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THE MEANING OF A PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION
by Barbara Gregorich, Bill Massey, John McCann, Phil Passen

The National Committee draft political resolution, along with Comrade Barnes' report to the 1971 National Committee plenum, more than confirm the recent party views that caused us to submit "For a Proletarian Orientation." It is clear that our document is a political alternative to the NC draft resolution.

The purpose of this contribution is to further elaborate the relationship between a proletarian orientation and the party's work in the Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican liberation struggles, the women's liberation movement, the antiwar movement, the student movement, and other areas of struggle. We will also take up other related questions dealing with both the crucial importance of reorienting the party to the proletariat and the manner in which this orientation can be implemented. In rejecting the NC draft's anti-historical approach to the relationship between the party and the class, and the way in which workers can be won to Bolshevism, we offer the traditional Marxist approach. We do not do this merely because it is traditional, but *because it is correct.*

COMRADE PENG AND THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION

The necessity of a proletarian orientation is not just a problem for the Socialist Workers Party but, as the present discussion on Latin America should illustrate, it is a problem for the entire Fourth International. For the clearest analysis of the problems in both the advanced industrial countries and the backward countries, we have the contribution of Comrade Peng Shu-tse, "Return to the Road of Trotskyism." Comrade Peng, armed with the Marxist method and his years of experience as a leading activist in the working class movement, cuts to the heart of the problem not only in regard to the debate on the strategy of guerilla warfare, but also in regard to the problems of party building in the industrial countries. In Section II, entitled "Toward the Working Class," Comrade Peng says:

In the past period the International, on the whole, has found itself working in and recruiting from primarily petty-bourgeois strata, especially the student movement. To a great degree, of course, this area of work was determined by the objective conditions; nevertheless, our past work in and orientation to the working class had not been what it should have been. *Therefore, the re-orientation toward and integration into the working class is the most urgent task facing our movement today.*

Perhaps some of the comrades would object to the call for such a reorientation of our movement, by saying that our orientation toward the working class has always been understood if not explicitly stated. But the concrete reality of our movement will not support such an objection. *We have only to look at the sections in the most industrialized countries of the world, as in Western Europe, to discover that in none of these sections do we have any real basis in the working class. The comrades in these sections come mainly from outside the working class and still remain outside the working class. If such a situation is permitted to continue for*

any length of time, these sections cannot but degenerate.

Of course, our past work in such areas as the student movement has brought us many valuable cadres as well as allowed us to expand our influence by participating in and leading important struggles. But we must realize, that a movement such as the student movement is not and cannot be a constant or stable phenomenon, and that this movement does not constitute (and cannot even be considered as) a basis for building a revolutionary (mass) party. *The only basis on which we can consider building a revolutionary (mass) party is the working class. The student movement must be considered secondary and subordinate to this orientation.*

Our orientation toward the working class must, above all, be concretely based on our work in the trade unions. The trade unions not only represent tens of millions of organized workers, but also one of the fundamental elements of the actual class struggle. The most unfortunate reality is, however, that in the past period the trade unions have not only been dominated by but completely controlled by the different reformist and even pro-imperialist leaderships. One cannot propose any real perspective of building a mass revolutionary party which can take the road to power, without first having struggled against and to a "certain" degree discredited the present leaderships in the trade unions. "It is impossible to capture political power (and the attempt to capture it should not be made) until this struggle [against the opportunist leaderships of the trade unions] has reached a certain stage." ("Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Lenin, Chapter VI.)

The central and most important part of the struggle against the present reformist leaderships can only be carried out by consistent work in the trade unions themselves. *Of course, this work is very difficult and will pose for our movement its most difficult (as well as most important) tactical problems and considerations. But regardless of how difficult this work may be made for us by the bourgeoisie and the bureaucratic trade union leaderships, "we must be able to withstand all this, to agree to any sacrifice, and even—if need be—to resort to all sorts of stratagems, artifices, illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, only so as to get into the trade unions, to remain in them, and to carry on Communist work within them at all costs." (Ibid.)*

Therefore, it is mandatory that the coming World Congress take this question into serious consideration and propose a concrete orientation to and plan for work in the trade unions and the working class as a whole. *Only with such a concrete plan of orientation toward the working class can we envisage the construction of a mass revolutionary party capable of taking power. There is no other road. (International Information Bulletin, #5, March 1969, p. 21 our emphasis)*

From the above document, written by one of the leading figures of the world Trotskyist movement, it is clear that there is a need to defend the Leninist strategy of party

building not only in Latin America and Britain, but also in the United States. This defense is the meaning behind "For a Proletarian Orientation."

