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On Affirmative Action and Preferential Layoffs

by Debby Leonard, Houston Branch

July 8, 1975

In this period of economic depression, massive layoffs and mounting unemployment, the question of affirmative action programs has been raised in a new light—how should women and minorities be enabled to protect the gains they won in a period of relative prosperity. Many different approaches, from Meany's white job trust line to the "phantom seniority" position of sections of the radical movement, have been put forward. Court suits have been filed on all sides; there are regular news reports and features on the subject and it is discussed among workers at the plant. It should be noted, however, to put the question in perspective, that although the issue is important, in fact, only a small percentage of the layoffs have hit workers actually hired on the basis of affirmative action programs.

During the past several months the SWP leadership has adopted a position on the question of so-called "preferential layoffs" which was articulated, in part, in the resolution supported by the SWP National CLUW fraction at the Coalition of Labor Union Women National Coordinating Committee on 6/1/75. (See Appendix III.) Because of my disagreement with that position, I presented a counter-resolution within the CLUW fraction. (See Appendix II.) I have also included the original SWP leadership draft resolution presented to the SWP National CLUW fraction. (See Appendix I.) The International Socialist and October League sponsored resolution (Appendix IV) and the resolution supported by the bureaucrats in CLUW and passed at the CLUW NCC (Appendix V) are also included, since I thought it would be educational to see some of the various positions taken on this question.

First, let me clearly state that I support the affirmative action programs, which have resulted in significant gains for women and minority workers in hiring, upgrading, training and apprenticeship programs, working conditions and job opportunities in general. Affirmative action programs represent concessions wrung from employers and the federal government as a result of the struggles of minorities and women. Affirmative action programs were won in a period of relative economic prosperity and, in the limited areas and industries where hiring is still going on, I support "preferential hiring."

Although the *Draft Political Resolution* mentions "preferential treatment" in the sense of affirmative action programs several times, it does not clearly take up the question of "preferential layoffs," except in one rather confusing paragraph on page 18:

"The seniority system won through previous battles by the workers movement is one tool in limiting the bosses from picking and choosing whom they will fire at will, starting with the most militant workers. It, like the hiring hall and closed shop, established a degree of workers control over hiring and firing. In a similar way the

workers will have to prevent the bosses' use of 'preferential firing' to reverse the gains recently made through preferential hiring and affirmative action quotas. Layoffs cannot be allowed to reduce the proportions of minority and women workers."

What is "preferential firing" in this context? In a union shop context, does it mean laying-off the worker with the lowest seniority who, if he is a minority or female, is then "preferentially fired"? Based on the SWP leadership's present position, I would have to assume this. If, however, this is a union shop where large numbers of women and minorities have been employed for some time and the individual laid-off was female or a minority, it would not be "preferential firing" but just a traditional lay-off. I must assume this is what is meant.

In general parlance on this question, however, "preferential layoffs" are taken to mean layoffs out of seniority progression—when used to maintain a woman or minority worker on the job, for example—and, in this case, "preferential layoffs" would, therefore, be something the SWP presently supports. I am also assuming that "firing" equals "layoff"—the significant difference being that in a "layoff" you maintain your seniority for purposes of recall, but in a "firing" you lose all seniority. Of course, in non-union shops, where affirmative action programs have also been implemented, the bosses nearly always employ "preferential firing" and "preferential layoffs"—meaning without any consideration of seniority.

The concept expressed in the paragraph as a whole, however, as I understand it, is one I can support—that "workers" will have to prevent these layoffs. Fine! One would have to conclude, in light of the first two sentences, that the way to do this is to wage a fight against any layoff. But, unfortunately, the SWP leadership's present position no longer says that—it says that and then proceeds to undercut that position by saying that, nevertheless, some layoffs are better than other layoffs.

Once the transitional program, which is presented in Section VII, "Labor's Strategic Line in March," (*Draft Political Resolution*, p. 16-19), is modified to include support for "preferential" or "quota" layoffs (meaning violating present seniority structure so as to retain the same proportion of women and minorities on the job) a number of dangerous positions follow:

1) Appeal to the bourgeois courts: the resolution supported by the SWP at the CLUW NCC states in part, "Resolved: That the Coalition of Labor Union Women oppose in every way possible any reduction through layoffs in the proportionate number of women and minority workers hired under affirmative action programs. . . ." Does this include enlisting the aid of the bourgeois courts against a union? Articles in the *Militant* and discussion with the national trade union director have

indicated that in fact we do not rule out support to such suits against unions. It is only a step from appealing to the bourgeois courts to supporting bourgeois politicians who have taken a "good stand" on this issue. Crossing class lines is a principled question; sowing illusions about bourgeois courts as friends of workers to be enlisted against the workers' movement is treacherous.

2) The concept that "some layoffs are not as bad as other layoffs": the *Draft Political Resolution*, p. 18, states, "1. In the death agony of capitalism, a decent job is the most fundamental right of every worker." (What is a "decent" job? *The Transitional Program* states that the "Fourth International demands employment and decent living conditions for all." [*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, "The Transitional Program," Pioneer Publishers, p. 11.] But the SWP leadership is now saying, in a period of massive layoffs, that a job is more the right of one worker (a minority or female) than another worker (a white male). And that any white male who cannot accept that is racist, sexist and politically backward.

3) Accepting the inevitability of "layoffs" vs. the transitional program: the Party leadership is raising the "preferential" or "quota" layoffs concept while the fight for "no layoffs—jobs for all" is just beginning (ex. the New York sanitation workers) and must be supported with top priority, while the demands for no overtime and a shorter work week to avoid layoffs are still being raised, discussed and, in select cases, implemented (albeit with a loss of pay). Do we project the transitional demands to fight against layoffs, except where affirmative action programs are in effect, in which case we will settle for less, i.e. layoffs?

The adoption of the position on "preferential" or "quota" layoffs has been justified by asserting that the demands relating to full employment—"Jobs for All"—are unrealizable and that layoffs are occurring. But the "Transitional Program" was written to deal with exactly that situation and Trotsky did not hedge on the question:

"Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing section of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the slops of a crumbling society. *The right to employment* is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is being shorn from him at every step. Against unemployment, 'structural' as well as 'conjunctural,' the time is ripe to advance, along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of a *sliding scale of working hours*. Trade unions and other mass organizations should bind the workers and the unemployed together in the solidarity of mutual responsibility. On this basis all the work on hand would then be divided among all existing workers in accordance with how the extent of the working week is defined. The average wage of every worker remains the same as it was under the old work week. Wages, under a strictly guaranteed *minimum*, would follow the movement of prices. It is impossible to accept any other program for the present catastrophic period.

"Property owners and their lawyers will prove the 'unrealizability' of these demands. Smaller, especially ruined capitalists, in addition will refer to their account ledgers. The workers categorically denounce such conclusions and references. The question is not one of a 'normal'

collision between opposing material interests. The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind. If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. 'Realizability' or 'unrealizability' is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery." (*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, "The Transitional Program," Pioneer Publishers, p. 11-12; emphasis in original.)

There are problems of principle and serious tactical problems with the SWP leadership's present position on "preferential" or "quota" layoffs. There are very real problems working with it, on the job, or in the union, in the very necessary and crucial fight against racism and sexism which must be central to the building of a class-struggle left wing in the union movement.

The union bureaucracy, from Meany on down, is permeated with racism and sexism. During the past years of relative economic prosperity and quiescence in the working class, the labor bureaucrats have grown ever closer to the state power so that the national heads of labor are often indistinguishable from the heads of government, politically and socially. The motivation for appealing to the courts against the unions, as some women and minorities have done, is understandable. But bourgeois courts will not eliminate racism and sexism in unions. They will cooperate, as will the employers, in dividing the class and in promoting antagonism between workers and their principal organization of defense, the union.

The fight against racism and sexism in the union movement, and in the working class as a whole, must be waged within the class, in the shop and in the union hall. It is a continual daily struggle. At the plant where I work, an Atlantic Richfield (ARCO) oil refinery, and in my union, Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (AFL-CIO), it means the demand for preferential treatment of a grievance against a racist or sexist company practice—a grievance which the union committee wants to drop; it is the constant battle against racial slurs and sexist terminology; it is the continual education on why women have the right to work in the plant and why minorities must be trained as skilled craftsmen.

It is possible to convince white male workers that it is in their interest to support preferential hiring and upgrading. We can argue successfully and convince white male workers not to support a racist class action suit presently being filed by white male workers citing reverse discrimination at a Port Arthur refinery. It is possible to very effectively explain what we mean by the "effects of past discrimination." Nine years ago ARCO was a totally segregated plant, with "colored" and "white" rest rooms, separate recreation clubs with unequal facilities, separate change houses, segregated meals. It was only six years ago, in 1969, that the federal government required "quota" hiring and upgrading of black workers, and they moved out of the lowest paid jobs, the labor gang, the yard, and

shook-up the entire segregated union seniority system to train as craftsmen and move into the high paid operating division in sizable numbers. In 1969 an affirmative action program for black workers was instituted. In 1972 ARCO hired the first woman hourly worker into the gang since World War II. I hired on in December 1973; there are now about 40 women in the plant, out of a work force of about 1300. Yes, I support affirmative action programs. The arguments for them are winnable arguments; the answers are class answers and promote class solidarity.

Within the context of support for the affirmative action programs, how do we face the layoffs. We must explain that *every* worker is just as important as *every* other worker. *Every* job is our job. *Every* job must be defended—from the newest hired—black, female, Chicano or young white male—to the most senior man in the plant. We must use the transitional program. A shorter work week with no loss in pay. No overtime while there are layoffs. Open the company books to see who's getting the money. Use class action to prevent a single layoff! Nationalize the company, under workers' control.

These are demands that make sense now. Are they realistic, understandable, consciousness-raising? Yes. Are they winnable now? Only the shorter work week and no overtime and the use of class action—to a limited degree, with limited success, depending on the union and the industry.

Now—the demand for “quota” layoffs—for the same proportion of women and minorities *after* the layoff as before. The New York sanitation workers went beyond this to the demand—“Not a single layoff—jobs for all!”—and backed it up with class action. Do we demand that New York public employees accept some layoffs, as long as they're not minorities or women? No! Now, do I go to my union, the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, because there is an affirmative action program in the plant where I work, and say—O.K., some layoffs are acceptable as long as they don't reduce the quota of women and minorities? No—I say, we fight for no layoffs—like the New York sanitation workers.

By the same logic, a victory in the “quota” layoff suits means that a minority or woman worker returns to work and a white male is laid off. A strange victory indeed—and a victory which in no way touches the capitalist system (labor power equals labor power) but does provide a service for capitalism by further dividing the working class, using the weapon that hurts most—deprivation of a livelihood.

Another anomaly: if there were a 20 percent layoff at ARCO, for example, following the proportional layoff policy the Party leadership now advocates, virtually every *young* white male worker would be laid off. If male comrades, who are overwhelmingly white, presently work in such a plant, we are, with the present policy, calling on them to lead a movement for voluntary layoff of white males, if it becomes apparent that layoffs will jeopardize the minority and women quota established by affirmative action programs. We will insist that in order to join our fight against racism and sexism, a white male worker must agree to graciously give up his livelihood and accept a layoff. No, he will more readily strike to fight for all our jobs. It is easy to generalize about this new twist to the transitional program, but it is suicidal for those of us who live with the reality to apply it. Rather, let us be fighters for *every* job; let us demand that white male workers

defend *every* worker's job—including the jobs of the newly hired minorities and women. This is a winnable way to combat racism and sexism.

It has been said that there is polarization between seniority and “preferential” or “quota” layoffs—if you oppose “preferential layoffs,” you support seniority. No. The seniority system, despite its positive basis in defense against arbitrary hiring and firing, has many negative aspects. In most plants, workers with a great deal of seniority have a much higher wage scale than new hires; older, more senior workers have several more weeks vacation a year and additional privileges. In many unions, retired workers have equal vote—and often a controlling vote—with workers in the plant. These more conservative, older and retired members are usually the base of support for the union bureaucrats. They are often a party to the sell-out agreements which particularly hurt the new hires and those with little seniority including, in many cases, most of the minority and women workers. We should take this question on. There is nothing sacred about the seniority system as it is presently structured. We want one pay scale throughout the plant. We want equal vacation and sick time throughout the plant. We want to eliminate the “probation” or “trial” period where the company can fire at will and the new hire has no union protection. We totally oppose Meany's advocacy of special privileges for seniority. We have many arguments with the seniority system as it presently stands.

But is the seniority system the real question here? From Meany's point of view, it is. No. The problem with “preferential” or “quota” layoffs, from a revolutionary point of view, is the acceptance of the concept that layoffs are inevitable in this period and that one layoff is better than another and proposing this as the basis for fighting against racism and sexism in the unions and the working class as a whole.

It is easy to see this if you are dealing with an unorganized shop where there is no question of seniority. Without a union, it is easy to apply the “quota” layoff policy—without a union there are always “preferential layoffs.” Ironically, what was once a detriment to women and minorities who had no union protection from arbitrary layoffs where they were first to go, now turns into an advantage; since there is no union to protect the jobs of the white males, they are now laid off, while those who used to be laid off are now retained. (No, one layoff is no less bad than another layoff.)

The *Draft Political Resolution* notes the need for building a “class-struggle left wing” in the union movement. Agreed. We must have a program for that class-struggle left wing. The fight against racism and sexism, as manifested by the employer, in society as a whole, and in the union, will be a key part of that program. Minority and women workers, because of their super-exploited position in the class and their resulting higher level of consciousness, will play a vanguard role in building this class-struggle left wing. They will be the best fighters for the transitional program and the best defenders of the interests of the class as a whole. A class-struggle left wing must fight for the *job* of every worker and for “preferential treatment” to women and minorities suffering the effects of past discrimination. The Coalition of Labor Union Women is objectively a part of the beginning of the building of a left wing in the labor movement. In order to

support the demands of women workers, CLUW was compelled to adopt a program to the left of the union bureaucracy, a program which dealt with the pressing needs of *all* workers and, in fact, adopted a number of our transitional demands in its program to combat unemployment, layoffs and depression. Although I do not think the resolution adopted on affirmative action and layoffs at the CLUW NCC meeting (Appendix V) went far enough, the resolution supported by the SWP on "quota layoffs" (Appendix III) would have been, if adopted, in my opinion, a step backwards from the program already adopted by CLUW. CLUW's problem is not its program, but that it is being stifled by bureaucrats on one side and assorted radical tendencies on the other, so that its program is not being implemented.

It is my belief that the SWP leadership (along with certain other radical tendencies, and now the NAACP) has come to this position on "preferential layoffs" because of our close identification with and immersion in the various sectoralist movements that have been so important during the whole past period while the working class, and the unions in particular, have remained quiescent. In the same way that the Party has been able to successfully pull back from other political misassessments, I would hope that this position will be reconsidered, especially in light of the important turn we are making toward the working class.

When we tackle the vital question of racism and sexism within the working class, we want to be armed with the best possible program: a program that is clear, unequivocal and uncompromising; a program that promotes class solidarity on a principled basis; a program that is useable, educational and defensible. Armed with such a program, and with cadres in the working class, we will be able to play a vanguard role in the beginning of the building of a class-struggle left wing in the union movement.

Appendix I

(original SWP Resolution submitted to National SWP CLUW Fraction)

Resolution on Discriminatory Layoffs and New Attacks on Affirmative Action Programs

Whereas: The current economic crisis has brought massive layoffs, adversely and disproportionately affecting newly hired women and minorities who recently won jobs in industry under court-ordered affirmative action programs; and

Whereas: These massive layoffs threaten to wipe-out the gains of the civil rights movement and women's movement against discriminatory hiring practices; and,

Whereas: The seniority system, which developed under the discriminatory hiring practices of the employers, is used in the present economic crisis to lay off the last-hired workers, which includes in many instances all those hired under affirmative action programs and in all instances a disproportionate number of women workers; therefore, be it

Resolved: That the Coalition of Labor Union Women oppose in every way possible any reduction through

layoffs in the proportionate number of women and minority workers hired under affirmative action programs, wherever layoffs occur, and be it further

Resolved: That we urge all unions to endorse our position and support the continuing struggle against discriminatory hiring practices and for the equal rights of women and minority workers who in the past have been excluded from jobs because of race and sex.

Appendix II

(counter-resolution submitted to National SWP CLUW Fraction by Debby Leonard)

Whereas: Women and minority workers have, during the past several years, made important breakthroughs toward equalizing job opportunities in hiring, upgrading, training and apprenticeship programs;

Whereas: The struggles of women and minorities have wrung concessions from the federal government and employers in the form of affirmative action programs;

Whereas: In this period of economic depression and mounting layoffs in the public and private sectors, women and minority workers are losing these gains won in a period of relative prosperity because the federal government and large corporations are not meeting the demand for full employment;

Whereas: The Coalition of Labor Union Women, while fighting for the particular needs of women and minority workers who are paying a high price for generations of discrimination on the job, is concerned that the government and big business not be successful in pitting worker against worker;

Whereas: CLUW insists that it is illegal to layoff workers hired under affirmative action programs and also illegal to violate union contracts by overstepping seniority agreements;

Whereas: CLUW maintains that all layoffs are bad; no layoff is less bad than another layoff;

Whereas: CLUW holds big business and the federal government responsible for the present economic depression, which workers are paying the price for;

Resolved: That the problems of job discrimination, layoffs and unorganized workers in this period of economic depression, must be confronted by and within the union movement, as the organized expression of workers' solidarity and defense;

Resolved: That CLUW insists that the union movement demand a shorter work week with no reduction in pay and total elimination of overtime to avoid layoffs, and that the union movement enforce these demands with any action necessary and without consideration of seniority in any plant facing layoffs;

Resolved: That CLUW calls on the union movement to demand extensive public works projects at union wages to provide jobs for all unemployed workers;

Resolved: That CLUW demands that the defense budget be cut to provide finances for the above;

And furthermore, Whereas: More than 8 million working people in this country are presently unemployed—including tens of thousands of union members;

Resolved: That the union movement organize unemployed workers in a fight for public works programs at union wages and jobs for all;

And further, Whereas: The Democratic and Republican parties have given no substantial response to the demands of workers, especially women and minorities;

Resolved: That CLUW project supporting women unionists, running on the CLUW program, as independent labor candidates for public office;

And finally be it Resolved: That the National Coordinating Committee of CLUW authorize the CLUW National Steering Committee to seek a meeting with the International AFL-CIO Executive Board, and meetings with the National UAW and Teamster leaderships, to issue a call for a national union conference to deal with unemployment, layoffs and depression, especially as it affects women and minority workers;

And that the National CLUW send this resolution to all national unions and that local CLUW chapters and CLUW members raise these demands in their local unions.

