



# Discussion Bulletin

Published by

**SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

14 Charles Lane, New York, N. Y. 10014

Vol. 29, No. 20

July, 1971

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## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR TRADE UNION ORIENTATION

By George Basley and Jeff Powers

It is not unusual for our national convention to approve a whole series of orientations for a coming period, only to have some of them lost in the shuffle of events, set aside for higher priorities, or abandoned because of a lack of comradeship.

This has been true of the party's working class and trade union policies. The orientation set forth for this area of work at the 1969 convention and elaborated at the activist and educational Conference is correct but has only been implemented in a limited way. We could continue to excuse ourselves for this except the political situation is changing. The radicalization really *is* beginning to spread into the working class, particularly among the younger workers. This change has been slow in coming because of the inertia of an entire generation of working class lethargy and also because of the (for the most part) unchallenged betrayals of the trade union bureaucracy.

The current radicalization could not be quarantined. It is no exaggeration to say that almost all of American society, the working class included, is now preoccupied with political questions of one sort or another. The spread of the radicalization into the working class has been of a general nature with a few important manifestations through class actions. Most indications of the new mood are reflected through hard fought union battles over primarily economic questions.

Lunch periods in the factories are now often forums for various political arguments. The presence of radicals in these arguments is not only common but accepted. The atmosphere has changed. The most belligerent racists and national chauvinists are on the defensive because those in the middle tend to support more radical positions. Although workers tend to be inconsistent in their approach to political questions, radicalism seems to be in the factory to stay.

How then do we relate to these new developments? How do we, through our party and through the movements in which we work, expect to reach into the beginning phases of radicalization in the working class?

Because the specific political opportunities open to us have been few, the party projects a broad orientation to the awakening of the working class. Usually our orientation is through the various political movements in which we are already involved.

The following quotations concerning our working class orientation have been taken from the documents which should be read in full because they include a comprehensive outline of party policy. These quotations were chosen because they concern the *practical* application of the orientation.

Frank Lovell made the following contribution to the pre-convention discussion in 1965. (SWP discussion bulletin, vol. 25, no. 7). These remarks are more valid today than they were six years ago.

"Our task is to gather some troops in the unions and thus to be in a position to take advantage of all the favorable developments as they unfold. Right now we ought to center our attention on young workers entering industry. If we pay attention to them and bring some of them around to the regular forums and introduce them to the paper and literature of the Socialist Workers Party, we might recruit some of them and that

will be our guarantee of the future in the union movement. . . . In our daily work it is helpful to bear in mind that many young workers are not primarily interested in shop problems or union politics. The war, poverty, civil rights struggles, education, corruption in high places, all this is often of greater concern than 'the Union'. We will find that the workers recruited in the factories sometimes have no knowledge of union politics, and will first learn of the importance of the union movement from us. Such recruits as we can win now may very well become the leaders and organizers of new class struggle actions.

"We surely have many young comrades in industry already, most of them members of unions. Here it is more difficult for them to make contacts and recruits to the youth or the party than if we were on campus. But it can be done, especially if the party pays some attention to this urgent need." (pg. 19)

Comrade Lovell made the following specific proposals in 1969. (Internal Information Bulletin no. 6, 1969). ". . . (4) *General propaganda* and '*trade union work*'. We now find it very easy to sell *Militants* at plant gates. There is great advantage to this, especially if comrades or friends of the party are working in the plant. We find out right away what the general reaction is and we also that we can distribute anti-war literature to advantage—especially if we have a comrade working in the plant. . . . The sale of *Militants* at plant gates makes it possible to recruit young workers directly from the shops."

The 1971 proposed political draft resolution, "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization", after outlining a general program for workers, states "our program is a program of struggle; it is not a listing of promissary notes." But the program remains a promise, because the implementation of our working class and trade union policies, to date, has been far too limited.

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How many branches have consistent *Militant* sales at plant gates? National reports and *Militant* panel transcripts indicate none, with the possible exception of Detroit. Is it because our paper won't sell? No, in fact, the few times such sales do occur, the results are gratifying. Will such sales take away from our other work? No, *Militant* sales always build our work. There is no reason why some general street sales cannot be converted into factory sales.

It follows logically that *Militants* sold at plant gates should have more feature stories of strike actions from various branches, and more stories of a general nature concerning the working class.

Today, political questions interest young workers more than trade union matters. We must attempt to approach this layer through the movements in which we are already involved. The support given the GE strike by the SMC, for example, was well received by the workers. Similar actions should be carried out by our comrades involved in anti-war activity.

Leafletting of factories should be part and parcel of our anti-war work. Endorsements from trade union bureaucrats should be utilized to the hilt in this leafletting, especially if an International or Local union in a branch area has declared against the war. Working class neighborhoods must not be overlooked. Leafletting here enables us to reach workers from many factories at the same time.

The integration of our GI work into this leafletting is very important. Factories have many Vietnam veterans, the overwhelming majority of whom are opposed to the war and very vocal about their feelings. Our work could draw many of them into the anti-war movement, and increase the possibility of recruiting some of them to the YSA.

The same type of approach would be a valuable aid to our women's liberation work. Abortion and child care are popular issues among working class women. In Cambridge, for example, the response to the child care referendum has been enthusiastic. More attention should be paid to this type of enthusiasm by attempting to involve working class women in the committees in which we participate. It would be surprising if the leafletting of factories with a high percentage of women workers did not attract some of the younger women to the women's movement.

If we do it with care and without fostering any false expectations, it would be foolish for us not to branch out to the working class in these and many other areas of our work. There will be no problem involving student activists, for they respond enthusiastically to serious attempts to reach working people.

Most important is that the work be done consistently and over a long period of time. Comrade Breitman remarked at Oberlin that there must be millions of young workers beginning to radicalize. These young workers must become aware that the mass movements are aware of them and consider their support to be of the utmost importance. One quick sale or distribution will pass unnoticed.

\* \* \*

A word must be said here about the document entitled "For a Proletarian Orientation" as much of the discussion

concerning our working class orientation will revolve around the views set forth there.

There is a big difference between branching out towards the workers in our mass work, and sending comrades into the factories regardless of the political opportunities. Comrades should not be "sent" into the factories unless they are to do specific political work, and opportunities of this type are limited in spite of the general spread of discontent and radicalism into sections of the working class.

The biggest error of the "Proletarian Orientation" document is that it envisions the "orientation" as a cure for alien class forces within the party. Two mistakes are evident here.

First, a party is not proletarianized by sending its cadre into the factories. It is impossible to wipe out a comrade's social origins in this way. A party is proletarianized when it carries out three tasks correctly: the correct program, the correct strategical implementation of the program in political action, and the correct education of the cadre in a thorough understanding of the party's historic tasks.

Second, and most important, political turns are not made to solve internal party problems. They are made to take advantage of new areas of work.

\* \* \*

Although we do not believe that we should immediately "send" comrades into the factories, we do believe the party should pay more attention to comrades' jobs.

Almost every comrade has to get a job. Right now the party has no policy concerning jobs and the results are anarchistic. Many comrades have low paying, dead-end jobs and lead hand to mouth existences when their political work does not require it; while others, who should be doing full time political work, are stuck on a job because the branch cannot afford another full-timer.

We feel that the party should approach the question of comrades' jobs systematically. The party *should* have a general policy of encouraging comrades who have to work to get into the working class in a serious way. If possible, comrades should learn a trade or a skill. In some cases, the branch leadership might wish to advise specific comrades to improve their employment while leaving the choice of trade or industry up to each individual. The result of such a policy would be very beneficial to the party.

First, comrades would be getting better paying jobs and would be better able to support the party. At the same time, they would gain social stability from steady employment.

Second, comrades with skills would be better able to transfer because their chances for employment would be better. The party has many fresh cases of transfers floundering on the rocks of unemployment.

Third, the added income from these worker comrades to the party would enable us to add more full-timers. Six comrades leaving dead-end jobs and entering industry would enable us to add another full-timer to the payroll.

Fourth, the party would have a whole layer of comrades who are aware of the shifting moods of the working class and who would be in a position to recruit a few newly radicalizing younger workers.

Fifth, if situations do develop in sections of industry, we will have the personnel to shift there—worker comrades who have both the political experience from their work in the party and employment experience to get into the

factory. It is not a question of which trade to pick. Most factories need many tradesmen and tradeswomen from different backgrounds.

None of this entails a change in political work or orientation. No one should be taken off campus or take night or exhausting jobs which would isolate them from the political work of the party. None of this has anything to do with the "proletarianization" of Comrade X.

\* \* \*

To sum up, we do not propose any change in our work-

ing class and trade union policy as outlined at recent conventions. We do feel that an energetic implementation of this policy is now necessary.

If this work is not more encouraged from the party center, it will go on as it is, a policy endorsed by the convention but hardly carried out. The comrade in charge of national trade union work should go on national tour to help various branches begin this work in a serious way.

Since the basic problem is one of spreading the orientation through many areas of our current work, its implementation and co-ordination should not be difficult and the necessary personnel should not be hard to find.

## WHERE DOES HEDDA GARZA STAND?

by Lew Jones and Susan LaMont,  
Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local

Comrade Hedda Garza, in her document "For A Better Relationship Between Word and Deed" (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 29, No. 9), claims that because of "a generalized misinterpretation of party positions" party public speakers "have changed and distorted our program until it is scarcely recognizable." This discussion article will show that it is comrade Hedda Garza, even though she speaks in the name of support to the line of the political committee and national committee resolutions, who has the "generalized misinterpretation of party positions."

Her own words reveal her disagreement with the party's characterization of and policy toward the women's liberation movement and the gay liberation movement. Moreover, in warning the party against "adapting alien lines to suit the particular milieu" she indicates her disagreement with one of the central points of the National Committee Draft Political Resolution.

### *Women's Liberation*

Comrade Hedda Garza charges that party speakers are advancing a "man-hating" line in the women's liberation movement, as opposed to a "class line." She states in her discussion article, "The PC resolution on women's liberation states straightforwardly—as do the articles by Evelyn Reed—that our line is a class line—not a man-hating line—not a line that divides society along sex lines." Further, in answer to the Wohlforthites charge that the women's liberation movement raised the "danger of dividing society along sex lines rather than class lines," comrade Hedda Garza states that, "that danger certainly does exist in a movement such as the women's liberation movement. . . ." (It is obvious why her answer "dispensed with the Woolys with great ease,"—she simply agreed with them!)

Comrade Hedda Garza feels that the main thrust of the women's liberation movement is "man-hating" to which the party has been adapting: "It is not too difficult to see why many [party] women were very excited by the emergence of the Women's Liberation Movement and why so many have been bending toward the line of the movement as a whole instead of putting forth our own line. . . ."

These words reveal that she has a basic disagreement with the party's view of the nature of oppression of women, the feminist movement that oppression has given rise to, and the party's line for this movement. It is the party's view that *all* women are oppressed as women and that this oppression has been and is a fundamental component of all class societies. Thus comrade Hedda Garza's warn-

ing of the "danger" of the women's liberation movement dividing society along sex lines is false, since society is already divided by the ruling class's oppression of women as a sex.

It is this specific oppression of women that provides the framework for the current women's liberation movement in the context of today's radicalization. This movement stands for the end of the oppression of all women. The party sees that struggle as inherently revolutionary, striking at some of the key myths, institutions, and underpinnings of American capitalist society. We therefore support the women's liberation struggle for its own ends.

The party understands that women, by continuing to build their own movement, organizations, and leadership will play a central part in the American revolution. It is on the basis of women organized as a social force fighting for their own demands that real alliances with oppressed nationalities and the working class as a whole will be forged as well as provide and give impetus to feminist leaders of those movements. Thus, far from dividing society, the women's liberation movement will be instrumental in helping to get rid of capitalist society and all its divisions: class, racial, and sexual.

Flowing from her fear that the thrust of the movement will be "man-hating," comrade Hedda Garza points out that "the thesis that all women are in the same awful predicament together" is a "distortion of the theme of sisterhood," claiming the Political Committee Draft Resolution, *Toward a Mass Feminist Movement*, as verification. But, to the contrary, the PC resolution states that while women face different degrees and forms of oppression, *all* women *are* in the same awful predicament together. The resolution states, "There is an objective basis for a unified struggle of women of different nationalities and classes because all women are oppressed as women by capitalism. Sisterhood *is* powerful because of this universal female oppression, and this is the basis for the existence of an independent nonexclusive mass feminist movement, with an anticapitalist logic."

Standing behind comrade Hedda Garza's concern with the question of "man-hating" is a basic disagreement with the party's analysis of and approach to the feminist movement. "Man-hating," in reality, is not the issue either in the women's liberation movement or the party. In fact, the issue usually comes up only when the bourgeois media raises it to distort the women's liberation movement. These attacks are reminiscent of the liberal attacks on black

nationalism as "racism in reverse." The problem in this society is not "man-hating" or "white-hating," but woman-hating and Black-hating, Chicano-hating etc.

The party does feel that the rage of women against their oppression and agents of that oppression is not only justified but totally progressive. Rather than wanting to see as comrade Hedda Garza does, that "their initial hatred against men will simmer down," we would like to see the anger of the women's liberation movement against their oppression spread to all the women in this country. Our purpose is not to "simmer down" this sentiment, but to give it political direction through such vehicles as the abortion campaign mass actions.

Standing side by side comrade Hedda Garza's view of the women's liberation movement as "man-hating," is a patronizing attitude toward working class women and a conservative estimate of the potential of working class women becoming involved in the feminist movement. This is most clearly revealed in her discussion of her view of the party's position on the nuclear family.

First it is necessary to correct a factual error. The "public stance" of the party has never been to use "abolition of the nuclear family" as a "transitional slogan." We defy comrade Hedda Garza to find this slogan used on any banner, in *The Militant*, in any election campaign, or in any other public activity of the party. The reason we don't use the "slogan," "Abolish the nuclear family," is not, as comrade Garza implies, that working class women are "terrified" by it; we don't use it because it is not directed at the state, but at individual women. Moreover, we understand that because the family plays a real social and economic role in capitalist society, it cannot simply be "abolished" — its functions must be replaced.

Comrade Hedda Garza, however, should have no doubts — the party believes the family is a reactionary institution. One of the functions of this reactionary institution is the oppression of women, especially working women. Because of that oppression working women have the most to gain from and will be among the most consistent fighters for 24-hour child care centers, the repeal of all abortion laws, and equal pay for equal work. Not only that, because of their oppression and because of their role in the struggle against oppression, many working women will come to a conscious understanding of the reactionary role of the family and see themselves as independent, self-reliant women — as feminists.

In general, we are left with the impression that comrade Hedda Garza views the women's liberation movement solely as a "man-hating" movement which threatens to divide society along sex lines, and she is worried that the party is adapting to these pressures. She proposes a "class line" which actually turns out to be a conservative, patronizing one, and one that is in disagreement with the party's class line of mass action around demands which speak to the needs of *all* women. What comrade Hedda Garza's full outlook is, remains to be seen. Our question is, where does Hedda Garza stand?

#### *Gay Liberation*

Comrade Hedda Garza makes similar mistakes with regard to the gay liberation movement. Her characterization of the gay liberation movement is decidedly different from that contained in the National Committee Draft Political Resolution, even though, once again, her criticisms are put forward in the context of professed support to that document.

In a series of non-analytical anecdotes, comrade Hedda

Garza seeks to prove that the deed has exceeded the word in our activity in the gay liberation movement; that the party's probe has been "misinterpreted." Instead, what these stories demonstrate is comrade Hedda Garza's deep political hostility to gay liberation and a different analysis and approach from that outlined in the Draft Political Resolution.

The party's reaction to the rise of the gay liberation movement was to welcome this development and to make clear the party's position of unconditional support to the full civil and human rights for homosexuals. We saw the development of the gay liberation movement as further confirmation of our analysis of the current radicalization. When this severely oppressed layer decided for the first time to take to the streets to fight for its rights, it indicated to us the depth and scope of the radicalization. The party is currently conducting a probe of the gay liberation movement in order to determine its strategy and tactics toward the movement.

This attitude is summed up in the National Committee Draft Political Resolution as follows: "The gay liberation movement against the oppression of homosexuals, the prison revolts, the welfare struggles, the divisions in the Catholic Church demonstrate several key facts:

"1) There is no layer too oppressed to struggle, no reactionary prejudice and oppression too sacrosanct and deep-rooted to be challenged.

"2) The actions of each new layer of the diversified movement have raised greater doubts about the fundamental values of bourgeois society.

"3) Each extends and deepens interest in radical ideas about the reconstruction of social life.

"4) Each drives home the conclusion that new issues and independent struggles will continue to emerge as the radicalization deepens."

Comrade Hedda Garza's reaction is objectively opposed to this estimate. All her examples indicate an attitude toward the gay liberation movement that is based on acceptance of the myths about homosexuals fostered and maintained by the ruling class — myths which the gay liberation movement is beginning to expose. All her examples point to a view of the gay liberation movement which seems to be that the movement is basically sick, exhibitionist, and that its central objective is to convert others to homosexuality.

The example comrade Hedda Garza spends the most time on is an alleged "sex circus" which she saw the gay contingent "exhibit" at the April 24 demonstration. This "en-masse off-Broadway show for the local gentry" was "deliberately put on" by gays who "cavorted and carried on, making sexual gestures and freely fondling each other in a most intimate style." The alleged fact that "the reporter was ducking the question," which comrade Hedda Garza asked at a branch meeting about this "sex circus" evidently indicates to her that the party is "adapting alien lines to suit the particular milieu" or else "caving in to extremist pressures."

Comrade Hedda Garza's diatribe is absolutely astounding. The party saw the establishment of the Student Mobilization Committee Gay Task Force and the building of the April 24 gay contingent as an important step forward because it provided a vehicle for mobilizing a whole new constituency against the war. Moreover, the contingent was an important show of strength by the gay liberation movement; in San Francisco the gay contingent was the

largest gay action to date on the West Coast. Even *The New York Times* recognized the importance of this development, when it referred to the gay contingent and its ready acceptance by the rest of the demonstrators.

Yet, all comrade Hedda Garza has to say about this development is that it resulted in a "deliberately put on" "sex circus." The fact that no bourgeois, radical, or gay press reported the "show" leads us to wonder whether it actually occurred. In fact, we doubt that anything was going on in the gay contingent that was not going on throughout the demonstration, as occurs on these actions whether we like it or not.

Without attempting any objective or rounded analysis, comrade Hedda Garza viciously slanders and tries to discredit the April 24 gay contingent as nothing but exhibitionist and "deliberately put on" no less. (Incidentally, no matter what the gay liberation movement does there will be those who will consider it "exhibitionist" thereby revealing more about their prejudices than their political insight. Such estimations have nothing in common with Marxism.)

Further examples from her article would appear to complete comrade Hedda Garza's estimate of the gay liberation movement. For instance, she states that, "women comrades are definitely made to feel that they are backward if they don't declare themselves man-haters and lesbians." She further implies that comrades who would rather "fight than switch" are made to feel that they "are somehow not true-blue Bolsheviks." She says "all this hasn't the faintest resemblance to a 'probe' into gay liberation." We say that all this hasn't the faintest resemblance to reality. In the real world things are just the other way around. All the institutions and sexual standards of this society are stacked against women and gay people. Women are taught to hate themselves and forced to become sex objects. Gays are derided and pressured to conform to heterosexual norms. Both the women's liberation and gay liberation movements are fighting against these pressures. Instead of seeing these developments as progressive, comrade Hedda Garza paints us a picture of "man-haters" and lesbians out to convert others to homosexuality.

In this regard we cannot let pass comrade Hedda Garza's remark about "confessions of newly acquired homosexuality." This is the end result of the gay liberation movement in her view, no doubt, but this is a remarkably coarse remark. The radicalization and the gay liberation movement, because of struggles, have created an atmosphere where homosexuals are "coming out" and fighting for their full human rights as homosexuals. Does she believe all this is phoney, that it is all "newly acquired"? Does she believe the anguish and self-guilt many homosexuals are made to suffer is real? Does she believe the gay liberation movement and the atmosphere where gays can come-out is good? Her remarks would indicate a negative answer in all cases.

Furthermore, comrade Hedda Garza indicates her belief in the widespread myth that homosexuals are simply "sick" by the reference at the end of her article to the SWP becoming a "hospital" for gay people. We would like to point out that gay people do not need hospitals any more than non-gay people do. They are oppressed. Repeat—oppressed. What they need and what they are building are organizations and a movement to fight that oppression.

Comrade Hedda Garza believes the gay liberation movement is a sick, exhibitionist movement, which threatens to

turn the SWP into "a conversion school for lesbians" and male homosexuals. Even a novice would recognize that this is a different position than that held by the party. Thus she should have presented us with an exposition of her full views, rather than hiding her views behind a supposed divergence between words and deeds. We are left in the dark as to what she fully thinks, and once again must pose the question, where does Hedda Garza stand? *Hedda Garza's Line*

In her concluding paragraphs comrade Hedda Garza states, "When we confront our opponents, it is becoming more and more difficult to defend our deeds. Often we find ourselves speaking for the party line while knowing full well that the opponent's charges about our actual words and deeds are quite accurate." Furthermore, she warns the party against "caving into extremist pressures and allowing the movement to become a dumping ground for grievances against men and a conversion school for lesbians."

Two things ought to be said about these remarks. First, we imagine that it is quite difficult for comrade Hedda Garza to defend the deeds of the party and the line from which those deeds flow, since she disagrees with both the line and the deeds. What we really deserve is not her criticisms of a supposed divergence between word and deeds, but a full exposition of her political views and proposals for action.

Second, in so far as a worked-out line manifests itself in her document, that line has a familiar ring to it. She has presented us with an approach that goes in the direction of the line put forward by the Gregorich *et al* grouping. Moreover, she treats us to similar dire warnings of disaster for the party if the present course is continued.