THE MEANING OF A PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION

Our initial document has thoroughly demonstrated the historical and primary importance of a proletarian orientation in the Trotskyist movement. We urge comrades to read or re-read it. In addition, the importance of class composition is testified to by remarks such as Trotsky's characterization of the Abern clique:

They were less interested in *principled questions*, in particular *the question of changing the social composition of the party*, than in combinations at the top, personal conflicts and generally occurrences in the "general staff." (*In Defense of Marxism: Against the Petty-Bourgeois Opposition*, p. 145 our emphasis)

The necessity of taking up this particular principled question is once more evident. Attempts to avoid this question result in incorrect and miseducational formulations, such as those used by Comrade Barnes in his plenum report polemic against the opponents of revolutionary Marxism. Under the general label of the "miss the boat theory," Comrade Barnes attacks: the Communist Party's "industrial concentration"; the International Socialists' "workers work"; Wohlforth's "proletarian orientation"; Progressive Labor's "colonization of key plants." But Comrade Barnes himself "misses the boat" and the point as well. What is wrong with our opponents is *not* their interest or proposed interest in the working class—what is wrong with our opponents is their reformist and ultraleft programs. If concern with the working class *was* all that was wrong with our opponents, they would be justified in asking our party, as Trotsky asked Abern: "Aren't the workers good enough for the opposition? Or is the opposition unsuitable for workers?" (*In Defense of Marxism*, p. 146)

Inasmuch as our opponents want to go to the working class, *they are correct*. The fact that our opponents go to the working class does not make going to the working class wrong. If everything our opponents did was wrong, then we should not even have a party, since our opponents have political parties and that must, therefore, be wrong. It happens to be that our opponents are right on this question. If it is true that our opponents are attacking us for not going to the working class, that part of their criticism is correct and we should *heed their advice, get into the working class, and win the leadership of the workers!*

Since Comrade Barnes *must* be aware that what is wrong with our opponents is *not* their proposed interest in going to the workers, what reason could he have for making this polemic? Is it possible that Comrade Barnes was actually polemicizing with someone else, someone, perhaps, who feels that the Socialist Workers Party should reorient itself to the working class? Since our resolution was not yet out, it is eliminated as the source of the cause of Comrade Barnes' attack on the need to go to the working class. This leaves only one other suspect—Comrade Peng Shu-tse. It would seem that if Comrade Barnes disagrees with Comrade Peng, he would be more responsible and more clearly understood if he raised these dis-

agreements within the confines of the International discussion. In such a discussion, we of course would be in complete agreement with Comrade Peng, but we would be interested in whether or not Comrade Barnes feels that Comrade Peng is part of the "miss the boat" group. We hope that Comrade Barnes will answer this question and give the new information he has to buttress his position. If he does not disagree with Comrade Peng, he should also explain. We are sure that his answer will have more than local interest.

A LESSON FROM LENIN

While our opponents err in their programs and not in their declared concern for the working class, the Socialist Workers Party, which holds the correct program, *shows little concern with reaching the working class with this program*. Our opponents fail primarily in their attempt to apply a sterile definition of the class struggle to key questions such as Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican nationalism, women's liberation, the necessity of struggle against the U.S. imperialist designs in Southeast Asia, the student radicalization, etc.