Appendix III

(resolution supported by SWP at CLUW National Coordinating Committee on 6/1/75)

RESOLUTION ON DISCRIMINATORY LAYOFFS

Whereas: Women and minority workers have, during the past several years, made important breakthroughs toward equalizing job opportunities in hiring, upgrading, training and apprenticeship programs; and

Whereas: The struggles of women and minorities have wrung concessions from the federal government and employers in the form of affirmative action programs; and

Whereas: These gains have been a major breakthrough for labor in restricting the employers' ability to divide working people; and

Whereas: The current economic crisis has brought massive layoffs, adversely and disproportionately affecting newly hired women and minorities who recently won jobs in industry under affirmative action programs; and

Whereas: These massive layoffs threaten to wipe-out the gains of women's, civil rights, and labor movements against discriminatory hiring, employment, apprenticeship and upgrading practices; therefore, be it

Resolved: That the Coalition of Labor Union Women oppose in every way possible any reduction through layoffs in the proportionate number of women and minority workers hired under affirmative action programs, wherever layoffs occur, and be it further

Resolved: That wherever a seniority system is used to perpetuate the discriminatory hiring, firing, and employment practices of an employer by allowing a reduction in the percentage of women and minority workers gained through affirmative action struggles, CLUW stands for

altering or amending that seniority system so as to protect these gains, and be it further

Resolved: That we urge all unions to endorse our position and support the continuing struggle against discriminatory hiring, firing, and employment practices and for the equal rights of women and minority workers who have been and are excluded from jobs because of race and sex.

Appendix IV

(resolution presented to CLUW NCC meeting and supported by the International Socialists and the October League)

**Proposed MADISON-JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN
CLUW Position
on Seniority and Layoffs, May, 1975.**

Whereas: The issues of affirmative action and seniority have been erroneously made to appear as divisive issues among working people; and

Whereas: Federal, state, and local affirmative action legislation has improved the position of women and minority workers in industry and other previously "white" and "male" jobs; and

Whereas: The recent devastating layoffs of workers all over the country have hit women and minority workers particularly hard, in many cases totally wiping out the gains of the past ten years; and

Whereas: The efforts of trade unions must be to save the jobs of all workers, and in particular the jobs of those who have suffered past discrimination;

Therefore, Be it Resolved, the Coalition of Labor Union Women supports the following position on layoffs and seniority:

1. CLUW initiate resistance to layoffs and encourage unions to initiate resistance of layoffs.

2. Every effort be made to negotiate six month prior notification of layoff clauses in all union contracts.

3. Seniority is a necessary and important means of defense for all working people. The winning of seniority for promotions and layoffs was a victory by the unions over the arbitrary practices of the employers. It would be a tragic mistake for the unions to allow the government or the employers to destroy the principle of seniority. This makes it all the more important that the unions develop a solution of their own that protects both higher seniority workers and workers who have faced discrimination in the past.

4. When layoffs occur, the unions should stand on the notion that it is the companies who made the crisis and it is they who should pay the price, not women, black and minority group workers. The union should demand that these workers receive compensatory treatment in one or more of the following ways:

a. All workers work a short week and "share the work," with those who lose a day receiving full work week benefits.

b. Layoffs are rotated with everyone working one week on and one week off with no loss of pay.

c. The proportion of women/minority workers is maintained, without laying off any men to retain the women and minority workers.

d. Voluntary layoffs by higher seniority workers if they are eligible for SUB benefits.

e. Pay laid off workers what they would have made if they had not been laid off, and allow them to accrue seniority.

5. The above principle of compensatory treatment is an old trade union principle. What is a pension, but compensation for old age? When a company has to pay workers a pension, they are paying that worker for doing nothing—nothing from their point of view, that is. That is why employers never did want to grant pensions. The unions had to fight for them. The unions must fight for the oppressed as they fought for the retired worker.

Appendix V

(resolution adopted by the National Coordinating Committee of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, June 1, 1975)

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND SENIORITY

The Coalition of Labor Union Women, in its statement of purpose, adopted at its founding, agreed upon the following basic beliefs about affirmative action:

- Employers continue to profit by dividing workers on sexual, racial and age lines. This encourages the segregation of job classifications and results in wage and benefit losses to women.

- The power of unions must increasingly be brought to bear through collective bargaining to correct these inequities. The coalition will seek to encourage women, through their unions to recognize and take positive action against job discrimination in hiring, promotion, classification and other aspects of work.

- We must become more knowledgeable of the specifics of collective bargaining and of contract clauses and work-place practices that discriminate against us. We must be more informed about what is and can be done within the labor movement to correct these situations.

In the 15 months since these principles were enunciated, the national economy has deteriorated, and women, particularly non-unionized women, have been pushed back many of the steps they won toward equality in the work place. Accordingly, the Coalition of Labor Union Women adopts the following resolution in three parts:

1. In regard to employers, RESOLVED:

That CLUW pledges itself to renewed efforts to organize unorganized women, noting that unionized women suffer proportionately less in layoffs and noting that a union contract provides almost the only safeguard against

capricious or selective layoffs, which most harm women and minority group members:

That CLUW pledges itself to provide information to women workers about their job rights under Title VII equal employment opportunity guidelines, the Equal Pay Act and pertinent executive orders;

That CLUW will support efforts to see that employers provide training and retraining programs to allow women to move into non-traditional jobs; to promote job posting and job bidding in ways that open new fields to women and minority group members;

That CLUW will continue its exploration of ways to promote full employment and to place the cost of discrimination upon the employer rather than the worker, and will press for legislative action where appropriate and bring governmental or tax support into areas under the threat of layoffs or closures.

2. In regard to our unions, RESOLVED:

That CLUW and its members will take vigilant action in their unions to see that seniority for all purposes is measured on the widest possible base in any work place, thereby safeguarding workers against layoffs that run counter to seniority;

That CLUW members will seek to improve the seniority system in their unions and eliminate those aspects that have not served women and minority workers fairly;

That CLUW members will monitor recall and rehiring actions in their unions closely to see that contract clauses are carried out;

That where unions have hiring halls or apprentice programs, CLUW members will insist that their union's control over hiring does not work to the detriment of those suffering the effects of long discrimination;

That CLUW and all its members will press our unions to put their own houses in order with regard to discrimination against women and minorities wherever it exists and will urge that the unions themselves:

- a. Evaluate all contracts and eliminate provisions and practices that permit discrimination;

- b. Bargain for affirmative action programs and then monitor the results;

- c. Establish procedures under the union constitutions for redress of sex-discrimination problems within the rank-and-file of the union structure, and;

- d. Undertake affirmative action hiring and training in the union headquarters.

3. With regard to all women unionists, RESOLVED:

That CLUW will assist women trade unionists to pursue through local union procedures any charges of discrimination, and if no satisfactory response is offered by the local union, it will assist such women to pursue methods outlined in the union's constitution for redress. To secure information about such procedures, the CLUW chapter will review the union's constitution and turn to the N.C.C. representative from the union concerned.

Nation and Nationality

By Tony Thomas

July 9, 1975

Gus Horowitz's discussion article, "A Letter on Nation, Nationality and National Minorities" (D.B. Vol. 33, No. 2) contains many useful contributions on the question of the national struggle and some useful suggestions in regard to our terminology on it.

Particularly useful is Comrade Gus's delineation of the term national minority and his application of it to the Puerto Rican national minority in this country. It helps to come to grips with the debate that has taken place among Puerto Rican left groups like the PSP over whether there is one Puerto Rican nation or a separate Puerto Rican American nationality or nation.

The usefulness of his definition of a national minority is that it specifies a dynamic that is not fixed, it labels one step in a process. It shows what is open to such a minority, and what its origins are. It is also linked with the concrete social origin of this problem.

This useful approach is not found when Comrade Gus approaches the question of definitions of nations and nationalities which he undertakes to redefine. Rather than clarifying things, as his description of what a national minority does, his description of nationalities and nations can only hamper the ability of our movement to analyse the national question.

This use of the terms could make our movement incomprehensible to people outside of it, as well as obscuring the value of some of the teaching of Marxism on the national question.

Classical criteria inadequate?

Comrade Gus writes, "I think that the 'classical criterion' defining a nation has been proved inadequate."

His most concrete approach is to state: "For example, Blacks in the United States do not live in a common territory, and their common language is English, yet they are most definitely a distinct nationality." This is followed by several similar and less clear examples.

Comrade Horowitz then proceeds to make these new definitions which are to replace the "classical" criteria: "I think it is useful to think of a *nationality* as a *nation-information*, and a *nation* as a nationality which has established a sovereign *nation-state*."

While these definitions may seem rather clear cut in a formal sense, they are less useful than the classic Marxist terms which our party has used up to now.

The classic Leninist definition of a nation was made by Joseph Stalin in his work *Marxism and the National Question* written in 1913.

Stalin, both before and after the degeneration of the Bolshevik party, was not the model practitioner of the Leninist attitude or analysis of the national question. Leon

Trotsky explained in his biography of Stalin, the value of this work and how it came to be radically different from anything else its author wrote:

"*Marxism and the National Question* is undoubtedly Stalin's most important—rather, his one and only—theoretical work. On the basis of that single article, which was forty printed pages long, its author is entitled to recognition as an outstanding theoretician. What is rather mystifying is why he did not write anything of even remotely comparable quality either before or after. The key to the mystery is hidden away in this, that *Stalin's work was wholly inspired by Lenin, written under his unremitting supervision and edited by him line by line.*" (Emphasis added.)

The definition of a nation in this book is as follows: "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."

This definition was the culminating point in an attempt to clarify the Marxist analysis of the nation after a long period of analysis, differences and partial approaches. Moreover, it was meant to concretize the Leninist position on the national question as opposed to the ideas of the Austro-Marxists who pushed the idea of cultural-national autonomy.

The Austro-Marxists, as Trotsky points out in *Stalin*, "considered nationality independent of territory, economy and class, transforming it into a species of abstraction limited by so-called 'national character.'" Their aim was to leap over the material conditions at the base of the national struggle to work out a system to appease the petit-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalists of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, while at the same time maintaining the status quo of national division and dominance by the Hapsburg monarchy, and the Austrian and Hungarian ruling classes.

Trotsky writes, "Lenin's position was the direct opposite. Regarding nationality as unseverably connected with territory, economy and class structure, he refused at the same time to regard the historical state, the borders of which cut across the living body of nations, as a sacrosanct and inviolate category."

Stalin's definition thus placed the Marxist understanding of the nation in the concrete material, social and cultural conditions out of which it grew, giving weight to the Marxist insistence on the right to self-determination and other material demands.

As Trotsky put it, "This combined definition, compounding the psychological attributes of a nation with the geographic and economic conditions of its development, is not only theoretically but also practically fruitful, for then

the solution to the problem of each nation's fate must perforce be sought along the lines of changing the material conditions of its existence, beginning with territory. Bolshevism was never addicted to the fetishistic worship of a state's borders."

Nation as a social formation

The superiority of the "classic definition" versus Comrade Gus Horowitz's definition (nation equals nation-state) is that it recognizes that the nation as it has evolved is a specific social formation and not a state entity.

Nations grew—especially out of the initial stages of capitalist development—out of the needs of the capitalist production system to pull together an internal market, and to pull it together further by the development of a common language and culture. In the abstract, of course, the aim of the emerging capitalist classes, especially during the rise of capitalism, was to pull this further together with the development of a nation state.

While the formation of a nation-state usually accentuates the coherence of a nation, there is not a one-to-one relationship between nation-state and nation.

Some nations are unable to pull together a national state due to the opposition of oppressor states which they are weaker than. Some national states out of the same dynamic extend themselves to oppress other nations and nationalities. Comrade Gus ably shows how this phenomenon of a multi-national state is an increasing phenomenon in the imperialist epoch.

In fact, much of the problem of the national question flows from the fact that there is a difference between nation and state. One of the prime characteristics of national oppression is the forcible retention of one nation in the national state of another nation. This is why the whole series of national demands raised by our movement centers around the principle of the right to national self-determination, the right to establish a separate state.

Similarly, our other key national demands for autonomy and for political, social and economic equality are similarly directed to the state.

This concentration on the state is essential to the dynamic of the national question for us, even though we believe that such state reforms can not fundamentally end the effects of national oppression, only social and economic changes through social revolution can do that.

Nationalities versus nations

In practice, we have tended to differentiate between nationalities and nations on the basis of nationalities being designated as being peoples with all, or most, of the attributes of nationhood except a common territory and economy. Put another way, we have tended to define nationalities as "a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture."

In this sense, we as well as general usage inside and outside Marxist circles, have used the term nationality to designate the populations of nations.

Politically we have tended to recognize the right to self-determination of nationalities as well as of nations.

However, on an analytical level and in the ability to

describe specific phenomena the difference between nation and nationality is quite important. This is why it is necessary to have precise meaningful terms based on the social realities rather than state relations as Comrade Horowitz proposes (e.g. nationality equals nation-information).

A nationality that has established a nation is likely to look qualitatively different and is likely to have different forms, problems and solutions in regard to national oppression and the character of its national struggle. This is true even as we recognize that there are basic similarities between the national struggle of both types of social formations.

Quebec fits the Leninist norm of a nation. It has a common territory, common economy and the attributes of nationality. This means that the control over the Quebec territory and its economy and the distortions thereof by Canadian imperialism and its state represent one of the key aspects of the oppression of the Quebec nation.

These distortions effect the whole economy, as well as being visited on the individuals of the Quebecois nationality. That is it involves, not only discrimination against French-speaking people in the favor of the English-speaking minority, but also it means the concentration of lower-paying, less industrial enterprises in Quebec as opposed to in Ontario.

While both Quebecois and Afro-American workers face problems of job discrimination because of their nationality, there is no such thing as an Afro-American economy distorted by American imperialism which Afro-Americans are struggling to reorient.

If Black people decide to form a nation and that nation is formed there may be a struggle for that, but currently the economic aspect of the Black struggle centers on Blacks getting their share out of the economy of the American national state and its bourgeoisie.

Another example is Puerto Rico. Imperialist rule over Puerto Rico keeps that country in a state of underdevelopment and dependency. This is quite different—the situation of the Puerto Rican nation—from the situation of the Puerto Rican national minority in this country.

Puerto Ricans migrate to the United States to get out of the condition of being in an oppressed nation whose economy is distorted by American imperialism. While they may not be conscious of this in these terms, this distortion forces them to prefer the status of being an oppressed minority in the United States. (I might add that being an oppressed national minority as Comrade Gus adequately explains is not different in what people face from being an oppressed nationality—only being a minority is not as "permanent" a condition.)

Social structure

The existence of a nation *usually* means that there is usually greater social differentiation and a different social structure than within an oppressed nationality. There is usually a greater multiplicity of classes flowing from the existence of an entire "national" economy.

Oppressed nationalities, on the other hand, are often, as part of their national oppression, restricted to play one or more particular economic and social role within the larger economy of the dominant state.

In an oppressed nation like Puerto Rico, or Quebec, you

can find every step on the social ladder occupied by members of the oppressed nationality, or even areas where few or no people of the dominant nationality are present. This is not to deny that imperialism, and settlers of the dominant nationality actually control the top spots in the economies of these two nations in an almost total way.

State forms

Oppressed nations, in contrast to oppressed nationalities, tend to have their own governmental forms. This is invariably the rule, even when they lack national independence.

This may vary from special colonial forms of dictatorial repression, as in Portugal's colonies until April, 1974; forms of "semi-independence" like Puerto Rico or the current status of the remaining Portuguese colonies; or they may be masked in the guise of having legal "equality" and the same forms as other "regions" of the state such as in the Canadian "province" called Quebec and in the French "overseas department" called Martinique.

While again here there is also not a one-to-one relationship, we can find this type of division even in authoritarian regimes like the Russian Empire before 1917.

This is a completely different phenomenon from the practice of the Democratic party in the United States which runs Black candidates in areas where there is a significant Black population. The function of the Black Democrats is to create political illusions that make capitalist rule easier.

In oppressed nations, the different types of governmental forms reflect the fact that these nations as entire social formations, with an overall separate economic, political and social reality, require different forms of government to manage capitalism.

National independence

In regard to these differences it is hardly surprising that in oppressed nations the demand for national independence or national unification tends to be more directly posed than demands for assimilation with, integration into, or autonomy from the oppressor nations.

This does not mean that Marxists can not raise the latter demands in regard to oppressed nations as they do in regard to oppressed nationalities. Nor does it mean that we raise or expect the demand for independence only from and for oppressed nations and not oppressed nationalities.

It simply means that national identity, national consciousness and the social and economic needs for a separate or unified national state are more sharply posed in nations than in most oppressed nationalities.

This is self-evident even in Comrade Gus's article. He gives five examples of places where we advocate either independence (Quebec, Angola, Puerto Rico) or national unification (Ireland, the Arab peoples).

Under Comrade Horowitz's classifications of statehood equals nationhood, Quebec, Puerto Rico and Angola are "nationalities" or collections of them. Ireland and the Arab peoples are "nations" (although he would state there is no "Arab nation" only Egyptian, Syrian, Saudi Arabian, Jordanian, Libyan, Iraqi, Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian nations; all with an Arab "nationality").

Under the classic criteria used by the Bolsheviks, all of the states for whom he calls for independence or unification are nations (although again the Arab states may be in transition between the existence of an Arab nation toward separate nations based on the new states).

Nation and the state

In his article Comrade Horowitz gives a contrast between a nation (nation-state) and a nationality (apparently a stateless nation): "The French can be considered a nation, whereas Black people in the United States are a nationality."

Are the French defined by the existence of their state or because they constitute "a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup manifested in a common culture?"

Is France defined by the existence of their state? Is Martinique part of the French nation? Are the Bretons and the Basques and others who are part of the French state?

Did northern France cease to be part of the French nation when Hitler occupied it in 1940? Did the French nation disappear as a nation in 1942 when Hitler occupied the rest of France?

Comrade Horowitz would of course answer "No!" adamantly.

This analogy shows that the state and nationhood are not always identical.

Nationality as a state in formation

Comrade Gus's definition of nationalities as "nations-in-formation" has the same weaknesses, if not more, as his definition of the nation.

At one point he makes the observation that nationalities don't always wind up as nation-states. As he puts it "a nation-in-formation may not necessarily form its own nation-state."

Given that Comrade Gus terms a nation and nation-state as the same thing in his article, this phrase can be translated as saying "a nation-in-formation may not necessarily form a nation," or better, "a nation-in-formation is not a nation-in-formation."

The point being that nationalities arise not out of any progression toward becoming nations, much less out of any progression toward becoming nation-states.

Like nations, they rise out of specific social and economic realities. Like nations they may resolve their problems as oppressed or unoppressed nationalities by many forms, including assimilation in dominant nationalities, or fusion into new nationalities, as well as national-self-determination or national autonomy. Like nations, they possess specific cultural, linguistic, and social origins that are products of a larger evolution in the class struggle.