If there is any doubt of this, comrades should compare comrade Hedda Garza's views with the following extracted from the Gregorich *et al* grouping's documents. On women's liberation: "The party and its cadres must conduct an unremitting struggle against any adaptation on the part of the movement or ourselves to alien class propaganda or theories. It is important that we adopt an approach with the utmost clarity. First it must be emphasized that the class divisions between women transcend their sex identity, especially in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism. Confusion on this score can only lead the party into a morass." (From "The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation," *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 29, no. 15; pg. 11.)

On gay liberation: "Instead of crass adaptation to the petty bourgeois milieu with the publication of article after article on homosexuals, *The Militant* needs page after page on the plight of the working class and the socialist alternative." (From "For a Proletarian Orientation," *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 29, No. 2; pg. 33.) Or, "our entry into [the gay liberation movement] was in the most confused manner. It seems that we are entering it to find out what it is all about, yet our press, public speakers, women's liberation work, and antiwar work treat it as a major priority! Our adaptation to this movement and the manner in which it has been done is an *effect*, not the cause, of a problem in our present orientation." (From "The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation," *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 29, No. 15; pg. 13.)

Comrade Hedda Garza makes the same basic mistake that the Gregorich grouping makes, and it is revealed in her own words in her concluding paragraphs. "But a



document or two are not enough to turn back a growing tendency in our ranks to jump barefoot and fully into one or two movements, ignoring all else and worse yet, adapting alien lines to suit the particular milieu."

Indeed, a document or two are not enough to turn back such a growing tendency, especially when those documents are fully intended to encourage the party to embrace and fully support the new forms of the radicalization. As stated in the Report to the SWP National Committee Plenum on the Draft Political Resolution: "The key thing is that as the radicalization deepens, as new movements arise, as new sectors come into struggle against the anti-democratic bias of capitalism, against the inequalities of capitalism, that we embrace the progressive demands of these movements, and we act as revolutionists toward them and in them. Then as long as we're clear about our political principles we should find no insurmountable obstacles to coming to grips with these new movements, analyzing them and incorporating generalizations and demands flowing from them into our program.

"There's a section in the resolution that deals with this. It says our job is to champion the movements of all sectors of the oppressed that rise in struggle against the oppression of capitalism. And, over time, we add to our transitional program, our program for the socialist revolution, those demands flowing from these struggles which fit into the strategy of the transitional program. We do

not see these struggles — regardless of their current leadership or limitations — as something separate from or alien to the SWP. The revolutionary party wants to be connected with the genuinely progressive goals of every movement of the oppressed."

Comrade Hedda Garza, like the Gregorich *et al* grouping, does not understand the character of the radicalization and the tasks of the party in regard to this radicalization. She sees the new forms of the radicalization as "alien" and is direly worried that by intervening in these new forms that the party will become a "haven or hospital at the expense of recruiting workers, veterans, and student youth."

Comrade Hedda Garza has stated on the floor of the Lower Manhattan Branch that she is not sure if she will support the NC Draft Political Resolution or the For a Proletarian Orientation Resolution. We submit that that is an honest statement of her position. (Such honesty would have been appreciated in her document.) She objectively stands somewhere between those two resolutions. Her only problem is that there is no middle ground between these sharply counterposed, divergent lines. She ought to reconsider her contribution and her views in light of the two line resolutions, make a decision, and inform the party where she stands and why. The party can expect no less from her.

July 13, 1971.

#### SOME HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE PRESENT DISCUSSION

By Evelyn Sell, Austin Branch

It is helpful to review the last couple of political resolutions presented to the party for convention discussion and ratification. This will provide the background for our current position. The political resolution in 1967 was entitled "American Politics and the 1968 Presidential Campaign." Like this summer, the party was preparing itself for launching the most ambitious national electoral campaign in its history. The aim of the political resolution was to analyze the current conjuncture of events and lay out the immediate tasks and campaigns of the party. This is a very standard or normal aim of a convention political resolution.

The resolution had 8 major sections:

1. The situation of the U. S. on the international front. There was a description and analysis of the international role of American imperialism, of the U. S. role in Vietnam. The resolution went into the shifts in power relationships between the different sectors of world capitalism and traced the growing direct intervention of the U. S. government in the internal affairs of other nations. This section ended with a presentation of the deepening crisis of capitalism on a world scale.

2. The situation of U. S. capitalism on the domestic front. The effects of the war on the U. S. economy and social stability was outlined. The current situation in the unions, particularly the industrial unions, was analyzed.

3. Special attention was devoted to describing and analyzing the organization and actions of public workers — the fastest growing sector of the labor force and one whose struggles directly confronted the government.

There then followed an outline of the activities and meaning of:

4. The rise of Black Power.

5. The student movement.

6. The new antiwar movement.

7. The 1968 presidential election scene was then surveyed and the various political forces were examined.

8. The final section dealt with the SWP presidential campaign. We projected the idea that the 1968 campaign would take place within the context of a continuing radicalization. We dissected the current radicalization and compared it to the post-World War II upsurge in union militancy. We said at that time that the radicalized students, the Black freedom fighters and the antiwar movement were in the vanguard of militant struggles and the labor movement was lagging far behind. We pointed out that although the students were involved in important struggles, they could not themselves provide the basis for an independent political party such as the working class — or an oppressed nationality — could provide. Therefore, we said that for the students to engage in truly effective battles against capitalism, they must be won over politically to the working class. In practical terms, given the situation in 1967, that meant winning the students over to the revolutionary party which alone offered the alternative of independent working class political action. In order to accomplish that end, our election campaign directed its 1968 election campaign in a dual way: it campaigned against the war and for socialism.

To sum up the 1967 political resolution: we first took a sober, realistic look at the class enemy (at that enemy's strengths and weaknesses); we then took a look at the opposition forces that were challenging the rule of the class enemy; and, finally, we projected our tasks and goals for the coming period based on the evaluation of the current situation. We were cautiously optimistic about the general relationship of forces in the country and about our ability to recruit fresh new young revolutionists to the nucleus of the revolutionary party.

The test of events proved that we were right in our



analysis and in our tactics. The radicalization spread and deepened and encompassed new groups, new movements. We were able to recruit healthy new young socialists. One positive result of the work we did in the 1968 election campaign is the situation we have here in Texas now. The election campaign sparked the creation of a YSA in Austin. From that beginning we were able to build a branch of the party here, then other YSA locals and another party branch in Houston.

I pointed out before that the 1967 political resolution was standard or normal in the sense of having as its aim an analysis of the current conjuncture of events and a laying out of the prime tasks and campaigns of the party. Our method of analyzing the events was, also, standard in that we employed the methodology of Marxism, enriched by the insights given to us by the work of Lenin and Trotsky. Our major goal was standard—standard since our very inception: to build a mass revolutionary party in the U.S. in order to achieve a socialist world. What was not standard and never is standard in our resolutions were the concrete analyses and projections of specific tasks. These can never be standardized formulas for us because we base ourselves on reality and reality is ever-changing, ever-shifting, never the same in all features from one moment to the next. It would be much more simple, of course, to just pick up last year's resolution or one from 10 years ago or 15 years ago, dust it off, change a few dates, add a few current examples and present it to the party. And that is the way some political groups function. Formulas are convenient security blankets for anarchistic reality. But we are not a formula party and we don't train our members to be formula people. We're glad to send those kind of people to the Spartacists or the Wohlforthites. We don't promise our recruits that entering this party is going to mean having it easy ideologically; we don't dispense ultimate truth at our branch meetings or our political conventions. (Five drops of Marx today and three drops of Lenin and a few drops of Trotsky—now you're cured of mental strain and you don't have to think for yourself anymore!) We tell our members: we have a difficult job; we have to face reality, full-of-motion, complicated, ornery, contradictory reality and we have to figure things out from one year to the next, from one month to the next, from one week to the next. It's tough but it's necessary, it's the only way to accomplish our goal, and it's the only way to stay in tune with history.

The 1969 political resolution was quite different from the 1967 resolution. Instead of looking at a specific set of circumstances as we did in 1967, the 1969 resolution presented a general view of the development of U.S. imperialism over the last 25 years, the response of the oppositional forces within this country to these imperialist developments, the evolution of the new radicalization, and the role of our party.

This resolution had seven major sections. A special added document outlined the 50 year history of the Trotskyist movement in the U.S.

1. The opening section develops the idea of the strategic importance of the American revolution for the world socialist future. We then point out the crucial importance of the creation of a mass revolutionary socialist party in order to successfully achieve that American revolution. We state the necessity of selecting, training and hardening

the cadres which will form the framework of that kind of party.

2. The next section begins to lay out the objective conditions which have led to the creation of the present subjective reactions to life in these United States. Again, we began by analyzing the contradictions of the class enemy which impel it to create its own gravediggers. It was the internal contradictions of its economic system that compelled the United States to spread across the American continent and then across the seas. The more victories it won (over the Native Americans, over the Spanish, over the British, etc.) the worse these contradictions became. This section concludes with a description of the untenable American war in Vietnam, a war which has exposed its naked imperialism to the world, has proven that a modern military machine is no match for a popular revolution, and has provoked the greatest antiwar movement in American history.

3. The post World War II American economy is then examined. We pointed to the growing militarization of the economy and its concomitant crises and squeeze-plays against the workers.

4. The political climate in this country since World War II is featured in the next section. The past 25 years can be broken into two major phases: the cold war witch-hunt and the new radicalization. We foresaw the continuing breakdown of the relative political stability enjoyed by America's capitalist rulers during the heyday of their rule and we looked forward to the continuing development of extraordinary opportunities for independent black and labor political action accompanied by the growth of revolutionary socialist ideas and influence.

5. We recognized that our ability to take advantage of these tremendous openings rested on our skill in applying the methods projected in the Transitional Program. This method is to find demands which embody all of the following characteristics: they correspond to the present level of political understanding of the masses, they meet the concrete needs of the masses, they serve to mobilize people into independent actions, they lead to a higher level of understanding of what this system really is like and what must be done to the system to win these demands. In short, they take people from this point in time farther along the road to the transformation of capitalism into socialism, via the express train of social revolution. The resolution points to three special sections of the population to which we must project such transitional demands: the Black community and the youth (both of which were in massive independent movement already) and the organized working class (which we know will play a crucial role in the revolutionary process). Each of these sectors is then looked at closely and the general, major demands necessary for each are outlined.

6. The development of the new radicalization is then described along with a report on the various political currents operating within the radicalized sectors of society.

7. The final section of the resolution returns to the theme presented in the first sections: the vital importance of building a Leninist party in this country, a single centralized multi-national revolutionary party capable of establishing a workers state and carrying out the main tasks of socialism. Three main assignments are made for the party:

a. Apply united front methods to the peculiar conditions prevailing in the American left, i.e., we should use the action coalition approach employed in the anti-war movement for work in other areas of activity.

b. Apply the method of the Transitional Program wherever there are openings. Augment the demands in the Transitional Program with new demands appropriate for the new sectors of society entering into struggle with the class enemy.

c. Engage in polemical struggle with the opportunists and ultraleft misleaders in the radical movement—expose their false ideas and counterpose Marxism to their methods and programs.

The companion document to the 1969 political resolution focuses on our experiences in building a revolutionary party. It is entitled "The Road We Have Traveled: Five Decades of Building the Revolutionary Party in the United States: 1919-1969." In this survey, George Novack outlines the 5 phases in the development of American Trotskyism. I will just briefly recapitulate the major strategies used in building and rebuilding the party in each of those 5 phases.

**1919-1927** In 1919 the Socialist Party split and one of the groups formally constituted itself as an independent communist party, the first in the U.S. The founders of the American Trotskyist movement were a part of that historic step but when they supported the Communist Left Opposition, led by Leon Trotsky, they were expelled from the CPUSA. The first step in building a revolutionary socialist movement in this country was to split the major left-wing organization, the Socialist Party. A split based on principled differences temporarily diminishes the organized party but leads to a strengthening of the cadres and thus is a forward movement on the road to building a mass revolutionary party.

**1928-1933** The very small group that supported the international Left Opposition concentrated its energies into putting forward its Trotskyist program to radicals, primarily to the members and supporters of the Communist Party. Participation in mass movements of that time was subordinated to the tasks of educating the comrades thoroughly in Marxism and Leninism and in the nature of Stalinism, and secondly to propagandizing these ideas among radicals. We were then called the Communist League of America and functioned as an outlawed faction of the Stalinized CP. This party-building tactic did not win over the whole CP but it did succeed in gathering together a nucleus of several hundred Trotskyists. This period of our history exemplifies a second way of building a revolutionary party: "going fishing" inside the left-wing movement.

**1933-1940** When the Third International failed so completely to meet the challenge of fascism in Europe, our movement decided the CP was beyond regeneration and we turned our attention away from the CP and toward those political groups and tendencies which were moving in a revolutionary direction. In 1934 we succeeded in completing a fusion with the American Workers Party led by A.J. Muste. At the same time we began to engage in modest mass work inside the ranks of the unemployed and employed. It was during this period that we participated in and led strikes and organizing efforts such as the one among the Minneapolis teamsters. A new opening in the left-wing movement led us into entering the Socialist

Party. We were there from 1936 through 1937 and we were able to split the left-wing of that party and when we left the SP we took the majority of the youth and the healthiest workers. In this way we came out of the SP twice as large as we were when we went in, we had gained valuable political experience, and we had begun to further penetrate into unions such as auto and maritime. With these successes as a firm foundation, the Socialist Workers Party was formally established in 1938. No sooner were we founded than we faced an internal political battle with a petty-bourgeois opposition led by Burnham and Shachtman. In the resultant split we lost 40% of our membership but the 60% that remained had been tested and hardened in the process of debate and we had preserved our revolutionary proletarian program, organization and perspective. During that hectic 7 year period from 1933-1940 we employed 4 different, 4 valid tactics to build the party: fusion, entryism, splitting and mass work. The first three involved working with already-radicalized persons and groups; the last—mass work—involved reaching out to the new layers in society just swinging into motion, just approaching radical conclusions.

**1940-1947** The whole first part of this period was devoted to defending ourselves against the combined assaults of the government, the labor bureaucracy and the patriotic attitudes of the American public. Our party grew numerically smaller as we hung on for dear life and organized a broad national Civil Rights Defense Committee to preserve our cadres. As the war fever cooled down and labor began to fight back against the restrictions imposed by the employers and their government servants, the party moved out into the unions and into the struggles of Blacks. Our literature circulation picked up and we began recruiting more and more Blacks and workers. We continued to expand in every way during the next 3 years (1944-47). Sizable fractions were established in auto, steel, rubber, aircraft and maritime. We intervened vigorously in Black struggles for equality. New party branches were set up across the country. By the time of our 1946 convention we had the largest membership in our history; as a matter of fact, we had doubled our membership in the one year preceding the '46 convention. It looked like the only way for us to go was up. But the class enemy knows that "up" for the forces of socialism means down for the power of capitalism; the class enemy struck back at the labor and Black upsurge, struck back at the growing influence of revolutionary socialism with the cold war and the witch-hunt.

We employed two party-building techniques during this period covering the World War II patriotic fervor and the post-war upsurge: defense of our cadres and mass work. Defending the party is a very necessary part of party-building. In the first place, it is crucial to preserve the precious human material already won to the cause of proletarian revolution; we don't squander our valuable resources like capitalism does—they're too hard come by for us to be casual about losing them. In the second place, when we put up a vigorous defense against boss attacks, we gain the respect and the allegiance of the healthier elements in society. In the third place, we help educate and arm broader layers through the example we set for oppressed sectors in society.

The second party-building technique used during this period was mass work, primarily within organized la-

bor and the Black community. We "colonized" comrades into basic industry and into labor situations where they could function within major components of the organized union movement. This was carried on in a deliberate and conscious manner. This is a very effective tactic given a certain set of circumstances.

**1948-1960** The next dozen years were very difficult ones for party-building. The political terrorism launched by the capitalist rulers stifled dissent, left-wing organizations, mobilization of the oppressed sectors of society. Although the main public target of the witch-hunt was the CP, all radical groups suffered under the blows of McCarthyism. Our trade union members were blacklisted by the employers and thrown out of their jobs, many trade union comrades grew disheartened or frightened and dropped out of union and party activity; whole branches shriveled up and blew away; groups dropped out, we had a major split with the Cochranites. Our party-building during this period took the form of defense of the cadres (the Kutcher case), splitting, and the launching of broad propaganda campaigns aimed at every segment of American society (presidential election campaigns). During the latter part of the 1950's we began to see some light at the end of the long dark corridor: the Black community began to move forward starting with the Montgomery bus boycott movement and the Stalinist monolith began to break apart with the Krushchev revelations and the revolt in Hungary.

**1960-1968** The winds of change swept across this country and the world during the 60s. A whole series of national and international events announced that a new era had opened up for mass action and revolutionary achievements: the Cuban revolution which inspired the new generation of American youth, the civil rights movement which broke through the political stranglehold of the bosses on American society, the beginnings of a re-vigoration of the left through the rising student movement, and the emergence of an unparalleled antiwar movement in this country. The party sought to rebuild its cadres and expand as never before through work within the three major areas of struggle: Black liberation, the student movement, and the antiwar movement. We played a truly vanguard role in analyzing the developments within the Black liberation struggles and supporting the most revolutionary component: Black nationalism as expressed through the activities and words of Malcolm X. We helped create the most serious, most capable revolutionary youth group in the country, the Young Socialist Alliance, and the YSA intervened effectively within the ever-growing, ever-more-radical student struggles. We threw our forces into the antiwar movement; and, our labor within that movement, our program adopted by that movement, our tactics used by that movement have made it qualitatively different than it would have been if it had followed the course proposed by the CP, the social-democrats, the ultra-lefts, the pacifists, etc.

What forms did our party-building take during that period? Propaganda and recruitment within the radicalized layers in society, splits and expulsions (Robertsonites, Wohlforthites, groups such as Kirk-Kaye, Boulton and Swabeck), and mass work within the living-breathing-acting movements on the march in this country plus broad propaganda efforts reaching all segments of so-

ciety. As you can see from this over-view of the fifty year history of Trotskyism in this country, our party-building efforts have taken many different forms: propagandizing radicalized elements, splitting, fusion, entryism, mass work, defending our cadres, broad propaganda, and expulsion.

Each one of these methods for preserving and augmenting the tiny number of revolutionary socialists in this heartland of world imperialism is a valid method when applied to the appropriate conditions. Each one of these methods is principled when applied to the appropriate conditions. Each one of these methods is successful when applied to the appropriate conditions. That's the Catch-22: *when applied to the appropriate conditions.*

How much simpler it would be if we could strike upon *THE ONE WAY* and apply it for a length of time and at the end of that period, Eureka! we end up with a mass revolutionary party. Capitalist psychological conditioning impels us to look for such simple solutions but our Marxist training and understanding teaches us that there are no simple solutions to complex problems. We know by studying the experiences of other revolutions that there is more than one way to solve the day-to-day problems of creating the nucleus of a revolutionary party, then building that core into a mass revolutionary party. We know what we are aiming for, we know the general outlines of how to get there but we have no completely worked out set of blueprints for each tiny step along the way to our goal. Is that because we are ignorant or saturated with alien class influences? No. We have no blueprints for what we must do every small step along the way because we must take into consideration constantly the living reality within which we function, the living reality within which all of society functions and that living reality changes, shifts, reverses itself, leaps forward. We must fit our tactics to that living reality, with all its twists and turns, and keep those tactics in harmony with our goals. A tactic for party-building is neither correct nor incorrect in and of itself. It is correct depending on the conditions to which it is applied. It is incorrect if it is applied to conditions which do not warrant such a tactic.

For example, our tactic of fusion with the Musteites' American Workers Party in 1934 was principled and correct; it helped build the Trotskyist movement. But what if we were to have a fusion between our party and the Socialist Labor Party based on the SLP abstentionism from the living mass struggles in this country? In that case, we would be both unprincipled and tactically incorrect because we would be abandoning our revolutionary perspectives and destroying our cadres. Another example, our tactic of entry into the Socialist Party in 1936 was principled and correct; we came out of it bigger and better than before. But what if we entered into the Democratic Party with the argument that there's where the masses are and there's where we can win over progressive elements? We would be unprincipled in crossing class lines to join the bosses in their party. We also would be incorrect in our tactic because we would not be helping to build the necessary independent political organizations of the working class which are essential to the further development of the class struggle but we would instead be propping up the illusions about class rule in the U.S. and we would mis-train, mis-educate and mis-direct our pre-

sent and future cadres so that a mass revolutionary party built around solid cadres could never be created.

Tactics must be seen as relative to the concrete set of circumstances to which they are applied. That is what we understood when we undertook to build a revolutionary party in this country and that is what we have confirmed every step along the way in gathering the first beginnings of such a party. If anything is the product of alien class forces, it is the tendency to try to find easy formula solutions to the problems of party-building, the tendency to confuse principles with tactics, the tendency to run away from plunging into the living movements in this country and to find supposed shelter within those arenas which are not boiling over with so many decision-demanding situations. It is the psychological conditioning of the class enemy which leads us into rigid thinking, inhibits our abilities to see the true relations between things, and frightens us away from involvement in deep-going changes of familiar patterns.

The approach which characterized the political documents which I have just reviewed and discussed is based on a materialist analysis of our society, i.e., we looked at living reality, at actual events, at actually existing relationships of forces and then we laid out our tasks relative to that reality and relative to our goal. That approach is quite different from one based on reliance on "absolute truths" regardless of present reality and the way it is evolving.

That materialist approach is what characterizes the 1971 draft political resolution of the National Committee. The aim of the 1971 resolution was to further develop the perspectives and tasks approved at the 1969 convention of the party—with special emphasis again on the key task of constructing the Socialist Workers Party as the current expression of the development of a mass revolutionary party in this country.