There should be no dichotomy between relating our program and cadres to the various independent movements and orienting to the working class and the trade unions. In fact, it is a *necessity* that we do both. The coming American revolution *will be led by the working class*, with other sectors of society following that lead. The NC says that the working class will radicalize in response to the developing social movements, so all is well. But the NC fails to recognize the *crucial interrelationship between party work in the various social and political movements and party work in the trade unions*. In *What Is To Be Done* Lenin stressed the need for expanding party activity into all sectors of society from the party's base in the working class. Here is how he explained the importance of this activity:

Working class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to *all* cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected—unless they are trained moreover, to respond from a Social-Democratic point of view and no other. . . . In order to become a Social-Democrat, the worker must have a clear picture in his own mind of the economic nature and the social and political features of the landlord and the priest, the high state official and the peasant, the student and the vagabond; he must know their strong and weak points; he must grasp the meaning of all the catchwords and sophisms by which each class and each stratum camouflages its selfish strivings and its real "inner workings"; he must understand what interests are reflected by certain institutions and certain laws and how they are reflected. But this "clear picture" cannot be obtained from any book. . . . These comprehensive political exposures are an essential and *fundamental* condition for training the masses in revolutionary activity.

Why do the Russian workers still manifest little revolutionary activity in response to the brutal treatment of the people by the police . . . etc? Is it because the "economic struggle" does not stimulate them to this . . . ? . . . We must blame ourselves, our lagging behind the mass movement, for still being unable to organize suf-

ficiently wide, striking and rapid exposures of all the shameful outrages. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 412-414)

Of course, Lenin assumed that these activities of the party would be carried out from its base in the working class. He made this clear in *What Is To Be Done*:

Have we sufficient forces to direct our propaganda and agitation among all the social classes? Most certainly. Our Economists, who are frequently inclined to deny this lose sight of the gigantic progress our movement has made from approximately 1894 to 1902. Like any real tail-enders, they often go on living in the bygone stages of the movement's inception. *In the earlier period, indeed, we had astonishingly few forces, and it was perfectly natural and legitimate then to devote ourselves exclusively to activities among the workers and to condemn severely any deviation from this course. The entire task then was to consolidate our position in the working class. At the present time, however, gigantic forces have been attracted to the movement.* (*Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 429, our emphasis)

We, the authors of "For a Proletarian Orientation," propose that the party adopt a method of party building and mass work in the tradition of Lenin rather than that of Barnes. That is, one that puts the question of developing a base in the working class *first* rather than *last*. When we say that the party must put the question of developing a base in the working class *first*, we are *not* proposing that the party drop all of its other areas of work and send every last comrade into the trade unions and other areas of the working class. Instead, the party must utilize its work in the developing political movements to *begin rooting* itself in the working class. This can be done by directing those movements toward the working class and by utilizing our recruits from those movements to begin colonizing key sectors of the proletariat.

As the NC draft resolution states, 11% of the workers are non-white. However, as Comrade Lauren Charous pointed out in his contribution to the pre-convention discussion, it is more important to realize that *over 95% of non-whites are workers*. Once the figure is put this way it becomes clear that in order to reach the most oppressed sectors of the working class, we must go to the working class. This sector of the working class has an importance far, far greater than the deceptive 11% figure would lead one to believe. These are workers concentrated in the basic industries of steel, auto, rubber, transportation, etc., and in the textile sweatshops and the municipal unions. They are the semi-skilled and unskilled workers who have the least to lose and the most to gain in the overthrow of this social system. Reaching these Black and Brown workers is, for us, the most decisive question of the socialist revolution in the United States. Without them, there will be no socialist revolution in this country. Our whole understanding of the theory of the permanent revolution demands that we reach this vanguard sector of the working class. It is only necessary to stand outside any major industrial plant in this country and it becomes clear as to the important role the Black and Brown workers will play in the coming struggle for power. The party that turns its back to these workers turns its back on its historic destiny of leading the socialist revolution.

The highest proportion of women are also either workers

or members of the working class. If we are to take seriously our duty to give leadership to the struggle for women's liberation, we must reach these women with our program. The *Transitional Program* urges, "Turn to the Woman Worker." The most important place to best carry forward our demands in both the national and women's struggles is inside the working class, of which these two groups constitute an integral and super-exploited part. They comprise, along with the young white male worker, that part of the proletariat whom Cannon referred to when he said:

There is a mass of younger workers who have none of these benefits and privileges and no vested interest in 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.* ("Defending the Revolutionary Party and Its Perspectives," p. 7, our emphasis)

In our resolution, "For a Proletarian Orientation," we stated the necessity of relating our revolutionary socialist program and party to all of the struggles against capitalist oppression and exploitation. The party, of course, must have priorities in this regard. For example, it should not react with equal force to a struggle involving the right of jobs to Blacks and a movement to end celibacy on the part of priests of the Catholic Church. On the first we should mobilize all our forces to build the struggle, while the other might merit a mention in the "In Brief" column in *The Militant*. In addition to taking our program to all struggles against capitalist oppression and exploitation, we see the necessity for taking all these struggles into our class—the working class—and educating it and mobilizing it in support of these struggles.