Terminology

Since the Marxist movement began, we have been forced to make frequent changes in terminology, as well as in our analysis. We are not conservative, or reserved about doing this. We change our terminology whenever it is useful to us.

We changed our terminology on the term nationalism from what it was in Lenin's time, for example. This not only represented a change in broader usage outside the Marxist movement, but more importantly, our change in terminology represented a political clarification in advance of the analysis put forward by Lenin, although it was based on the fundamental line he presented.

However, we do not change terminology lightly, especially when it may be the case that no one outside of a narrow circle within the party will understand it. We also do not

change our terminology to create a dictionary-style simplicity at the cost of analytical and political clarity.

In general our terminology is developed to be concrete in reference to different social, economic phenomena in the real world. That is why I think that we should stick with the classic terminology in regard to nation and nationality, as well as make good use of the new precision on the term national minority that Comrade Horowitz has provided in his article.

SOME COMMENTS ON CHINA'S ANTI-SOVIET DRIVE AND THE CURRENT STAGE OF AMERICAN MAOISM

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The purpose of this contribution is to assess the implications of the "united front against the superpowers" campaign of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy, its impact on the American Maoist current and to briefly survey the general status of that milieu and our orientation to it.

The evolution of the "united front against the superpowers" and its meaning.

In the wake of the Sino-Soviet schism, the 1963 SWP convention adopted a resolution codifying our basic understanding of the rupture. While that document (The Sino-Soviet Dispute, vol. 24, no. 9) underscored the need for a political revolution to overturn bureaucratic despotism and to uproot the deformities which plagued the Chinese workers state from birth, it also made a significant comparison between the policies and practices of the Mao and Khrushchev regimes.

On points ranging from differing outlooks on the nature of imperialism, the struggle for peace, attitudes towards the colonial revolution, to "the road to power" the document noted the following. "The sum of these positions put forward in their polemics shows that the Chinese CP advocates a far more aggressive class struggle policy than the utterly opportunist and reformist course pursued by the Soviet leadership and its followers from Calcutta to New York. On most of the key issues of the international class struggle in dispute Peking is to the left of the Kremlin and takes more militant stands."

In the 1960s, the going strategy of the Chinese CP was the "united front against imperialism." The central postulates of this perspective included the characterization of U.S. imperialism as the "number one enemy of the people of the world." While major documents of the 1969 ninth Chinese CP congress noted that the "new czars" of the Soviet bureaucracy were "worse than Hitler," the chief contradiction in the world, the Maoists stated, was between imperialism and the colonial struggles for national liberation.

Armed struggle and peasant based "people's war" animated the Mao regime's "united front against imperialism," which drew together the "bloc of four classes" in the struggle for "new democracy" in the two stage theory of revolution. This perspective for the national revolution was generalized in the "front" as an international strategy of the colonial world against the metropolitan capitalist states—a globalization of the theme of Mao's strategy of engulfing of the urban centers by the peasantry. The slogan of such a perspective was: "from the countryside to the city."

For the Chinese Stalinists, class collaboration and peaceful co-existence have always been cornerstones of basic policy.

The recent period of detente, however, has more than underscored this. It has revealed a dramatic shift of emphasis which has far reaching implications for the class struggle.

The basis of this shift was codified in the recent Chinese CP tenth party congress. At this gathering, the "united front against imperialism" became the "united front against the superpowers." The radical sounding verbiage of previous congresses—symbolized in such clarions as "long live the victory of the peoples war"—was absent. Detente and Sino-American friendship replaced anti-imperialist and anti-Yankee tirades; "revolutionary diplomacy" supplanted "armed struggle" and the modest doles of aid to insurgent nationalist guerrilla movements; capitalist Europe took the place of the "third world" for the major arena of attention by the Mao regime.

And, most importantly in all this, the Soviet Union emerged as the chief enemy of the world's people—the "primary contradiction" as the Peking overlords put it. The major antagonist was, they stated, between "Soviet social-imperialism" and the people of the world.

The aim of the "united front against the superpowers" is stated as the drive to isolate the "contention and collusion" of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. which attempts to destroy all forms of national independence in its big power maneuvering. The essence of the matter, however, stated increasingly by the Chinese hierarchy and underlined by the deeds it and its toadies commit, is an unrelenting campaign against the Soviet Union.

The U.S.S.R. is considered a new capitalist-imperialist power—fascist led at that—against which are arrayed numerous capitalist states, as well as the colonial world and some of its "colonial" appendages in the Warsaw Pact. In the fight against the menace located in Moscow, bourgeois states become progressive in the international bloc envisioned by the Mao regime. Western Europe is cited as the "main axis of contention" between social-imperialism and a progressive capitalist Europe fighting for "independence" from America and Russia. The imperialist character of Great Britain, West Germany, France, Portugal, etc., is, to be sure, secondary in this assessment, and is infrequently, if ever noted. The implications of that, alone, are noteworthy.

In the context of such a campaign, the idealist nature of Mao's "Marxism"—secondary and primary, antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions, the classless formulae of "uniting the many against the few" and "the small against the big"—come squarely and concretely down on the side of imperialism.

The Peking bureaucrats have come out in favor of NATO; chided Greece for leaving that imperialist military bloc (while Albania applauded such a move); opposed Great Britain's possible exit from the Common Market

while calling for a "stronger Europe"; issued statements urging Portugal to *stay* in its colony of Macao; stated its incapability of "doing anything" if the U.S. invaded Thailand or Cambodia over the Mayaguez incident; maintained diplomatic relations with Chile, shutting the doors of its embassy to refugees from the junta, and now plans trade missions in the near future. This list could go on—not to mention Vietnam—with the rapprochement with Marcos, etc.

When Defense Secretary James Schlesinger engaged in nuclear sabre rattling recently, threatening tactical strikes against Warsaw pact nations in the case of "communist aggression" the Mao regime was silent.

Bourgeois commentators have noted messages conveyed to Washington by Peking of the need for a strong American presence in the Asia arena to offset a predictable strengthening of Soviet influence, given the victory in Vietnam.

The retrograde character of the anti-Soviet campaign of the Chinese leadership poses the gravest of questions in the context of the deepening global crisis of imperialism.

It has an internal dynamic which continues to unfold, to the detriment not only of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggle, but potentially to the foundations of the deformed and degenerated workers states. (I leave aside the explosive danger posed by the domestic policies of the Chinese bureaucracy.)

The Soviet Union, while maintaining a million strong armed force on the Chinese border and clinging to its chauvinist territorial claims, has not yet stooped to a characterization of the Chinese workers state paralleling that made of it by the Mao regime. To be sure, it has not yet *needed* to; that this could happen, in the rivalry between the narrow, nationalist minded counter-revolutionary castes for the crumbs offered by collaboration with imperialism, is likely. It is a logical outcome of the clash between two major parasitic strata hamstrung by the impossibility of constructing socialism in one country.

The Soviet Union, in the Sino-Indian conflicts more than a decade ago, aided the capitalist Indian regime against the workers state, the first such time in history that type of betrayal occurred.

But the extremes of China's anti-Soviet policy, the scope and level of allegiance to imperialism against the Soviet Union, and the implications which spring from such blocs, I believe, now put the *policy* of the Mao regime to the right of that of the Soviet Union.*

This is the measure of the "turn" that has transpired over the past several years. It by no means signals any objective or subjective "turn" in the opposite direction by the Moscow overlords. To the contrary, the strategic weight of the Moscow Stalinist parties across the world is critical to the aims of US imperialism in detente. Alongside such parties is the tremendous superiority over China of Soviet industrial and military strength, which is turned into a bludgeon against independent struggle.

*At times, there is an objective collusion between the counter-revolutionary thrusts of Moscow and Peking. Vietnam, obviously, but before that, similar stands in support of Bandaranaike in Ceylon. Recently, in deference to allies (Russia, Iraq; China, Iran) both opposed the Kurdish struggle.

Given these concrete factors, the Chinese bureaucrats—the junior partner of U.S. imperialism in detente—must find new angles in prostituting themselves for imperialist bidding. Its best bargaining point is to provide a capacity unafforded by any other country in the world: a workers state *against*, and vehemently at that, Moscow. This is not simply "a decision" reached by the Mao bureaucracy, but an inevitable product of the conflict between it and its twin in Moscow. The interests of the bureaucracy come first, then the "theory" justifying it. For the Chinese ruling caste, "independence" from the Soviet bureaucracy—a compulsion of objective forces—in the Sino-Soviet split could not satiate the requirements of its rule. Contained within the Stalinist foundation of the Chinese workers state was the potential of what is now happening.

What is now happening, the nurturing of the latent, most dangerous tendencies of the Stalinist perspectives of the Chinese Maoists, has evolved into more than simple "anti-Sovietism" and betrayal. Implicit in such a perspective is the advocacy of nuclear war against the Soviet bloc by imperialism with a promissory note of non-intervention by the Mao regime.

As an ominous backdrop, President Ford recently announced a shift in the stated policy of imperialism on nuclear conflict. He noted America now did not rule out a first strike. This new attempt to shore up imperialism's "fighting image"—and a reflection of the highest stakes of the class struggle battles on the horizon—was most keenly directed at Moscow.

Chinese propaganda is rife with talk of war between the Soviet Union and the United States—including Peking's abstentionist perspective (the ominous vagaries do not at all rule out Peking's possible joining an assault on Russia . . .). The verbiage is of a "new world war," which could only be nuclear in character. The deadly silence from Peking which greeted Schlesinger's atomic warnings underlines this fact. To be sure, Chinese civil defense preparation for possible Soviet initiated war was, and is, by no means unjustified.

It has been an *axiom* of "Mao Tse-Tung thought" that "out of the new war" will emerge "new revolutions." The 1963 SWP document on the Sino-Soviet split, as well, notes the glaring weaknesses then displayed by the Chinese overlords on the question of nuclear disarmament and the dangers of war. Twelve years later, imperialism is only too glad to make use of such a perilous deficiency.

Mao's bizarre formulations on the impetus to revolution generated by atomic conflict is likewise given a concreteness by the Chinese support to NATO, which is, by no means, a paper tiger.

This reality of Peking's "turn" is the single most important development affecting world—and American—Maoism since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This event marked the apex of youthful adulation of the Chinese current in the left.

Maoism, on an international scale, is racked by crisis. A central feature of this crisis is the strategic nature of the "united front against the superpowers." It is, of course, not a front of any sort, but concession after concession by China on the political field to capitalism in exchange for investment, credits, etc.

The previous Peking perspective, the "united front against imperialism," was based on a rejection of the revolutionary potential of the working class in general,

and in the proletariats of Europe and North America in particular. This offered little guidance, of course, for Maoist party-building in the advanced sectors, leaving them the option to cheer for the onrushing of the people's war to reach Europe's backdoor.

But the "united front against the superpowers" goes one better. It notes the "progressive character" of virtually all bourgeoisies in the world. While the Moscow Stalinists can supply mass parties as the strikebreakers and gravediggers of revolutions, the *direct* mediator for Chinese foreign policy—owing both to the reality of the size and weight of its followers and the politics of its campaign—is the given ruling class of any country.

The impact of the historic absence of political perspective and organizational collaboration is now particularly acute. This, combined with the meaning of the anti-Soviet drive (the anti-CP drive in some countries) has accentuated the crisis of Maoism.

Maoist parties now tend to echo the more *right wing* sentiments of a given bourgeoisie, though, it should be clear there remains a heterogeneity and unevenness in this process.

The leading German Maoist Party, the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), has trained its fire on the sector of Germany "occupied by Soviet social imperialism." It supports the Federal Republic against the workers state. In May, eighteen KPD members were arrested protesting "Soviet aggression" at a war memorial in East Germany. As if to underline the urgent need to take on the Soviet Union, the KPD deliberately avoided organizing protests against the presence of Henry Kissinger in West Germany. They have called on West Germans to be vigilant against invasion and to strengthen "national independence."

In Finland, the Maoists campaign for the extension of fishing rights as part of the campaign to strengthen Finnish "national sovereignty" against Moscow's aggressive policies. They warn Scandinavia of the dangers of Soviet colonization.

In Great Britain, the major Maoist sect waged a ferocious campaign for the maintenance of that nation's place in the Common Market.

In Portugal, sectors of the Maoists declare that a CP government would be *worse* than Salazarism and that "social imperialism" is the "main danger" to Portuguese independence.

A major Maoist group in France, the Communist Party (M-L), has called for French "national rearmament," strengthening that country's ties in an "independent" NATO and warned of the dangers of Warsaw Pact aggression . . . the program of Gaullism!

These perspectives exacerbate the widespread confusion on the level of analysis, strategy and tactics already sharply felt under the impact of Europe's deepening radicalization and the increased tests imposed by it on revolutionaries. The Maoists are driven by the logic of the anti-Soviet campaign *politically* to the right, while remaining infected by ultraleftism. As the Mao regime looks to Europe, the American Maoists look to their European counterparts. The "guidance" they receive will deepen their mounting problems.

The U.S. Maoists Today

American Maoism today is rent by splits, with the variety of coalitions and blocs which characterized it at its

most stable point two and half years ago all having burst.

The close relationship between the *Guardian* and the October League has been torn asunder over differing estimates of the weight of and way in which "Soviet social imperialism" should be opposed internationally. A corollary of this is a sectarian turn by the OL in opposition to "united action" with the CP in the United States, something which the *Guardian* condemns in its ex-allies. From this initial set of ruptures, new disputes and issues have begun to emerge. These include a significant development of what appears to be a newly stated opposition to advocacy of the right of self-determination for the Black nationality by *Guardian* editor Irwin Silber; and an uncritical tailing of the Portuguese CP by the *Guardian* (with the OL embracing the right-centrist Portuguese Maoist current).

The OL, which played an important role in the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee, has had a sharp falling out with the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, as well. The OL opposed any PRSC participation in the Stalinist dominated World Peace Council gathering in Havana on Puerto Rican independence. The *Guardian* backed the move, noting the need for an independent line against the "revisionists."

Of all the Maoist groups, the OL has been the most slavish in aping the Mao regime's anti-Soviet campaign. It appears to be warmest to the notorious right wing Scandinavian Maoist currents. A feature of this posture has been the organization's support to the Shah of Iran against attempted "Soviet penetration" of the Persian Gulf. The OL believes the independence struggles in Dhofar and Oman are inspirations of—therefore to be opposed—the Soviet Union.

It has been rebuked for this by the *Guardian*.

The OL has also undergone a right turn on the question of desegregation in Boston, politically opposing the May 17th march called by the NAACP. The OL's first mention of the Boston crisis in nearly six months occurred in its July issue. The article noted the Dec. 14 anti-racist march, where the OL initiated an ultraleft contingent, as the *sine qua non* of the entire struggle. OL spokespersons stated in the *Guardian* they opposed "forced assimilation"—busing and the court order against segregation that prompted it—and counterposed to it "voluntary integration." This formulation is an indication of the deepening of the crisis in the Maoist current initiated by the Boston situation.

The *Guardian* fared little better. In a retreat from previous positions, it criticized Phase II of desegregation in Boston for increased busing. It did not editorially mention May 17, though in its coverage of the event it was compelled to note the importance of the action.

The *Guardian*, sensitive to a milieu far broader than that of the sympathizers attracted to the OL *sect*, is politically more attuned to the needs of a consequently more influential role. The *Guardian* has the greatest *influence* in the general Maoist current. But, having broken with the OL, it is now back in the familiar situation of a paper without a party, of ideas without cadre.

The OL, with its 500-600 members, is politically closer to the center of the unaffiliated Maoist milieu than that of the Revolutionary Union. But for all the RU's gross capitulation to racism on the Boston question, it has outflanked the OL on the left with its strong anti-Shah

position and is making the most of it. (The OL apparently abstained from the recent demonstrations in Washington held to protest the visit of the Shah's sister. The RU, and its Iranian sympathizers in the Iranian Students Association, played a central role in the actions). It should be noted that this debate around Iran is the highlight of the "international" questions being discussed by the Maoists. The *Guardian*, OL and RU, of course, all adhere to the two-stage theory for Iran.

The OL's crude knee-jerking towards China—the *Guardian* terms it "flunkeyism"—may be motivated by an attempt at growth and authority through winning the Chinese "franchise." No such long sought grail has been granted since the days of PL. Whether the junior grade functionaries who preside over the CCP's "American commission" ever decide to so beknight a Maoist party again remains to be seen.

The RU, the oldest of all the Maoist currents, has struck out on its own. In March, it issued a "Draft Programme" for the founding of the "new communist party." As a concession to the heat generated by its hard anti-Black nationalist line, especially over busing, this document retreats on certain "excesses."

It notes that "narrow nationalism" and white chauvinism have equally damaging influences in the vanguard—a year ago Black nationalism was the "main danger." As well, the document resurrects the Black Belt theory. Previously, the RU had rejected the Black Belt as the area in which a seceding Black state would have to be founded—which is the OL's position. The difference now between the OL and the RU on this question is the level of advocacy of the abstract right of self determination and derivative questions—affirmative actions, preferential treatment, etc. The RU supports the right of but opposes *advocacy* of self-determination, while it opposes fights in defense of affirmative action, etc. The OL has a generally opposite position.

The main reason for the toned down position by the RU is to corral any doubters into the "new party." As well, the RU is trying to recoup the big losses of Black members it suffered over the past year and a half. The RU in Boston is preparing to launch a new campaign against Phase II in the fall; the OL, notwithstanding sharp retreats, has by no means dived into the racist movement.

The RU is spending the summer "summing up" its new document. It no longer appears to feel the need to polemicize against the OL and the *Guardian* by name. It notes only "a falling out among the opportunists" as it prepares to launch an enlarged version of itself as the "new party."

The extent to which the RU is ready to move is indicated by its reining in the Revolutionary Student Brigade. The RSB, which may have 700 members, cancelled its summer convention in deference to a "request" by the RU to participate in the summer pre-convention work. The RSB was heavily racked by the busing crisis in Boston, as well, and after an initial flush of growth and excitement at its founding two years ago has faced a big crisis of tasks and perspectives.

Under its own banners and front group "workers committees" the RU was able to bring upwards of 4,000 people into the streets and out for meetings for May Day activities. A majority of its 27 branch areas continue to publish monthly "workers papers." A founding congress of

the RU party could conceivably draw together 1500 to 2000 individuals. Both the RU and the OL have grown in the past period, although the OL continues to suffer from a self-imposed lack of campus base.

The RU's front-group fetishism, its sectarian refusal to work with virtually any groups other than those it materializes and dominates and its generalized isolation from both "mainstream" Maoism and the emerging class battles have accelerated the group's historic heavy-handed posturing into a more frenzied character.