Once again we start by taking a long, hard look at the class enemy and we say that the internal and international crises of American capitalism are growing worse and worse. Then we take a sober look at the opposition forces in this country and we say that the radicalization is getting better and better, going deeper, spreading more broadly, affecting new layers continuously. After surveying and analyzing the situation of the class enemy, the situation of the opposition forces and the relationship between these two contending segments of society, we look at ourselves—what we are now, what we want to be and what we can do to change ourselves from a small nucleus of cadres formed around a revolutionary socialist program into a mass revolutionary party capable of leading the transformation of this dying rotten capitalist system into a healthy socialist society where people can at last shape their destinies to fit their needs and desires.

This resolution continues to affirm what the previous two convention resolutions projected and, also, to augment the previous documents within the same general framework of analyses and tasks. I don't intend to review the material in the resolution; it is your responsibility to read and re-read that material carefully, critically. What I will do during this last section of my report is to measure the approach and conclusions of the 1971 draft political resolution against the approach and projections contained in the Transitional Program.

The Transitional Program is our basic programmatic

document. It embodies our general world analysis of the death agony of capitalism and lays out general guidelines for revolutionary socialist activity in all major sectors of the world: the advanced capitalist countries, the colonial world, and the workers states. The Transitional Program contains a set of demands applicable to each of these major sectors. I've already described the basic nature of these transitional demands earlier in this report but I'm going to repeat now: these demands correspond to the present level of political understanding of the masses, they meet the concrete needs of the masses, they serve to mobilize people into independent actions against the class enemy, they lead to a higher understanding of what this system really is and what must be done to the system in order to fully win the demands; transitional demands are designed to move massive numbers of people from a particular point to another point much closer to social revolution and then from there into the revolution itself. The demands contained in the Transitional Program are like algebraic formulas; it is the responsibility of revolutionists to provide the specific expression of each demand. For example, the Transitional Program calls for the sliding scale of wages and hours. The sliding scale of wages means that workers must be guaranteed an automatic rise in wages in relation to the increase in the price of consumer goods. The sliding scale of hours means that all available work would be divided among all existing workers. In the United States we have filled this algebraic formulation with the specific slogan: 30 for 40, i.e., 30 hours work a week keeping wages at the same level as that obtained previously for working 40 hours a week. The sliding scale of wages is demanded through the "escalator clause" which guarantees that wages will rise with the index of consumer prices.

Trotsky, who was the major author of the Transitional Program, pointed out in 1938 that the chief significance of the program was that it drew the balance of the already accumulated experiences of the cadres in countries across the world and on the basis of our concrete national experiences opened up broader international perspectives. He contrasted that with drawing up an *a priori* theoretical plan, i.e., an abstract approach based on revealed doctrine regardless of present reality.

It is the Transitional Program which underlies the present 1971 draft political resolution (just as it has provided the basis for all of our other programmatic statements). For example, the very first sentence in the Transitional Program is: "The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat." The draft resolution addresses itself to this key problem by outlining ways and means of constructing the necessary leadership of the proletariat in these United States of America at this particular time. Given the continuing crises wracking American capitalism, given the continuing growth of the radicalization which was born out of those crises and makes them more severe than ever, we project intensive participation in the mass movements with top priorities given to: the antiwar movement, nationalist struggles, the student movement, women's liberation. We want to recruit the very best fighters in these movements and help them become conscious Trotskyist cadres in order to transform our present tiny nucleus of revolutionary cadres into the mass workers party we know we must build to

achieve a successful socialist revolution in this country.

We look to the youth in this country to replenish and swell the ranks of the Trotskyist movement. We go out looking for them—in the anti-war movement, on the high school and college campuses, in the ranks of the nationalist struggles, in women's liberation groups, and on their jobs. The Transitional Program points out: "The movement is revitalized by the youth who are free of responsibility for the past. The Fourth International pays particular attention to the young generation of the proletariat. All of its policies strive to inspire the youth with belief in its own strength and in the future. Only the fresh enthusiasm and aggressive spirit of the youth can guarantee the preliminary successes in the struggle; only these successes can return the best elements of the older generation to the road of revolution." The draft resolution gives concrete expression to this concern for "the young generation of the proletariat." But this concern is not based on pat formulas from the past; it is based on the specific set of realities prevailing right here in this country at this time. We say that the present young generation of the proletariat is part of and is affected by the general youth radicalization which has been going on over the past decade. We see the effects of the general radicalization in the army, for example, which draws most of its human material from the ranks of the working class youth. We agree with that mouthpiece for the bourgeoisie, *Fortune* magazine, when it states: "The central fact about the new workers is that they are young and bring into the plants with them the new perspective of the American youth in 1970."

At the same time that we are concerned about attracting young workers, we seek to recruit young people in general, we seek to mobilize young people wherever they are in mass actions directed against the class enemy and its institutions. It is the campus youth who have provided the backbone of the anti-war movement and given it the powerful muscle it has needed to punch away at the imperialist rulers. It is the campus youth who have been the most receptive to the most militant antiwar demands, to the policy of non-exclusion, to the repeated calls for mass mobilizations. We needed and we still need massive support from young students in order to continue to deepen and broaden the anti-war movement.

We must never forget that the struggle against the imperialist war is a prime obligation for revolutionists—it isn't something we do because it's fashionable or exciting, it isn't a diversion from our main duty and goal. In our study of *The History of the Russian Revolution* we have discussed over and over these past couple weeks the Bolshevik attitude toward imperialist war and the criminal failure of the Second International to condemn and fight against their respective war-making national bourgeoisies. The SWP exemplifies the very best traditions of international Trotskyism in our intense focus on the Indochinese war. The draft resolution reaffirms what we have said in previous resolutions: "the Vietnamese revolution and the effort of U.S. imperialism to crush it remain the central issue in American and world politics." We don't write resolutions just to look good, just to have something pretty to appear in a history book; we mean what we say and we say what we mean and we back up our words with action—that's the purpose of our words: to prepare us for action, to set us into motion, to clarify what we are to

do, to guide us in our action, to help us win victory through action.

In terms of imperialist wars, the Transitional Program teaches us that it is important to have a correct policy based on two major considerations: 1) an uncompromising attitude toward imperialism (and that is certainly embodied in our draft resolution), and, 2) the ability to base our program on the experience of the masses themselves. At every step of the way, we have based our program against the war on the experiences of the masses, on the level of political consciousness prevailing, on slogans which would lead to greater and higher levels of understanding, on actions which would continuously mobilize larger and larger forces and draw in more and more sections of American society, especially the most important section that has the power to end the war: the working class.

Drawing in the working class in massive numbers is our goal, let me repeat: our goal. We did not start by organizing demonstrations out of the factories for a very simple reason: workers were not participating in the initial stages of the antiwar movement. We did not create the antiwar movement—if we had we would have waved our magic wand and drawn all the workers out of the factories and off the land and organized a general strike, that's if we had our druthers. We are not capable of doing things like that at the present time; we are a tiny nucleus of revolutionary cadres and we are not looked upon as the leaders of the working class. We took what existed and we worked with it with the aim of reaching the mass of the working class. What did exist? Students in teach-ins and students in the street. That was the objective reality in 1965. We work with objective reality like a sculptor works with clay: molding that reality with a conscious design in order to achieve a predetermined goal. At least, that's what we try to do. That's what we tried to do with the antiwar movement which sprang up and we have been succeeding, little by little, painful step by painful step.

The Transitional Program tells us: "The struggle against war must first of all begin with the *revolutionary mobilization of the youth*." Well, we didn't have any choice about how the struggle began or with whom—but as a matter of fact the struggle against the war did begin with the mobilization of the student youth and we have been attempting to give that mobilization more and more of a revolutionary character by drawing into action broader strata.

I will conclude by listing the salient characteristics of the 1971 National Committee draft political resolution which I hope all comrades will keep in mind throughout the pre-convention discussion:

1. It correctly describes reality as it exists in the United States at the present time: the reality of U.S. imperialism, the reality of the opposition forces battling the imperialist monster, the reality of the political parties striving to assume leadership of those oppositional forces.

2. It correctly assesses that reality: the depth of the crises wracking the class enemy, the extensive and continuing spread of the radicalization, the growing influence of and opportunities for the Socialist Workers Party as contrasted with all other groups on the left.

3. It correctly sets forth the tasks we must undertake to affect that reality in order to come closer to our goal

of socialist revolution and the establishment of a workers state—with prime importance given to the tasks connected with building a mass revolutionary party.

I hope comrades will vote to support the general line

## ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM IN PALESTINE

By Joel Aber, Atlanta Branch

The following discussion article is based upon slightly edited excerpts from my report to the Atlanta branch in support of the National Committee Draft Resolution on Israel and the Arab Revolution (*Disc. Bull.*, Vol 29, No. 3) delivered June 6, 1971. My primary purpose in submitting this article is to clarify where the Langston-Langston-Rothschild resolution goes wrong.

### *Our Political Opponents and the Palestinians*

Both the nature of the guerrilla movement and the attitudes of other working-class tendencies toward the Arab revolution increase the potential for the influence of Leninist thinking on the Palestinian leadership.

Our Stalinist and social democratic opponents appear to have little influence in the Palestinian guerrilla movement at this time, despite some Maoist rhetoric among the guerrillas. Moscow virtually gave up any opportunity to influence the Palestinians when Israel was formed in 1948. Not only did the Soviet Union jump to recognize and aid the Israeli state, but the Palestinian CP had the unbelievable shortsightedness to dissolve itself into the Israeli CP! The Soviet bureaucracy's current collusion with the U. S., Israeli and bourgeois Arab regimes in attempting to impose the Rogers Peace Plan on the Palestinian guerrillas is perfectly in keeping with the miserable Soviet record on this question over the past 23 years; and the present dynamics of the guerrilla struggle make it unlikely that Stalinism can gain much influence among the Palestinians at this time.

At a recent antiwar conference a comrade picked up a copy of the latest *Young Worker*, organ of the Young Worker's Liberation League. It contains an article on Israel. Unbelievable as it may seem, the author manages to discuss the Middle East without *once* even mentioning the existence of a Palestinian guerrilla movement or even the fact that a revolution is going on in Palestine. This is similar to the position of the most right-wing Zionists.

The *Young Worker* tells us that, "The purpose of this article is to clear up some confusion." The first bit of confusion mentioned is the "nonexistent Soviet anti-Semitism." Another troublesome bit of confusion is why the Soviet Union favored the establishment of Israel, which the article explains thusly:

"The establishment of a Jewish state in 1948 was supported by most of the world revolutionary and progressive movements, but, on the basis that it would be part of a bi-national state of Jews and Arabs. . . . The Soviet Union led the fight to establish such a state." Then, the article explains, the imperialists instigated the Zionists to take all of Palestine instead of just half.

Just picture what happened: The Soviet Union and the progressive forces were trying to come to an agreement with the U. S. and British monopoly capitalists to deprive the Palestinians of their self-determination in only *half* of Palestine. The progressive forces, you see, wouldn't have

of this resolution in order to maintain the party's forward motion along the path leading to the proletarian revolution in the United States.

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dreamed of taking away *all* of the Palestinians' democratic rights. Only half. But these tricky monopoly capitalists for some unfathomable reason didn't keep their end of the bargain. What a surprise!

The organized social democrats—the Second International—have even less chance than do the Stalinists for derailing the Palestinian revolution. Mapai and Mapam, the major ruling parties of Israel, are both affiliated with the Second International. And that sufficiently sums up the possibilities that are open to this collection of traitors for co-opting the struggle.

### *Origins of Palestinian Revolutionary Consciousness*

The present revolutionary consciousness on the part of the Palestinian masses and the guerrilla leadership has humble origins indeed. The Palestinians experienced nothing but defeats in the 28 years from 1939 to 1967. The years 1936-39 had seen a 174-day Palestinian general strike—to my knowledge the longest general strike anywhere in the history of modern capitalism. Although half the British colonial army was tied down in Palestine during that upsurge, the leadership of the masses was so totally bankrupt that not a single gain was won. This massive defeat left the Palestinians leaderless and opened the way for the Palestinians' later defeats and eviction from their homeland, beginning in the 1948 war, and continuing through the 1956 Suez war and the 1967 Six-Day war.

The devastating 1967 Mideast war was the culmination of a process that began in the 1930s. And the Palestinians were still leaderless in June, 1967; their only hope of victory was the miserably ineffective armies of the bourgeois Arab states.

But the forces of imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction were trying to cheat history. Each defeat of the Palestinians merely increased the certainty that the counter-revolution had sowed the seeds of its own doom. These seeds germinated with explosive force after June, 1967, and three short years later were challenging the state power of King Hussein, the most loyal ally of Zionism and imperialism. The events since 1967 have powerfully dramatized the revolutionary potential of the nationalism of the oppressed—the revolutionary logic of the Palestinians' simple demand to determine their own destiny.

In June, 1967, the Palestine Liberation Organization was nothing more than a creature of Nasser, headed by the anti-Jewish demagogue Ahmed Shukairy. The purpose of Nasser's creation was to keep the Palestinian leaders under his tutelage. But Nasser badly miscalculated the mood of the Palestinians, for almost overnight they transformed the PLO into a mass organization of independent struggle. Since then, the PLO has become a broad coalition of organizations committed to the overthrow of Zionism—something of a single-issue united front.

When the mass movements grew so strong as to pose



the question of who would rule in Jordan, the imperialists lost no time in planning a counterattack, the diplomatic phase of which is now known as the Rogers Peace Plan. The United States persuaded Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Soviet bureaucracy to jointly conspire to once again negotiate the fate of Palestine without consulting the Palestinians.

We all know how successfully the Rogers Plan served to isolate the Palestinian organizations from their military and diplomatic support among the Arab regimes, and how this isolation paved the way for King Hussein's bloody attempt to liquidate the guerrillas while the so-called progressive Arab regimes stood on the sidelines and watched the bloodshed.

#### *Lessons of the Defeat in Jordan*

The Jordanian civil war, like the defeat of 1967 at the hands of Israel, probably taught the Palestinian organizations some important lessons that will make future defeats less likely.

If the guerrilla organizations were becoming independent of Nasserism before the civil war, they have learned even more poignantly that they must struggle independently, that neither the Baathists, nor the Nasserites, nor the Soviet government can be regarded as trustworthy allies. It should be apparent to both us and the Palestinian revolutionaries that the governments of the Soviet Union, Syria, Egypt and Iraq all have one objective with regard to the Palestinians: maintaining the *status quo* at all costs, even if this entails liquidation of the Palestinian revolution.

If the leadership of the guerrilla organizations realizes that the bourgeois nationalism of Nasser and company is a dead end—that the Palestinians in particular and the Arab revolution in general can achieve national liberation and other democratic tasks only by sweeping aside even the Arab national bourgeoisie—if the leadership realizes this fact, then only one course is open to them: a full-fledged socialist revolution led by the working class in alliance with the peasantry.

This is the lesson of the theory of Permanent Revolution. The development of any leadership that has assimilated this lesson will go a long way toward resolving the crisis of leadership in the Arab revolution.

#### *The Crisis of Leadership and the Transitional Program*

The potential for building a revolutionary party and overcoming the crisis of leadership is clearly on the horizon in Palestine. But it would be incorrect to assume that such a party already exists to lead either the Palestinian or the Israeli-Jewish proletariat. None of the Palestinian guerrilla organizations, nor Matzpen, the Israeli Socialist Organization, meet the criteria for revolutionary socialist parties, either in theory, in program, or in organization.

It would be jumping the gun for us to attempt to decide which of the guerrilla organizations is most deserving of our support. The revolutionary organizations are still coalescing. No one organization has yet established clear hegemony over the Palestinian masses. In such times of rapid change and evolution, there are likely to be further splits and regroupments among the Palestinian organizations.

In addition, the political differences between the guerrilla organizations are not of such clearcut nature that any can be characterized as programmatically the most revolu-

tionary. It is probable that there are elements of what is correct in each of their positions.

It should be kept in mind that when the guerrilla movement has come under heaviest attack, the unity of the various organizations increased. It is significant that the combined forces of the United States, Israel, the Soviet Union, Jordan, Syria and Egypt have not been able to drive a wedge between the organizations of struggle. The organizational unity of the guerrillas was at least momentarily strengthened in the face of the counterrevolutionary onslaught. For example, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine had been expelled from the guerrillas' military coalition, the Joint Struggle Command, after the PFLP's ultraleft airline hijackings. But the Joint Struggle Command immediately reinstated the PFLP when civil war broke out in Jordan.

We should realize that there are probably many potential Bolshevik cadres among the militants in *all* of the leading guerrilla organizations. The guerrilla movement as a whole is discussing most of the political points that the Trotskyist movement regards as the keys to making the world revolution.

Among these points are (1) the necessity for the revolution to be socialist in order to attain self-determination, (2) the necessity for a revolutionary party, and (3) a transitional approach for directing the mass struggle.

The first point, the fact that the revolution must be socialist, I already touched on. It should be emphasized that none of the guerrilla organizations is 100 percent clear on this. The PFLP and DPFLP tend to mix up Maoist, two-stage-revolution rhetoric with the theory of permanent revolution. Fateh is anti-ideological, not stating what the exact character of the revolution is to be. However, all the guerrilla organizations stress in their public statements the examples of Vietnam and Cuba, and many of their spokesmen state the negative example of what happened in Algeria. The major guerrilla groups seem to be sort of Castroist in their emphasis on the primacy of armed struggle above all else.

There is not homogeneity on this question, however. The second point, the necessity for a revolutionary party, was emphasized by Nayef Hawatmeh, the leader of the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, in an interview that he gave to *Intercontinental Press* about a year and a half ago. Hawatmeh stated that a revolutionary party must be built to successfully direct the Palestinian struggle and further stated that the DPFLP is not such a party at this time. This was the opinion of Hawatmeh, *not* the formal political position of the DPFLP. The necessity for a party is one point we should hit hard with Arab students in the United States. But how that party will develop, we have no way of knowing, whether from one of the existing guerrilla organizations or independently.

Now to the third point—the development of a transitional approach and transitional demands. Some transitional forms developed during the civil war in Jordan. People's militias were formed throughout Jordan and challenged the power of the Jordanian Army. A People's Council similar to the Soviets of the Russian Revolution was formed and became the government of Irbid, Jordan's second largest city. From the sketchy reports we get here in the United States, it appears that both Fateh and the DPFLP jointly organized and provided leadership for



the People's Council, and both of these organizations apparently helped to form the militias.

These organizations of the Palestinian masses—the militias and the Peoples Councils—were beginning to pose the question of which class would rule Jordan, the Palestinian and Jordanian workers and peasants, or the Hashomite dynasty and its imperialist allies. In other words, virtual dual power existed.

In addition to the transitional organizational forms that temporarily appeared last year, the guerrilla movement is raising demands that have transitional character. For instance, the demand for a unitary, democratic, secular Palestine with full civil, religious and cultural rights for national minorities. This demand is transitional partly because it strikes an immediate responsive chord among the Palestinian masses; it is the perfectly reasonable democratic demand of self-determination, but it is a demand that cannot be met by the ruling class in either Israel or the Arab states.

It is also transitional in character because it undercuts the Zionist propaganda about the Israeli state being necessary to prevent the Jews from being driven into the sea. The demand for a democratic, secular Palestine therefore aims at raising the consciousness not only of the Palestinians, but also the Israeli Jewish working class. It is a demand that is eminently reasonable to anyone whose support for the Israeli state was based upon the belief that Israel is for democracy, but must defend itself against undemocratic, belligerent Arabs. And it is essential for the Arab revolution to break away the Israeli Jews from their Zionist chauvinism and encourage the development of anti-Zionist organizations within Israel.

#### *The Unitary Democratic Palestine versus Neocolonialism*

The demand for a democratic, secular Palestine stands in direct opposition to a concept now being put forth by the so-called liberal wing of the Israeli ruling class. There are disagreements within the Israeli leaders about how to handle the very real threat to Zionism from the Palestinian liberationists both inside and outside of Israel's present borders. Moshe Dayan is known as a hardliner. But Deputy Premier Abba Eban thinks it opportune to attempt to co-opt the Palestinians.

The difference between the Israeli "hawks" and "doves" isn't great. It's like the difference between the Democrats and the Republicans over whether it's important to co-opt the Afro-Americans, only even less of a difference. While the more hawkish wing of the Israeli ruling class is for out-and-out military repression, the "doves" suggest the formula of a semi-autonomous West Bank of the Jordan, a semi-autonomous Palestinian state within Israel.

This is the Israeli version of Black capitalism. More accurately described, it's neocolonialism—a Palestinian puppet state under the total political and economic domination of Israel. The neocolonial plan is most closely modeled on the Black African enclave called Bantustan that was created by South Africa to move the overwhelming majority of the South African population that is Black into tiny, economically unviable corners of South Africa, while still maintaining apartheid. The Palestinian liberationists refer to this plan for the Palestinians as the Palestinian Bantustan, or Palestinostan. The Bantustan idea has found receptive ears among some of the bourgeois

Arab spokesmen in Jordan and Egypt. *It is an Israeli counteroffensive against the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine.*

One of the reasons for going into the Israeli Bantustan idea here is to demonstrate how worried at least one sector of the Israeli ruling class is about the destruction of the illusion of progressive Israel by Palestinians who are demanding self-determination and a democratic Palestine.

Another point important to realize about this Bantustan idea is that it is the logical extension of the definition of the right of Israel to self-determination, with a phony concession to Palestinian self-determination tacked on to make it seem more palatable to those who think Israel should respect the rights of the Palestinians. And it is the antithesis of the demand for a unitary, democratic Palestine.

#### *Once Again the Luxemburgian Error*

I'd like to spend the rest of my time discussing the question of self-determination, and pointing out the differences between the NC resolution and the opposition resolution submitted by Berta and Bob Langston and Jon Rothschild.

First, some general comments on self-determination. It has always been the tradition of Marxists that we support the right of oppressed nations to self-determination. We support struggles for national liberation unequivocally and without condition. But we don't support simply nationalism in general. Nationalism is a very powerful tool. In the hands of the oppressed, it's a revolutionary tool—a tool for national liberation and social transformation. In the hands of the oppressor, it's an equally powerful counterrevolutionary tool—a tool for continued oppression and maintenance of the existing social order.

