the conference, due to the delay in the arrival of the Texas group which had its feet on the ground because of practical experience, nationalists, the ultra-lefts, undercover Stalinists, and Democratic party allies seemed to be close to blocking the emergence of the slogan of a La Raza Unida party. Only the vigorous intervention of our comrades and the Crusade for Justice forces prevented the conference from ending in a great big fiasco. The slogan and idea of a La Raza Unida party won out.

The reformist poison was still evident and then took another form at the conference. Since they couldn't beat back the idea of a La Raza Unida party the next line of attack was directly upon Marxism. It began with an ejection of Progressive Labor sales-people. Our vigorous defense of PL's and our right to sell socialist literature and the determined look and impressive numbers of our comrades prevented our literature table from being next to go. Some of the leaders felt enough heat to feel that they had to attack "European" ideologies like Marxism. These adaptations to what I can only term as bourgeois ideology within the movement were answered in The Militant and had to be repeated later during the Chicano moratorium's defense after the police attack in Los Angeles. They have come up time and time again and our comrades have replied vigorously to attempts to exclude us from the movement.

Our party has dealt politically with arguments from misguided nationalists as well as bourgeois apologists within the movement. I think the comrades should have their attention drawn to this more sharply. Whatever the sociological roots of the family or other phenomena within an oppressed nationality our concern must be with the political implications it will have. In Denver the extended family arrangement was the basis for the organization of the Crusade for Justice, which organized the Chicano Youth Conference, and fought for the idea of La Raza entering the political arena on its own. A sociological abstraction about the reactionary nature of the nuclear family would have been an obstacle to our intervention in this milieu and might have made our intervention less effective than it was.

We will face similar problems in the future and should be prepared to deal with them. For example the struggle for the teaching of the history of Third World people is an important

democratic struggle which we support. Nevertheless our Third World comrades are aware that sometimes the result is not to our liking. An example of this is the attempt by the bourgeoisie to co-opt this demand and to teach the history they wish taught. In the New York area some of the Spanish language literature about Puerto Ricans lauds the achievements of the man who is responsible for the emasculation of the independence movement and the jailing of hundreds of its militants, and who is an active supporter of the campaign against revolutionary Cuba, Luis Muñoz Marín.

The struggle for a true picture of the Puerto Ricans' past as well as for the Chicanos past will only be painted by people with a revolutionary point of view. Our comrades within these movements must be prepared to take on "bourgeois nationalists" within the movement. We must be clear therefore that talk about "our cultural traditions" etc. are often sheer demagogy. Just like the laws of physics the laws of Marxism apply universally. Our task is to use Marx's method to dig up the history and lessons of past struggles in order to prepare for the present struggles.

The fact of the matter is that capitalism in the U.S. was unable to assimilate the Black, Brown, and Red people. But U.S. capital did subjugate the other bourgeoisie and rulers of the new world. By doing so it established the bourgeois culture we all know, with its racism and its chauvinism. By doing that it did not deprive Latinos of our "culture." We never had it, but instead gave a greater drive to Third World people for abolishing capitalist culture. More than that, however, capitalism gave all oppressed people something else, the Marxist method for appreciating the importance of the distinct peoples within the U.S.A. Our problem is to now merge the uniqueness of Third World people in the U.S.A. with the Marxist method. Our job, in other words, is to apply Marxism to the current struggles and to arm the vanguard with that indispensable tool.

That is why I believe that we must be more conscious when we talk about "Chicano culture," or any other culture. Those "cultures" will never come into existence under capitalism. They have never existed before. What has existed is the distinct way different peoples have become subjugated to U.S. capital and the fact that in the present decay of the system the struggle for the establishment of separate "cultures," leads to the



permanent revolution in the U.S.

One of the ways to prepare comrades for these confrontations within the Chicano, Puerto Rican and Afro community is to carry articles dealing with the struggles and past of these peoples. We have done a great deal of that on the Afro-American struggle and in the recent past we have presented many articles on the Women's Liberation movement. Possibly the magazine would be a better vehicle for these types of articles and book reviews.

We have many comrades on campuses that come across material suitable for the magazine in the form of lectures to Third World classes, monographs prepared for special studies, mimeographed material prepared for seminars, etc. Some comrades have taken courses in Latin American history; Puerto Rican history; Chicano studies, etc. They should be encouraged by YSA organizers and party organizers to send that material into the I.S.R. so that comrades can become more familiar with the history, customs, polemics, authors, etc. of the Chicano and Puerto Rican movement.

In addition, branches that have comrades that read and speak Spanish should subscribe to movement papers of the Chicanos and of the Puerto Ricans. Sometimes the individual comrades cannot afford to subscribe but perhaps some arrangement can be worked out with branch libraries or literature people.