The RU and the RSB are the most aggressive of the Maoists in taking initiatives. They are the most prone to the sharp ups and downs generated by mindless activism. Their strident opposition to the central themes of the radicalization of the Black masses and other oppressed nationalities and women has been deepened by the growing isolation imposed by their blatant anti-unionism.

The RU was at the center of the shouting down of the podium at the April 26 AFL-CIO jobs rally. This was a model of their tactic of "jamming" the bureaucrats.

The class polarization the National Committee draft political resolution notes reflects itself in the programmatic bankruptcy of our Maoist opponents in the face of big, new tests. In the specific case of the RU and the RSB, this means the lashing out against the rising tide of proletarian struggles in all other forms. This expresses the fear and impotence of the petty bourgeoisie in its time of crisis and decomposition.

Practically, this means the fire of the RU and the RSB will increasingly be directed at the vanguard of the proletariat and its allies—the Trotskyist movement. While last year marked an upturn in the RU and RSB's physical attacks on the Moscow Stalinists and a bit of modest thuggery directed at the *Guardian*, we have been the targets of increased vituperation and concurrent assaults. We should be prepared for more such attacks.

It should be noted that while the RU has, on the question of Iran opposed the Shah (and totally upheld China's line, since as a *state* it has certain prerogatives that parties do not . . .) it is by no means free of anti-Soviet hysteria. More than the OL, the RU has raised the spectre of a US Soviet world war and its own neutralist position in such an event. It is more *agitatively* anti-Soviet than the OL and the *Guardian*.

The RU also notes the progressive results of a nuclear confrontation. In regional RSB "anti-war" demonstrations in April, a main slogan advanced was for the removal of the Soviet Union from the Middle East.

These Maoists stated, "despite all his shuttling, shuffling, and bunny-hopping, a 'tearful' Kissinger announces that peace talks have broken down in the area. Another war threatens to break out, and this flunkey tells us that confrontation with the Soviet Union cannot be ruled out. BUT WE WON'T FIGHT IN ANY WAR BETWEEN THESE BLOODSUCKERS FOR WORLD SUPREMACY!"

In the June issue of the group's newspaper, *Revolution*, the RU notes, "either socialist revolutions will prevent WW 3 or WW 3 will give rise to revolution—in the U.S. and the Soviet Union and in many other countries all around the world where socialism has not yet been achieved." This is a paraphrase of a quote attributed to Mao Tse-Tung.

The RU pressing ahead with its party, is leaving the *Guardian* and the OL in its trail. The likelihood of the unity of these two groups a second time around is not to be ruled out, in the wake of the RU's party effort. Similarly,

they each could be compelled to step up independent initiatives.

On the fringes of this process is the activation of the Communist Labor Party, formed from the old Communist League, which, in turn, was strengthened largely by a majority split from the Detroit based League of Revolutionary Black Workers several years ago. Virtually underground since its founding in the late 1960s, since this tendency has become "the party" it has shifted into activism. In Boston, for instance, the group issued a leaflet in the name of a front group for the May 17th march and came out unconditionally for busing—against the "fascist menace." It helped monitor the Coalition to Defend Abortion Rights march in early May. In some areas it is active in the NAACP.

As well, the Black Workers Congress—which emerged as a minority split from the League of Revolutionary Black Workers—has recently announced itself as the multinational Revolutionary Workers Congress.

* * *

The changed political climate, the new stage of the radicalization, highlights the incapacity of the Maoists to unite. The tests of mass actions around the key class issues of the day, the decisive judge of program, were absent in the period in which Maoism re-emerged as a major tendency in the left, from 1972-74.

Under the hammer blows of the need for an analysis and an action orientation to the rising tide of Black and antiwar struggles, the then Maoist Progressive Labor Party and its pro-Chinese opponents in the Students for a Democratic Society were blown apart.

From the debris of such a cataclysmic failure, the "regroupment" process developed in the period of the relative downturn in mass actions. This period accompanied the "turn" of the Chinese bureaucracy, which, in its own way, helped to cement the conservative impressions felt by the new Maoists.

For these Maoists, the ultraleftism in the 1960s has become the opportunism in the 1970s. The image of today's Maoists would repel large layers of an early layer of SDS type rebels inspired by the Chinese revolution. Those who did not either mature beyond the naive spontaneism of that early period, or who were not burned out, but zigged and zagged are the nucleus of the current consistent followers of the bureaucracy. They have inculcated the cynicism of Stalinism and have become hardened in the past period.

The central theoretical question which arrayed the varieties of the 1960s Maoists against one another was the national question, the struggle for Black liberation in particular.

That remains a key debate today. But while the debate was actually more heated in the period of Maoist parlor room polemics in 1973 and into the spring of 1974, more than anything it was the *actuality* of the struggle for self-determination by the Black nationality, reflected in the Boston desegregation battle, that turned the discussion outward, into the world of action and struggle.

That battle—as a test of leadership on an acute scale—exists to this day. Its continuing impact can be seen in the negative by the the Maoists' paralysis of perspective. The Maoists have been *bypassed* by the Boston struggle.

A signal of things to come, as well, was the orientation

of the RU and the OL to the April 26 AFL-CIO rally. *Both* politically *opposed* the call to action; both cited the union bureaucracy, not the bosses, as the target for sharpest fire; both ran amok on the field, mobilizing a combined number of upwards of 200 supporters to rush the stage; both organizations ended up chanting the *same* slogan: "Fight, Don't Starve!"; and each has, in different areas, front groups of that name. The OL's position of "moving the unions to the left"—a combination of tailing left-bureaucrats and creating narrow ultraleft inter and intra union caucus formations—indeed was indistinguishable from the RU's infantile "jamming" perspective.

The *Guardian* as well, without naming either the OL or RU, noted the stage-rush as the high point of the day, a fitting rebuke to the dreaded labor bureaucracy which had called the action to "sow illusions" in the first place.

The RU, which politically opposes the Equal Rights Amendment in the debates between sects, now finds itself in the odd situation of nearing a possible "victory" with the defeat of the ERA (along with a "defeat" with the implementation of Phase II in Boston).

The OL, which attempts to make polemical hay from the RU's weakness on the woman question, abstained from any activity whatsoever in the defense of Boston abortion doctor Kenneth Edelin—a national issue—a case that is both still pending and includes the upcoming trial of three more abortion doctors. The *Guardian* in its coverage of the defense of abortion rights, necessarily was compelled to note the initiatives of our pro-abortion work.

The general outlines of political battle in the coming period sketch a situation in which the Maoists, while by no means withering on the vine, face increasingly severe tests. They have found the first such hurdles indeed hard to jump.

Maoism and the organizations of the oppressed nationalities

The past year or so has witnessed the consolidation of three all Black organizations representing a wing of the Black liberation movement as a sector of the Maoist movement.

These groups are the Congress of Afrikan People (CAP), the February First Movement (formerly, the Youth Organization for Black Unity) and the African Liberation Support Committee (ALSC). Smaller such organizations around the country have gone through similar evolution as well.

The Pan-Africanist backgrounds of these groups brought them into contact with African revolutionaries who considered themselves Marxists. This first favorable connection with Marxism, coupled with questions posed in the fight against Black oppression, generated a rising interest in scientific socialism.

In that evolution, as the National Committee Black struggle document notes, "... none of these radical groupings or a coalition of them has developed the confidence, experience and methods to effectively challenge the hegemony of the pro-capitalist reformists who are holding back the struggle." This has been a central theme of the Black movement since the death of Malcolm and the failures of SNCC and the Black Panther Party. It reflects the fact that the fullest understanding of the revolutionary potential of the nationalism of the oppressed

has not developed; why there is among these groups a sense that nationalism must be "transcended"—that is, rejected—for a more economist view of working class unity.

This, in turn, has produced a certain demoralization, which is intertwined with and effects the deepening and important political search for answers that has led to an increasing warmth toward socialist ideas.

The great esteem for and identification with China by the "progressive" African governments and guerrilla groups which first influenced the developing Pan Africanist current, plus the genuine and justified high regard for the Chinese revolution held by radicals of the oppressed nationalities, shapes the linking of socialism and Marxism with "Mao Tse-Tung thought."

At the very least there is a hard leadership layer in these organizations galvanized around Maoism, while there is a wider layer that is to one degree or another pro-Chinese. This ideological development, however, must be matched against performance in the test of struggle.

This Maoist current has not as yet been able to come to grips with the Boston struggle.

CAP initially came out echoing the RU's anti-busing line, then withdrew it for revision. It now views busing as a bourgeois trick, calls for working class unity around "quality education" and for "white communists" to struggle against the antibusing movement it characterizes as racist. YOBU, as one of the progenitors of the FFM had a similar position.

While CAP boycotted the founding conference of the National Student Coalition Against Racism, the FFM came. It should be noted that leading up to the conference the FFM was fraternal in its discussions with antiracist activists. It was not clear on its line. At the conference it caved in to the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization (PRRWO), whose fierce sectarianism and goon tactics could not give life to a stated desire to smash the conference.

While the FFM denounced the conference, red-baiting it in the *African World* and the *Guardian*, such activity was a clear admission of weakness. The FFM was offered workshops, a speaker at the Friday night teach-in prior to the conference, as well as urged to submit resolutions, etc. at the conference. Having no line, it failed the political test.

CAP printed a pamphlet after the Dec. 14 demonstration, the main theme of which was a slanderous and red-baiting attack on the YSA and SWP. The key lesson CAP drew from Dec. 14 was that Black Democrats like State Sen. William Owens, who issued the call for the action, could not be trusted to lead struggles because he had displayed his inability to "really fight" at the confrontation point he initiated in the march route. Owen's refusal to duke it with the cops at the intersection of Boylston St. and Commonwealth Ave. on Dec. 14 was, for CAP, the quintessential moment of the whole day and the key to its meaning. None of these organizations mentioned the May 17th March, nor, in an organized way, participated it.

The Maoism of these groups is reflected in an increasing affection for the politics and terminology of the Peking bureaucrats. CAP's newspaper, *Unity and Struggle*, regularly prints study pieces from Mao, Kim Il Sung and Enver Hoxha.

The main ALSC speaker at African Liberation Day in Washington denounced "Soviet social-imperialism" in a call for struggle against Moscow. The ALSC demonstra-

tions, which appear to dwindle in size each year, raise demands which blur any clear political focus for the actions. Demands against "international runaway shops" and for "workers rule" are a measure of this. The attraction of healthier elements to such activities can be in part attributed to both a continuing radicalization in the Black community and the legacy of the healthier actions the ALSC called in the past.

The generalized deepening of a consistent commitment to Maoism by this layer will tend to inhibit it from leadership in the developing struggles of Blacks, whether on the campuses or in the communities and shops.

Questions of union strategy and the class struggle vis-à-vis Black liberation are unavoidable. A case in point is the absence of any serious presence of this milieu at the April 26 demonstration.

As a new generation of Black students begins to take up the critical struggle on the campuses against cutbacks, the questions of strategy and tactics will be squarely posed to groups like the FFM.

This spring, where the FFM had a hand in leadership at Harvard University, a struggle around Black control of the W.E.B. Du Bois institute was completely stymied. At another campus, independent Black activists called on the National Student Coalition Against Racism for advice, because of their experience with the FFM, which had been able to provide no leadership whatsoever.

How these groups will relate to the potentially explosive opening of school in Boston this fall raises the question of action again.

The call by CAP for the fielding of an "anti-Democratic, anti-Republican, anti-depression, anti-repression popular front" presidential campaign has not, to the increasing anger of Amiri Baraka, found a hearing among the multinational Maoist groups. Although CAP and the OL have joined in May Day activities and jointly opposed the "revisionist" orientation of the Puerto Rican Solidarity Committee, the OL has what appears to be a principled position against electoral activity.

Baraka's stated purpose in this effort is to unite the Maoist forces as the nucleus of such a campaign in an attempt to brake what he considers needless squabbling and sectarianism.

As well, Baraka has stated such a campaign is needed to do battle with the "Trots and revisionists." The most responsive to his call are the left social democrats of the Kinoy-New American Movement variety.

Whether or not such a campaign, that is, a reformist campaign, which is deliberately *not* an independent Black campaign, ever takes off, remains to be seen. Should Baraka run for president, regardless of programmatic weakness and his own views and given the tremendous organizational weaknesses which would accompany it, a layer of Black youth would identify with it. To be sure, that CAP has made such a campaign a priority for its work reflects pressures for independent political action in the Black community; pressures which Baraka, with a real stature among a significant layer of Black activists, is compelled to recognize and respond to. The inability to field a campaign objectively will be a setback for this current. This campaign will to some degree put us in an advantageous situation to debate and have discussions with the less hardened elements of this layer.

The impact of the evolution towards Maoism—though none of these groups have yet embraced the right-wing,

retrograde strain which increasingly characterizes international and American Maoism—on local groups is telling, as well.

The small Black organization around the *Struggle* newspaper, tied closely to the OL in Boston, has been stampeded by the desegregation struggle. They are literally unable to rise above the mounds of bombast of Maoist rhetoric to involve themselves in the fight. Only three issues of the group's newspaper have appeared in the last nine months.

Similarly, when CAP initiated the Black Women's United Front conference several months ago—600 women showed up—verbiage abounded. Between the recommended study of Dimitrov and Mao and the bureaucratic stranglehold from above, the "front" appears to have dissipated. No *action strategy* was proposed; in fact the principles of unity did not include opposition to sexism because, as one CAP spokesperson put it, that was "implied" by principles which condemn capitalism, imperialism and racism. Such crises of perspective are bound to increase.

Under the pressure of events on the one hand, and the visible, developing strength of the Trotskyist movement, especially in the Black struggle, on the other, it may be possible to win over the more open individuals and those groups who question the paralysis and problems of the Black Maoist organizations. As well, shifts away from certain dead-end policies and narrow, dogmatic views in these groups might occur.

There exists, as well, a larger layer of Blacks, who are by no means in or around such organizations but are sympathetic to China and Maoism. The counterposed examples of our ideas and activity to the practice of the Maoist groups—especially the multinational organizations—may tend to mitigate against the consolidation of this layer into a part of the Maoist current.

In noting the importance of this general "ideological development," the NC Black struggle document states, "we should become participants in it."

Among other things, I think this also means a step-up of our polemics with the ALSC-CAP-FFM types. We have not provided the programmatic clarity in polemical forms against them to the extent possible and necessary. We should not let red-baiting and slander mixed in with political debate—like Baraka's anti-busing pamphlet and his article in the Feb.-March issue of the *Black Scholar*—go unanswered.

We should specifically, in our press, take up the *lines* of the *Guardian*, OL and RU on the national question, applied to concretes, exposing the main multinational groups' abandonment of any perspective for Black liberation. (This holds, as well, for the Chicano movement, where both the OL and RU have made gains in the past period.)

Though our tone is fraternal with this current in the Black liberation struggle, it is an opponent current, although different than opponents of the CP and RU-OL-*Guardian* type. We must provide the important layer of unaffiliated, increasingly pro-socialist Black activists with the *material* that differentiates in *specific* the debates now going on and that we want to *initiate*; CAP on busing, the FFM on the student movement, CAP on the question of working class unity, etc.

At the same time, we should encourage NSCAR

affiliates to continue to seek out joint activities around any number of issues that arise in the anti-racist struggle with these organizations. Campus debates and forums where possible will have a combined impact far larger than the seemingly narrow confines it may seem to occur in.

Our developing presence in rising struggles, especially antiracist battles, makes it increasingly hard to sidestep the kind of important political debates—whether "formal" or in an arena of struggle—that can allow revolutionary Marxists to pose a genuine class struggle pole for revolutionary minded Black activists.

The SWP and China today

The growing influence of the SWP in the eyes of an ever widening layer of people as a key force in new struggles, the impact of our election campaigns and the growing acceptance of socialism as a worthwhile alternative more and more makes our word stronger as *the* radical view.

At the same time the radicalization that moves people towards us begins to remove—along with a positive side effect of detente—the outcast status of the workers' states. That is, for many today, there is a positive recognition of the gains of the Chinese workers state.

The fact that a growing number of people consider the enormous gains in health care, nutrition, women's rights, employment and education made by the Chinese revolution as a symbol, however rough and vague, of the relative superiority of socialism over capitalism, is one which we should *embrace*. (The comparison bourgeois commentators are compelled to make between China and India enhances this all the more.)

It is the fettering of the revolution with a bureaucratic yoke, the identification of socialism with totalitarianism that we pose against the Chinese misleadership.

The policies and practices of the Chinese Communist Party and the contention with the Soviet Union for the booty of detente imperil the workers states. Antiproletarian domestic policies and the anti-Soviet campaign combine to jeopardize China—and the Soviet Union, etc.—to the favor of imperialism.

The Maoist groups are, increasingly, the *apologists* for the bureaucratic *grave-diggers* of the Chinese revolution. Their rightward shift gives bourgeois war propaganda, in the throes of crisis, new wind for its sails.

These are the sides of the contradiction. The radicalization produces a favorable reaction to the Chinese revolution. At the same time, the Maoist current not only identifies with such an outlook, but dovetails the more *backward* elements of it, the more conservative aspects of any primitive and inarticulate break with bourgeois norms and ideology. That is, the average radicalizing person who becomes roughly "pro-Chinese" will still be prone to reformism, anti-communism, etc. For the revolutionary Marxists, then, it becomes necessary to deepen and clarify the reality of the Chinese revolution—to defend the Russian revolution, to explain *revolutionary* politics, etc.—to these elements as they search out political organizations in which they can actively express their radicalism.

For the Maoists, the unrefined bourgeois *prejudices* are the *building blocks* for assimilation into their current. Their use of self-criticism is designed to break down individual initiative and political self-esteem and to forge

lobotomized zealots who will toe any line from the bureaucracy. It is a method which glues all of the weakness of bourgeois ideology to the service of the sacrosanct power of the ruling caste, central committee, etc.

The NC draft political resolution correctly notes that the sway of the Chinese revolution has continued staying power; that we can by no means write the Maoists off.

The popularity of China requires us to come forward in a certain way, in the context of a natural competition between us and the Maoists for the new, healthy elements forged by the radicalization. To be sure, the number of people who are recruited to our movement directly and solely because of a position on China *per se* will be small. Rather, key aspects of the program, reflected in exemplary campaigns, etc. will be the dominant attractive force.

Some healthy activists will, not knowing the SWP and the YSA, come to Maoism by mistake. Others will join and be repelled by the infantilism, ultraleftism, opportunism and sectarianism of the current. Numerous academics may be drawn, as they were to Russia in the 1930s, into "friendship" groups as much because of the *absence* of a revolutionary policy in China as because of a revolution's triumph 25 years ago, that today is "safe" to support.