A LESSON FROM CANNON

The SWP, though it has gradually abandoned a proletarian orientation over the last fifteen years, has not abandoned the *Transitional Program*. But it has allowed itself to become isolated from the working class. The causes for the party's departure from its historic orientation were due primarily to the pressures of objective reality: the ability of U. S. imperialism to consolidate itself after World War II; the economic boom which followed; McCarthyism and the witch-hunt in the trade unions; the emergence of political movements based outside the organized working class; as well as factors such as the shortage of cadres who could carry out a proletarian orientation in the full sense of that term.

The leadership and membership of our party fought repeated battles in the fifties to preserve the proletarian orientation—witness the struggle against Cochran-Bartell, as well as the struggles of our trade union comrades to remain in the unions despite the witch-hunt. These two struggles cannot be written off as small items. In conducting these struggles the SWP acted in the best traditions of the Bolshevik movement. That legacy remains one of our movement's strongest weapons in the coming struggles, and one with which we must re-arm ourselves.

Furthermore, we recognize that the openings such as "regroupment," the movements for defense of the Cuban Revolution, the civil rights movement, and the developing student radicalization which came in the same general period (1957-1964) offered an excellent chance to break out of the isolation imposed by objective reality. We do

not intend to minimize the importance of these events politically or the party's relationship to them. *However, no revolutionary party can be removed from its class without suffering consequences. What was a temporary tactical necessity is becoming transformed into a permanent method of orientation by the party leadership; and if we continue to allow ourselves to be removed and separated from the working class and the trade unions, we will be forced to adapt even further to the pressures of alien class forces and our entire program will be affected.*

The adoption of a position that puts an orientation to the working class off to some future time when we have mass cadres at our disposal is tantamount to an attack on our revolutionary program. Although it is nowhere specifically stated, the NC draft resolution adopts a general line on building the party that is opposed to the traditional Leninist perspective. The NC draft perspective, which considers systematic intervention into the trade unions a purely local, special tactic (to be rejected more often than used), is that the workers will become radicalized and "politicalized" by the social movements around them, until they "look for an alternative political organization to support." (Vol. 29, No. 1, p. 22) Then, supposedly, if we are big enough, they will choose us. In order to emphasize the error in such a formulation as we find in the NC document, we will repeat a lesson from Comrade Cannon which we used in our first document:

The trade unions are the elementary and basic organizations of the workers and the main medium through which the socialist idea can penetrate the masses and thus become a real force. The masses do not come to the party: the party must go to the masses. The militant activist who carries the banner into the mass organization and takes his place on the firing line in their struggle is the true representative of resurgent socialism.

And it is not enough by any means to have a few "specialists" attending to this function while the others occupy the cheering section in the grandstand. Nothing is more absurd and futile than such a party. Auxiliary organizations can and should be formed to enlist the support of sympathizers and fellow travelers. But the party of the proletariat, to my notion, should be conceived as an organization of activists with the bulk of its members—everyone eligible, in fact—rooted in the trade unions and other mass organizations of the workers. . . .