Left-wing Zionists often try to parlay their defense of Israel into the claim that the Israeli Jews are waging a national liberation struggle, but this argument is totally false. While many Israeli Jews were oppressed people in their countries of origin, they are oppressors in the Arab world. Jewish nationalism in Israel was dependent from its inception upon maintenance of the same decaying capitalist system that was responsible for anti-Semitism and the oppression of the Jews in the first place. By its very nature, the Jewish state had to be created at the expense of the Palestinians, a subjugated colonial people.

The Leninist view is that oppressed nationalities have the unequivocal right to defend themselves against oppression. If they deem it necessary, they may form a separate state to protect their national rights. By contrast, however, an oppressor nation has no such right; self-determination on the part of the oppressor nation wouldn't be a *right*; it would be a *privilege*. The maintenance of a national state of the oppressor wouldn't be a means of protecting and defending a democratic right. Such a state could be used only as a club to wield over the oppressed nation.

To quote from the NC resolution: "The burden for forging a fighting internationalist alliance rests on the proletarian movement of the oppressor nationality or country. It must prove in deeds that it is opposed to its own bourgeoisie on this question by fighting side by side with the oppressed nationalities and supporting their right to self-determination."

All nationalities are not always entitled to self-deter-

mination at all times without exception. Marxists must examine whether national self-determination is necessary to protect against national oppression in each case. National self-determination is not, as the opposition resolution implies, simply a "norm of proletarian democracy."

The Langston's and Rothschild claim that they agree 100 percent with this Leninist conception of proletarian internationalism and the right of nations to self-determination. How, then do they arrive at the statement on page 17 of their resolution that the Leninist perspective "can be formulated as follows: A workers state in Palestine governed by the norms of proletarian democracy, including the right of the Israeli-Jewish proletariat to secede and form a politically independent workers state." (Emphasis added)

In polemicizing against Rosa Luxemburg's denial of Poland's right to self-determination, Lenin took great pains to distinguish between the legitimate right of the Poles to freedom from Russian domination and the completely reactionary character of Russian national chauvinism, which included oppression of the Poles. Luxemburg failed to make the distinction between nationalism of the oppressed and nationalism of the oppressor, thus concluding that all nationalism was reactionary. Langston, Langston, and Rothschild also fail to make this distinction, but conclude that both nationalisms are legitimate and progressive.

It's the opposite of Luxemburg's error, but starting from the same misunderstanding of nationalism.

#### *The Theory of Israeli Exceptionalism*

The Langstons and Rothschild do indeed state that they haven't revised Leninism; in fact, the implication of their document is that the National Committee has committed the Luxemburgian error. If comrades follow their reasoning closely, I think you'll see that it's rather tortured.

The Langston-Rothschild resolution does in fact state opposition to raising now the demand for Israeli-Jewish self-determination. Their resolution says that it's not a demand at all at this time; it's simply part of our program to be implemented after a victorious revolution. Not a very transitional approach. But why? Why do we ever advocate the continued existence of separate national states after a revolution?

Why, for instance, do we say that the Black and Chicano nations in the U.S. will have the right to secede after a revolution and form separate states? The only reason is that the transformation of power doesn't automatically end all national oppression, and a nation may need to form a state with its special bodies of armed men and women, to protect itself against national oppression and insure its democratic rights even after capitalist rule has been overthrown.

But we are not for the existence of nation-states forever. To the contrary, Marxists envisage the withering away of the state as soon as the capitalist ruling class has been completely destroyed, and the danger of counterrevolution no longer exists. Why, then, would the Israeli-Jewish working class need a state separate from the Palestinian state after a successful revolution?

The Jews would need such a state only if they had to insure that the Palestinians would not oppress them. And in fact this is precisely the fear that the Langston-Rothschild resolution reflects—the fear that after a socialist revolution, the criminal will become the victim; the Pa-

lestinians will oppress the Jews.

In other words, the revolution will be sidetracked or sold out. There is always such a danger. But since when do Marxists base their program upon the likelihood that a revolution will be sold out? The program we draw up is one that will ensure the success of a revolution, not one that is predicated upon failure.

If either the national bourgeoisie or the Stalinists did manage to come to power in Palestine and managed to turn the Jews into an oppressed people, it would then be time to raise the question of self-determination for the Jews.

But even if the revolution were to fail, isn't the more likely variant that the Israeli Jews would maintain their special privileges and the Palestinians would remain specially oppressed? Isn't this usually the pattern in unsuccessful revolutions? Isn't the *status quo* usually maintained in a counterrevolution, rather than being stood on its head? Look for example at the uncompleted Algerian revolution, after which the Algerian people are still oppressed by the French; or the Russian revolution, whose degeneration meant continued anti-Semitism, not the Jews becoming oppressors.

But these arguments, Langston and Rothschild would claim, are not relevant to the situation in Palestine. Their resolution outlines several elaborate contingencies that could turn the oppressor into the oppressed. Such unusual contingencies are not out of the question, but it should be re-emphasized that a Marxist program isn't a series of contingency plans. The Langston-Rothschild document, it seems to me, is guilty of the theory of Israeli exceptionalism.

Langston and Rothschild wouldn't contend, for instance, that white Americans would be entitled to self-determination after the American revolution. The reason they'd give is that there is no danger of the Black nation oppressing the whites. True, but why? Is it because Blacks in the U.S. are a minority? In that case, how about South Africa, where the Blacks are the overwhelming majority? Would it be appropriate to favor Afrikaaner self-determination after a successful South African revolution? Obviously it is immaterial whether the oppressed nation happens to be a physical majority. Or is it immaterial?

Not to Langston and Rothschild. They cite only two reasons for believing that the Israeli Jews might become the oppressed which they claim are unique to the Palestinian revolution. One is the fact that the Jews are a tiny minority in the Arab world. The second is the relatively large Palestinian petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie.

#### *When Did Democratic Demands Lose Their Revolutionary Character?*

Their second justification for Israeli exceptionalism—the existence of large petty-bourgeois and bourgeois elements among the Palestinians—really mystifies me. It almost seems that the Langstons and Rothschild have forgotten what they knew about transitional demands.

Their point is similar to Luxemburg's when she denied that the Poles had a right to self-determination because the spokesmen for Polish self-determination were the most reactionary bourgeois democrats.

Lenin pointed out that Luxemburg was so overanxious to dissociate herself from the Polish bourgeoisie that she was letting *their* program determine her program. She was being formalistic, in the manner later caricatured by Chairman Mao's pithy thought: "Support everything that the

enemy opposes, and oppose everything that the enemy supports." Or, to use a topical example, Senator Hartke says to bring the troops home now; therefore, bring the troops home now is a slogan of the bourgeoisie.

The Langston-Rothschild resolution is guilty of formalism similar to Luxemburg's. This formalism begins with their characterization of the Palestinian demand for a unitary, democratic, secular Palestine.

The opposition resolution outlines three perspectives for the revolutionary movement in Palestine—the feudal, the bourgeois-democratic and the revolutionary socialist. They argue that the demand for a unitary, democratic and secular Palestine is a bourgeois-democratic demand and therefore represents the interests of the bourgeoisie. This is incorrect. It no more represents the interests of the bourgeoisie than the demand to bring the troops home now in the antiwar movement.

True, it's not a full-fledged socialist demand. True, it's a demand that can be taken up on occasion by the Palestinian national bourgeoisie. But that doesn't make it a *bourgeois* demand. It's a *democratic* demand, which is an intimate part of the transitional program during this age of permanent revolution. To assume that a democratic demand contradicts the transitional program is to assume one of two things: either that the demand can be easily granted by the existing ruling class (i.e. the Zionists), thereby playing into the hands of reformism; or, that it is really a maximum demand, which has no immediate relevance to the mass struggle.

The Langston-Rothschild resolution opts for the former, stating that the concept of the unitary-democratic Palestine is based upon a "false consciousness," which "does not provide the necessary political weapons for the conduct of the national liberation struggle," thereby "preparing the way for the seizure and consolidation of power by the national bourgeoisie in Palestine once the Zionist state has been crushed."

This is untrue. The demand for a democratic Palestine doesn't reflect a *false* consciousness; it reflects an *incomplete* consciousness. But that is the nature of many demands which seem perfectly reasonable to masses of people who *have not yet developed* a socialist consciousness, yet they are demands that have a revolutionary thrust.

Let's look at an analogous example. Our Canadian comrades consider the demand, "Quebec Quebecois" to have revolutionary implications although it is supported by

segments of the Quebec bourgeoisie in their battle against the dominant English-Canadian bourgeoisie; in fact, there's even a nationalist Quebec party which we don't support although it raises this demand, because it's a bourgeois-nationalist party. But the existence of bourgeois nationalists who support the demand in no way detracts from its validity. As revolutionary socialists, we couple the demand for a free Quebec with socialist demands, and we couple the demands for Black and Chicano control of the Black and Chicano communities with socialist demands. The NC resolution does the same for Palestine.

But we don't demand of every Black nationalist that he also be a socialist as a condition of support. His consciousness may be incomplete, but the thrust of his demand to control his own community is objectively revolutionary. The same is true of the Palestinian guerrillas.

In fact, we point out that if the Palestinian national bourgeoisie were to consolidate power, it would then be impossible to achieve a democratic Palestine—that the unitary democratic Palestine could *only* be achieved through a socialist revolution.

When Langston and Rothschild oppose the concept of a democratic Palestine, they may be thinking of the word "democratic" or "progressive" in the way that the Stalinists use it; i.e. people's democracy or popular front. But the Palestinian guerrilla movement doesn't clearly articulate a people's front coalition with the national bourgeoisie, any more than it clearly articulates overthrow of the bourgeoisie by a socialist revolution.

This is a weakness in the program of the Palestinians, to be sure. But that's not surprising; they don't have a section of the Fourth International. Their revolution is in a very embryonic stage of its political development. But it's our job as Trotskyists to inject political content—to get across the theory of permanent revolution, not to reject or castigate the guerrilla organizations for being "bourgeois" because they haven't yet developed a socialist consciousness.

Look at our *Militant* articles on the Lowndes County Freedom Party and La Raza Unida parties. We don't castigate their leadership for not having a socialist perspective. Instead we point out the tremendous gains for the Black and Chicano struggles that those parties represent. Our attitude toward independent organizations of mass struggle in Palestine should be the same.

July 19, 1971

## THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY AND THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT: AN ANSWER TO THE GREGORICH TENDENCY

Steve Beren, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local

### *A Revolutionary Approach to Gay Liberation*

The SWP opposes all forms of capitalist oppression. We urge all oppressed people to organize and struggle against their oppression, independently of the ruling class. We welcome all new additions to the ranks of the current radicalization.

We take a revolutionary approach to all movements for social change. That is, in the context of complete support to all struggles against oppression, we analyze each movement. What demands does the movement raise? What is the movement's capacity to mobilize masses of people? What are the possibilities for recruitment from the movement to the revolutionary party? How does this movement relate to other movements and to the radicalization

as a whole?

The answers to these questions enable us to decide what strategies and demands revolutionary socialists should push within the movement, what coalitions and formations we should intervene in, the extent of our intervention in terms of comrade-power, etc.

In line with this revolutionary approach, the party is currently conducting a probe of the gay liberation movement. The probe was outlined in a PC motion issued May 25, 1971, which stated:

"That the party conduct a probe of the gay liberation movement for the purpose of gathering information. The information sought includes facts about the present size of the gay liberation movement, its geographical spread,

the history of its development, the specific nature of the different gay liberation groups, the demands which have been raised by the gay liberation organizations, the political positions of the different currents within the gay liberation movement, the positions of our opponents concerning it, and its relationship to the developing radicalization.

"The probe will be conducted within the framework of the party's unconditional support to the struggles of homosexuals for civil and human rights against the discrimination and oppression they suffer under capitalism. However, steps taken for the purpose of this probe do not signify setting in motion at this time a process of party fractional intervention based on a defined strategic and tactical orientation in the gay liberation movement. The purpose of this probe is solely to gather the necessary information about gay liberation formations and actions so that the party can then determine its policy toward them. . . ."

There are differing views within the party towards the gay liberation movement, as is obvious from the written pre-convention discussion. The purpose of this document is to answer those comrades who have raised criticisms of the gay liberation movement and/or the party's attitude towards the movement. This document is written within the context of support to the NC Draft Political Resolution and the May 25th motion of the PC.

#### *The Gregorich Tendency and Gay Liberation*

The position of the Gregorich tendency on gay liberation is consistent with their over-all political approach. They feel that the party has a petty-bourgeois orientation, and that this orientation is reflected in our approach to the various mass movements in which we intervene. They do not analyse the current stage of the class struggle. They do not see how the independent movements of the current radicalization will affect the working class, nor do they see that these movements are the most fruitful areas for recruitment to the SWP at this time. Instead they mechanically call for the party to immediately orient primarily to the trade unions, and label the student, antiwar, women's and gay movements as "petty-bourgeois." Thus they state:

"The party's job is to present its politics to the working class. . . Instead of crass adaptation to the petty-bourgeois milieu with the publication of article after article on homosexuals, the *Militant* needs page after page on the plight of the working class and the socialist alternative." (*For a Proletarian Orientation*, p. 33)

Of course, we want to present our politics to the workers. Our politics must be adopted by the working class if there is to be a revolution in this country. Only our class struggle program can provide the basis for principled unity of all sectors of the working class in common struggle against capitalist oppression.

This class struggle program incorporates the democratic and transitional demands of all oppressed sectors of society. When we speak of working class unity, we are talking of unity around this program, unity of the entire working class around the just demands of *all* workers — especially the demands of the most oppressed workers: women, the oppressed nationalities, homosexuals. When we speak of the class struggle, we mean struggle against *all* forms of class oppression.

In striving to win the working class to this program,

we will clash head-on with the capitalist rulers of this country in a battle for the political and ideological allegiance of the workers. We know that one key way the capitalists rule is by maintaining illusions in the minds of the masses — illusions of "patriotic" wars, racist "law and order," peaceful change through the electoral system, "getting ahead" in college and the business world, the "biological inferiority" of women, the "racial inferiority" of Afro-Americans, the "sickness" of homosexuals, etc. When the workers of this country reject these ideas and unite in action around our program, nothing will stop them from taking power.

It is precisely these illusions that are being challenged by the independent movements of the current radicalization. Thus these movements will play an important role in breaking the masses of Americans from capitalist ideology. That is why these movements are the place for the SWP to be *now*. We must lead these movements into greater and greater mass actions, deepening the radicalization, destroying the illusions, changing the mood in the country, moving the workers more and more towards an ideological break with the capitalists, moving them closer to our class struggle program.

Our orientation to these movements must be reflected in our press. The *Militant* must continue to have page after page explaining that the struggles of women, Blacks, the Vietnamese, homosexuals, etc. represent the interests of *all* workers. Most importantly, we must give extensive coverage to those movements that are already pointing the way of independent struggle through mass actions around demands directed at the capitalist government.

We say: the gay liberation struggle is the struggle of all workers, the oppression of homosexuals is part of the plight of the working class! It is incorrect and ignorant to label gays a "petty-bourgeois milieu." It is a sexist stereotype which labels us all as actors, artists, ballet dancers, and hair dressers; or states that we are weak beings who become gay only because we can't stand the pressures of life. This kind of thinking has no place in the revolutionary party. On the contrary, the party has the responsibility of getting the truth out: there are millions of homosexuals in this country. We are Black, Chicano, and white; male and female; young and old; worker, student, middle-class. And under the impact of the new radicalization, a militant gay liberation movement has arisen which is fighting our oppression.

In this connection, the PC has stated:

"One characteristic of the radicalization itself, especially in the youth movement, has been discussion about sex. Adolescents have all kinds of social restrictions put upon them concerning their private lives, and especially their sex lives. The way they're treated in the schools, under the law, etc. has become an issue among radicalizing youth. So there's a widespread and growing opposition in very broad layers of young people in this country against sexual repression and the enforced mutilation of sexuality.

"This has been reinforced by the rise of the women's liberation movement, which has been even more intimately concerned with repression of homosexuals. This is true because one of the central questions faced by the women's liberation movement is the question of sexual oppression. In addition to their class, race or national oppression, women are especially oppressed as a sex. Comrades are

familiar with the many things which the women's liberation movement has done to draw attention to this—the publicity campaigns, the propaganda and educational materials that have been written by various activists in the women's liberation movement against the objectification of sex, against the exploitation of sexual relations, against the reactionary and debilitating sexual norms and pressures of society, against the possessive and compulsive sexual relations bred by this system. They see that the social attitudes towards homosexuals are simply another facet of a sick sexist, racist class society. From the beginning a certain number of women's liberation activists and leaders have publicly identified themselves as homosexuals or bisexuals. And more and more the women's liberation movement has recognized the reactionary character of lesbian-baiting and the threat it poses to the movement if capitulated to.

"Finally we have growing numbers of public political and social organizations of homosexuals, something that is unique in American history. Beginning in 1968 and early 1969 and undoubtedly sparked by the general radicalization and reinforced by the rise of the women's liberation movements we saw across the country the proliferation of homosexual and homosexual rights organizations. It's probably not an exaggeration to say that almost every major campus in this country has either a homosexual rights organization or an organization of militant homosexuals demanding their rights, demanding an end to all discrimination, demanding a scientific and objective view of homosexuals as human beings. It's become the norm, as opposed to being unusual, for contingents of the more militant and more open homosexual groups to march in various protest demonstrations in addition to organizing some of their own.

"This all takes place in the post-Kinsey period. For the first time, scientific knowledge of the extent of homosexuality, and the characteristics of homosexuality have become widespread. This has helped in breaking down the stereotype of society divided into exclusively homosexual and exclusively heterosexual people. The fact that individual human beings go through different periods in their lives, with different characteristics to their sexuality, has become widely known. The fact that homosexuality of one kind or another is widespread in the population, that it cuts through all geographical and class layers, has been established.

"There has also been the experience, the growing body of literature available and the evolution in the understanding of the younger generation. The younger generation has begun to differentiate between sexuality and reproduction, sexuality and religious norms, sexuality and the sex-roles imposed by the nuclear family system, and has begun to understand the relation between sexuality and class society. For this generation, opposition to restrictive norms and repressive attitudes that feed reactionary ideologies has become the norm." (*Report on Membership Policy Given to the Political Committee of the SWP by Jack Barnes, Friday, November 13, 1970, pp. 3-4*)

Thus, the "sexual revolution" is part of the current radicalization. As the radicalization deepens and extends into the working class, the issues of sexual oppression will be discussed by millions of working men and women. These workers can be won to support struggles against

sexual oppression that will arise. The mass actions of those sectors of society most affected by sexism — women and homosexuals — will be a driving force in this revolutionizing of attitudes.

But the Gregorich tendency say: ". . . most working class women see the gay women's movement as extraneous and unrelated to them and their problems. We agree." (*The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation, Vol. 29, No. 15, p. 12*) They say: ". . . we should not . . . declare a priori that such movements (as gay liberation — S.B.) are . . . 'mass' revolutionary movements. . ." (p. 13) and that "the gay liberation movement is a relatively small movement with minimal social force and, as a movement, totally relegated to the petty bourgeois sector of society." (p. 13)

Many working class women, not to speak of working class men, view not only the lesbian movement but the entire women's liberation movement as irrelevant to their needs. How does the working class at this time view the Trotskyist movement? It is our job to politicize the working class, to win it to a revolutionary program. Where would the antiwar movement be today if we had resigned ourselves to the idea that most of the workers see the struggle of the National Liberation Front as something foreign and unrelated to their problems?

Even the antiwar movement is a "relatively small movement," if compared to the trade union movement — after all, there are fifteen million workers in the AFL-CIO. But the size of a movement at a given time is not the only or even the decisive factor. Movements that are small and minimal today will become large and powerful tomorrow. The potential social force of a movement depends in great part on whether the movement in its early stages pursues a course of reaching out and involving people in mass action.

What is the record of the gay liberation movement on this score? On June 27 of this year, Christopher Street Liberation Day, demonstrations around the concept of "gay pride," calling upon people to come out and join the struggle for liberation, occurred in several cities. The largest action was in New York, where up to 20,000 people participated in a march and rally from Sheridan Square to Central Park. This march was the culmination of a week of forums, workshops, dances and smaller demonstrations. The action was widely covered by the media, which called the action twice as large as the previous year's march. This is testimony to the rapid growth the movement has seen in the past year.

#### *Equal Rights in Jobs and Housing*

With a gay rights bill up for vote in Albany, groups from all over the state — Rochester, Buffalo, Long Island, Schenectady, etc. — began to build a state-wide march on the state capital in Albany for March 14. The demands of the demonstration were: enact equal rights legislation for homosexuals in the areas of housing and employment, and repeal all anti-gay legislation — i.e., the laws concerning sodomy, solicitation, impersonation and loitering. About 1,500 people turned out for the march. The bill was narrowly defeated but will be introduced at the next session. All signs point to another march on Albany. Similar marches have already occurred in Connecticut and Pennsylvania. In New York City, the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) is campaigning in support of a bill now being considered by the City Council. GAA's weekly meet-

ings are regularly attended by 200 to 300 people (the largest radical meetings of any group or coalition in New York in *any* movement), and 500 turned out for a June 24 candlelight march on City Hall. One of the most popular slogans seen at the June 27 action was "Next Year — Washington!" We should welcome and encourage such a national demonstration. Gay rights legislation can be an important issue in the 1972 elections. Independent campaigns, such as the campaign of Frank Kameny for D. C. Representative this spring, as well as our own campaigns, can and should bring this and other issues of the gay liberation movement to millions of people.