For us, what is important is that we throw up no *artificial* barriers to inhibit those interested in and supportive of China's revolution from coming to us.

The legacy of cold war isolation combined with widespread curiosity about China, the history of China's more radical appearance, the impact its populist-like anti-"superpower" bombast, all combine to this day to continue to portray it as to the left of the Soviet Union. It remains to see how rapidly this will evolve.

We should be able to make crystal clear to all that we are not only the *best* defenders of the Chinese revolution, we are its *only* defenders. We champion the interests, needs and just demands of the Chinese worker-peasant masses. We reject the identification of the pro-NATO, pro-Shah, pro-Ford bureaucracy with the drive forward of Chinese humanity. Against the reactionary, caste nationalism of the bureaucracy, we project a policy of revolutionary internationalism to strengthen the workers state and generalize revolutionary struggle.

We are against the deepening of autocratic rule—which many young activists unavoidably note and are ready for our explanations of as a *removal* of a barrier inhibiting their fully coming to socialism. And we are for the flowering of workers democracy through the political revolution which can ensure the tapping of the tremendous natural and human resources of Chinese society.

We should make, in other words, given the "turn" of the bureaucracy and its toadies around the world, a sharper

line of demarcation between the Trotskyists and the Chinese revolution on the one hand, and the counterrevolutionary caste and Mao sects on the other, who are *unable* to defend the workers state.

The SWP has a rich history in defense of the Chinese revolution. In the middle of the McCarthyite witch-hunt, we campaigned for the recognition of the U.S. government of the Chinese workers state. We demanded the extension of long term economic credits. Prior to that, in the immediate post-World War II period, when imperialism readied for a strike inside China, we demanded the troops be brought home. We demanded, as the victory of the Chinese revolution became a reality, that the U.S. stay out of China—our slogan was "Hands off China!" And we, as the only opponents of U.S. imperialist aggression in Korea to intransigently stand up against the anti-communist hysteria, pointed to the Pentagon's march to overthrow the Peking government and demanded that the U.S. get out of Korea immediately and unconditionally.

There are numerous other examples, including those of our support to China's just claims against the Soviet Union in the wake of the schism.

We have nothing to be defensive about in our stand on the side of the Chinese revolution nor should we be defensive about a deliberate attempt to identify with its gains. The Chinese revolution, first and foremost, is a confirmation of the theory of permanent revolution, as well.

Because a layer of the broad, undifferentiating, many times naive and non-sectarian element, studies Mao, it is important that we become more familiar with "Mao Tse-Tung Thought." We should deepen a grasp of the ins and outs of its general meaning, strategy and tactics. With such an understanding we can more ably pose authentic revolutionary Marxism against the addled mysticism of the Great Helmsman and his ghostwriters. Educational conferences and forums on one or another aspect could attract some elements looking for an answer.

The news of the growing war of words, which may presage a war of more material things, between the two largest workers states, has put the Sino-Soviet debate high on the agenda of interest of many people as well as the more radicalized layers.

It is a debate which we are uniquely suited to enter and participate in, to provide the theoretical, practical and organizational alternative to the lines of the two bureaucracies.

It is also a debate that will expand, intensify, and sharpen, and, through our continuing intervention, be an arena in which we can deal blows to two major opponents, enrich our political capital, and accumulate new cadre to the revolutionary vanguard.

SEX DIFFERENTIATION IN CANNIBALISM

By Evelyn Reed

July 10, 1975

Comrade Des Verney has delivered the first segment of his attack upon my book, *Woman's Evolution (Discussion Bulletin Vol. 33, No. 9)* and I have been notified that another more general critique will follow. He opens with a challenge on the question of cannibalism since my book presents a new theory of the hazards of cannibalism as a replacement for the former incorrect theory of the hazards of incest as a prime preoccupation of our most ancient ancestors.

As I explain, the concept or fear of incest could not occur until the biological facts of birth were ascertained. This came about relatively recently. Humans in the earliest period of savagery were unaware of the biological causes for birth and death, and were even unable to draw the essential distinction between other creatures and themselves as "hominids," a qualitatively different species.

Under these circumstances the new species that had departed from the vegetarian apes and acquired an omnivorous diet had to learn how to kill and eat flesh food at the very same time they had to learn what flesh was taboo and could not be eaten. In other words, social measures had to be instituted to overcome the biological ignorance—and innocence—of the nature of cannibalism.

My contention, arrived at from a number of avenues of investigation, is that the taboo against cannibalism was laid down by the female of the species—the "feminids"—in the course of instituting the first social regulations governing humanized life. These are embodied in the system called totemism. Matrilineal totem kinship provided the earliest safeguard for the in-group. Under this totemic protectorate those who belonged to the same matrilineal group, horde or clan were "of the same kind," the totem-kin. They were the "people," the human beings, the "sister-brother kin," whose lives were inviolate and who could not be killed or eaten. The growth and expansion of this kinship system moved side by side with steady encroachments over cannibalism until finally the menace was eradicated altogether.

Totemism and taboo thus became the joint social means for overcoming biological ignorance and the threat of cannibalism. Women led the way in this great advance in assuring human survival for two reasons; in the animal world they were not handicapped by the violent characteristics of male sexuality and in the hominid world they were slow or "backward" in assimilating the new meat diet. Thus the female sex was the advantaged sex, able to confront the threat of cannibalism and work out the means for mastering it. Through the kinship system they created the "fratriarchy," the brotherhood of kinsmen, as the male economic arm of the matriarchy, the sisterhood of kinswomen.

In his polemic comrade Des Verney does not object to my theory of cannibalism per se. But he vigorously opposes my analysis of the food-and-sex differentiations that existed in the early stages of human evolution which resulted in man-the-hunter becoming cannibalistic but not woman the vegetable-gatherer. My objective, however, was not simply to pose the problem of cannibalism but to find out how it was solved.

As part of the evidence for my thesis I call attention to the first division of labor between the sexes. This "sexual" division of labor as it is usually called has perplexed many anthropologists because it is also so prominently a food division. My theory takes this aspect into account and explains how and why this was the case. The sexual division of labor was also more importantly a food division of labor because of the existence of cannibalism.

The primitive division of labor is well known even to those who have not studied anthropology. Its broad circulation comes from its frequent use as an argument to buttress the myth of the eternal superiority of men over women. As the archaeologist Grahame Clark so picturesquely and chauvenistically summarizes this theme, "the resplendent figure of Man the Hunter, prototype of Man the Warrior" rises up over the lowly females who, like their ape forebears, dig for roots and vegetables.

My book corrects this one-sided and distorted view of the splendor of hunting and meat-eating and of the unchanging superiority of the male sex. I show that the new occupation and diet created the problem of cannibalism. Thus the very "backwardness" of the women in adopting the hunting occupation and meat diet became a key factor in propelling them forward to find the means to solve the problem. My theory therefore sheds light on the uneven development of the sexes, a topic that has hardly been discussed and merits a great deal more examination.

Comrade Des Verney however is unhappy with my hypothesis that in the course of human evolution social leadership was first exercised by the women before the men took over. Along with rejecting the matriarchy, he must now try to exorcise, not my theory of cannibalism as such, but my analysis of the sex differentiations that enabled the women to take the lead in its conquest. To this end he gives a list of quotations from various books to buttress his claim that women were just as bloodthirsty cannibals as men.

In my view even the subject of male cannibalism has been misinterpreted by the European observers, settlers, missionaries and colonial governors who from the time of Columbus on discovered these practices in primitive regions. Many who wrote about cannibalistic ceremonies did not understand that these were survivals from a

former epoch of cannibalism, some of them rituals commemorating its conquest. These white men were also unaware of the fact that their own ancestors, like everyone else's, stemmed from the same epoch of savagery and had passed through the same universal stage of cannibalism. So they felt no restraint in describing what they saw according to their colonial and racial prejudices.

This resulted in many reports that were not only sensational but even grotesque. Primitive men, they said, were cannibals because they were horrible, unChristian, warlike savages. They desired human flesh to satisfy their gruesome "gustatory lust" for such fare or to satisfy some unspecified revenge motive. They described the blood-letting, blood-drinking rituals in the same vein and slobbered over the "culinary arts" employed in the cooking of flesh enjoyed by primitive men in their "abominable" and "unnatural" feasts.

Descriptions of what Des Verney calls "female cannibalism" are far less plentiful and only an incidental part of the record. The references cited by Des Verney constitute only a fragment of the voluminous reports about male cannibalism. Descriptions of "female cannibalism" are equally distorted. The white men who interpreted their sexual practices in terms of "shameless orgies," "abase-ment to vile passions," "prostitution" and the like, were no less lurid in their descriptions of women present at "cannibal feasts."

The problem that confronts anthropologists on the subject of cannibalism is that, while its practice has been often described, its origin and development have not been researched. Lewis Morgan correctly posited a former universal stage of cannibalism, but he went astray in surmising that it had been due to the scarcity of other food supplies. Since this was an untenable view, and no better explanation has been forthcoming since his time, the subject fell into almost complete neglect.

My book reopens the subject. My theory is based, not upon a conscious cannibalism due to the scarcity of other food supplies, but upon an unconscious cannibalism due to the biological ignorance of our savage ancestors. Contrary to the sensational reports, neither savage men nor women were bloodthirsty monsters with an unholy "appetite" for human flesh. They were merely unaware of species differentiation in the earliest period, an ignorance that was overcome by the sex differentiation which placed women in the advantageous position to do the job.

Admittedly a new theory, my treatment is not the last word on the subject of cannibalism. There are many important aspects that even in 25 years I could not fully investigate or add to an already lengthy book. For example, there are the phenomena of "exo-cannibalism" and "endo-cannibalism." Exogamous cannibalism refers to the practice of "eating out," that is, the flesh of non-kin strangers and enemies. Endogamous cannibalism refers to the practice of "eating in," that is, dead kinsmen or "relatives." There is clear evidence that both played a part in developing the kinship system by which cannibalism was conquered. But the interconnections and changing relations between exo- and endo-cannibalism in the course of this evolution have yet to be investigated.

Another aspect still to be covered is the real situation with respect to the presence of women at certain ceremonial feasts. Women and even children partook of a "morsel" of the flesh consumed on these occasions. This would logically flow from the principle that common food, or

commensality, was one of the ways to bring formerly hostile groups of men together, converting them from strangers and enemies into kinsmen and bond friends. However, this does not answer all the questions that are raised; for example, when did women begin to regularly consume meat as a food? From my own researches there is strong evidence that meat-eating for women throughout the epoch of savagery and even beyond was a ritualistic, not a regular food practice. This has a bearing on the so-called "female cannibalism."

My theory, a pioneering venture into the analysis of cannibalism, is based upon what we know so far, not upon what is still unknown or uninvestigated. From this standpoint the documentation I give sufficiently supports my contention that the main burden of liberating humanity from animalism and cannibalism fell upon the women. In the strict sense of the term therefore there was no such thing as "female cannibalism." Without that essential sex differentiation in hunting and meat-eating at the beginning of human life, which enabled the women to institute totemism and taboo, we would not be here today debating what happened in the first million years of our history.

Des Verney however accepts Goldenweiser's position that totemism was only a figment in the imagination of the founders of anthropology that never existed in reality. This enables him to set forth his thesis of equality between the sexes in the area of cannibalism. It also enables him to suggest that women were "not universally (or even generally) inviolate and immune to victimization." This implies that women were killed and devoured with equal gusto by cannibalistic male savages to satisfy their depraved food tastes (the white man's view).

Des Verney says that the "burden of proof" is on me to deny Goldenweiser's writings and to "re-establish totemism" as a reality. He doesn't seem to understand that this is precisely what my theory of cannibalism does. The totemic protectorate applied first of all and on the broadest scale to women and children throughout the whole period during which totem-kinship was gradually extended from one group of hunters and meat-eaters to another.

Every theory must begin with the empirical data that has been collected on the subject. But it must then proceed from this descriptive material to an analysis and explanation of it through the historical-materialist method. The obstacles that exist in the field of prehistoric investigation are more than anthropological; they are also political. Current academic schools are dead set against disclosing anything that reinforces the priority of a communal, matriarchal society. To take shelter from such disclosures they must remain antievolutionist or too narrowly historical, satisfied with descriptive data and largely uncritical of dubious materials.

That is why every report or reference to cannibalism—as indeed to everything else in prehistory—must be carefully scrutinized and placed in its historical context, with the writer's prejudices or objectivity taken into account. Equally important, ceremonials and practices that have become deformed or degenerated in the course of time, or subjected to the influence of outside forces, must be recognized as such and separated out from examples indicating the original practices. This is the scrupulous scientific way of developing and presenting a new theory.

Comrade Des Verney does not follow this method. He presents no theory of his own on the origin, development

and eradication of cannibalism, and he challenges my theory with a list of quotations. There are several things wrong with his procedure. It is non-evolutionary, purely descriptive, and completely uncritical of the sources from which these reports were derived or the reliability of the reporters. This serves his purpose of trying to prove that women were just as blood-thirsty cannibals as were men with the same gustatory lust for delectable human flesh and blood. He writes, "both sexes are well represented on both sides of the pot or oven in all parts of the world where cannibalism has been attested and fairly reliably described."

But I do not consider his descriptive data all that reliable and place a big question mark over most of it. In particular I am most dubious about his lavish use of the book, *Cannibalism and Human Sacrifice* (1958) by the Englishman, Garry Hogg. When I picked up this paperback while completing the editing of my own book I debated with myself whether or not to include it in my bibliography. It is a flimsy, descriptive account that strings together some 200 pages of quotations copied from old and new reports and books, and suitably embellished by the pizzazz that goes with carrying out a sensational assignment from a publisher.

I decided to include it for two reasons. Hogg gives a statistical fact that I felt would be of interest to my readers; that while there are plenty of references to cannibalism scattered through many books and periodicals, there is no single comprehensive analytical study of the subject available in English. "No book covering the subject generally exists in the English language," he discovered while searching for one. This included his search of the Royal Anthropological Institute and the "incomparable" British Museum with its 80 miles of shelves and eight million books.

So Hogg wrote the first book in English devoted to the subject of cannibalism, and it is a superficial unscientific work. This was the second reason why I included it—those of my readers who perused it would see the extraordinary poverty that exists to the present day on the important subject of cannibalism.

Yet this is the book that Des Verney relies upon for his most extensive data on "female cannibalism." He lists more than 70 quotations out of this dubious material—by page numbers, since otherwise he would be merely copying what Hogg copies for his book from his source materials. Although Des Verney admits some uneasiness about Hogg's sensationalism, this thoroughly unreliable book becomes the major prop under his thesis of the bloodthirsty "female cannibal." There is not a trace of critical analysis in this hodge-podge of quotations.

Des Verney did not always imitate the bourgeois-empirical schools which are satisfied to stick to descriptive data. Speaking of evolution, therefore, it may be instructive to trace the evolution of Des Verney's views on anthropology over the period when they changed into their opposite.

Des Verney's Evolution as an Anthropologist

Four years ago when Des Verney's interest in anthropology began, he was on the right track, holding a materialist and evolutionary point of view. At that time he was well aware of the unreliability of many reports and analyses by 20th century bourgeois investigators who cared more

about catering to capitalist prejudices than to upholding scientific truth.

Thus in *Discussion Bulletin* Vol. 29, No. 23, Aug. 1971, Des Verney warned against uncritical acceptance of anthropological data, including the anti-materialist, anti-evolutionist dogma that was current in academic circles. Although in his characteristic intemperate way his charges are too sweeping, what he says is essentially true of the more venal careerists in the field. He wrote:

"Bourgeois-patriarchal anthropologists are *totally incompetent* in the area of prehistory. Their field, handled none too well by them, is the study of the remnants of primitive humanity within the past century, as they find these remnants worked through the meat-grinder of the capitalist world market and colonialism for anywhere from 350 to 50 years . . . they know nothing about capitalism and how it works, and *had better keep on knowing nothing*, if they value their jobs and grants and degrees in a capitalist society." [p. 16, his emphasis]

At that time Des Verney was a supporter of the priority of the matriarchy and even set forth numerous illustrations of its vestiges in many parts of the world. He did this to buttress my own answer to a questioner of my position on the subject, making clear that I continued in the tradition of Marx, Engels, Morgan and others.

But two years later in 1973 Des Verney made a complete turnaround. His contribution to *Discussion Bulletin* Vol. 31, No. 20 is entitled, "Repudiation of the Bachofen-Morgan-Engels Matriarchal Theory of Social Origins." Des Verney had switched to the side of the anti-evolutionists, Boas, Radcliffe-Brown, Lowie, and others. Again in his somewhat unrestrained manner he denounced the evolutionists he had earlier supported as "wild speculators," "amateurs," "dilettantist folklorists" and "unabashed racists." Corresponding to his shift of allegiances, he switched his former characterization of Lowie as a "white racist" to Lewis Morgan as the "white racist."

Des Verney exonerated Marx and Engels from these anathemas because, he said, as scientists in a different field they could not be blamed for their incompetence in the science of anthropology and for being taken in by Morgan's stages of social evolution. Thus Marxists, he said, "need have no cause for shame" about Engels' "gambit" in the field of prehistory with his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*.

Des Verney was less benevolent with me. Because I stubbornly refused to give up Morgan's stages of evolution and also adhered to his insistence on the late arrival of the father-family, I was soundly castigated for "hanging on for dear life" to a "pet exotic hypothesis."

That was in 1973 before the publication of my book. Today, two years later and after publication, Des Verney has zeroed in upon *Woman's Evolution* in earnest. Although he has not yet stated all his objections to my other theories and extensions of earlier theories, his criticism of my theory of cannibalism is clearly and pungently expressed. It can be summarized in the following epithets:

I am a victim of "utopian fantasies," not only "antis-scientific and utopian rationalist," but also a "pseudo-anthropologist" and a "charlatan." In addition I am "obscurantist," "antimaterialist," "incredibly shallow and facetious," and even "irresponsible and slipshod." I am so "amateurish" that "even those *totally ignorant of social anthropology*" cannot fail to see it. These ignoramus

"include the overwhelming majority of her supporters inside and outside the party."

As for my book, it has no scientific value at all; in fact, it is an "attack on science," and a "debauchery of science." It is "convincing only to those who are anthropological and scientific illiterates"—which means all my supporters inside and outside the party.

Along with these tender sentiments directed to me, Des Verney issues dire warnings to the SWP because the book "seems to be enormously popular" with both the ranks and the leadership. This is "gruesome," he says, causing the party to "make an ass of itself in public" by leading people to believe it is espousing the ideas in my book.

The trouble with me and the SWP, he says, is that we suffer from *komchvanstve*—a Russian term for boastful swagger, the American equivalent of which would be "ego-tripping." A mere acquaintance with Marxism, we are told, does not give us "an automatic passport into other areas of knowledge" which are beyond our depth.