The purposeful activism of the educated socialists must be directed *primarily* into the trade unions precisely because they are the immediate connecting link with a broader circle of workers and therefore the most fruitful field of activity. When *the socialist idea is carried into the workers' mass organizations by the militant activists, and takes root there, a profound influence is exerted upon these organizations. They become aware of their class interests and their historic mission, and grow in militancy and solidarity and effectiveness in their struggle against the exploiters.*

At the same time, the party gains strength from the live mass contact, finds a constant corrective for tactical errors under the impact of the class struggle and steadily draws new proletarian recruits into its ranks. In the trade union struggle the party tests and corrects

itself in action. It hardens and grows up to the level of its historic task as the workers vanguard in the coming revolution. (Notebook of an Agitator, p. 106, our emphasis)

We assume from reading the above that Comrade Cannon also qualifies for Comrade Barnes' "miss the boat" group for a number of reasons, including the fact that Cannon uses such terms as "rooted in the trade unions" and sees the dialectical relationship between the party and the unions. Perhaps when Comrade Barnes explains his differences with Comrade Peng, he would also take up his differences with Comrade Cannon and their different conceptions with relationship to the party and the mass organizations of the workers.

THE PARTY AND ITS CLASS COMPOSITION

The fact that the large majority of our comrades have been recruited from the petty bourgeois social layers is a contradictory phenomenon. *The fact that we are recruiting almost entirely from what is scientifically called an alien class milieu is certainly not a positive thing.* It means we are not recruiting workers and in that sense is negative. It is positive in the sense that the party has been able to replenish its ranks, intervene in various important movements, and has been able to build and expand its press and propaganda facilities. The party has also been able to increase its geographical spread and penetrate into new areas.

We as individuals do not pick what social class we are to be born into, nor does the party require that its recruits come only from the working class. However, the history of the Marxist movement, including that of our own party, teaches us that the dangers of a petty bourgeois social composition will ultimately endanger the revolutionary program of the party. Trotsky warned that *unless there was a proletarianization process set up by the party, regardless of the devotion of the petty bourgeois comrades, the party could not help but degenerate.* Cannon likewise, in the beginning of *Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, warned that without the correct proletarian class composition, the revolutionary program of the party could become a "scrap of paper" overnight.

Considering the long period of isolation from the working class and the trade unions, and the implications of the NC draft resolution and Comrade Barnes' plenum report (especially with regard to social composition), it is without doubt that a "molecular process" of petty bourgeoisification is taking place in the party. If a halt is not brought to this process, quantity will change into quality. That is, if the party does not take conscious steps to guard against the weaknesses inherent in its present composition and to change that composition, the program, which does not exist outside of social reality, will be revised.

If the present party leadership believes that the lessons of the Shachtman fight (as spelled out by Trotsky and Cannon) are no longer applicable, it has a duty to inform the party of its position. It also must forthrightly define and clearly spell out why Trotsky and Cannon's writings on the question of class composition are now obsolete. If the leadership still holds to the traditional positions, why does it propose putting off to the indefinite future the proletarianization of the party and the

reorientation of the party to the trade unions and other areas of the working class?

This includes the intervention with our program into the Black liberation struggle. It is not enough to have the correct theory, it must be put into practice in the arena itself. Over the past period our role in both the trade unions and the Black movement has been only that of commentary by a few of the "specialists" that Cannon spoke about. In both arenas, the leadership seems to want a "good trade union movement" or a "good Black struggle" before involving itself in the process. But these movements will only become "good" by our going into them and fighting with our *Transitional Program* to build them. These masses will not come to us—we must go to them and win them to our program.

In bringing these problems to the party's attention we do not see ourselves as a group of "messianic saviors" with a bagful of instant recipes or panaceas. The party has the entire history, lessons, and traditions of the Marxist movement to rely on in this situation. It will be with the correct application of these lessons that the party will survive the present threat to its historic destiny, hold onto the many positive gains of the past period, and provide the leadership of the coming American revolution.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

The opening sentence of the *Transitional Program* is as true today as when it was written:

The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of leadership of the proletariat. (p. 4)

It further states:

The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only "ripened" they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e. chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership. (p. 5)

There in a few sentences is the *who* and the *why* for the party that aims to be the vanguard leadership of the American revolution. The *Transitional Program* also provides the *how*. The *where* should be obvious to all but dullards and philistines. We live in the most industrialized country in the world. We have key industries: steel, auto, transport, electrical, aerospace, communications, etc. Any reader of the *New York Times* or *Fortune Magazine* knows this. There are also key mass workers organizations: United Steel Workers, United Auto Workers, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, United Railroad Workers, Communications Workers of America, etc. In addition, there are supplementary arenas in every urban center in the United States where masses of working people are as yet unorganized but have the main prerequisites for such organization, not only as proletarians but as distinct oppressed nationalities. Besides the oppressed nationalities and the organized working class, there are other important mass groups having distinct recognition and social roles in their own right: women, but in par-

ticular working class women; GI's, but in particular the draftee citizen soldiers. These groups are by and large proletarian in composition. So much for the *where*.