#### *The Antiwar Movement*

At the Washington SMC conference, a gay liberation workshop of about 25 people formed the Gay Task Force, and called for Gay Contingents in Washington and San Francisco on April 24. Several thousand gays marched in our own contingent in each city. This was one of the largest mobilizations of gay people in history and we should be extremely proud of the role we played in building the Gay Task Force. In a historic development, two spokespersons for the gay liberation movement addressed the Washington rally. *The Advocate*, the leading West Coast gay community newspaper, and *Gay*, the leading New York paper, each carried front-page banner headlines on April 24 and the Gay Contingent. Antiwar sentiment is as high among gay people as among the population in general, but has just begun to be tapped. Fifty-five people attended the gay workshop at the July NPAC conference and mapped out plans for Gay Contingents in all the regional actions planned for November 6, as well as a national day of Gay Task Force antiwar activity — the date to be worked out in co-ordination with the other constituencies. Gay contingents will be a permanent feature of the antiwar movement and will increase in size and impact.

#### *The Lesbian Movement*

Throughout the country, lesbians have played a leadership role in both the feminist and gay liberation movements. The women's liberation movement has rebuffed the media's attempt to lesbian-bait the movement. There are lesbian speakers at every women's liberation rally, and this goes back to August 26 in New York. When Kate Millett was singled out by the bourgeois media for attack, participants in a December 12 N.Y. march for jobs, child-care and abortions all wore lavender armbands as a sign of solidarity. Lesbian workshops are often the largest at conferences of both the women's and gay movements. In New York, the largest lesbian organization is Daughters of Bilitis (DOB). DOB holds weekly meetings which are attended by about 75 women each week. Women in DOB and GAA, as well as independent women, were among the leading organizers for June 27. Lesbians will play an important role in the upcoming abortion campaign, and we should consider building gay contingents in the actions called by the July 16-18 abortion conference.

#### *The Gay Movement is International*

The June 27th actions occurred not just in the U.S. but in London, Copenhagen, Amsterdam and other cities. There was a gay contingent organized by French homosexuals in this year's May Day demonstration in Paris. As the gay liberation movement spreads throughout the

world, it will undoubtedly reach homosexuals in the Soviet Union and the other workers' states. A struggle to repeal the anti-homosexual laws instituted by Stalin in 1934 will be part of the political revolution in the Soviet Union. And of course, the oppression of homosexuals in the Soviet Union, Cuba and other workers' states will be an issue of concern for revolutionaries throughout the world.

One of the ways the KKK attacked the SWP in Houston was to label Debby Leonard "queer." But as more and more of the real "queers" come out and join the struggle for liberation, this kind of attack loses its effect. When people like Kate Millett or Merle Miller come out they do not become "discredited." Rather, they become heroes to thousands of young gay people throughout the country. When thousands of people begin to come out, it begins to break down the prejudice about the alleged "sickness" of homosexuality. The attitudes of society are beginning to change, the trend is toward sympathy for gay rights as human beings and away from hatred and prejudice. This change in attitudes represents the depth of capitalism's crisis. This crisis has simultaneously paved the way for the independent self-organization of homosexuals in struggle against the government. It is the combination of these factors that will enable the gay liberation movement to play an important role in the coming American revolution.

The gay liberation movement is part of the class struggle. It represents the interests of millions throughout the world. The movement is already engaging in massive street demonstrations. The thrust of the movement is clear: end all legal oppression of homosexuals, grant full human rights to homosexuals, end the physical and psychological violence directed against us. Capitalism cannot grant us total liberation. Our total liberation will require the destruction of the institutions that oppress us: the family, the church, the police, bourgeois science, bourgeois education, bourgeois psychology etc.

The Gregorich group does not respond in a revolutionary fashion to the development of gay liberation. This reflects their generally conservative approach to the entire radicalization. They say that the party's "adaptation to this movement. . . is an *effect*, not the cause, of a problem in our present orientation." (*The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation*, p. 13, their emphasis) Of course, the party's support for gay liberation is consistent with its over-all analysis of the current period expressed in the NC Draft Political Resolution. The Gregorich tendency calls our current orientation "petty-bourgeois." They are wrong. It is their premature call for a "turn to the workers" that represents a retreat from the living class struggle. It is this, and not the party's support for gay liberation, which indicates a bending before alien class pressures.

The NC resolution says that the revolution will ". . . open the road to the destruction of capitalist exploitation, alienation, oppression, racism, and sexism, and the construction of socialism — the first truly human social order." The revolution ". . . will incorporate the democratic and transitional demands that flow from the various independent movements that have arisen in the course of social struggle as well as those that will arise as the radicalization deepens. It will give an enormous impetus to the further development of these movements until their demands are met in full in the course of the construction of socialism." (*Perspectives and Lessons of the New Rad-*



icalization, pp. 15-16)

Only "the first truly human social order" will give total freedom to gay people. The stake of homosexuals throughout the world therefore lies in the success of world revolution. The gay liberation movement will be a permanent feature of the international radicalization. It will be a part of the revolution. It will play a key role in destroy-

ing sexist ideology. The gay liberation movement will exist until the last vestiges of prejudice and oppression are wiped out. Clearly, the gay liberation movement is a revolutionary movement. The SWP should welcome the opportunity to intervene in and eventually lead this movement to victory.

July 17, 1971

FOR THE PARTY'S INSPECTION: A LETTER AND AN AMENDMENT

By David Keil, Twin Cities Branch

1. Introduction

What follows is a cover letter for a preliminary draft of an amendment to the NC draft political resolution, which I sent to the Political Committee for their information; and the *final* draft of the proposed amendment. The final draft differs from the original, but not in major ways.

It seems less and less likely that this amendment will be voted on as a critical supplement to the NC resolution. The NC resolution's supporters have the right to reject the amendment, not only as something they disagree with, but also as a counter-line in which case if I wanted a vote on it, I would have to call it a counter-resolution. This kind of rejection seems likely: leading Twin Cities comrades have already said on the branch floor that it is in conflict with the NC resolution's general line. It has even been called a "trick." The authors of "For A Proletarian Orientation," of course, don't see much usefulness in the amendment either.

If, as seems likely, this amendment is rejected as being a counter-line to the NC resolution, it will still serve two purposes after it is withdrawn. First, it will outline the correct basis of support to "For A Proletarian Orientation" and the other documents on which the Proletarian Orientation Tendency is based. Second, it, and the PC's rejection of it, will outline the correct basis for opposition to the NC draft. It will make the NC's position more clear than it was before.

In response to my letter, in a letter dated July 15, the Organization Secretary, Comrade Jack Barnes, has declined to express any opinion about my amendment before I submit it for publication, inferring in his letter that discussions of political differences should not be carried on privately. It is not excluded, then, that the NC draft's supporters will allow the amendment to be voted on as being within the general line of the NC resolution. This, of course, would open up an excellent discussion. But it does not seem likely.

2. Letter to the P. C.

July 11, 1971

Dear comrades,

Enclosed is a preliminary draft of a proposed amendment to the NC draft political resolution, which I am presently circulating in order to obtain suggestions and sponsors. It will be submitted to the internal bulletin once whatever changes may be necessary are made.

I am sending it to you now for your information. Of course, I am also very interested to know whether you would consider it a counter-line. I think that to know this as soon as possible would bring political clarification to comrades who tend to agree with "For A Proletarian Orientation."

The enclosed draft is *not* for publication in the internal bulletin. I expect that it will be submitted, in a form very

similar to the present one, in a week or two.

Comradely,  
s/David Keil

3. Proposed amendment to the NC Political Resolution  
"Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization"

The document "For A Proletarian Orientation" is a good initial criticism of the party's work and perspectives. Its thrust is correct. It has certain weaknesses, however.

The most important is that, *as a counter-resolution*, "For A Proletarian Orientation" is inadequate and represents a mistaken approach. It does not discuss a number of questions, points which the party traditionally includes in its political resolutions. These include a discussion of the character of the present period, and a characterization of our opponents. It does not sufficiently discuss the tactics needed for a "proletarian orientation."

"For A Proletarian Orientation" is mistaken in saying that the party has *given up* its proletarian orientation. This charge has implications which the authors do not agree with. The proletarian orientation of the party is expressed in its working class program and in its long-range perspective for a socialist revolution carried out by the working class under the leadership of the proletarian party. These, the program and perspective, are correct and there is general agreement on them. What is really under discussion is the orientation of the party's practical, day-to-day *work*. This question is not simply one of a few tactics, but nor is it one of principle. There is no disagreement over programmatic line, so the clearest way to express criticisms of the NC draft resolution would be in the form of an amendment rather than a counter-resolution. This is a *tactical* error of the authors of "For A Proletarian Orientation."

The document is also mistaken in saying that the party is petty-bourgeois in mentality, if by this is meant that the mentality of the membership is not Leninist. While exceptions exist to the proletarian, Leninist mentality of our party's comrades, it is in general one of the most Leninist parties in history, in the mentality of its rank and file membership. In addition, the key to this question is the leadership and organizational procedures. It should be clear that the party has both an experienced Leninist leadership cadre and a Leninist organizational structure of democratic centralism.

It is also necessary to specify, for those comrades who may be inclined to misinterpret "For A Proletarian Orientation," that no one contends that the party "degenerated" from 1957 to 1964, (or at any other time), or that it acquired a permanent petty-bourgeois orientation. If this were true, of course, a new party would be necessary, as NC supporters have pointed out. But it is not true.

"For A Proletarian Orientation" is mistaken in advancing as its concrete proposal (which is not explained), that we



must colonize basic industry massively, an operation for which "all comrades should be considered." This proposal does not seem realistic or justified as it is presented. Rather, what is needed is an outline of work to be carried out by *all* comrades, trade union or not, to implement a proletarian orientation, with *selective* colonization as a *tactic*.

But these weaknesses are not fundamental. Many of them are semantic. They can be corrected through discussion, as can the party's mistakes. We must not because of these weaknesses fail to see the general line of "For A Proletarian Orientation," which is that the party's most important task right now is to root itself firmly in the working class.

It is necessary for the party to discuss the *concrete forms* of propaganda work which should be carried out in the trade unions and in the direction of workers, in the present situation. To show what is meant by a proletarian orientation of our work, it must be explained what actual possibilities there are, what difficulties and limitations there will be in our work among workers, and what tasks impose themselves on us. "For A Proletarian Orientation" does not do this adequately.

We are now seeing a strike wave in the United States. Workers, despite their trade union bureaucracies, have used the most militant tactics, as in the New York city workers' strike. New layers of workers, organized in newly developing trade union formations, have gone on strike unexpectedly, as in the case of teachers and the postal workers. Railway workers and others have struck in face of injunctions and open government strike-breaking. The employers are responding with attempts at union-busting, such as the Boulware tactic of GE, the forcing of long strikes combined with the stockpiling of products, and such government measures as the abrogation of the Davis-Bacon law. Now the railroads have posted work rules challenging the very right of the unions to represent the workers. All this takes place in the midst of a hated imperialist war, inflation and unemployment, as well as a general student-led radicalization, which the NC resolution discusses.

Therefore, even for those who wrongly believe that the proletarian class struggle comes to a halt at times, it is incorrect to say that the workers "are not now in motion."

Furthermore, workers, especially young workers, are interested in the question of the war, women's liberation, Black and Chicano liberation, and other political issues. They are tired of the capitalist parties and of the reactionary union bureaucrats. They are, in short, receptive to a class struggle program for labor.

Our party has the only program which meets the objective needs of the working masses. It is our duty to outline a plan of intervention in the working class, to put the program into practice. The fact that the present period is for us a propaganda period only means that our work among workers will be mainly propaganda work. We must not expect to lead mass class battles right away, or even find a situation yet where we can lead caucuses to overthrow the union bureaucracy. Rather we must outline a realistic set of tasks, foreseeing many difficulties and limitations. Above all, a propaganda period is not one in which we *stay out* of the working class, but one in which we assemble cadres from all parts of the society, orienting our propaganda work toward the proletariat as a priority.

The NC political resolution, "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization" is more complete than "For

A Proletarian Orientation" in some regards, but it has important weaknesses of its own. Its assessment of our opponents deals primarily with tactics rather than programmatic and principled differences. While it does not *explicitly reject* all colonization of trade unions and industry at this time, its vague treatment of this subject might lead one to believe that it does. The resolution also lacks clarity in dealing with the party's general perspectives with regard to the working class, and its tasks in allocation of forces. The resolution should discuss the party's methods of recruiting, training and assimilating cadres, instead of saying there are no general rules about this. It should also discuss what our priority areas of work are.

If it is not certain which trade unions will revolutionize, or whether or not there will be a labor party, then the implications of these new "uncertainties" for our party should be discussed. The NC resolution poses these "uncertainties," but it does not discuss the implications. For example, should we begin supporting formations outside and counterposed to the unions? Should we make our support for a future labor party conditional? These are some incorrect conclusions which might be drawn from these "uncertainties."

Finally, the NC resolution doesn't discuss the need for a *proletarian orientation of our work*. This is a most serious weakness, so it is necessary to enumerate a number of steps which could be taken in order to restore to the party the correct proletarian orientation of its work. The need for a discussion in the world Trotskyist movement of a concrete plan of orientation toward the working class was called for by Comrade Peng Shu-tse in 1969 in his document "Return to the Road of Trotskyism." As Comrade Peng wrote then, in Section II, "Toward the Working Class,"

"... the reorientation toward and integration into the working class is the most urgent task facing our movement today.

"... The student movement must be considered secondary and subordinate to this orientation.

"Our orientation toward the working class must, above all, be concretely based on our work in the trade unions." (page 21, International Information Bulletin Number 5, March 1969, 30 cents).

The NC draft resolution, and Comrade Barnes' report to the plenum, give serious attention to the question of the working class. Though the orientation of our work is not described sufficiently, the political and programmatic line are correct. On the question of our perspectives on the necessity of transforming the unions, on the key sector of the working class represented by the industrial proletariat, and on the need for a proletarian composition, the resolution, or Comrade Barnes' report, make the fundamental correct points which must be made.

But in its response to its critics, the party leadership is not so clear. There is a tendency to be open to discussion on trade union work, in order to discuss "tactical questions," as shown in Comrade Barnes' report and in Comrade Lovell's article. But there is also a tendency, once the question of *orientation* is raised, to dismiss the critics as "simon-pure sectarians and schematists," as does Comrade Novack, and as having the same policy as all our opponents, as does the NC resolution by inference. This latter tendency should be corrected in the discussion.

Comrade Frank Lovell's article "Have We Given Up Our Proletarian Orientation?" is a valuable and positive contribution to the discussion on our orientation. In it he points out certain weaknesses of "For A Proletarian Orientation." But, on the whole, this article does not refute the main point of "For A Proletarian Orientation," which is that the party must orient its work and attention more toward the proletariat.

The title itself of Comrade Lovell's article indicates agreement that a proletarian orientation is needed. The discussion, then, is about what we mean by a proletarian orientation. More precisely, the discussion should be on whether we should have a proletarian orientation of our present work.

While pointing out that being rooted in the trade unions is no guarantee of success, he favors "being rooted in the unions, as any party that hopes to lead the proletarian revolution in this country must be . . ."

Comrade Lovell writes, "We did not then [1954] and we do not now neglect the union movement. Beginning in 1954 and extending right down to the present moment we have invited official representatives, rank-and-file critics, and aspiring leaders of the unions to our forums to air their opinions on every political issue." This is good. But is our *practice* adequate in this regard? In Minneapolis, a branch which is not lax in the attention it pays to the labor movement in comparison with other branches, there was *one* forum in the 1970-71 season which was oriented to the labor movement. And for that forum, though a leading comrade spoke and it was a successful meeting, no special publicity effort was made to draw workers, no speakers outside the party were invited. It is not likely that too many forums such as Comrade Lovell describes were held in many other branches, either.

In order to find a pamphlet by us about the labor movement which is in any way comprehensive, it is necessary to go back to 1967: "Recent Trends in the Labor Movement." As Comrade Lovell says, "Recent Trends in the Labor Movement" should be reread now because these trends have deepened in the last five years; but it should be re-read now also because we have issued nothing like it in the last five years! No longer do we see articles like Comrade Dobbs' "The Case for an Independent Labor Party" often in *The Militant*. Though the Pathfinder output and *The Militant* coverage of the labor movement are good and may have improved in many ways, neither is sufficient for the kind of proletarian orientation that is needed.

Comrade Lovell discusses *Militant* plant gate sales "wherever possible" as a good thing, and advocates comrades in good trade union situations taking an active interest in union issues, even organizing a broad movement in the unions on these issues. He even suggests that branches assign comrades to find work at certain jobs in certain unions.

Of course, this is good. It is hard to say, even, that it is not enough. But the work which Comrade Lovell describes is in general localized, not done with serious conscious direction, regularity or in a systematic way. This is evidently not the fault of the comrades involved, either in the leadership or in the unions. Rather it is because our national orientation does not provide for a serious orientation toward work in the trade unions and working class.

What is needed to solve this problem, in addition to general prescriptions such as Comrade Lovell's, is a na-

tional orientation. Some comrades, for example, not understanding the need for a proletarian orientation as do Frank Lovell and other national leaders, will tend to want to subordinate *all* work to campus work, and will tend to think that plant gate sales cut across campus sales, etc. Or that a comrade should pass up a good trade union situation in order to "build up" a short-term campus situation. That is why a national orientation is necessary. Articles like that of Comrade Lovell are helpful in discussing and moving toward such a national orientation. But the orientation itself must be explicit and must be written into our resolutions for vote at the convention, in order to carry out the necessary "re-orientation" and "integration into the working class."

Therefore, an amendment to the NC draft resolution is what is necessary. "For A Proletarian Orientation" should be supported and voted for as a valuable contribution to the discussion, despite its weaknesses—not as a counter-line to the NC resolution.

The kind of amendment that is needed is outlined by the criticisms presented in this article and by the sixteen points outlined below. To fully discuss a proletarian orientation of our work, once it has been decided upon, the party may have to continue the discussion after the convention, within the National Committee or in the party as a whole.

The comrades who will be defending the NC draft resolution will have to make a decision regarding this proposed amendment. That is, should they regard it as a "counter-line," as they may regard "For A Proletarian Orientation," or should they say it is within the general line of the NC resolution, even if they may oppose the amendment, and be prepared to vote for the NC resolution if the amendment to it is passed.

If the comrades reject this amendment as a "counter-line," then those of us who agree with it must recognize that a counter-resolution is necessary, and join those who support "For A Proletarian Orientation" as a counter-resolution in order to work out a full alternative line. In that case the amendment would be withdrawn. If the amendment is rejected as a "counter-line," we must also conclude that the NC resolution does not make its line at all clear, because its line would then really be for a *campus* orientation of our work and *opposed* to increased trade union work and a proletarian orientation of our work. This is nowhere stated in the NC draft resolution.

But if the comrades do not reject this amendment as a "counter-line," then those who support "For A Proletarian Orientation" as a counter-resolution must reconsider their position, because the comrades supporting the NC resolution would be indicating that they are open to discussing proposals for a proletarian orientation of our work within the context of general political agreement. It would be clear that, for those who agree with the party's program and its general strategy, a counter-resolution is not needed. Nevertheless, it is crucial that such an amendment be passed, without which we are in danger of continuing and increasing our isolation from the working class, and making worse mistakes than we are now making.

\* \* \*

Some steps which should be considered for a proletarian orientation of our work:

(1) A national survey to find out what trade unions and what industries our comrades are in, and how many and where, to be published in an internal bulletin and discussed

for its implications.

(2) More trade union and labor oriented pamphlets published by Pathfinder.

(3) More coverage and discussion of trade union situations and labor struggles in *The Militant*. This is not only an editorial question, but we have also given inadequate attention *locally* to preparing such articles. We should make more propaganda for a labor party than we do.

(4) More general education on trade union perspectives, especially classes given by veteran trade union comrades, in order to pass on the party's tradition and understanding to young comrades.

(5) Stepped-up and *systematic* work among GIs and veterans. Demonstrations at comrades' induction should *never* be thought of as a way of letting the brass know who we are so they will reject us, but only as a way of alerting the *public*, of building the basis for defense of the comrade's rights before his induction. These kinds of demonstrations should be considered also from the point of view of whether or not they isolate the comrade when he goes in among the rest of the inductees.

(6) Increased emphasis on work among high school students, in collaboration with the YSA.

(7) Increased emphasis on work among technical college students, in collaboration with the YSA.

(8) Stepped-up, *regular* sales of *The Militant* at plant gates and in working class and Third World communities.

(9) More emphasis by the party in urging the antiwar movement to distribute antiwar literature at plant gates, coupled with the demand that the union bureaucrats mobilize their memberships and sustain the antiwar movement financially. Our aim should be to set up rank and file antiwar committees in industry.

(10) Increased orientation of women's liberation, black and Chicano propaganda toward working people, on the basis of our present program, while not abandoning campus activity in these fields. These areas of work would be

much more productive for us if we made the priority be work in the working class neighborhoods, the ghettos and the barrios, and the trade unions or caucuses.

(11) Orientation of our election campaigns more toward workers, preparing special leaflets, etc.

(12) Orientation of our campus work more toward drawing campus workers into our activity and toward having student comrades follow and support workers' struggles more closely. In addition to the recruitment of workers in a milieu where the radicalization is strong, this would help us recruit students, many of whom see the limitations of their own social power as students and will be looking for an organization that is active in the working class.

(13) Preparation of special leaflets during strikes. These could explain our support for the strike, give a political but not sectarian interpretation, and where we are familiar enough with the situation to be authoritative, evaluate the strike and the union's handling of it. This leafletting could move in the direction of *regular* factory bulletins on political, economic and plant issues, such as our French comrades issue.

(14) A national trade union department of the party, when our work makes this realistic.

(15) Trade union fractions or work committees, locally and nationally. The form, as in (14), should be subordinated to the needs of the work to be done.

(16) Giving consideration to special situations, we should selectively colonize certain workplaces, in order to establish a firm base in the trade union movement. Student comrades should not be told to leave school, in general, and comrades for whom such a colonization would be unrealistic or unfeasible should not be considered for it. But for young comrades seeking a job or easily able to make a transfer into a trade union situation, the party should give serious attention to colonization.