Des Verney assures me that all this *komschvanstve* "crap" is unnecessary to the revolution, the SWP, to women or myself. There is no need to palm myself off as an anthropologist; the comrades will still respect me as I am. I should therefore cease "running around badgering scientists for not giving their stamp of approval" to my book. And he chastizes the SWP for acting like a "lunatic-fringe nut cult" and not preventing me from inviting professors to come out and debate the issues.

Des Verney does not seem to understand my objective in inviting such debates. I am not soliciting a career as an academic anthropologist so I have no need for any official stamp of approval for that purpose. On the contrary, my

book is a challenge to those who have usurped and monopolized the science of prehistory that had such brilliant beginnings at the time of Morgan and Engels and which the anti-evolutionists have today brought into a blind alley. My "badgering" is a declaration of intent that the thought-control imposed upon this science for the past sixty-odd years must cease and a re-examination of the findings and theories of the founders of anthropology go forward.

This challenge is long overdue. As an individual I could not have made myself heard against the overwhelming weight of official academia. But because of the feminist movement I am listened to by increasing thousands of women and men inside and outside the rigidly controlled academic circles. This will help to encourage other dissidents in the field to assert their own views against the established dogmas.

The feminist interest in uncovering the part played by women in the first million years of human history is a formidable force that cannot easily be disregarded. As one reviewer of my book discerns the matter:

"Reed's work—464 pages of deeply-researched challenges to established "truth" about pre-history—represents a frontal feminist assault on an academic discipline that up until now has been able to dodge the impact of angry women scholars bent on toppling the myths of male-dominated academia. Psychology, sociology, history and most other social sciences have been shaken in the last decade by feminists who have begun to refute the patriarchal lies that have passed for scientific research. Anthropology has been largely untouched however until *Women's Evolution*."

WHY BLACKS JOINED THE UAW IN DETROIT DURING THE 40's

by Lee Artz, Detroit Branch

July 10, 1975

(This contribution is based on remarks given to the Detroit branch, during the discussion on the Black Resolution, July 9.)

Comrades have done an adequate job of dealing with Comrade Alvin's errors on the problem of lay-offs and affirmative action. It is always good however to be able to test our politics. I think we can do this if we look at the real record of how Black workers were won over to fighting with the union movement in the 30's and 40's. Comrade Alvin's second article devotes close to one page in claiming that the CIO recruited Blacks simply because they were working in the plants when the union came along. He makes much ado about a program that benefitted "all the workers," and emphatically rejects using a program that is also based on championing the demands of the most oppressed. You will notice that he does not give any concrete examples of how this was done by the CIO in the 40's. That's because the real record on this score falls more closely in line with the party's position. I want to give you several examples and make a few comments about what happened in the Detroit auto plants when the UAW was a new and dynamic union.

First, let me note that the CIO was a great step forward for the working class in the United States, including its stand on race discrimination. In the CIO constitution it guaranteed equal rights for Blacks and banned any form of racial discrimination. The CIO was revolutionary in that limited sense—it afforded Blacks the first institution ever where they had a chance for opportunity, dignity, and real participation. The seniority rights that the CIO won were a victory for Blacks, who were now protected from racist firings by the bosses. The CIO in its own way had learned the hard facts of life—they came to recognize that the union movement could not survive for long without Black workers supporting it. The CIO saw the necessity for labor to lead the struggle for full equality and civil rights for Blacks if they expected to win them over. The UAW in its early stages of development learned it the hard way.

The auto magnates of Detroit were determined to defeat the unionization of their plants, and used every means at their disposal: the courts, the press, firings, and even hired thugs. Of the most potentially volatile ploys, the auto industry sought to rely on the racism of white workers to squelch the union drive. Ford in particular saw his opportunity to defeat the organizing drive of the UAW by bringing thousands of Southern Black workers to work as scabs in the River Rouge plant. The situation took on the character of racial antagonisms when thousands of Black workers crossed the picket lines to work at jobs the white workers were striking. The radical leadership of the UAW was able to forestall the racial animosity among the ranks

and instead offered guarantees to the Black workers—union membership, no retaliatory action, and the opportunity for real security, not the boss's good will. The appearance of a sizable number of Black UAW members on the picket line supported the contentions of UAW guarantees. What was the UAW's policy and practice that won Black workers to its ranks and avoided Ford's attempt to foster racial battles at the gates of River Rouge?

First, the seniority rights protected Blacks from losing their jobs, *even* to whites. This victory of the CIO and the UAW was put into practice even in the area of transfers and promotions. At one of the Chrysler plants in Detroit, during their changeover to war production in 1941, new jobs opened up with better conditions and better pay. The Chrysler management began transferring workers to the new operations—all white transfers. The workers in that particular plant had been trained well on how to champion the demands of the most oppressed. They went on a two-day work stoppage and claimed that the boss had no right to decide the transfers and promotions. They demanded an end to "discrimination in transfer." The plant was predominantly white, but had just come out of a long strike where Blacks had played a key role on the UAW flying squad, and they were not about to speak out of both sides of their mouth. They won and the Black workers got an equal number of job transfers.

In the discussion last week a comrade said that the boss is indifferent to who is laid off. That isn't true. The capitalists want to promote the concept of white workers privilege. The transfers at Chrysler in '41 are only one example. The auto company was defeated that time but they still seek to foster racist attitudes among whites to justify cutbacks and their right to manage. Will the more privileged white workers respond correctly is the question.

In September 1941 at Packard and in January 1942 at the Hudson auto plant a handful of Black workers were hired for some menial jobs. The workers at these two plants were newly arrived Southern whites, racist to the core, not having gone through the learning experience of strikes and picket lines which won the benefits they had in their jobs. When Hudson and Packard hired the Black workers the 2000-2500 whites went on a wildcat strike. During their strike the bosses paid them their full wages, because they were striking against working with Blacks, not against the boss. You might say these white workers were very, very upset about working with Blacks. In the union meetings that took place many said they would not give up the rights that white workers had won to the lazy "niggers." What the UAW leadership did, apparently because they knew on what basis unity of Blacks and whites was founded, was to demand that the workers go back to work, demand the company stop sanctioning the

strike and fire anyone who failed to return; and they even took legal action against some of the worst white workers. The official position of the UAW was that anyone who refused to go back to work with Blacks had no business having that job. Now I'm sure that those white Southerners were still upset, and felt they were being denied their "hard-earned" rights—but then privileged white workers will always think that—the answer is the same the UAW used 30 years ago, but probably wouldn't use today. They called the white workers up short and defended the rights of Black workers in this instance.

In fact from 1941 to 1942 the UAW along with the local NAACP helped secure jobs for over 75,000 Blacks in the auto industry by taking action under FDR's Executive Order 8802 which guaranteed equal employment. The order itself did nothing, but legal action and union action combined in Detroit helped win Black jobs.

Comrade Alvin's article also implies that the CIO or the union movement achieved working class unity by a program limited to the trade union struggles. He is wrong if we look at Detroit during the 40's. The UAW had a social and economic policy that it followed in and outside the plant—based on preferential treatment for Blacks. A shining example is the crisis that developed around the Sojourner Truth housing project which is located on the near northeast side of Detroit. During the war there was a serious housing shortage in this city. Under pressure from A. Philip Randolph who kept threatening FDR with a march on Washington, and the need to keep Black support for the war effort, the government took some limited steps to grant concessions to the Black community. One such project, the only one in Detroit, was to build a special housing project for Blacks. It was called Sojourner Truth, paid for by the Federal government, *and* located in the white neighborhood. We must understand that this was preferential treatment. There were no housing projects for whites who also faced a severe shortage of living quarters. Well, the Klan was quite upset and decided that the Sojourner Truth Housing Project was really for whites who made up most of the population of Detroit. They went on a real campaign, attacking the Black families that had already moved into the homes. In September of 1941 there was a white riot led by the KKK against the Black families while 200 cops watched. The case went to court and the projects were turned over to white occupancy. Then the UAW and the NAACP really got involved. (I should point out that many of the whites were UAW members, probably some of the same that had wildcatted against Black workers at Hudson. Many were also members of the KKK.) In March of 1942 about 300 people, Black and white, composed of ministers, NAACP, and the UAW marched into the Sojourner Truth Projects and *occupied them forcibly!* They demanded that the homes be given to Blacks. The federal government again reversed itself and returned the project to Black ownership, which is what it remains to this day.

Immediately after the June 1943 race riot when whites were rampaging through the city the UAW called a rally with the NAACP. Victor Reuther told the 10,000 people there that "any worker who refuses to work with another had better leave the plant, because he doesn't belong there." The rally demanded an end to police terror and a special public works program for the Black community.

All of the whites in the auto plants were not like those at Hudson, Packard and the Sojourner Truth actions. But

there were enough to make the claim that support to preferential treatment of Blacks in transfers, jobs, and housing was upsetting and dividing the working class. You could have made that claim and say there should be a program limited to those demands that do not encroach on the special privileges of white workers, but it would be wrong. I suppose you could make a little argument that we should not have supported the Black families at the Sojourner Truth Project but counterposed calling for *housing for all!* It was unfair to whites who had worked hard and still had to live in poor rundown homes. But it would be wrong. It wasn't necessary to counterpose *homes for all* and calling for Black occupancy of Sojourner Truth at the expense of whites—they could go hand-in-hand. But the question was posed: who lives in these particular homes? Just like the question is posed: who works at these particular jobs?

The UAW leadership was more conscious than the racists they had to discipline. The UAW then was still playing a progressive role and had the post WW II strikes ahead, in which Blacks played an important and many times heroic role. That was made possible by the fight the UAW waged for civil rights in the early '40s.

Let me quickly give you some more examples of the special approach the UAW had to Blacks. During the '43 riot, thanks to the resolute leadership of the UAW, especially on the local level, there was not one incident of racial violence in the plants! The UAW was the only institution that sided with Blacks during the riot. They called for a six-point program to be implemented immediately and took it to city council. Besides asking the council to act on the NAACP demand for martial law, their statement called for the following: 1) special city funds for a crash program of parks and recreation for the Black community and neighborhood; 2) Funds for housing for Black families; 3) More stringent and harsher rules to fight discrimination on the job; 4) Special grand jury investigation into the police and city actions against Blacks during, after, and before the riot; 5) Equal justice to rioters (this was especially important because the *white-run* riot only had *Black* criminals, which was the position of the entire media in Detroit); including legal counsel and fair bail. In their statement the UAW charged that the school system was openly racist and measures should be taken to correct it. Is this simply a program limited to demands that do not encroach on the special privileges of white workers? I don't think so. Neither did the whites who wanted to protect their "hard-earned" jobs, homes, and schools from Black invasion. And neither did Blacks who became the best of the best in future UAW actions.

After the war in 1945, Blacks and women who were hired for the war-time efforts were sent home in droves by the bosses who justified it by giving jobs to returning white workers. They said white workers had earned their jobs, but Blacks and women had to leave because they didn't need them or hadn't earned them. At Dodge Truck the UAW local 140 struck to oppose the dismissal of 31 Black women, when the plant cut back for peacetime production. The union president said Dodge could not lay-off the women because Dodge "could not discriminate because of race." They demanded the reinstatement of the Black women, eventually went to court and won, including \$55,000 in back wages. The UAW established a Fair Employment Practices Dept. of the union and took many such cases up for Black and women workers as wartime

production ceased.

Comrade Alvin is wrong about Blacks joining the CIO simply because they were there. Blacks continued to be strikebreakers and distrust the CIO for years. From the beginnings of the CIO until the early '40's there was not large Black recruitment into the union. Those that did join, did so because of their own judgment rather than any special considerations on the part of the CIO. But from 1944-47 thousands of Blacks came to the CIO. The establishment of the CIO Committee to Abolish Racial Discrimination and their victories in job upgrading and integrated housing gave increased weight to their posture of equal rights. The growth of the UAW, Textile Workers and Mineworkers all were related to how well they could overcome the racism and privileges the white workers had, in face of the bosses attempts to use Blacks as strikebreakers.

The corollary to this history is also true. Comrade Alvin said the CIO could not segregate the union—it would not be in keeping with its existence, so a program limited to demands “all the workers” could accept was logical and won Blacks over.

When the AFL and CIO merged in 1955 they backtracked on the question of civil rights. The new constitution replaced “equal rights” for Black unionists with “equal benefits.” It left open the opportunity to establish “separate but equal” union membership for Blacks. When the AFL-CIO launched “Operation Dixie” to organize the South they refused to take on the Democratic Party and Jim Crow. “Class B” unions were proposed for Blacks so as not to antagonize white workers. The AFL-CIO never did organize the South, especially Black workers. An important failure was their refusal to take up civil rights in and out of the plant and to take on the task of

“championing the demands of the most oppressed.” The anti-union sentiment, which is part of the reactionary ideology in the South, is heavily tied to the racist attitudes and practices of whites, including workers.

I hope this sets some of the record straight about how Blacks were won to support the union movement and how the union movement was won to support Black rights. Whenever and wherever the union supported Blacks and their demands, even at the expense of white privileges, the union thrived and won advantages for all. When the union refused to confront the racism of the workers it lost some important battles to the bosses, starting in the Steel Strikes of 1919, through the 1943 Packard strike and including actions at Dodge Main in '68-9. The boss was able to count on white workers protecting their own “hard-earned” interests long enough to deal with the Black workers, only to set up whites for the slaughter later.

The history of the labor movement is rich with positive and negative examples of how the working class has overcome its real divisions. It first had to overcome its own backwardness and sacrifice its “hard-earned,” but privileged positions vis-a-vis the oppressed.

We cannot let Comrade Alvin change the party's position on championing the demands of the oppressed, nor let him challenge the fundamentals of the combined character of the American revolution. By his angered cries that the revolution cannot be made without white workers, and his justification for telling Blacks and women to step aside, he implies that they don't need allies—in particular Black workers. *That is a revision* of the combined character of the American revolution.

We also should not let Comrade Alvin rewrite, even by vast generalizations, the history of the labor movement on this question.

In Defense of the Revolutionary Perspective: A Reply to Comrade Alvin

By Linda Jenness, Frank Lovell, and Baxter Smith

July 14, 1975

In his contributions titled "Revisionism and Opportunism" and "Tradition, Orientation, and Program" printed in *SWP Discussion Bulletin* Vol. 33, Nos. 6 and 8, Comrade Milton Alvin charges that the Socialist Workers Party is following a disastrous course by defending the affirmative-action gains of Blacks, other oppressed national minorities, and women.

Our reply is in two sections. In the first section we explain the basic issues involved in preferential hiring, affirmative-action plans, and the seniority system.

In the second section we discuss the arguments raised by Comrade Alvin and set the record straight on some of the more outlandish distortions and misrepresentations of fact in his contributions.

SECTION I

Preferential hiring, affirmative action, and seniority

What is preferential hiring?

The demand for *preference of employment* for oppressed minorities and women arises from the civil rights movement, not the union movement. It is true that unions have traditionally demanded preference of employment for union members and the exclusion of non-union members. That is the meaning of the closed shop and the basis of the union hiring hall.

But it was the civil rights and women's movements that raised the demand for Blacks and women to receive preference. What is the basis for this demand? Women and Blacks are entitled to preference because everyone else has enjoyed preference of one kind or another, and as a result Blacks and women have been locked out of many jobs.

General hiring practices, whatever the specific rules of a particular employer, have discriminated against minorities and women. Whether conscious or not, that's the way it always worked out.

When employers post "help wanted" signs, they require workers to complete application forms. They then determine who is "qualified" and who is not. Only those preferred by the employer are hired. They may be preferred because of special skills or training, past experience, union membership, age, sex, church affiliation, national origin, citizenship, military service, formal education, family connection, marital status, physical build, general appearance, or any number of other reasons.

Because of racist and sexist prejudices, Blacks and women were preferred for some kinds of jobs—in the garment, communications, steel, agriculture, and some other industries—but were excluded from most job categories

and classifications, especially better-paying ones.

The civil rights movement fought to make some changes in these discriminatory hiring practices by demanding that all jobs be open to Blacks, that they be given on-the-job training, and an opportunity to "qualify." They demanded that Blacks be given preference of employment ("quotas") in proportion to their numbers in the general population in every region of the country.

All they were demanding was *equal treatment*, but the form of this demand was new. Its aim was to destroy the pariah status of Black people.

The demand for preferential hiring was not an answer to unemployment, and did not pretend to be. It was raised as an answer to discrimination in hiring.

What Is Affirmative Action?

As a result of the upsurge of the civil rights movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Title VII of that Act bars any employer of fifteen or more people from job discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin or sex.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was set up by the federal government to enforce Title VII. During its first few years of existence, most of the cases handled by the EEOC dealt with race discrimination. Towards the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s, as a result of the rise of the women's liberation movement, discrimination based on sex became a large part of the cases handled by the EEOC.

As women and Blacks went to court challenging discriminatory hiring and promotional practices, the courts ordered employers to draw up plans to remedy the more blatantly racist and sexist aspects of hiring. These plans became known as affirmative action plans.

Through the affirmative action plans, employers were forced to hire some women and Blacks in previously all-male, all-white jobs. They were forced to upgrade some women and Blacks in departments and job categories. In some cases, they were forced to pay out large amounts of money in back pay for failure to comply with the affirmative action plans.

Through the affirmative-action programs, or preferential hiring, the percentage of women and Blacks in higher paying jobs, and in previously all-male and/or all-white jobs, increased. This was a blow to racist and sexist practices. It was a step forward not only for women and Blacks, but for the labor movement as a whole.

Assault on Affirmative-Action Gains

The current wave of layoffs, caused by the worldwide

capitalist depression, has thrown millions out of work. As always, Blacks and women have been the first to go. They have been laid off in *higher proportions* than white male workers.

Government unemployment statistics are always suspect, but the trends are clear. The overall Black unemployment rate has remained about double that for white unemployment—that is, it has risen twice as fast. Of the 49,000 new unemployed workers officially counted between February and March 1975, 47,000 were Black. Between March 1974 and March 1975 the number of unemployed women jumped by more than one million.

In specific plants, of course, the figures are incontrovertible. The following examples were cited by *Business Week* magazine in its May 5 issue:

A. The Norton Company in Worcester, Massachusetts, had a work force composed of 3.7 percent minority workers in 1973, up from 1.9 percent in 1971. As a result of layoffs, this percentage dropped to 2.7 in 1974.

B. In a "Pittsburgh-based conglomerate," Blacks had gone from 2 percent of the work force in 1965 to 11 percent in September 1974. Women had gone from 6 percent to 14 percent in the same period. When the company laid off 15 percent of its total work force of 30,000, it knocked out 26 percent of the Black workers and an even higher proportion of women.