It is to these, first of all, that we must turn with our revolutionary program. This means we must enter these arenas of struggle to politicalize and provide leadership for the building of the American revolution. They will not come to us—we must go to them. *Therefore, the party must decide to reorient itself to the proletariat.*

In carrying out this decision, we first need an education (for many it will be a re-education) around the question of a proletarian orientation. If our basic orientation is to be the working class, as it should be, this must be understood and applied by all comrades whether in trade unions, nationalist organizations, the women's liberation movement, the antiwar movement, high schools, campuses or the GI movement. Recruits to our party should understand that they are joining a party that aims to be the *proletarian vanguard*. We must have no professional trade unionists, professional nationalists, professional women's liberationists, professional students, etc. We must have professional working class revolutionaries who work in various fields to the same end—the building and completion of the social revolution. If our basic orientation is proletarian then all other work is supplementary and auxiliary to that end.

The party has a small number of comrades within various trade unions. Most of them play no role due to the lack of direction from the national and branch leaderships. There are of course exceptions, but that is what they are—exceptions. We don't want trade union members (or for that matter students) functioning as "free agents." The party must set up the machinery, which would include trade union fractions, to direct this work from the national center in consultation with the local area. This is ABC.

In addition, the party has a large number of members who are neither on campus nor have any serious perspective of returning to the campus, and there are comrades steadily graduating or leaving school for other reasons. Utilizing primarily these comrades, the national leadership, in consultation with the branch leaderships, should begin the conscious penetration of the working class by the party. This must be done in a systematic and organized manner. Specific areas into which comrades are colonized will depend on local considerations and any national campaigns we undertake. In addition, of course, sales and distributions, campaign activities, and our general propaganda must be *consciously* geared to the working class as much as possible.

We do not have a deadline for the completion of this turn; to ask for a deadline or percentages would be mechanical and unserious. Nor do we have a blueprint. *The line for a proletarian orientation must first be accepted by the party.* As we said in "For a Proletarian Orientation":

It takes a fighting organization to make a revolution, and the place to build it is *inside, not outside*, the broad labor movement. That means, primarily the trade unions. . . . We will not get down to business until we devote nine-tenths of our time and attention to trade union work. (*Notebook of an Agitator*, p. 106, our emphasis)

Though Cannon's statement was made in 1936, during

our entry into the Socialist Party, it retains its full meaning and weight today, some thirty-five years later. This is particularly true when it is compared to the anti-historical and anti-theoretical statements of the real "Johnny-come-lately's" of the 1960's and 1970's, who would either ignore the fact that there is a mass workers' movement or assign it less than secondary consideration.

The effect of our entry into the Socialist Party, with a proletarian orientation on our part, was detailed by George Novack in 1969:

The balance sheet of entry showed the following positive results. (1) We had won over the majority of the Socialist youth and those workers really interested in making a socialist revolution, more than doubling our numbers. (2) Our forces accumulated valuable political experience, (3) *The entry aided our penetration of the auto, maritime, and other unions so that the proletarian orientation, which remained a constant concern of our movement, was enhanced.* (4) By expelling its left wing, the SP finally cut itself off from the radicalized youth and union militants, dealing itself crippling blows from which it never recovered. (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 27, #11, p. 6 our emphasis)

We see here that the party in 1936-37 did not see a specific tactical orientation—the entry into the SP—as mutually exclusive from a conscious orientation to the trade unions. The two were *completely complementary*. Also, since it is a fact that the majority of the Socialist youth who left the SP with us also left the SWP two years later with Shachtman-Burnham and Abern, the fact that they are listed first in the positive results of the entry is more a product of the pressures of the 1960's on the historian. The key point here and the most important thing (then as a fact, now as a lesson) is number three:

The entry aided our penetration of the auto, maritime, and other unions so that the proletarian orientation, which remained a constant concern of our movement, was enhanced. (our emphasis)

Our movement was relatively small, harassed by the huge Stalinist movement of that day, and yet "the proletarian orientation . . . remained a constant concern." It remained a constant concern throughout the 1940's and into the 1950's. The party defeated attacks on it from both the petty bourgeois opposition of Shachtman and the petty bourgeoisified trade unionism of Cochran. Yet today, the proletarian orientation is not only not of *constant concern*, it is at best of *remote concern*, and if there is not a halt called it will be of *no concern!* It is time to return to our party's class before that happens.