Another source of information are radical professors who are sympathetic to the revolutionary movement

and not unwilling to submit material in their specialty to the magazine. They usually like to see their material printed and it helps establish the fact that the I.S.R. is a magazine for serious people looking for Marxist explanations and analyses. In the past the fear of witch-hunt made many of these people afraid to have their work appear in our press. With the academicians we should be establishing the Trotskyist movement in the U.S. as the organization that not only does things but also provides serious people with a forum to express their ideas.

Years ago we opened up the Militant Labor Forum to non-party speakers and we now accept it as a matter of course that non-party people can make their contributions there. I do not at all mean that we change the character of the magazine and turn it into a centrist type of mish-mash where the magazine loses its identity as an organ of revolutionary socialism. I do think that the inclusion of articles in the magazine by non-party figures sympathetic to Marxism, or people that use Marx's method for historical, sociological or area studies work should be encouraged to submit material to the I.S.R.

My main concern at this point is that as much material as possible on Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and on Latin America appear in our press. The educational and propagandistic contributions such articles will make will help to equip the party and the Y.S.A. for future work within the Third World movement in the U.S.

June 12, 1971

by Lee Smith, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

The contribution by Comrade Hedda Garza, For a Better Relationship Between Word and Deed (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 29, No. 9), purports to be addressing itself to "a generalized misinterpretation of party positions" by comrades publicly representing the party (emphasis in original). At the outset of her article, Comrade Garza tells us that this problem has reached such proportions that our program is "scarcely recognizable," but nowhere in the following paragraphs is there documentation sufficient to justify such a sweeping charge. Instead, there is a series of vague assertions about "many comrades" and "a great many comrades" and "several leading women in our party" and "comrades" and "leading comrades" and "many comrades." There are also six references to specified events, but these six events hardly add up to a case proving that the party's program has been distorted beyond recognition by the misrepresentations of party public spokespeople.

#### Six Examples

What are the six events not shrouded in the mystery of numberless and nameless comrades? They are 1) the Madison socialist educational conference, 2) a speech by Comrade Ruth Ann Miller, 3) the December, 1970 YSA convention, 4) a women's conference at Adelphi University, 5) the April 24 antiwar demonstration in Washington, D.C., and 6) a New York Branch meeting.

The Madison socialist educational conference and the women's conference at Adelphi University are presumably cited as examples of the correct correspondence between word (our line) and deed (the tactical formulation put forward in a particular situation). In Madison, Comrade Garza tells us, the Wohlforthites' charge that women's liberation threatened to divide the working class along sex lines was handily answered by conceding that "certainly" women's liberation does pose such a threat, but.... If the answer given was substantially as Comrade Garza represents it, and I had heard it, I would have been inclined to suggest to the comrades that a better formulation corresponding more closely to our line would point out that the working class is already divided along sex lines by the oppression of women, and that by struggling against that oppression, the women's liberation movement is promoting the kind of unity we care about -- unity in anticapitalist,

struggle. Still, the formulation related by Comrade Garza definitely does not distort our program beyond recognition.

Comrade Garza reports that at the Adelphi women's conference, comrades responded to an inquiry about the SWP's position on the family by commenting "that the Communist Party was indeed right on one score -- working-class women are terrified by the 'abolish' slogan." Comrade Garza and the other comrades then went on, she continues, to explain the Marxist view of the withering away of the nuclear family. It is not clear from the article why the CP was brought into the comrades' answer, but perhaps Stalinists had raised the question or spoken previously such that the reference was an effective debating device. In any case, the kind of reply outlined in this account seems generally to conform to the standard explanation we present.

One lone sentence is quoted from a panel presentation by Comrade Ruth Ann Miller in Comrade Garza's article. Without more information on the context, the single sentence quoted cannot by any amount of straining be judged in and of itself a misinterpretation of the party's position. On the other hand, I should think comrades ought to be somewhat wary of employing the kind of position put forward by Comrade Garza as "the best formulation on man hatred." Comrade Garza's formulation does make the correct points that women's oppression must be fought politically and that it is an oppression rooted in class society, but it seems unwise to me to stress overmuch "that men are also victimized" and it seems completely unwarranted to project that "hatred against men will simmer down." Simmering down and being politically channeled are not the same thing.

The December, 1970 YSA convention is referred to because Comrade Garza believes that YSA leaders unfairly chastised YSA comrades who "attempted to straighten out the formulation" on the nuclear family. Comrade Garza charges that the YSA comrades who made this attempt "were called everything from Stalinists to Wohlforthites." She does not say they were so called by the previously mentioned "party-member YSA leaders" who "loudly chastised" them, but that is a possible inference. If this is implied purposely by Comrade Garza, she is mistaken. I heard most of the discussion at that convention from the presiding committee

table and I can vouch that no leading comrade or any other comrade called another comrade either a Stalinist or a Wohlforthite in the entire discussion. If Comrade Garza doubts it, tapes of the whole convention are available. Furthermore, it is a misrepresentation of the remarks I assume Comrade Garza is referring to (even here I must assume because no names are used) to describe them as an attempt to straighten out the formulation. What was criticized by one delegate from the Long Island YSA Local was the Marxist position on the family, the presentation by the YSA of the position at all, not the particular formulation. The delegate's criticisms were wrong, and a number of comrades addressed themselves to the error; no one "chastised" the comrade or called anyone any names.