July 20, 1971

#### TEXT OF LETTER TO COMRADE KEIL

By Jack Barnes

Comrade Keil, in his introductory remarks to his July 20 contribution to the Discussion Bulletin, reprints a letter dated July 11, 1971 he addressed to the Political Committee and refers to a reply by myself.

For the information of the party membership, the following is the full text of this letter from myself to Comrade Keil:

14 Charles Lane  
New York, N. Y. 10014  
July 15, 1971

TWIN CITIES

David Keil

Dear Comrade Keil,

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 11 and the proposed amendment to the NC draft political resolution. Your letter stipulates that the amendment is "not for publication in the internal bulletin." (Your emphasis) It also says that you are circulating the amendment privately "to obtain suggestions and sponsors." The amendment itself contains the following passages: "The comrades who will be defending the NC draft resolution will have to make a decision regarding this proposed amendment . . . If the comrades reject this amendment as a 'counter-line', then those of us who agree with it must recognize that a counter-resolution is necessary, and

join those who support 'For A Proletarian Orientation' as a counter-resolution in order to work out a full alternative line."

Within this framework you ask the Political Committee to express its opinion of the amendment before it is submitted for publication in the internal bulletin by you and whatever other comrades you may be able to influence privately. In effect this means that you are asking the Political Committee to make a private political commitment to you behind the back of the party. Such procedure would be entirely out of line. In response to an earlier inquiry from you about discussion procedure, my letter of March 22 called to your attention the section on "Factionalism and Party Unity" in the party resolution on "The Organizational Character of the SWP." Let me now cite to you the full text of pertinent paragraphs from page 12 of that basic party document:

#### *Factionalism and Party Unity*

A properly conducted discussion of internal political differences contributes to the good and welfare of the party. It facilitates the hammering out of a correct political line and it helps to educate the membership. These benefits derive from the discussion provided that every comrade hears all points of view and the whole party is drawn into the thinking about the questions in dispute.

In that way the membership as a whole can intervene in disputes, settle them in an orderly way by majority decision and get on with the party work. This method has been followed by American Trotskyism throughout its history and has resulted in an effective clarification of all controversial issues.

Concentration of private discussions of disputed issues, on the other hand, tends to give the comrades involved a one-sided view and warps their capacity for objective political judgement. Inexperienced comrades especially are made the target of such lopsided discussion methods. The aim is to line them up quickly in a closed caucus, and prejudice their thinking before they have heard an open party debate. When dissident views are introduced

into the party in that manner groupings tend to form and harden, and the dissenting views tend to assert themselves in disruptive fashion, before the party as a whole has had a chance to face and act on the issues in dispute.

In keeping with the discussion norms set forth in the above quotation, any amendments you may wish to offer concerning the National Committee draft resolutions should be submitted directly and openly to the party as a whole through the internal bulletin.

cc: C. Scheer  
K. Shilman

Comradely,  
s/Jack Barnes  
Organization Secretary

ON GREGORICH (& CO.), LIZ M. (& CO.), HEDDA GARZA  
by Bob Fink, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local

In two other documents, I tried to present an abstract view to explain what Marxist is becoming (relativism) and what it should become (scientific). I have tried to criticize, in the least factional way I could, the errors which in part flow from a certain theoretical degeneration, and more so, the degeneration of theory which flows from a number of practical errors. Such errors are the alienated atmosphere of party life internally; the impatience and intolerance of party activists in external life, and I have called for a special discussion on the content of democratic centralism in relation to the Pentagon Papers exposé and the implications of that exposé. Democratic centralism has not only become distorted, but even in a correct form, such as in the 1950's, the balance between democracy and centralism may not necessarily suffice for today without a new balance being struck.

Comrades writing other documents have not been so factionless in their criticism as I hoped I was in those documents, nor in their proposals for solutions. They are precipitous beyond what they need to be, because they're so anxious to air many justified grievances. I can agree with their criticism especially regarding the lack of proletarian orientation, but I do not feel their solutions are altogether correct. They lack modernity. They also disagree with each other. For example, in Gregorich (& Co.), we find a rigid concept of class being expressed, especially in relation to the women's liberation struggle, in which they wrote that "class divisions transcend their (women's) sex-identity." The Liz M. (& Co.) document (supporting Gregorich) regards our stand on women's liberation as healthiest on the organized left, even to the call for "multi-class" movements.

I agree with the latter, while in no way supporting the present SWP alienation from proletarian or class work. But there have been other "proletarian-orientation" minorities, and I would want to know whether the question of class and the *limits* of that concept is really understood before the Gregorich proposed alternatives are worth considering, for that understanding will determine what their *interpretation* of their words *will* be, words which look fine on paper.

The biggest obstacle to believing that real understanding is there, is the continuing call for "sending" comrades into industry—in the middle of *hard times*—(no word how many comrades, not to mention how)—and the emphasis with "trade unions" relative to the very real and significant other forms of *proletarian* life, like tenant or-

ganization, welfare rights, unemployed struggle, and the numerous "illegal" strikes by unions whose employees work for the city and state governments.

One also wants to know if we are facing in these documents a real understanding of the sexual, feminist, and cultural rebellion; of the *unique* character of capitalist America with its traditions of democracy (now being retaken bit by bit); of the rare possibility that the US ruling class may be defeatable by other than military revolutionary means as they are losing their world support and strength (from the military revolutionary struggle of non-USA peoples). Even now, the US rulers will be reckoning with China in a last bid for trade and a shot in the arm economically. We must not take preparing for the worst as being expectation of the worst, inevitably.

The inclusion of women, sexuality, and the other cultural issues in the Gregorich and Liz M. documents *can* be interpreted as an after-thought; lip-service to them just as the current line in action is lip-service to proletarian struggle with occasional articles in *The Militant*. Their inclusion may be motivated more to serve as means to criticize the errors we are making rather than being included as a serious part of our work. There is little or no mention of ecology and science and whether this crisis may "transcend" *at times*, the class struggle and be progressively dealt with often on a multi-class level.

Avoiding an unprincipled bloc is as important in party internal politics as is avoiding other errors. There is a rush to criticize the "corporation" atmosphere in the movement, an atmosphere in which an organizer is almost a polite "receptionist" for the leadership and for members' complaints and "questions"; an atmosphere in which there is more centralism *within* leading bodies *relating to the rest of the members*, than of the whole party relating to the outside; an atmosphere in which exec. members are "we" and "you" are the members (mimicked in our outside work in which the masses hear our spokespeople say "we," never "I"—tho' the program would be the *same*—thus we alienate, right off the bat, those masses who feel they're up against "another" political machine in the SWP-YSA). We say we "want to learn" from outside movements. That's a good attitude if it were true, really. It is adaptation, not learning, in some cases; in most others, it is *neither*.

This rush to raise questions is good. Obviously our party is *not* homogenous, nor *will it be* for a long time.

Quickie alternatives will not suffice written by a few people, if it is at all possible to salvage a broad *collective* party discussion out of the serious internal crisis we are really in due to the evolution of the party in these unique times.

What is the essence of this uniqueness? *The superstructure of socialism is already rearing its head before the political seizure of power!* This is unevenness in its most acute form. There is no law of history to prevent our believing that this may be what is happening.

The technological cooperative *base* of capitalism lacks only cooperative ownership. But despite this lack, the *social*-production base is still here, and has been for a long time. The superstructure we expected to emanate from it under socialism is beginning to occur *now*, among students, women, and many workers and almost all the youth. There is a revolt which is communal in *content*, tho' not in form or consciousness. People are into sexual "comings-out," into group-"touch"-therapy, body-decoration, *et al* because the atomization and the alienation of class history has reached intolerable levels, is too much a violation, to insufferable limits, of the social (communal) instinct for some people to "wait." We have all been forced to live in our own private, solitary worlds. We have (most of us) virtually no social life except on a work level, organization level, or family level. Occasionally, clusters of comrades and other leftists will actually relate to each other as fellow "tribespeople" (the tribe being our world-wide class), but this rarely, and even more rarely is the relationship total in warmth and identity. People don't talk much to each other on elevators, on the street—but all that is beginning in the population in spurts. There is not much give-and-take between comrades. Often its on either a work-to-do or don't-bother-me level all the time. The justification is and had to be: "We are not a social club." But this is no *longer* true if we read the present cultural revolt among the masses of youth.

To appeal to the identity and solidarity of our class, we must be of *their* evolving culture—or of their cultural revolution, just as we must speak the same language. The personal has become political. That's the meaning of the end of one of my documents which abstractly points out that neither human solidarity of individuals or social organized movements can exist without the other. Each creates the other today, or neither will exist for

long.

I do not believe that much of the current leadership of the party understands this. I hope they will. But how much of this do Gregorich and Liz M. understand? Many youth today even want to be artists! They don't *want* to work, as we know alienated labor, at *all*. They don't want jobs and "pay." There is a real call for a new Renaissance as well as for revolution. The same youth are even negating the "leaders" concept, not from the position of Anarchy, or from bourgeois individualism, but from an unconscious desire for communalism. Like some primitives, many of us are taking off the colonists "clothes" and running back into the woods looking for "our people."

Communal demands prior to socialism are the demands of a *classless* society. *Whoever* makes them is toying with *classless* concepts of struggle. However, to expect people to "control themselves" and their subjective needs in the "interests" of the struggle in this country may have been easier years ago, because we had already been doing it in the interests of the state and production. The cybernetic-media revolution exposes the virtual lack of *real* material need for this today. Hence the fierce *independence*, personal too, in the struggle and movements today.

If we are to preserve the strategy of class struggle that we should, we will have to find a "new" way to do it. Perhaps instead of building fires beneath people, we'll have to learn how to build fires inside them, and can realistically hope that moral and conscious judgements are powerful without relying always on pep-talks, slogans, "discipline," and even at times, economic background.

\* \* \*

Hedda Garza has answered Lee Smith's level of debate well enough in her open letter. Yet a number of comrades still feel, somehow, that man-hate is a part of our "line." It is one thing to recognize it exists, and *must* exist, and to recognize the healthy role it plays. It's another thing to *preach it!* Whoever can't tell the difference cannot tell the difference between action versus reaction. Man-hate is a reaction, but it is not at the same time an *action* and *solution* to the liberation of women.

July 20, 1971

### SOME TRENDS IN THE LABOR FORCE

By Sue Smith, Oakland/Berkeley Branch

I want to take up Marx and Trotsky's views of productive and unproductive workers as contrasted with the use of these categories in the minority document as the economic basis for the proletarian orientation. In addition, I want to go into some of the trends in the composition of the labor force to demonstrate statistical affirmation of the majority position.

The opposition document proposes that our orientation should be toward productive workers, those at the point of production. They show a confusion about the definition of a productive worker. According to one definition (incorrect in Marxist terms) they mean a producer of commodities as opposed to services. At other junctures they correctly use the term—as a producer of surplus value. Their incorrect definition would apparently exclude professional and technical workers, service and trade workers, gov-

ernment workers, while including workers in mining, construction, manufacturing and transportation. The document criticizes Mandel for defining "technical intelligentsia" (intellectual labor) as productive labor:

The intermediaries between science and technique, or between technique and production: laboratory assistants, scientific researchers, inventors, technologists, planners, project engineers, draftsmen, etc, in contrast to category 1 (foremen, timekeepers, etc.), these layers are not accomplices in the process of extracting surplus value from the producer. They take part in the material process of production itself and for that reason are not exploiters but producers of surplus value (Mandel, *ISR*, Dec. 1970 p. 40)

The minority answers:

This conception has nothing in common with Marxism.

Surplus value is produced at the point of production.\*\* The intelligentsia described by Comrade Mandel do not work at the point of production. Comrade Mandel may say that the designer of a machine or tool is indispensable to the production of surplus value, but that was just as much the case in Marx's time as it is now, and Marx did not say that such engineers or inventors produced surplus value. (Document for the Proletarian Orientation, p. 6) (\*\* in Marxist terms this is the same as saying surplus value is produced at the point of production of surplus value—a redundancy. My note)

[The authors of the document apparently did not read on]

In Volume 4 of *Capital* (Theories of Surplus Value Part I.), in the section on productive vs unproductive labor, p. 152, Marx writes:

Here the productive labourer is quite explicitly one who not only produces for the capitalist the full value of the means of subsistence contained in his wages, but reproduces it for him 'with a profit' . . .

Included among these productive workers, of course, are all those who contribute in one way or another to the production of the commodity, from the actual operative to the manager or *engineer* (my emphasis) as distinct from the capitalist . . .

Adam Smith . . . defines productive labour as labour WHICH IS DIRECTLY EXCHANGED WITH CAPITAL; . . .

These definitions are therefore not derived from the material characteristics of labour (either from the nature of its product nor from the particular character of the labour as concrete labour), but from the definite social form, the social relations of production, within which the labour is realised. An actor, for example, or even a clown, according to this definition, is a productive labourer if he works in the service of a capitalist (an entrepreneur) to whom he returns more labour than he receives from him in the form of wages; while a jobbing tailor who comes to the capitalist's house and patches his trousers for him, producing a mere use-value for him, is an unproductive labourer.

Productive and unproductive labour is here throughout conceived from THE STANDPOINT OF THE POSSESSOR OF MONEY, FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE CAPITALIST, NOT FROM THAT OF THE WORKMAN . . .

From these portions of Vol. 4, Marx defines productive labor as labor which produces surplus value for the capitalist, and it has nothing to do with whether the worker is engaged on the assembly line at GM, or as an engineer or computer programmer. In fact, a computer programmer working for IBM would be, according to Marx, classed as a productive worker, but that same programmer working for a government agency, doing similar work, under similar conditions, would be unproductive labor. Hence, the concrete physical work that a worker performs does not determine whether he is productive or not.

I take up this point because the proletarian orientation seems to mean "productive worker orientation"—the basic industrial, mostly unionized workers. When a closer study of Marx reveals that the productive category means something else, these categories can no longer be used as the theoretical justification for orienting to the heavy industrial workers.

A corollary argument is that white collar workers not

only are not productive, they are also petty bourgeois. No, most are salaried workers—some productive and others unproductive. The difference is in the white collar extra status, which the bosses have so carefully fostered in their attempt to divide and conquer.

Since the blue collar factory workers are still very petty bourgeois in mentality, this cannot be used as an argument for orienting to the basic industrial workers organized into unions.

Recognition that the industrial unionized workers play the decisive role in any bid for state power, due to their strategic role in production, should not thereby diminish the importance of relating to the trends in the rest of the working class. There are two trends of particular importance: the relative social weight of white collar workers is growing, and at the same time they are becoming "proletarianized"—that is, their working conditions are more like manual labor.

First, in accordance with Mandel's use of the term neo-capitalism to indicate the third industrial revolution, a major characteristic of this revolution is the increasing intellectualization of labor, and a decrease in unskilled labor, due to automation and cybernation. The number of unskilled workers has dropped over the last 20 years from 13 million to less than 4 million, out of a labor force currently of around 80 million. The percent of operatives and related workers (manual) dropped from 21% in 1954 to 19% in 1969. However, from 1954 to 1969, the number of professional, technical and related workers has increased from around 6 million to around 11 million; the number of service, clerical and sales workers has increased from 18 million in 1954 to 27 million in 1969. The last statistic of course reflects the increasing participation of women in economic life: from approx. 30% of the civilian labor force in 1947 to 38% in 1969, from 16.7 million to 30.5 million.

The needs of American industry then, are increasingly for more intellectual non-manual labor and relatively less manual workers, with unskilled workers shrinking so rapidly as to indicate their eventual demise from the productive process. This latter trend does not exclude the fact that many highly skilled jobs are being reduced to semi-skilled jobs because machines take over the precision work.

This trend toward intellectual labor also reflects itself in the number of students now enrolled in colleges: nearly 8 1/2 million. According to Mark Friedman in Bulletin #14 page 19, a large majority of this youth is of proletarian background. Young people are entering junior colleges and trade schools now for much the same reason they went to high school 25 years ago: just to get a job. The influx of students began in the 1940s as a function of the third industrial revolution, and nearly tripled in the last 10 years. Because of the open enrollment policy 76% of New York high school graduates go on to some form of higher education, up from 57% last year. This increase is largely composed of third world students. (Friedman #14, p. 19)

The process of intellectualization of labor is closely linked to a second phenomenon: the proletarianization of this labor. For example, a recent study by two British university psychologists reported in the July 14 Chronicle entitled "What Psychic Wages Won't Buy" stated that "they now see a swing away from the former non-monetary



commitment to the job among . . . (white collar workers)." Some of the factors cited as responsible for the changed attitudes were:

a) information overload: the amount of new and ever more detailed information relating to some white collar jobs, is growing so fast that it takes almost one's whole time to keep up to date. b) advances in technology de-personalize and drain some jobs of the psychic wage that once could be expected. The scope for personal and intellectual involvement previously to be found in many jobs is diminishing, and to find fulfillment once obtained in work, employees have to look elsewhere.

Mandel reinforces this study in "Where is America Going?" (*Young Socialist*, Sept. 1969)

Intellectual labor . . . becomes to an ever-increasing degree alienated labor—standardized, mechanized, and subjected to rigid rules and regimentation, in exactly the same way that manual labor was in the first and second industrial revolutions. This fact is very closely linked with one of the most spectacular recent developments in American society: the massive student revolt . . . the growing radicalization of students.

Students now realize the jobs they receive (if they receive any at all) after their education will not be the privileged managerial and capitalist occupations of the 1930s. The vast majority of them will simply be non-industrial workers. This creates a consciousness of alienation while they are still students. The alienation is exacerbated by the realization that the purpose, curriculum, and structure of the college is clearly to suit capitalist needs. Further, in today's job market, the largest number of graduates ever, found they weren't even going to have the "privilege" of joining the ranks of the proletariat.

White collar workers along with students reflect their increasingly alienated conditions by turning more to militant trade unionism after the fashion of the traditional industrial unions.

Trade union membership tends to follow the radicalizations of the workers: in 1930 only 11.6% of the labor force was organized into unions but by 1937, 22.6% had been recruited, with the building of the CIO. These figures continued to rise to a high of 34.7% in 1954 after which they declined steadily to 1968's 27.9%. The quiescence of the class is indicated by the fact that the percentage of union membership is continuing to shrink. But simultaneously we are seeing a rise of the white collar organizations which now consider themselves unions, where formerly they were "associations." Many of these unions are increasingly militant. For example, the telephone workers have just gone on strike, a postal workers' strike seems imminent, and San Francisco teachers held their ground not long ago, etc.

The majority document whose orientation is toward the broader working class movements does not by any means *exclude* work in the industrial trade unions; *no, this is a tactical decision to be carried out.* Trade union work is only one tactic within a broader strategy of participation in the working class movement. And this movement includes not only students and white collar workers, but also the antiwar movement, GIs in the army, women's liberation, gay liberation, the prison movement, and the third world components. A large percentage of the working class is composed of precisely women, third world people and youth. But it seems to distress the opposition that these numbers are not yet radicalizing as workers but as the separate components I have mentioned. This cannot fail to have ultimately a radicalizing effect within the factories, but it isn't happening just now. We must maintain our orientation to those components of the working class which are in motion, in order to learn from these movements and propel them forward, and to prepare ourselves for when the workers move, as workers, forward to the socialist revolution.

July 22, 1970

## THE DISCUSSION IN THE OAKLAND/BERKELEY BRANCH

By Allen Taplin, Oakland/Berkeley Branch

(The following is an expansion on remarks made to the Oakland/Berkeley branch meeting on July 18.)

Last week we were told that a tendency had been formed around the resolution "For A Proletarian Orientation." I remember that early in the pre-convention discussion in our branch I had referred to this group as a tendency. Some of their supporters were upset by this remark, protesting that they were only a group and not a tendency.

Well, I was a little premature in that statement. But this group has evolved somewhat, has changed over the months, and has achieved a defined political focus. And now it is a tendency.

I know that some of the comrades are speculating on their continued evolution, wondering whether this tendency will develop into a faction. The discussion in the past few weeks has become more hostile in tone, more factional in form. So some comrades are thinking that perhaps the continued development of differences will sooner or later lead some of them out of the party and YSA.

Perhaps it will. But it would be premature right at this point to label this group a faction, and claim that they are headed toward a split. I thought I should say this publicly because many comrades are talking about it

privately. Also, this subject can be raised now because the discussion nationally, and in this branch especially, has reached the point where the political lines have been pretty clearly drawn, where most of the comrades understand the major issues and have taken a stand on them.

The history of the Socialist Workers Party has taught us that political tendencies—which are set up to win supporters for ideas—can develop into factions—which are set up to win organizational control of the party. And we know that factional disputes can lead to disruption of the party's work and eventually to splits.

The history of the SWP has also shown that this does not always happen. Sometimes tendencies have existed for many years in the party and have not caused any particular problems in our work. Sometimes tendencies have disappeared as comrades changed their views or individually dropped out of activity. And of course it's possible for a tendency to become a majority in the party.

It's worth looking at this tendency that developed in the Oakland/Berkeley branch because there are many comrades here who know about this dispute only from the



current controversy. Actually, it has a considerable history.

First, let me sum up what we have learned about this group:

1) Politically, it can be labeled a sectarian tendency. The definition that I used earlier in the discussion was that this group was characterized by a growing opposition, of a sectarian nature, to the party's intervention into the youth radicalization.

2) The methodology they employ is schematic, formal, superficial. Their arguments rest mainly upon quotations used out of context, rather than upon analysis of current political problems.

3) Their organization approach is that of carping critics. They attack the party's work in every field of the radicalization on this basis: that all our weaknesses are our own fault, the result of petty-bourgeois leadership and orientation.

4) The supporters of the sectarian tendency are a disparate grouping. The definition of disparate is to have no definitive relation in common; to be connected only by some notion of great generality. The notion that we must now "turn to the working class" is certainly one of great generality.