C. Ford Motor Company's Brook Park complex near Cleveland has 2,000 of its 10,000 production workers on lay-off—1,400 of the 9,300 men, and 600 of the 700 women. These 600 women, hired only last year, were not even eligible for Supplemental Unemployment Benefits.

Reacting to their *disproportionate* victimization by the layoffs, Blacks and women have gone back to court. This time they are demanding that the gains made through affirmative action be defended. The layoffs, they assert, should not be allowed to wipe out all the gains made in the last ten years of struggle. Again, all they are demanding is *equal* treatment.

In demanding protection for their gains in hiring and promotion, Blacks and women have run up against the seniority system. This confrontation has blossomed into a national debate.

George Meany and his cohorts in the AFL-CIO bureaucracy say: "Strict seniority at all costs." They are unwilling to make any accommodation to the newly won rights of women and Blacks.

On the other side, the NAACP has taken a position on the side of affirmative action gains when they come in conflict with seniority. Herbert Hill, National Labor Director of the NAACP, said in a speech to the NAACP convention in July 1975: "There are some who argue that seniority is a vested right. This, of course, is sheer nonsense. The argument that white men have a prior right to a job and that black people must wait until there is full employment before they too can work is the essence of the racist mentality.

"Seniority is nothing more nor less than an expectation—an expectation that has been formulated as a provision in a union contract. A contract that was written by men, not by a Divine hand, and therefore can be rewritten by the same mortals—especially if it violates the law.

"After a decade of litigation under Title VII, it is absolutely clear that seniority provisions in union con-

tracts that perpetuate the present effects of past discrimination are illegal. . . .

"So we are now proposing in the courts that at the very least—as a minimum—that wherever furlough or dismissals occur, the same proportion of non-whites be retained on the job as existed prior to the lay-off."

Court Decisions

The courts have taken various positions. Among them are:

A. Jersey Central Power and Light Co. Jersey Central Power and Light Co. had, by court order, been forced to comply with an affirmative-action plan and had hired some women and Black workers. When they decided to lay off about 10 percent of the total 3,850-member work force, the company asked the court to decide how the layoffs should be handled in light of the affirmative action plan.

The judge ordered a reduction of the work force in a way that would not disproportionately victimize the newly hired women and minorities. In other words, two categories of workers would be recognized: those hired as a result of the affirmative-action program, and those previously hired under discriminatory company practices.

If the total work force were to be reduced by one-tenth, then one of every ten workers in each group would be laid off in a line of group seniority.

This ruling, however, was later overturned by an appeals court which ruled that "the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement must govern." In other words, strict seniority.

B. Wisconsin Steel Works of International Harvester. In a case similar to that of Jersey Central, the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said: "An employment seniority system embodying the 'last hired, first fired' principle does not of itself perpetuate past discrimination. To hold otherwise would be tantamount to shackling white employes with a burden of past discrimination created not by them but by their employer." In other words, the court again upheld strict seniority.

C. Continental Can Co. Continental Can Company in Harvey, Louisiana, laid off 200 workers, including 48 of the 50 Black workers at the plant. All but two of the Black workers had been hired since 1965. When some of the Black workers went to court, the judge ruled that the percentage cut in Black employment could not be greater than the cut in the total work force. This forced the reinstatement, with back pay, of seven Black workers.

Because of the conflicting court decisions, the Supreme Court has agreed to hear a case initiated by two Black men laid off by Bowman Transportation Co. in Atlanta. The case will probably be heard in the fall.

Position of the Socialist Workers Party

The SWP stands in defense of the percentage gains made through affirmative action by women and Blacks, and in opposition to discrimination in layoffs. The layoffs must not be allowed to reduce by one iota the percentage gains made over the past decade.

If Blacks are ten percent of a factory before the layoffs, they should not be less than ten percent after the layoffs. If women are 20 percent in a high paying job category

before the layoffs, they should not be less than 20 percent after the layoffs.

The formula for accomplishing this will vary. There is no one solution that would fit every work situation. But the percentage gain should be protected by whatever means necessary.

Often the formula for protecting affirmative-action gains will run into conflict with seniority provisions. When that happens, seniority rules should be altered or amended so as to provide for equality for Blacks and women.

Seniority

The seniority system, which the union bureaucrats tout as a hallowed principle of unionism, has both strengths and weaknesses. It protects—to some degree—union militants and others the employers consider “troublemakers” from arbitrary firings. This was an important gain in building the mass industrial unions of the CIO in the 1930s. Seniority, like the hiring hall, gave the union a limited degree of control over hiring and firing practices.

Seniority also has a negative side. Wherever Blacks and women have been frozen out of jobs and promotions by discrimination, seniority preserves and perpetuates that discrimination. It is used to uphold the relative privileges of white, male workers in opposition to the aspirations of women, Blacks, and youth for equality on the job.

Even one of the original benefits of seniority—limited protection of militants—has turned into its opposite today. Who are the militants in the work force today? The Blacks, the women, and the youth. Precisely those people that seniority is *not* defending.

This contradictory character of seniority was not discovered yesterday. In May 1953, in the midst of the fight with the Cochran faction, which abandoned the revolutionary perspective and adapted to the trade-union bureaucracy, James P. Cannon discussed this problem in a speech to the majority caucus in New York City. His speech is printed in *Speeches to the Party* under the title “Trade Unionists and Revolutionists.” Cannon said:

“The seniority clause, like everything else in life, has revealed a contradictory quality. By regulating the right to employment through time of service on the job, it secures the union militant against arbitrary discrimination and layoffs. It is an absolute necessity for union security. That is the positive side of the seniority clause. But, at the same time, it also gradually creates a sort of special interest in the form of steadier employment for those unionists who have been longest in the shop. That is its negative side.

“In time, with the stretching out of their seniority rights and their upgrading to better jobs, a process of transformation in the status of the original union militants has taken place. In the course of sixteen years, they have secured more or less steady employment, even in times of slack work. They are, under the rules, the last to be laid off and the first to be rehired. And in most cases, they have better jobs than newcomers to the shop. All of this, combined with war and postwar prosperity, has changed their material position and, to a certain extent, their social status.”

“In these mass production industries,” Cannon continues a little later, “which are real slave pens and hell holes, there are many others. There is a mass of younger workers who have none of these benefits and privileges and no vested interest in the piled-up seniority rights.

They are the human material for the new radicalization. The revolutionary party, looking to the future, must turn its primary attention to them.”

This contradictory character of the seniority system remains true today. And when Blacks, women and youth challenge the discriminatory aspects of seniority, the SWP stands with them.

SECTION II

Where Comrade Alvin Goes Wrong

Just the Facts, Please

Before we can begin to deal with Comrade Alvin's arguments, we must first straighten out some distortions and outright falsifications in “Revisionism and Opportunism.” It is difficult to have a rational discussion unless we can agree on the facts.

Throughout his contribution, Comrade Alvin refers to the party's position as a “program for preferential layoffs.” This is erroneous. The party's demand is not *for* preferential layoffs, but *against* preferential layoffs.

Preferential layoffs or, more precisely, discriminatory layoffs, are what are taking place right now. Women and Blacks and being fired *disproportionately*. The percentage of women and Blacks on the job and especially in the better jobs is being *reduced*. We are against that.

Perhaps Comrade Alvin thinks we are calling for white, male workers to be “preferentially” laid off. But no, we are not. It seems obvious to us that if the same percentage of Black and white workers, and male and female workers, is maintained after the layoffs as before, that *no one group is being discriminated against*. And that's what our position is.

The fact that Comrade Alvin begins his contribution by stating that the party's position is exactly the opposite of what it really is, is merely the first of his flights from reality.

Next, he makes two further assertions about the party's position, quite emphatically, which are simply not true. Fortunately, they can be easily set straight. All one has to do is read.

Comrade Alvin refers to three articles that appeared in the *Militants* dated June 13 and 20, 1975. One of the articles is by Frank Lovell, titled “Seniority, jobs and affirmative action.” Alvin writes: “*Not one word is contained in any of the three articles defending the party's demand 'Jobs for All' through a reduction of hours of work*” (his emphasis). Later on, referring to the Lovell article, he writes: “The two-page spread in the *Militant* by Frank Lovell is also thoroughly revisionist. Two pages! And not a single word about the demand for jobs for all with no reduction in pay.”

We urge comrades to go back and read that article. They will find, not just one word, but *an entire section* on our program for fighting for jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no reduction in pay and a massive public works program.

Lest Comrade Alvin overlook the section again, however, we quote key sections of it here. Comrade Lovell wrote:

“There is an additional way the AFL-CIO could create jobs for millions now out of work if it were serious about the fight. In 1932 a bill was introduced in Congress by

Senator Hugo Black for a thirty-hour workweek. It was passed by the U.S. Senate.

"Technological advances and greatly increased labor productivity during the intervening forty-three years make the thirty-hour workweek with no reduction in pay a social and economic necessity today. Why is it that not one of the many 'friends of labor,' elected with union money, has yet thought to introduce legislation in the present Congress for a thirty-hour workweek?"

"The hours of work can be shortened with no reduction in pay.

"A massive public works program can be started.

"The union movement ought to champion these demands and mobilize the working class—the unorganized, the unemployed, the youth, all the poor—to win them."

Squeezed Out?

Comrade Alvin makes a further assertion. He says that the party has totally dropped the demand for full employment. After complaining about the three articles not "defending the party's demand 'Jobs for All' through a reduction of hours of work," he states: "Perhaps I should say the *former demand* of the party because Jobs for All has been squeezed out of the picture by the position advocating preferential layoffs [sic]. Isn't that a disgrace?"

Yes, it certainly would be . . . if it were true! But the real disgrace, as we shall see, is that Comrade Alvin has blinders on.

Let's examine just one issue of the *Militant*. We'll even use one that Comrade Alvin himself complains about, the June 20 issue, and see if jobs for all through a shorter workweek has been "squeezed out."

On page 8 of that issue there is an article on the SWP presidential campaign titled "Oregonians hear SWP solution to jobs crisis." Vice-presidential candidate Willie Mae Reid, the article states, "uses every interview to explain the socialist solution to growing unemployment lines." And what does she say? "What we need is a shortened workweek with no reduction in pay. Our concern is not the profits of the corporations but the needs of human beings, of working people. We need to demand a halt to the mammoth defense budget, and to demand that the money be used to benefit working people through a massive public works program."

Another article appears on the *page facing* the article by Linda Jenness that Alvin finds so "revisionist" and "opportunist." This article, on page 25, is titled "Minn. unionists rally, demand 'Jobs for All.'" The article tells about a rally in Minneapolis that was initiated by the Twin Cities CLUW, in which members of the SWP are active. And what program for jobs did CLUW present to the rally? The article states: "Cunningham [of CLUW] told of CLUW's program for combating unemployment, including a shorter workweek with no reduction in pay and a massive public works program at union wages."

The same issue devotes three-and-a-half pages to the fight against layoffs in New York City. One of these articles, titled "Comejo: unity, mass action needed to stop assault on jobs, social services," states: "Comejo explained that the Socialist Workers party is campaigning on a program to transform society on the basis of human need rather than private profit. It raises demands from ending

military spending to reducing the workweek with no cut in pay, from escalator clauses for wages to workers' control over the factories."

And that's just one issue of the *Militant*. Any comrade can pick up any of our propaganda tools and see that the demands for a shorter work week and a massive public works program have hardly been "squeezed out of the picture."

We don't want to rub it in, but we must also remind Comrade Alvin of the more than 300,000 copies of the Bill of Rights for Working People that have been distributed where the first item is the "right to a job" through a shorter workweek with no reduction in pay and a massive public works program.

We must also ask Comrade Alvin to look at what the *Militant* has been campaigning for this year, as set forth in its *front-page headlines*. He will find: Jan. 31—"Rallies Demand 'Jobs for All'"; Feb. 7—"How a workers government would provide jobs for all"; Feb. 21—"Auto workers rally for jobs in Washington"; March 7—"Unions plan mass protests for jobs"; March 14—"Why can't we all have jobs?"; April 11—"Unions mobilize for April 26 march for jobs"; April 25—"All out April 26—March for jobs"; May 2—"Funds for jobs—not for war!"

Now to the Issues

Comrade Alvin complains bitterly about the article in the June 20 issue of the *Militant* by Linda Jenness titled "CLUW leaders debate stand on seniority, layoffs, and affirmative-action programs." This is one of the articles that he thinks "prove" that the fight against discriminatory layoffs and the fight for jobs for all are "mutually exclusive." His proof lies in the fact that the article did not discuss the fight for jobs for all.

It's true that this article did not deal with the fight for full employment. And that brings us to the very heart of Alvin's disagreement with the party's position.

The reason the article in question did not deal with the fight for full employment is quite simple: as its title implies, the fight for full employment *was not the central topic under discussion*. What was being debated at the CLUW meeting was CLUW's position on the *discriminatory layoffs*. Or, to be more specific, CLUW's stand on seniority, layoffs, and affirmative-action programs.

What Comrade Alvin fails to grasp—or disagrees with—is that there are two issues here. One is the fight for *jobs for all*. The other is the fight against *discrimination*. The two are interrelated, as we shall see later, but they are also distinct questions.

As far as Comrade Alvin is concerned, the problem facing Blacks and women is *just the same* as the problem facing all workers: not enough jobs to go around. And the answer is just the same: jobs for all through a shorter workweek and a public works program. *But that is not the reality*—not by a long shot. Blacks and women have *two* problems: the general problem of unemployment, and the problem of racist and sexist discrimination that is causing them to be laid off in disproportionate numbers.

Comrade Alvin nowhere makes it clear whether he agrees that Blacks and women are suffering from discriminatory layoffs. If he disputes the factual material on this point as presented in the *Militant* and in this article, he should say so. If he does not believe Blacks and

women are discriminated against in layoffs, he should try to prove his point. So far he is ambiguous. But the party's stance is clear. We believe that there are two problems, and that it is absolutely crucial to have answers to *both*. Because to ignore the special oppression of Blacks and women, to have no program to combat it, means in practice to *accept* it. To say to Black and women workers that their fight against discriminatory layoffs is "mutually exclusive" with the fight for jobs for all is to *abstain from* if not *oppose outright* the struggle of Blacks and women for equality.

We will say it again: the Socialist Workers Party is against layoffs, whether Comrade Alvin believes it or not—all *layoffs*. We are also against discrimination—all *discrimination*, whether in education, hiring, promotion, or layoffs.

But let's go back to the CLUW meeting in order to make this point more explicit.

Alvin criticizes the resolution introduced by Jean Tussey to the CLUW meeting under discussion. He writes: "The resolution does not call for reducing hours of work so that everyone can remain on the job and for no reduction in pay. It is a pity that our basic position of jobs for all was not even presented to the meeting for consideration."

Let's imagine for a moment that Tussey's resolution had proposed a shorter workweek with no reduction in pay as the solution to the discriminatory layoffs. The CLUW members (at least those not totally tied to the coattails of the AFL-CIO and UAW bureaucrats) would probably have said to Tussey what we now say to Comrade Alvin:

"Where the hell have you been? CLUW already *has* a position in support of a shorter workweek with no reduction in pay. It's in CLUW's Statement of Purpose adopted at the founding convention [as the result, not coincidentally, of a resolution introduced by a member of the SWP]. *But that's not what we are discussing*. We are discussing discrimination. More specifically, we are discussing discriminatory layoffs and how to keep women and Blacks from being disproportionately victimized. Don't you have anything to say about *that*?"

Jean Tussey did have something to say about that. Comrade Alvin doesn't.

Jean Tussey's resolution stated that CLUW must: "... oppose in every way possible any reduction through layoffs in the proportionate number of women and minority workers hired under affirmative action programs, wherever layoffs occur and that,

"Wherever a seniority system is used to perpetuate the discriminatory hiring, firing, and employment practices of any employer by allowing a reduction in the percentage of women and minority workers gained through affirmative action struggles, CLUW stands for altering or amending that seniority system so as to protect these gains. . . ."

It's precisely on this question of the discriminatory character of the layoffs that Comrade Alvin has nothing to say.

'Linda Jenness owes the party an explanation'

There is another item that we feel needs to be taken up. Comrade Alvin implies that something was awry in the

functioning of our fraction, headed by Comrade Linda Jenness, at the CLUW meeting under discussion. He writes:

"From further information that has become available since the article on the CLUW meeting was carried in the *Militant* it seems that another resolution was called to the attention of some representatives at the meeting. This resolution contained the basically correct slogan of jobs for all by reducing hours of work with no reduction in pay. I believe that Comrade Linda Jenness owes the party an explanation of how and why this resolution came to be rejected and not even introduced at the meeting."

Comrade Alvin makes it sound sinister, mysterious, and underhanded to boot! The "explanation owed," however, is quite simple. Here it is:

One member of the fraction, Comrade Debby Leonard, disagreed with the SWP position. She drafted an alternate resolution, which she read over the phone to Comrade Lovell and gave in writing to Comrade Jenness.

The Leonard resolution did, as Comrade Alvin states, call for a reduced workweek with no reduction in pay. It also called for a massive public works program. It called for a cut in the military budget. It called for organizing the unorganized. It called for supporting women unionists running as independent labor candidates for public office.

It *did not* call for defending affirmative action gains by opposing any reduction in the percentage of women and Blacks in the work force. It *did not* call for altering the seniority system when it comes in conflict with the aspirations of women and oppressed national minorities for equality.

Comrades Lovell, Jenness, and Leonard all agreed that this alternate resolution was in *opposition to the party's position*. Surely Comrade Alvin does not think the fraction should introduce and fight for a resolution which is in opposition to our position.

Nor was this resolution debated during the fraction meeting. Comrade Alvin has been in the party long enough to know that differences on political line are not debated during fraction meetings. They are debated during pre-convention discussion and at the convention, which is what we are in the process of doing now.

Comrade Alvin says "from further information that has become available" as though this information was withheld from him and he had to get it in some underground fashion.

He got this information in the same way that all members of the National Committee got it—from a mailing put out by the National Office. The mailing included a report on the CLUW meeting by Comrade Linda Jenness and a copy of all the resolutions, including the alternate resolution of Comrade Leonard. Comrade Leonard had agreed to have her resolution included so that members of the National Committee would know what her disagreements were in her own words.

'A plague on both your houses'

On page 13 of "Tradition, Orientation and Program," Comrade Alvin presents a hypothetical case in which all 200 women and minority workers in a plant are laid off. His intention is to prove that jobs for all would solve their problems without arousing the ire of any white, male

workers—a point that amounts to a tautology and completely evades the problem of discrimination. Quite frankly, it doesn't take the revolutionary party to tell workers that if there was full employment everyone would have a job.

But there is no need to resort to hypothetical cases. Let's take a real one: the case cited earlier of Continental Can Company, which laid off 48 out of 50 Black workers because of their low seniority. The workers at Continental Can Company did not win jobs for all. So the Black workers went to court to simply demand *equality*, that they not be discriminated against in the firings. That was the problem in the real world.