The fifth concrete incident specified in Comrade Garza's article is the April 24 antiwar action in Washington, D.C. More specifically, it is "what can only be described as a sex circus" on the part of members of the Gay Contingent during the rally. Unfortunately, I am not able to determine what it was that has provoked such a reaction from Comrade Garza, since she does "not go into a graphic description" and since my own assignment in the press area that day meant that I was not able to witness how my gay brothers and sisters "cavorted and carried on, making sexual gestures and freely fondling each other in a most intimate style." She states that she does not mean necking, so presumably she saw some people doing more than that. (I find it hard to believe that there was a homosexual orgy of 200 people -- a figure Comrade Garza gives in another, apparently related connection -- that went unnoticed by either the bourgeois press or the gay press, but this is really beside the point.) For the sake of trying to discover what Comrade Garza is getting at, I will grant that she saw some offensive "lewd and lascivious" behavior among gays at the rally. Why is this brought up in an article that is supposed to be dealing with the correspondence between word and deed? Was it a heterosexual orgy? But the words and deeds The document is supposed to be about are the public representation of the party's position and its democratically-decided line. To follow the account with a fantasy about "two hundred or so heterosexual comrades" who would be expelled if they did what those gays did does not clarify the purpose of this account in this article. Why is it there? Until and unless Comrade Garza explains it better than she does in the article, one must speculate on the basis of what she has already written.

Is the reference to heterosexual comrades included because Comrade Garza saw gay comrades taking part in the "sex circus" that offended her and she thinks they should be expelled? She does not say so.

She goes on to state that she realizes gay comrades are not responsible for "the actions of an entire contingent" (perhaps there were thousands in this orgy; there were certainly a couple of thousand gays in the contingent). But, Comrade Garza adds, "we do expect our gay comrades to have the correct attitude within the movement they are 'probing.'" What does this mean? Does this mean that in the current stage of our probe, while we are exercising limited participation under the most general framework of support to homosexual civil rights and freedom from persecution, in order to gather information, that we should present the gay movement with a list of no-no's to govern deportment on public demonstrations? I should be surprised frankly, when and if we develop a line of intervention for the gay liberation movement, if even then we would give attention to something that is no more a problem among gays generally than it is among heterosexuals. I do not think Comrade Garza really believes that the failure of gay comrades to project good manners to gay antiwar marchers was responsible for what offended her.

In my opinion, what is really behind this account of the alleged orgy is that Comrade Garza first of all finds whatever displays she witnessed more offensive when they are engaged in by homosexuals than when they are engaged in by heterosexuals. I do not think this is because of "prudery" but because of anti-homosexual prejudice. It is possible that Comrade Garza thinks it was a mistake for the antiwar movement to mobilize gays for April 24 and that it was a mistake for the party to join with people from the gay liberation movement in proposing that the SMC and NPAC do so; this would seem to be the logic of her raising the so-called "sex circus," unrelated as it is to the explicitly stated subject of her article. But perhaps this is not what she thinks. I would like to hear more from her on the subject.

The final specified event is the New York Branch discussion of April 24, during which Comrade Graza made comments along the lines of those she makes in the article about the gay "sex circus" and was, in her estimation, dishonestly and unfairly answered by the reporter. What is the point? A reporter in a party branch meeting is certainly not publicly representing

the party's line, and if he is misrepresenting the line to the branch, there must be more to what he said than we are given in Comrade Garza's article -- which is at most an example of misunderstanding on either the reporter's or Comrade Garza's part. Of course, after the branch meeting, we are told, another conversation occurred with one of these mysterious "comrades" -- this time, "a leading gay comrade."

#### The Mysterious Examples

Such vague references as "a leading gay comrade told me" or "Comrades have publicly stated that homosexuality is 'transitional,'" (whatever that means) are impossible to discuss. In Comrade Garza's article, there are no less than 13 such references, although it might be argued

that the reference to "kiting" in relation to "the recent Albany abortion demonstration" should be in the category of specific references.

I suspect that these references are left vague and anonymous as a convenience. I suspect that each of them is a distortion, and specific references would place Comrade Garza in an uncomfortable position because the concrete details of these examples fully and openly stated would not support the argument she attempts to make. I challenge Comrade Garza to support her charge that there is a vast divergence between party policy and party practice in either the women's liberation movement or the gay liberation probe by providing the specifics of the incidents she lists in her article.

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