I could go on with this summary, but I think that's enough.

In the Oakland/Berkeley YSA and SWP a dispute has been going on for a long time. It's been more than a year and a half now that more or less the same comrades have been at odds over one or another issue.

For a long time there were no clearcut differences of a political nature involved in these arguments. Although comrades on both sides kept looking for political differences in the other side's views, the differences were almost always on the level of who should do the work, how it should be done, where the emphasis should be placed, and so on.

The early arguments were mostly—though not entirely—between branch activists in the YSA. The first "groups" developed over who could best organize and lead the YSA. So we saw a contest of individuals for leadership in the YSA here. I'm sure most comrades in the country who have been members for any length of time have seen arguments of this sort develop and then pass away.

About a year ago a number of the comrades of the present sectarian tendency became the majority in the Berkeley YSA, though they have remained a minority in the party branch. They were hard workers, some of them quite talented, and did good work. They weren't sectarians then. I don't think that they had any political views that were different from the rest of us at that time. If they did, I for one couldn't discover it.

I remember that one of their main criticisms was that the local YSA leadership wasn't carrying out the national line very well—wasn't doing enough SMC work—wasn't audacious in doing student work. That's what they said a year ago.

At that time I viewed them as "dissidents." This is a type we will always find in the movement: comrades who are usually opposed to the leadership, whether or not they have any distinct political views of their own.

The arguments in the YSA didn't stop. They spread

to the party and became centered in the party. The majority and minority groupings both tended to harden up somewhat. Many new comrades became attracted to one side or the other fairly soon after they joined. As a result there developed two fairly stable groupings in the branch. For a long time there was no clearly defined *political* distinction between them.

This was not a healthy situation, but we managed to do our work fairly well because the national leadership and this branch—leadership and membership—followed a good organizational policy. We tried to involve all the comrades in the work, regardless of their opinions or personal characteristics. We tried to build a collective leadership for the branch, with comrades from both sides on the executive committee and in the fractions. Everyone was given a fair shake and the opportunity to put their abilities to work. There were difficulties in this of course, but we managed.

This kind of a situation isn't very stable, but it can last a long time if the comrades involved are more-or-less settled in their opinions and activities. However, most of the comrades involved were fairly new to our movement, and not at all settled in their opinions and activities.

A change in this situation began to develop prior to the pre-convention discussion. During the last plenum reports the majority put pressure on the dissidents to put their views into writing. Now that the convention was approaching they would have to put up or shut up. They seemed to feel this pressure very strongly and it appears they looked for a way to put up—to justify their year-long criticisms of our branch leadership.

There are a few people in the branch who for a long time have had clearcut political views differing from the party majority's. Then some other comrades with clear political differences moved here from other branches. At the present time the Oakland/Berkeley branch has become a sort of concentration point for many comrades who have been attracted to the minority's views. With the start of the discussion these comrades provided a clear political focus for all the dissidents.

Under these circumstances a tendency has crystallized here which is part of the national sectarian tendency. We might say that the branch dissidents have found a political viewpoint to justify their opposition to the branch majority leadership—and on the other side, the comrades with a sectarian viewpoint have found a following.

I have called the minority a disparate group. We have learned from the discussion that many of the comrades here who support their resolution are motivated by an attitude of sectarian resistance to the party's turn toward the radicalization. This is the major driving force of this grouping, and not any strong belief that everyone must get into the factories today.

There are a few comrades here who have declared for the counterresolution who are not sectarian in their politics or inclinations. These comrades continue to insist that they support the party's basic line on the radicalization. They only have organizational differences, some have said; or they believe the party and branch leadership is not very competent; or we should change the emphasis of our work somewhat, etc.

We have noticed that the latter group continues to lose ground to the former within their tendency. We've noticed in the past few weeks the sectarian leaders have softened

their views on the radicalization somewhat in response to the views of some of their followers. But the main direction for the group as a whole is the sectarian direction. This kind of change always occurs in these polemics.

A grouping of dissidents without clearcut politics, who join together with sectarian politicians in a polemic against the party line, will inevitably find their political course determined by the views of the sectarians. Every individual of course may not develop this way. But that's the rule for the development of such groupings.

\* \* \*

We're all wondering what will happen here when the discussion is over. The deepening of the differences will increase the problems we have had in working together in this branch. However, our past year's history has shown that we do have an organizational method which should enable us to function in a healthy manner.

### **ASPECTS OF THE GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT** by John Lauritsen, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

Kinsey and his associates interviewed more than 8,000 American males and more than 7,000 American females in their studies: *Sexual Behavior In The Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior In The Human Female* (1953), using a study design of extreme sophistication. Here are a few of their findings:

Fifty percent of all males are conscious of erotic responses to other males.

Thirty-seven percent of the total male population (2 out of every 5 males) has had at least one homosexual experience to the point of orgasm between adolescence and old age.

Eighteen percent have at least as much homosexual as heterosexual experience for at least three years between the ages of 16 and 55.

Ten percent are more or less exclusively homosexual for at least three years between these ages.

Four percent are exclusively homosexual throughout their lives after adolescence.

Ten percent of *married* males between the ages of 16 and 25 are involved in some homosexual activity.

Twenty-eight percent of the female population is conscious of erotic responses to other females.

Thirteen percent reach orgasm through homosexual contacts by their mid-forties.

Between two and six percent are more or less exclusively homosexual.

Kinsey and his associates find that their data require thinking in terms of a gradual *continuum* between those who exhibit exclusively heterosexual and those who exhibit exclusively homosexual behavior. They aptly sum up by saying:

The homosexual has been a significant part of human sexual activity ever since the dawn of history, primarily because it is an expression of capacities that are basic in the human animal.

The anthropologist, Frank Beach, and the psychologist, Clellan Ford, studied anthropological data on 190 human societies as well as the behavior of subhuman primates and lower mammals for their book, *Patterns Of Sexual Behavior* (Harper & Bros., 1951). They found that America, by condemning any and all forms of homo-

The discussion has already had a lot of good results. The most important is its educational value. A whole layer of new comrades have had an opportunity to learn about the party's politics and history through the means of a polemic. A polemic, whatever its cost in injured personal relations, is perhaps the most effective educational event in our movement.

One thing that's very striking in every one of our many, many long meetings is that most all the comrades get up and read from written statements. That means that the comrades are thinking about the issues involved, are working out their views, and carefully preparing their statements.

Many comrades, on both sides, who in the ordinary course of branch life rarely or never make a political comment, have become active polemicists in this discussion. It's certainly the most intense educational experience this branch has ever gone through.

July 18, 1971

sexual behavior, fell into an extreme minority position among human societies. Most human societies either encourage or tolerate some form of homosexual behavior. In addition, they found homosexual behavior, including genuine liaisons, to be quite frequent among infra-human primates (apes and monkeys) and among all lower mammals. They concluded that:

Men and women who are totally lacking in any conscious homosexual leanings are as much a product of cultural conditioning as are the exclusive homosexuals who find heterosexual relations distasteful and unsatisfying. Both extremes represent movement away from the original, intermediate condition which includes the capacity for both forms of sexual expression. In a restrictive society such as our own a large proportion of the population learns not to respond to or even to recognize homosexual stimuli and may eventually become in fact unable to do so. At the same time a certain minority group, also through the process of learning, becomes highly if not exclusively sensitive to the erotic attractions of a like-sexed partner....human homosexuality is not basically a product of hormonal imbalance or "perverted heredity." It is the product of the fundamental mammalian heritage of general sexual responsiveness as modified under the impact of experience. (*op. cit.*, p. 263.)

Wainwright Churchill in his book, *Homosexual Behavior Among Males* (Hawthorne, N. Y., 1967) presents extensive evidence that anti-homosexual prejudice is peculiar to Judeo-Christendom, that is, to lands under the influence of Jewish and Christian superstitions. Such prejudice is not found in most of Asia and Africa, except as a result of European colonization or the penetration of Christian missionaries.

As materialists we are not inclined to think in terms of "eternal human nature," and we do not see sexual attitudes as having been handed down from an old man in the sky. Since evidence indicates that homosexual behavior is perfectly natural and commonly occurring, then it is anti-homosexual prejudice that has to be explained. This leads us to an examination of religious history.

## OUR RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

From the very beginning fear and hostility seem to characterize the Judeo-Christian attitude towards sex: original sin, the shamefulness of the naked body, etc.

Consider the cursing of Eve:

I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception  
In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children  
And thy desire shall be to thy husband  
And he shall rule over thee.

Here we see the feminine role laid down as degradation and penitent submission to male authority.

What were the sins of our Mother Eve? Sexual pleasure and the pursuit of knowledge. And if one were to defend our woman ancestor, one would have to maintain that the human body and reason were good, in opposition to the entire Judeo-Christian tradition.

Homosexuality flourished among many ancient peoples: the Celts, Greeks, Scandinavians, Egyptians, Etruscans, Cretans, Carthaginians, and Summerians, and throughout the "Cradle of Civilization," the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, the Nile Valley, and the Mediterranean Basin.

The ancient Hebrews, however, developed negative attitudes towards human sexuality. PRUDISHNESS came to dominate the Jewish outlook. For example, the sculpture of the Greeks and other "heathen" peoples, portraying the nude human body, shocked the Hebrews, who called this "uncovering of nakedness."

The Hebrews considered themselves the "chosen people" of a jealous and vindictive god, morally superior to their neighbors. In setting themselves apart from other peoples, they developed a most stringent sexual code. Under mosaic law, 36 crimes were punishable by death; one half - 18 - involved sexual relationships of one kind or another.

For two men who made love to each other, the law stated:

If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them. (Leviticus 20:13)

The prescribed method of execution was death by stoning, regarded as the most severe penalty. Adulterers, in contrast, were put to death by the more humane method of strangulation.

Not only would death by stoning be slow and painful, but there would be an additional psychological aspect. Every man, woman and child would take part in the execution, the hatred of the entire community directed against the non-conformist.

The Hebrews came to associate homosexual practices entirely with foreign customs, and they referred to "the way of the Canaanite-Chaldean-heathen-etc.," rather than naming the unnamable practices. Conceptions of idolatry evolved to the notion that homosexuality was actually unnatural. The Sodom and Gomorrah story was probably literally believed.

### *From Bolshevism To Stalinism*

Within months of taking power after the 1917 revolution, the Bolshevik government, under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, ended all legal discrimination based upon homosexuality. The old czarist homosexuality paragraph which penalized homosexual acts with long-term imprisonment was simply scrapped. This reform was consistent with making divorce easy, providing for free abortion, communal laundries and dining halls, and other revolutionary actions.

An article on homosexuality in the great Soviet Encyclopedia was based upon the two people considered to be the leading scientific authorities on the subject: Magnus Hirschfeld and Sigmund Freud. The article maintained that homosexuality represented a scientific question and that homosexuals should not be punished. It was emphasized that the walls separating homosexuals from the rest of society should be taken down.

We have a great deal of research to do in finding out what discussions took place within the Bolshevik party, and exactly what reasons were given for the revolutionary and unprecedented abolition of the anti-homosexuality laws. We might speculate that the leading Bolsheviks perceived religious superstition as the source of anti-homosexual prejudice; evidence to this effect was available at that time, though it would be quite meager and subjective in comparison to the anthropological data banks available to us now. Almost certainly they realized that activity *which does nobody any harm* should not be punished. This is the "no crimes without victims" concept which has recently gained currency in the gay liberation and other movements.

According to Wilhelm Reich, both Lenin and Trotsky placed great importance upon the sexual revolution and the need to develop appropriate theory.

Lenin himself, in criticizing a book by Ruth Fischer, stressed the fact that the sexual revolution, like the sexual social process in general, was not at all understood from the standpoint of dialectic (sic) materialism, and that its mastery would require a tremendous experience. He thought that if anybody would comprehend this problem in its totality and real significance, he would do the greatest service to the revolution. . . . Trotsky also pointed out again and again how new and how little understood was the field of cultural and sexual revolution. (*The Sexual Revolution*, Noonday, N.Y., p. 180)

Unfortunately, circumstances did not permit the development of such theory. The early actions of the Bolsheviks, however, gave a powerful impetus to many different struggles, and radical mass-based sexual freedom groups arose during the 1920's and early 1930's, until they were squelched by fascism and stalinism.

As part of the Thermidorian reaction in the Soviet Union, there developed a mythology regarding homosexuality completely without foundation in the real world.

Stalinists began to talk of homosexuality as "the result of decadence in the bourgeois sector of society" and "the fascist perversion." Discrimination and "party purges" began to take place. In some cases, old Bolsheviks like Clara Zetkin intervened and achieved acquittal. But repression continued until in January, 1934 there were mass arrests of homosexuals in Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, and Odessa. In March, 1934, a law punishing homosexual acts with imprisonment up to eight years appeared.

For an eloquent polemic dealing with the tensions midway between Bolshevism and Stalinism, I suggest that comrades read "A 1928 Appeal for Homosexual Rights" by Kurt Hiller, appearing in the May, 1971 *International Socialist Review*. In this speech, delivered before the Second International Congress for Sexual Reform in Copenhagen, Hiller, an independent socialist and spokesperson for homosexual emancipation, takes on the "decadence" theories of French CPer Henri Barbusse, who became one of the most subservient stalinist hacks.

The Communist Parties to this day continue to propagate the stalinist crap about homosexuality being "the product of alienation," "the fascist perversion," etc., *ad nauseam*. I shall give a few typical and recent examples of their libels. First, however, I wish to re-emphasize that there is *not a scrap of evidence for these myths*. The "fascist perversion" theme is particularly obscene, since gay people were put into concentration camps and murdered under fascism in Germany and Italy. In Italy today, the neo-fascist party propagandizes for anti-homosexual legislation. In America, the American Nazi Party counter-demonstrates at gay liberation actions.

*Example I.*

Carmen Ristorucci, in reviewing Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* for the CP theoretical journal, *Political Affairs*, January, 1971, writes:

Little differentiation is made between homosexuals who are a product of a decaying capitalism which confuses and corrupts the minds of people, and women, an exploited section . . .

*Example II.*

The cartoons of Bill Andrews for the *Daily World*.

A. (February 20, 1971).

Cartoon shows an effeminate J. Edgar Hoover and Nixon. Hoover is the evil queen after Snow White story—asks question of magic mirror ("who is fairest of us all?")—reflection of effeminate Nixon in mirror answers, "You are, of course, my dear!" Both are clearly portrayed as less than "real men," i.e. "faggots."

B. (May 29, 1971)

Hoover again, being embraced by male TV star, with hearts floating around. Hoover says, "Easy lad! People are looking!"

C. (October 15, 1970)

A charming allusion to the "fascist perversion."

The caption reads, "Sen. Fulbright (D-Ark) criticized the Nixon regime 'for thinking that it is in our interest to go to bed with the Papadopoulos.' (Fascist Greek junta)" Andrews draws a Nixon in flowered pajamas in a four poster double bed with a depraved looking Papadopoulos with pursed lips. Nixon, his arms around Papadopoulos, says "...But it was LUST at first sight!" On a small table is an alarm clock and a vase with flowers. Through a window can be seen the Acropolis. So that nobody will miss the point, a large swastika is shown on the footboard of the bed.

*Example III.*

Jarvis Tyner in pamphlet, *Build the Youth Front*, 25c, publ. Y. W. L. L., sold at July, 1971, NPAC conference in NYC.

But Gay Liberation is essentially a diversion. And the bourgeoisie picks up on these things and goes to town. The N. Y. Times was talking about "gay ghettos." . . . There is male chauvinism (*sic*). There's no question about that, but I don't think "sexism" describes the thing, the phenomenon. We are opposed to the repression of homosexuals on the basis of their being homosexuals . . . But it is a psychological problem. It's based on the bourgeois concept of manhood. It's based on all kinds of pressures in the crisis and oppression and exploitation in society with people distorted and so on. But you really can't answer the Gay Liberation movement at this stage by walking up to them and saying "You're sick." They're not ready to accept this.

And in every coalition, Gay Liberation has been brought in. . . . Then they had this united front with some sections of the Trotskyites and other trends. (p. 18)

*Example IV.*

The leading stalinist "intellectual," Prof. Herbert Aptheker, writing in his book, *The Urgency Of Marxist-Christian Dialogue*, Harper & Row, N. Y. 1970.

...a good working rule would appear to be that the exercise of sexuality is the privilege and pleasure of adults and is the business of two such adults and nobody else's. On the whole this would answer the question of so-called "perversions," though the attitude toward homosexuality remains rather intensely hostile in socialist countries.

Such sexual conduct as well as the extraordinary emphasis upon sexuality in the West, and especially in the United States, (particularly in rather exotic and sadistic forms) is viewed by Marxists as a reflection of decadence. Manifestations of this in civilizations in decline—as in the Greek and Roman empires, or in those of Nazi Germany, and fascist Italy—serve to confirm this analysis, especially as far as dominant cultural and behavioral patterns are concerned. (p.99)

We observe Aptheker's use of the word, "analysis." Yet he presents no analysis. How could he?

Was the obedient professor just a little embarrassed at having to follow the decadence-fascist perversion line? Who can tell? The academese just rolls on.

Greece in its youth and its prime—decadent!

*SUMMARY OF SCIENTIFIC OPINION*

No other aspect of human existence has been regarded with less rationality than sexual behavior. Until recently, homosexuality was regarded as a rare disease or a "crime against nature." In the Middle Ages, homosexuality was referred to as "*peccatum illud horribile, inter Christianos non nominandum*" (the sin so horrible that it may not be mentioned among Christians), and it is still regarded by many as something mysterious and uncanny—the "love that dare not speak its name." Most Americans would rather leap into a sea of flames than discuss their homosexual feelings.

Scientific studies, however, indicate that even in our own, brutally repressive society, homosexual acts are a commonly occurring form of activity found among all classes and all kinds of women and men.

Then the slave religion, Christianity, came along. The Death Religion. The Christians carried forward the Jewish sexual code with new refinements.

By the 4th Century, Constantius had made homosexual acts a capital crime.

About 400 AD Theodosius The Great made Christianity the state religion of Rome, and from that time onwards, heretics were enemies of the state and traitors.

A milestone in the history of gay oppression came in 538 when Justinian The Great codified Roman law. This Christian emperor prescribed torture, mutilation, and castration. He once had the dying bodies of two bishops convicted of sodomy dragged through the streets in view of the assembled populace. Justinian's edict condemned sodomites to the sword "lest, as a result of these impious acts, whole cities should perish together with their inhabitants." The edict referred to "diabolical & unlawful lusts" and reasoned that "because of such crimes there are famines, earthquakes & pestilences," a reference to

the Sodom and Gomorrah story. By March 15, 544, Justinian was claiming that homosexual acts endangered the state.

We might note in passing that the ruling classes do not generally feel themselves bound by the moral codes they pass down to the masses. Justinian was no paragon of virtue, and many stories are recorded of the affairs, both heterosexual and homosexual, of his wife, the Empress Theodora. She was once so excited by observing men being castrated that she was driven to public masturbation.

During the dark ages, homosexual offenders were punished by excommunication, denial of last rites, castration, torture, mutilation, death by burning, and burial in unsanctified ground. Some Christian fathers even felt it necessary to perform mutilation upon the *corpses* of the offenders. Sodomy, heresy, witchcraft, and treason became more or less equated (adumbrating the McCarthy period in America, where again homosexuality and treason were linked).

The word "faggot," now used as a pejorative for male homosexuals, originates in the practice of burning homosexual offenders at the stake. "Faggot" means a bundle of sticks tied together for burning. Such phrases as *fire and faggot* and *to fry a faggot* refer to burning heretics alive. Heretics who recanted were obliged to wear an embroidered figure of a faggot on their sleeve. Hence, we see the word generalized from a bundle of fuel sticks, to the method of execution, to major victims of the Inquisition, gay people.

According to Henry Kamen in *The Spanish Inquisition*:

Homosexuality in the Middle Ages was treated as the ultimate crime against morality, and the standard definitions of it refer to the "abominable" or the "unspeakable" crime. . . . The usual punishment was burning alive.

The Inquisition lasted until well into the 19th Century. Although the Roman Church deserves the greatest credit for the persecution of gay people, the Protestant denomination should not be overlooked.

Henry VIII of England murdered his wife, drove tens of thousands of people off their lands and then had 27,000 of them executed for "vagabondage." He established both the Church of England and the death penalty for the "detestable & abominable Vice of Buggery committed with mankind or beast." Henry VIII was a clever man. With a view to increasing the royal fortune, he was careful to specify (for those executed) "penalties of their goods, chattels, debts, lands, tenements, etc." Armed with this law, Henry VIII used the pretext of vice to destroy numerous monasteries and thus gain their lands. The death penalty for sodomy remained in effect in England until 1861.

In Amsterdam in 1750, 250 homosexual offenders were executed under the Calvinist tradition.

Under the Puritans, *The Capitall Lawes of New England* specified death for 15 offenses, including witchcraft, murder, insurrection, and homosexuality.

*A Marxist Approach To Gay Liberation: Sex Roles, Conformity, Historical Materialism, Etc.*

The Marxist approach to any new subject cannot diverge from the scientific approach. This is basic. The starting point is to acquire as much knowledge as pos-

sible in an objective way.

In the case of gay liberation, a specifically Marxist analysis begins from the perspective of homosexuality as being a basic component of the human animal. We also keep in mind the great malleability of human behavior, and the great variety of sex roles that have been adopted in one society or another.

Anti-homosexual prejudice is not merely the persistence of archaic religious beliefs, but rather these superstitions as tailored to each prevailing system. As materialists, we are aware that sexual attitudes don't drop out of the sky, and we would expect them to be generally congruent with the interests of the people in power. Furthermore, we would expect sex-role stereotypes to change as the needs of the system change. And indeed they do.

David Thorstad's "Answers to Some Questions On Gay Liberation" (Discussion Bulletin Vol. 29, #12) provides a number of illustrations of how sex-role stereotypes can be viewed from a historical materialist standpoint. I will add only a few points, as the possible examples are countless.