Just picture the situation. On the one side stand the company and the racist union bureaucrats insisting, "Seniority must prevail." On the other side stand the Black workers saying, "We demand to be treated fairly and equally and not suffer a disproportionate share of these layoffs."

And where does Comrade Alvin stand? We can only conclude that he would fold his arms, look firmly in the other direction, and reply, "A plague on both your houses! I don't recognize any layoffs at all. That is a concession in principle and it's not my mission in life to make such concessions." Such a posture may be appropriate to a sectarian abstentionist, who appeals to the holiest of principles while standing aside from the living class struggle—but not to a revolutionary party.

Parenthetically, we wonder if Comrade Alvin is opposed to our call for full unemployment compensation at union wages for those workers who have been laid off. Is calling for unemployment compensation a "concession in principle"? Is fighting for unemployment compensation "mutually exclusive" with the fight for a sliding scale of hours?

Privileges and 'self-interest'

Comrade Alvin claims that the fight to protect affirmative-action gains is "divisive." We have heard this argument before. It has been raised against every manifestation of independent struggle by Blacks and women. Our answer today is the same as always: What divides the working class is *racist and sexist discrimination*, not the fight against that discrimination.

The oppression of Blacks and women is not simply a problem of prejudiced *attitudes* on the part of whites and males. All whites and all men enjoy certain real material privileges over Blacks, other minorities, and women. These privileges are manifested in various different ways in regard to oppressed nationalities as compared to women, but they are present nevertheless, and when it comes to job discrimination they are similar. Whites and males are in general hired more readily, given better jobs, paid higher wages, and afforded greater job security. It is hardly surprising that they have become quite attached to these privileges and regard any challenge to them as a threat to their God-given rights. Unfortunately, *so does Comrade Alvin*, in his highly confused discussion of what constitutes the "material self-interest" of white, male workers.

On page 14 of "Tradition, Orientation and Program," Comrade Alvin writes: "Another aspect of the question is this: Can the workers who have the greatest seniority, in our example the 800 white males, be expected to vote 160 of this category out of a job in the interests of 160 other workers who were hired later? I doubt it. Perhaps in some

few isolated cases workers can be expected to do this but it would be an exception, not the rule.

"According to our method of dialectical materialism we expect people to act in their own material self-interest. That they do this we know from all previous experience. Therefore, we should expect a worker who, by virtue of seniority can hold his job to vote to do so in most cases and not to vote himself out in the street to get by on unemployment compensation."

A little further on he states: "The idea, as Comrade Linda Jenness expresses it, leads to the belief that the more privileged workers (those with the greatest seniority) can somehow be mobilized in a struggle to defend the interests of the less privileged. The implication is that they can be induced to do this even when it goes against their own material interests. I doubt this proposition very much."

This line of thinking has nothing to do with either dialectics or materialism.

Comrade Alvin has confused the interests of privileged workers in defending their material privileges in relation to the working class as a whole, with their material interests as workers. The two interests are diametrically opposed. In defending their material privileges as compared to Blacks and women, white male workers are defending the interests of the capitalist class, which fosters racial and sexual divisions in the working class as necessary components of its continued rule. In defending the "interests of the less privileged," such workers would be defending their interests as workers against the capitalist class. Understanding this fact is part of acquiring *class consciousness*. Comrade Alvin "doubts very much" that the more privileged workers can develop this aspect of class consciousness. The history of proletarian revolutions and upsurges demonstrates that he is too pessimistic. The Political Resolution submitted by the National Committee is based on the opposing perspective, that the material interests of the workers as a class will be the deciding factor that overcomes racial and sexual prejudice and the interest of defending their privileges on the part of the bulk of white male workers. Their *class* interests will predominate over their interests as a relatively privileged layer. The structure of the working class in this country emphasizes that this is an absolute prerequisite for the socialist revolution.

Surely Comrade Alvin is aware that there are times—many times!—when workers act in a manner directly contrary to their material self-interests as workers, as a class . . . *because they have a mistaken notion of where their interests lie*. They go to the polls and vote for capitalist candidates. They have supported and fought in imperialist wars. Because of mistaken notions about how to save their jobs, many workers support reactionary, protectionist "Buy American" campaigns; they call for the deportation of undocumented workers; and they fight tooth-and-nail to uphold racist and sexist discrimination.

No one can deny that workers lose their jobs when a manufacturer closes a plant and moves the operation to, for example, South Korea. How, then, can we possibly tell workers not to support protectionist legislation? How can we tell them not to call for deporting "illegal aliens" from a factory so citizens can have their jobs? We can do so because we have a broader view, a *class* view, of what is really in the interests of white U.S. workers as well as Mexican workers or Korean workers.

In the case of discriminatory layoffs, Comrade Alvin confuses the *right* of every worker to a job (which we support) with the relative *privilege* of white, male workers to have jobs *at the expense of Blacks and women* (which we resolutely oppose). Most white workers make the same mistake, of course, and Comrade Alvin's position won't do anything to teach them different, or to win them to a class-conscious perspective.

White parents also have the privilege, in general, of sending their children to better schools than Blacks attend. When we advocate busing to achieve school desegregation, one of the immediate consequences is that *some white children will have to go to the inferior Black schools*. As we have seen in Boston and elsewhere, the threat to what white parents view as their material self-interest is very deeply felt. One might as well ask (and most of our opponents do ask), "How can we possibly ask whites to agree to send their children to inferior schools? That's not in their interests. And besides, none of the schools are very good. Isn't the real struggle for *quality education for all?*"

That is precisely the "retreat to higher ground" formula used by the Communist Party and other reformists as a means of dodging the sharp issues of racist discrimination. It's the "Yes, but . . ." approach: "Yes, I'm against segregation, but the real fight is for quality education." "Yes, I'm against job discrimination, but the real fight is for jobs for all." What lies behind such attempts to find Black-white unity by ducking the issue of discrimination is nothing other than adaptation to the backwardness of white workers. Class unity will never be achieved on this basis.

Comrade Alvin tries to tell us that he is in favor of preferential hiring but against the party's position of defending preferential hiring gains in the face of layoffs. And what is the difference? "The difference is that preferential hiring can win support in wide circles, but preferential layoffs most likely cannot." ("Tradition, Orientation and Program," page 12.) And a little further on: "When preference in hiring is given to women and minorities no one already working in the given plant is hurt in any way. On the other hand, any formula for preferential layoffs or any other kind of layoffs hurts those who are laid off. Surely this difference between hiring and layoffs should be clear.

"Of course, it can be argued that preferential hiring does hurt those not hired. This is true. *But the hurt in this case is not very great compared to the hurt in the case of layoffs.*" (emphasis added)

What does this mean? If it means anything, it means that we support the demands of Blacks and women so long as they are seen as only a minor inconvenience to whites and males. But when Black and feminist demands are perceived as *hurting a lot*, when they really deal a blow to the entrenched privileges of whites and males, then count us out. Linda Jenness's characterization of such a stance as "hypocritical" and worthy only of "the faint-hearted, the fakers, and the fair-weather friends"—a characterization Comrade Alvin "resents" so much—is entirely accurate and appropriate.

The source of opportunism

Comrade Alvin charges that the party's intransigent defense of the affirmative action gains of women and

minorities constitutes "revisionism leading to opportunism." What is the material foundation of our alleged "opportunism"? Are we catering to the prejudices of a privileged layer of the working class? Are we buckling to pressure from the trade-union bureaucracy? Have we turned our backs on the admonition of the Transitional Program to "Open the road to the Youth! Turn to the woman worker!" Have we abandoned the struggle against discrimination? We don't think so.

Alvin says the party's position is unlikely to win much, if any, support among the "broad working masses." Which working masses is he talking about? It has and will win support among women and Black workers. In fact, it was women and Blacks who raised it. It has and will win support among the militant youth who are outraged at every manifestation of racism and sexist discrimination.

Is our "opportunism" based on adaptation to the conservative impulses and fears of the union bureaucracy and the aristocracy of labor?

Who is the union bureaucracy in the United States based on? Women? Blacks? Youth? No! The bureaucracy is based on the privileged, white male workers. Isn't that the layer of the working class that Comrade Alvin identifies as the "broad working masses"? And isn't the real opportunism to be found among those who kowtow to and try to justify the prejudices of this backward layer?

But Comrade Alvin has a totally different view of the sources of opportunism. When he complains about the Tussey resolution submitted to the CLUW meeting discussed above, he writes:

"Tussey is thoroughly familiar with the demand for jobs for all, as it used to be advocated by our party. *But she left this out of her resolution.* She preferred preferential layoffs. Why? Obviously because this was a meeting of women only and the temptation to introduce a resolution and maybe get it adopted that seemed to bend the issue in favor of women was very great. Was this not a bit opportunistic?" (emphasis in the original)

If the Coalition of Labor Union Women is not going to "bend the issue in favor of women," then what is its purpose? If CLUW does not carry out an uncompromising fight against all forms of discrimination against women workers, it is useless and a failure. The fact that the CLUW national coordinating committee failed to adopt the resolution presented by Tussey, and instead sidestepped the issue of discriminatory layoffs, was a setback for CLUW and we hope it will be reversed.

Comrade Alvin, on the other hand, seems to be saying that when women and Blacks "bend the issue" in favor of demands that defend their own interests as women and as Blacks, when they take up a fight against the special forms of discrimination and oppression they face, that is "a bit opportunistic."

No, it is not "opportunistic"—not a little bit, not at all.

Unity of the working class

The fact that most white workers accept the view (which is promulgated by the employers and the union bureaucracy) that the just demands of Blacks are a threat to their material self-interest is one of the biggest problems facing the labor movement today. It is the tremendous obstacle to working-class unity in the fight for jobs—and much more.

We believe, as the political resolution states (and Trotsky was our teacher on this point), that "to meet this

revolutionary perspective the American workers will have to learn to think socially and act politically. They must see the big social and political questions facing all the exploited and oppressed of the United States as issues of direct concern to them." They will have to learn that narrow-minded defense of white privileges and prejudices, no matter how deeply entrenched, is a *block* to united working-class struggle.

Comrade Alvin says he expects to be told that jobs for all is "unrealistic" while the fight against discriminatory layoffs is "realistic." That is not the distinction; that is not the party's position. We do not oppose discriminatory layoffs as some sort of stopgap solution. It is not a matter of fatalistically saying, "Well, there aren't enough jobs for everybody, so we might as well portion out what there are in the most equitable way." No, the fight against discriminatory layoffs is *an integral part of the fight to transform the unions into instruments that can win jobs for all*—and that means unions that will fight every manifestation of racism, sexism, and discrimination against those who suffer the worst hardships. It's not just that the two sets of demands are not "mutually exclusive"—both are indispensable parts of our program for a class-struggle left-wing in the unions. Unless we win the class as a whole to support the special demands of minorities and women, the fight for jobs for all is not "realistic," and neither is the fight for socialism.

Let there be no mistake about it: Comrade Alvin's disagreement is not a tactical difference over a few slogans. His position strikes at the very heart of our principled position on the national question and at our concept of what kind of party it will take to lead the American socialist revolution. As elaborated and pushed to its logical conclusions in "Revisionism and Opportunism," Comrade Alvin's position *completely dissolves the national question into the class question*. He rejects the dialectical interconnection between the two.

He cannot stomach the political resolution's call for "revolutionary unity based on support for the demands of the most oppressed," and he warns us: "Prospects for revolution will be dim indeed if our party is guided by one-sided formulas such as this."

He further writes: "All workers are oppressed under capitalism. For the revolutionary party to concentrate only on the most oppressed can only result in ignoring others

who are less oppressed. This is a self-defeating perspective. We must defend and identify with *all* oppressed. That is the only road to unity and eventually to victory."

This is nothing less than a reversion to the inadequate theory of the socialist movement in this country before the Russian Revolution. In *The First Ten Years of American Communism* (pp. 230-231), Jim Cannon describes how the problems of Blacks were seen then:

"The earlier socialist movement, out of which the Communist Party was formed, never recognized any need for a special program on the Negro question. It was considered purely and simply as an economic problem, part of the struggle between the workers and the capitalists; nothing could be done about the special problems of discrimination and inequality this side of socialism.

"The best of the earlier socialists were represented by Debs, who was friendly to all races and purely free from prejudice. But the limitedness of the great agitator's view on this far from simple problem was expressed in his statement: 'We have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races. The Socialist Party is the party of the whole working class, regardless of color—the whole working class of the whole world.' (Ray Ginger: *The Bending Cross*.) That was considered a very advanced position at the time, but it made no provision for active support of the Negro's special claim for a little equality here and now, or in the foreseeable future, on the road to socialism."

The party has learned a few things since the time of Debs, with the help of the Bolsheviks, not the least of which is the iron necessity to support the independent struggles of Blacks against every form of discrimination. This is not a moral question for us but a fundamental strategic approach to unifying the working class in the struggle for socialism. Our understanding of the centrality of the Black struggle to a revolutionary strategy in the United States is one of our most cherished theoretical acquisitions. And it will not be thrown overboard.

We are confident that the upcoming convention will reaffirm the party's position, as expressed in the political resolution, of firm opposition to every manifestation of racist and sexist discrimination, including discriminatory layoffs, and that the revisionist and opportunist position put forward by Comrade Alvin will be rejected.

**An Appendix to "Four Years of Teachers Union Work:
A Balance Sheet," by Paula Rogers, Detroit Branch.**

Michigan Federation of Teachers, Detroit

The Michigan Federation of Teachers (MFT) Convention took place in Detroit on May 2 and 3 in the political context of an unprecedented attack on teachers' collective bargaining rights. The central focus of the attack is the attempt to pass state legislation to destroy teachers' right to strike with the intent of forcing them into compulsory arbitration to settle contract disputes. Leading the bipartisan attack are Democratic party politicians elected with the support of the union movement. The AFL-CIO, UAW and Teamster bureaucrats have lent invaluable support to the reactionary move.

The MFT leadership has failed to meet the challenge, trying to reach a "compromise" with the reactionary forces and supporting limitations on collective bargaining which would relieve them of the responsibility of leading the teacher ranks in the fight for decent contracts. Their tactical orientation is to rely on lobbying and letter-writing to various "friends of labor" in the legislature.

A split has developed within the MFT leadership essentially over the question of how much to capitulate how soon. One wing, led by Mary Ellen Riordan, president of the Detroit Federation of teachers, and her hand-picked president of the MFT, Henry Linne, has favored a fast capitulation and immediate action to quiet the teacher ranks. The other faction, led by John Dele, president of the Taylor Federation of Teachers, composed of most of the non-Detroit locals, has favored taking a harder position for the right to strike and against compulsory arbitration, since in their opinion this will put teachers in a better position to "negotiate" with the legislature. It was this group which in February pushed through the MFT Administrative Board (the state executive board) a change in the MFT's position to favor the unqualified

right to strike and to oppose compulsory arbitration in any form, including court-ordered.

The central task was to bring the discussion on teachers' bargaining rights to the floor of the convention and to provoke a political debate and educational discussion on the questions raised. This was done through a resolution on the right to strike and through Paula Reimers' campaign for MFT president.

The MFT Convention was attended by 262 delegates from 24 locals with 729 votes. The Detroit local alone had 67 delegates with 435 votes, a mechanical majority.

The only significant floor debate on the right to strike occurred around a resolution introduced by Wayne County Community College Federation of Teachers (WCCCF), which included a final "resolved" which stated opposition to any legislation limiting the right to strike and imposing any form of compulsory arbitration. Riordan proposed a motion to delete the final "resolved" and demanded a roll call vote. (This entails voting by delegation -- not individually -- and gives the leadership the chance to whip the delegation into line.) The motion to delete passed by 492 votes for and 216 against, but the roll call showed that only 3 locals (DFT, Detroit Paraprofessionals and Dearborn) voted for deletion.

The deletion of the final "resolved" gutted the resolution and left a general position statement on the right to strike, essentially simply reaffirming by convention decision the change in MFT position passed by the Ad. Board in February. The amended resolution passed by dint of parliamentary maneuvering, with some opposition, mainly from Detroit.

The main discussion on the right to strike was around

the Reimers campaign for MFT president against the incumbent Henry Linne. The final decision to run was made on Thursday, the day before the convention, when it was clear that no serious campaign would be waged by the Dele faction in the MFT around the political question of the right to strike. (John Dele had planned to run with the support of the non-Detroit locals, but pulled out when Riordan's slate won all the Detroit delegates and it was clear he couldn't win.) At the last minute on Friday May 2, the Dele forces decided to run Tony Kaiser, president of the Hamtramck Ft, with no literature and no plans to run a serious political campaign around the right to strike; the Reimers campaign had already been announced when the decision was made. They would clearly have preferred to avoid the political discussion altogether. They only decided to run under pressure, to avoid allowing the vote against Linne's policies from going entirely to support a socialist.

The purpose of the Reimers campaign was to educate around a clear principled position on the right to strike and compulsory arbitration, and the tactical orientation necessary to win.

A campaign statement was distributed to all delegates as the convention opened on Friday. It created quite a stir since it was the only political statement of any kind at the convention. We found quite a lot of interest in it. Despite its length (two and a half pages), people read it all the way through; delegates discussed the points they agreed and disagreed on with one another and with us. Although most of the discussion occurred in corridors and restaurants, we noticed that during the floor debate on "the right to strike" resolution, some delegates raised arguments taken from the campaign statement.

A delegate from WCCCFT put a motion on the floor to give each candidate for president ten minutes to state his/her position. The time was cut to three minutes each in a close vote (76-61) pushed by Detroit. Nevertheless, we were able to bring the campaign to the convention floor.

The vote was Linne 523, Kaiser 161, and Reimers 33. This vote was considered significant and impressive by many delegates, since it represented forces from diverse locals willing to take a principled position, in contrast to the Kaiser vote which was based on personal and factional allegiance. Reimers was congratulated by a number of delegates on the campaign and the outcome.

We accomplished an important breakthrough with the activity around the election campaign and the "right to strike" resolution, drawing a clearly principled line and opening a broader political discussion on the question of opposition to anti-strike legislation within the MFT. The election campaign put Reimers forward as a pole of attraction for those looking for a more militant position. We also began a discussion of the importance of a mass campaign to win public support for teachers' union rights, and the necessity of joining in common action with the Michigan Education Association.

We will need to investigate ways to continue and broaden this discussion within the MFT as experience proves the correctness of our positions and analysis.

May 11, 1975

Note: This appendix was originally intended to accompany the article "Four Years of Teachers Union Work: A Balance Sheet," by Paula Rogers, Detroit Branch, printed in *SWP Discussion Bulletin* Vol. 33, No. 9, but was inadvertently left out in the preparation of the bulletin.