Conformity and a fear of being different are central concepts. A paradox is in operation. On one level, there is a prohibition against non-conformity which is linked to homosexual activity, but may in fact have nothing to do with it. A woman who shows too much independence or a man who shows too much sensitivity may be branded as "queer," even though their orientation might be entirely heterosexual. There have also been cases where people refused to believe that a "masculine" man or "feminine" woman was really gay, even when he or she was exclusively homosexual.

The profound significance of the fear of being considered queer lies in the fact that *no one is completely free from the possibility of being attacked as queer.*

Whites are not directly threatened by racism, and men are not directly threatened by male supremacy. But everyone must put some effort into acting so that he or she will not be considered queer.

In the case of males, the required non-queer role-playing sometimes goes to ridiculous extremes. In order not to be queer, an American male must be rigid, tough, aggressive, emotionless, and humorless. He may never express affection to another male, except under the guise of obscenity, drunkenness, or horseplay. Brutality is a potential ingredient of the "non-queer" male, as well as an underlying contempt for women. The ideal non-queer male is an incomplete human being—a caricature who is incapable of forming a meaningful relation with either sex.

In order not to be "limp-wristed," the non-queer male will make himself "stiff-wristed," and go around like a zombie with rigor mortis—all just to prove he's not queer.

The fear of being thought queer is so intense in America as to be stronger than the fear of death itself for some. A recent article in the *Village Voice* (3/18/71) quotes a GI explaining how the army could induce young American males to comply even with unpopular commands—"I know guys in Nam who completely disagreed with the war but would volunteer for dangerous missions as soon as their manhood was questioned."

Gay liberation not only has its own validity as a centuries-overdue rebellion against real oppression. But in addition, gay liberation, by ending the crippling fear of homosexuality, should have a powerful liberating effect on everyone, and should spur all sectors of the oppressed

and exploited to new combativeness for their own liberation.

### *Gay Liberation And The Revolutionary Party*

We still have much to learn and much theoretical work to do. This task is uniquely one for the Trotskyist movement.

At this point, we see the great dynamic and potential of the movement, its already international scope. We can see coalitions forming, such as the Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee and similar groups, and a projected Washington conference this fall, which are consistent with our perspective of mass action. Already we know enough to begin to help build the gay liberation movement. Such principles as non-exclusion, mass action, focused or single-issue coalitions, *etc.* are applicable to gay liberation as to the antiwar or women's liberation movement.

We should continue to develop theory on the sexual revolution, completing the task that Lenin and Trotsky thought so important.

On campus, where we have a strong base, gay groups should prove of great importance as sources of new ideas

and potential recruits to our movement.

As the gay liberation movement develops, collisions with the bourgeois social sciences, especially psychiatry, and with religion are inevitable, and the serious gay liberationists should find themselves strongly inclined towards revolutionary Marxism.

Twenty thousand gay men and women joined the Christopher Street Liberation Day march in New York City on June 27, 1971. Many thousands more took part in similar marches and other related activities in Los Angeles, Chicago, Austin, San Francisco, Boston, and Houston.

Two years ago I was one of a few dozen gay radicals who were moved to struggle for *our own* liberation. We took to the streets, we linked our cause to other struggles, and we made other movements come to grips with gay liberation.

Now there are gay liberation groups in every major city in America, on hundreds of college campuses, and in many Canadian and European cities.

The time to move beyond the probe stage and to involve ourselves in gay liberation is now.

July 15, 1971

### THE PROLETARIAN PARTY IN THE 1970's

Tom Vernier, Detroit Branch

Some significant questions have been raised in this discussion about the nature of our party, its composition, and its orientation. It is the thesis of the comrades who submitted the document "For a Proletarian Orientation" that the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is on a "new course" as a result of its adaptation to petty-*bourgeois* pressures on the party. This "new course" is, in their opinion, one that is leading the SWP away from the working class and away from the possibility of leading the proletariat in the coming American socialist revolution. The turn to this "new course" was brought about, according to these comrades, by the increasing number of petty-*bourgeois* students who have joined the party over the last decade and who have, because of their alien class interests, tended to focus the attention of the party more and more on "middle class movements" (like the women's liberation movement, the gay liberation movement, and the student movement), and less and less on the trade unions (i.e., for these comrades, the working class). Since, according to them, the 1971 convention may be our last chance to turn back to the revolutionary road, it is important to consider their arguments seriously.

#### *The Party and the Trade Unions*

The fundamental error of the opposition comrades is their conclusion that the work of a revolutionary party must always center in the trade unions, and that all other work must be subordinate to trade union activities. In his document, "In reply to the party leadership's perspectives", Comrade Charous makes this point: "These quotations ('Mass agitation in general must be conceived, organized, and developed, not as a substitute for the systematic penetration of the trade unions, but as a supplement to it. . . A party which aims to lead the working class must acquire a strong base of support and a leading influence in the trade unions. . . ' — from an article by Cannon in a 1939 *Socialist Appeal* — T.V.) more than indicate the attitude of the party in the past on the question of the importance and definition of a proletarian orientation. In the past, the party put as its primary

concern relating to the workers' organizations and taking the party's program to them."<sup>1</sup> In other words, in 1939 the primary orientation of the SWP was to acquire a strong base in the trade unions; therefore, the primary orientation of the party must always be to acquire a strong base in the trade unions, regardless of other factors.

Since our aim is to lead the working class in making a socialist revolution, and since the trade unions are the organizations of the working class, this proposition has a great deal of truth in it; it contains a principle that a party that views itself as the vanguard of the proletariat cannot forget. The principle is that it is the historic mission of the working class to overthrow capitalism, and that this task cannot be carried out, in general, without the conscious leadership of a revolutionary combat party that is rooted in and has the respect of the working masses. Does it follow from this principle, however, that the primary orientation of a revolutionary party must *always* be to acquire a strong base in the *trade unions*?

To answer this question, let us consider a section from the document adopted at the founding convention of the Fourth International, the Transitional Program.

". . . the Fourth International resolutely rejects and condemns trade union fetishism, equally characteristic of trade unionists and syndicalists.

"a. Trade unions do not offer, and in line with their task, composition, and manner of recruiting membership, cannot offer a finished revolutionary program; in consequence, they cannot replace the *party*. The building of national revolutionary parties as sections of the Fourth International is the central task of the transitional epoch.

"b. Trade unions, even the most powerful, embrace no more than 20 to 25 percent of the working class, and at that, predominantly the more skilled and better paid layers. The more oppressed majority of the working class is drawn only episodically into the struggle, during a period of exceptional upsurges in the labor movement. During such moments it is necessary to create organizations *ad hoc*, embracing the whole fighting mass: strike



committees, factory committees, and finally soviets.

"c. As organizations expressive of the top layers of the proletariat, trade unions, as witnessed by all past historical experience. . . developed powerful tendencies toward compromise with the *bourgeois*-democratic regime. In periods of acute class struggle, the leading bodies of the trade unions aim to become masters of the mass movement in order to render it harmless. . . In time of war or revolution, when the *bourgeoisie* is plunged into exceptional difficulties, trade union leaders usually become *bourgeois* ministers.

"Therefore, the sections of the Fourth International should always strive not only to renew the top leadership of the trade unions, boldly and resolutely in critical moments advancing new militant leaders in place of routine functionaries and careerists, but also to create in all possible instances independent militant organizations corresponding more closely to the tasks of mass struggle against *bourgeois* society; and if necessary, not flinching even in the face of a direct break with the conservative apparatus of the trade unions. If it be criminal to turn one's back on mass organizations for the sake of fostering sectarian fictions, it is no less so to passively tolerate subordination of the revolutionary mass movement to the control of openly reactionary or disguised conservative ("progressive") bureaucratic cliques. Trade unions are not ends in themselves; they are but means along the road to proletarian revolution."<sup>2</sup>

In the transitional epoch, in the period of building revolutionary parties, when the trade unions are the focus of the class struggle, the party should be in the trade unions, recruiting from them, developing cadres in them, leading them; that should be its primary task. When the trade unions are not the focus of class struggle, when other mass movements are raising transitional or anticapitalist demands, the party should be in those movements, recruiting from them, developing cadres in them, and leading them.

The most outstanding feature of the current radicalization is that the trade unions are not the focus of the class struggle; the working class has not yet moved as a class within or without the established trade unions. It is impossible to say, at this point, whether the trade unions will be revolutionized by the radicalization, whether they will be discarded by the workers for more advanced forms of organization, or whether they will become reactionary forces in the path of the revolution. We do know that, no matter how hard we might wish it otherwise, this radicalization is not going to unfold in the same way as previous ones. There are mass movements now, however, which are objectively anticapitalist movements and which involve the working class, and the lessons of the Transitional Program is that the revolutionary party should participate in these movements, to lead them in the correct direction, and to propagate its revolutionary program in them. In no other way can we carry out the crucial task of building the party.

*Who are the Proletarians?*

The party has not lost its orientation to the working class. Some comrades are interpreting the fact that a major part of our work is not in the trade unions to mean that we are not oriented toward the proletariat. This misinterpretation arises not only from a misunderstanding of the Transitional Program, but also from an extremely formal understanding of what the working class is. The sterile thinking reflected in this view permeates

all of their arguments. One gets the impression from reading "For a proletarian orientation" that, if workers are not employed in heavy industry or in the transport industry (transport of commodities only, I presume), then they are not really in the working class; they are actually more petty-*bourgeois* than proletarian. According to Gregorich, *et al.*, ". . . commercial workers. . . clerical workers . . . and technical workers. . . are basically economically competitive with the productive workers. In fact. . . their job is to increase the exploitation of the productive workers . . . The consciousness which develops from their work *cannot* be identical with the ideology of the assembly line workers."<sup>3</sup>

A first reaction to this formalism is to ask "if clerks and technicians are too far removed from the point of production to have a proletarian mentality, how is it possible that Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky arrived at a correct understanding of capitalist society and developed the proper methods and theory for successfully getting rid of it?" These revolutionaries did not spend a great part of their lives in the factories, comrades.

Carrying their argument about the social role of "non-productive" workers to the extreme, every worker in a plant, not just the clerks and technicians, is contributing to the exploitation of the other workers in the plant because each worker, in the performance of a certain job on the assembly line, increases the amount of surplus value that the capitalist who owns the plant can extract from all of the workers there. As soon as production becomes rationalized, with each worker carrying out a separate but essential task, it is impossible for the individual worker, through her or his labor, not to enable the capitalist to exploit all of the workers more than would be possible if production were less rational. This absurdity need be carried no further.

In contrast to this formal view of the working class, Marx said, "With the development of a real subsuming of labor under capital (or in the specifically capitalist mode of production), the real functionary in the overall labor process is not the individual worker, but increasingly a combined social capacity for work, and the various capacities for work, which are in competition with one another and constitute the entire productive machine, participate in very different ways in the direct process of creating commodities — or, more accurately in this sense, products — (one works more with his hands, another more with his head, one as a manager, engineer, technician, *etc.*, another as a supervisor, and a third as a simple manual laborer or even a helper). As a result of this, the functions of labor capacity will increasingly tend to be classified by the direct concept of productive labor, while those who possess that capacity will be classified under the concept of productive workers, directly exploited by capital and subordinated to the process of consumption and production."<sup>4</sup>

The comrades of the opposition would do well to consider the words of the dialectician Marx before they select which "key sectors" of the proletariat the party should attempt to root itself in.

#### *The Real World*

One of the major lessons to be learned from *The History of American Trotskyism* is that two things determine what the immediate tasks of the party shall be: the party's program and the objective conditions. The party can choose its program, but it cannot choose the



situation in which it will apply its program. It must intervene in the class struggle as it presents itself in the real world. Cannon puts it this way: ". . . the tactics of a party are imposed on it by political and economic factors beyond its control. The task of political leadership is to understand what is possible and necessary in a given situation, and what is not possible and not necessary . . . The activities of a revolutionary party. . . are conditioned by objective circumstances. . . The party always moves within a set of social factors not made by itself. They are features of the process of the development of society."5

We did not choose the present objective situation. We did not instruct the trade unions to withdraw from the forefront of the class struggle. We did not ask American capitalism to renew itself, however briefly, after World War II. We did not ask the ruling class to take advantage of the political and economic climate of the 1950's to decimate the ranks of the SWP. We did not call for the activation of the student movement so that we could participate in a petty-bourgeois movement. We did not decide that the women's liberation movement should become a mass movement now instead of sometime in the past or future. We did not instruct gay people to move against their oppression now instead of waiting for the socialist revolution. We did not plan any of these things; nevertheless they are all part of the objective situation that the party is faced with.

Our task is to build a mass revolutionary party that can lead the working class in the struggle for power. To train cadres for such a party (we are now only the beginnings of a mass party), the SWP must be at the front lines of the struggle of the masses against capitalism, whatever form that struggle takes. And that is where we are. To send our few cadres away from the front, away from the center of American political life, away from the antiwar movement, the women's liberation movement, etc., into the trade unions, away from the ongoing struggles that are challenging the ruling class every day, would be to totally misunderstand how political leaders are developed, how the political consciousness of the working masses is raised, and how the party can gain authority and experience through its work in the mass movements.

In *What is to be Done?* Lenin addressed himself to this problem, and I shall quote his words at some length: "Is it true that, in general, the economic struggle 'is the most widely applicable means' of drawing the masses into the political struggle? It is entirely untrue. *Any* and *every* manifestation of police tyranny and autocratic outrage, not only in connection with the economic struggle, is not one whit less 'widely applicable' as a means of 'drawing in' the masses. . . of the sum total of cases in which the workers suffer (either on their own account or on account of those closely connected with them) from tyranny, violence, and the lack of rights, undoubtedly only a small minority represent cases of police tyranny in the trade union struggle as such. Why then should we, beforehand, *restrict* the scope of political agitation by declaring only *one* of the means to be the 'most widely applicable'. . . ?"6

". . . Why do the Russian workers still manifest little revolutionary activity in response to the brutal treatment of the people by the police, the persecution of religious sects, the flogging of peasants, the outrageous censorship, the torture of soldiers, the persecution of the most innocent cultural undertakings, etc.? Is it because the 'economic struggle' does not 'stimulate' them to this, because

such activity does not 'promise palpable results', because it produces little that is 'positive'? To adopt such an opinion, we repeat, is merely to direct the charge where it does not belong, to blame the working masses for one's own philistinism (or Bernsteinism). We must blame ourselves, our lagging behind the mass movement, for still being unable to organize sufficiently wide, striking, and rapid exposures of all the shameful outrages. When we do that (and we must and can do it), the most backward worker will understand, *or will feel*, that the students and religious sects, the peasants and the authors are being abused and outraged by the same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life. Feeling that, he himself will be filled with an irresistible desire to react, and he will know how to hoot the censors one day, on another day to demonstrate outside the house of a governor who has brutally suppressed a peasant uprising, on still another day to teach a lesson to the gendarmes in surplices who are doing the work of the Holy Inquisition, etc. As yet we have done very little, almost nothing, *to bring* before the working masses prompt exposure on all possible issues. Many of us as yet do not recognize this as our *bounden* duty but trail spontaneously in the wake of the 'drab, everyday struggle', in the narrow confines of factory life."7

"But such (economic) activity is not enough for us; we are not children to be fed on the thing gruel of 'economic' politics alone; we want to know everything that others know, we want to learn the details of all aspects of political life, and to take part *actively* in every single political event."8

One gets the impression from reading the opposition documents that they think very little of the importance of the gay liberation and women's liberation struggles, or of the student movement, given the present character of these movements. It is difficult for them, I suppose, to openly oppose our participation in the antiwar movement, despite its "middle class" character. One point that Lenin makes quite clear in *What is to be Done?* is the necessity for the revolutionary party to engage in and lead these movements against the oppression of capitalist society, whenever they arise.

Because our forces are not concentrated in the trade unions does *not* mean that the party ignores the trade unions or that we are not watching them very closely. On the contrary, we have comrades who are active in the trade union movement, and the *Militant* regularly covers new developments in the labor movement. The contribution to this discussion by Comrade Lovell takes up this point in more detail.

*New Addresses?*

Gregorich, *et al.* quote from *Trotsky on the Trade Unions* as follows: "Under these conditions the thought easily arises: Is it not possible to bypass the trade unions? Is it not possible to replace them by some sort of fresh, uncorrupted organization of the type of the revolutionary trade unions, shop committees, soviets, and the like? The fundamental mistake of such attempts is that they reduce to organizational experiments the great political problem of how to free the masses from the influence of the trade union bureaucracy. It is not enough to offer the masses a new address. It is necessary to seek out the masses where they are and lead them."9

It is hard to believe that the comrades of the opposition really read most of the sources from which they quote. This is just one example of the quotations which, by removing them from their context, they have twisted to

mean something quite different from what the original author intended. The point Trotsky was making was that to abstain from the existing mass movements because their form and methods are not precisely what one would like them to be is a sectarian error, an error made by the Stalinists in the "Third Period", an error that is best exemplified presently by the abstention from the antiwar movement of such groups as the Progressive Labor Party and the International Socialists. The antiwar movement, the gay liberation movement, the women's liberation movement, the student movement, the nationalist movements — these are not "new addresses" for the masses; they are living movements of the masses that have arisen as concrete manifestations of the class struggle. To stop individuals who are beginning to participate in these movements and to tell them to go into the real struggle in the trade unions, that, at this point in the radicalization, is giving the masses a new address. Rather than seeking out the masses where they are and leading them, that is seeking out the masses where they are and telling them they shouldn't be there; in short, that is a prescription for the isolation of the revolutionary party from the masses.

#### *Petty-bourgeois or Proletarian?*

In addition to contending that we are on a "new course", the opposition also claims that the party has become almost hopelessly petty-bourgeois in composition. Cannon discussed this question in *Struggle for a Proletarian Party*. He described the petty-bourgeois and the proletarian party members in these terms:

"The petty-bourgeois intellectuals are introspective by nature. They mistake their own emotions, their uncertainties, their fears, and their own egoistic concern about their personal fate for the sentiments and movements of the great masses. They measure the world's agony by their own inconsequential aches and pains."<sup>10</sup>

"For the proletarian revolutionist the party is the concentrated expression of his life purpose, and he is bound to it for life and death. He preaches and practices party patriotism, because he knows that his socialist ideal cannot be realized without the party. In his eyes the crime of crimes is disloyalty or irresponsibility toward the party. The proletarian revolutionist is proud of his party. He defends it before the world on all occasions. The proletarian revolutionist is a disciplined man [comrades should recognize that this was written 30 years ago and should substitute the appropriate words for Cannon's "he", "his", and "man"—T.V.] since the party cannot exist as a combat organization without discipline. When he finds himself in the minority, he loyally submits to the decisions of the party and carries out its decisions, while he awaits new events to verify the disputes or new opportunities to discuss them again.

"The petty-bourgeois intellectual, who wants to teach and guide the labor movement without participating in it, feels only loose ties to the party and is always full of "grievances" against it. The moment his toes are stepped on, or he is rebuffed, he forgets all about the interests of the movement and remembers only that his feelings have been hurt; the revolution may be important, but the wounded vanity of a petty-bourgeois intellectual is more important. He is all for discipline when he is laying down the law to others, but as soon as he finds himself in a minority, he begins to deliver ultimatums and threats of a split to the party majority."<sup>11</sup>

Does the opposition really wish to characterize our party as petty-bourgeois? Not only does the majority of the membership of the party consist of working people, but the overwhelming attitude of the party membership toward the program and the party itself is proletarian. Of course there are party members who are petty-bourgeois in their social origins and who remain petty-bourgeois in their attitude and outlook, but this description does not apply to most comrades in the SWP today. It is precisely because of the fact that we have maintained our principled orientation toward the working class that the Trotskyist movement has not fallen away from the political scene (as have many of our "proletarian-oriented" opponents), that we have accumulated a rich store of lessons in building a revolutionary party, and that we can expect to rise to the leadership of the coming American revolution. Our history of struggle to maintain a proletarian orientation is one of which we can be proud.

#### *The proletarian party in 1971*

The basic question posed in this discussion is that of how to build a mass revolutionary party in the United States. The opposition claims that, in order to carry out this task, we must become "rooted" in the trade unions, at the expense, despite their pretensions to the contrary, of our work in the antiwar movement, the nationalist struggles, the women's liberation movement, and the student movement. The correct position is the one outlined in the National Committee resolution. We can develop the cadres that are essential for building the party into a mass organization only by participating in the existing mass movements that are actively and directly challenging the ruling class of this country.

It is our task to "seek out the masses where they are and lead them." We will gain the respect and confidence of the American working class not by approaching them in a formal and sectarian way to tell them how they *should* move against capitalism, but by joining them in the anticapitalist movements that do arise, offering them our leadership, and educating them about the real nature of this society and the need to change it. And it is certain that, when the organized working class begins to move, the SWP will be there with the *Militant* and the direction of our national leadership, as well as in the person of comrades we will recruit from the trade unions and comrades who are already there or who will be assigned to that area of work. We have had no reservations about that in the past, we have none now, and we will have none in the future.

During the 1972 SWP Presidential campaign our ideas will reach out to millions of people. Disillusionment with the Democratic and Republican parties, anger over the continuing war in Southeast Asia, increasing nationalist sentiment among Black and Brown Americans, coupled with the realization that capitalist politicians are interested only in the votes of the Black and Brown communities, not in their needs, and the rising movement of women and gay people against their sexual oppression fostered by capitalist society will all contribute to the increased attention our candidates will receive.

The SWP will be the only party to discuss openly the problems of unemployment and inflation, and we will have the only real solution to these problems. Our candidates alone will be speaking about the needs of working people, and they will be outlining the only way to satisfy those needs, the American socialist revolution. The cam-

paign will be a striking and concrete display of our proletarian orientation, for those who still doubt that we have one.

July 19, 1971

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