One final point of clarification. Our understanding of a proletarian orientation is that direct work in the working class comes first, and all other activities are carried out in relation to the working class; this does not mean that the party must limit its work directly within the working class. It does not mean that at all times the *majority* of the party's members must be in the workers' organizations. At this time, for example, it would be artificial and incorrect to simply yank the majority of our comrades from where they are and send them into the trade unions. A proletarian orientation *does mean* that the party carries on its work with the view toward rooting itself and having the overwhelming majority of its members in the

workers' organizations.

The question is *how* the party intervenes in other class milieus—not *whether* it intervenes. The simple fact of the matter is that the more proletarian our party becomes, the more able it will be to intervene in other class milieus, just as the more politically conscious the proletariat becomes the more effect it will have in solving not only its own problems but those of the middle class as well. A Leninist party is revolutionary in action, overwhelmingly proletarian in composition, and socialist in program. Anyone who could disagree with this is, to paraphrase Trotsky, a member due to a misunderstanding. The major question for the party today is to return to a proletarian orientation.

INTO THE WORKING CLASS

Since there has been evidence in the pre-convention discussion already held that there are severe misunderstandings as to what a proletarian orientation would be, we will briefly try to show what it would mean in relationship to certain specific areas of work: Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican liberation; women's liberation; gay liberation; the antiwar movement; GI movement; the student radicalization—campus and high school work.

Some of the conceptions of comrades are, indeed, strange. They envision a proletarian orientation as having nothing to do with the above fields, as if the majority of Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and Chicanos were something other than proletarian; as if the most important sector of women were not proletarian; as if it was not from the working class that the capitalist state dragoons its human cannon fodder; as if the working class were unconcerned and could not be mobilized on political questions such as the war; as if the liberation of humankind from all the economic, social, and cultural fetters of bourgeois society is not intimately related to the socialist revolution and thereby of concern to the vanguard party. Would these comrades have us believe that members of the working class live in a storm cellar unaware of the social reality around them and affecting their lives? The combination of lack of party concern for work among the proletarian sectors of society and the rationalizations of this lack of concern (as found in Comrade Barnes' plenum talk) is reinforcing the prejudices of these petty bourgeois youth toward the working class. It should be the party's role to take the student youth that come to it and give them a working class consciousness. This cannot be done by telling them that we don't have to be concerned with penetrating the working class until we are a mass party or have a massive cadre at our disposal or by convincing them that any attempt to carry out a proletarian orientation will end in failure.

The failure perspective laid out by Comrade Barnes is based on the work of our opponents. Would Comrade Barnes base his concept of whether or not to do student work on our opponents' successes or failures in that field? Since their successes on campus have been no better than their successes among workers, should we reconsider work among the students? Comrade Barnes would be approaching the problem more correctly if he tried to explain what a correct proletarian orientation is (there is ample material in the experience of our party to help him in this task) than to inveigh against a proletarian orientation of any type, using the experiences of RYM II, SP, IS, Wohlforth, etc., to drive home his point.

We agree with Comrade Barnes that the schemes of our opponents are "some phony industrial concentration" schemes. But this does not mean that industrial concentration itself is "phony." We would also like to point out that Comrade Livio Maitan would be against "some phony strategy of armed struggle and guerilla warfare"; Comrade Joe Hansen would be against "some phony Leninist strategy for party building." We are against a "phony proletarian orientation" and we are *in particular against phony rationalizations for abstaining from work among the proletariat.*

In addition to labeling any proletarian orientation as "phony," the leadership implies that the working class will either be absorbed into the party from the already existing movements or that the working class, when it radicalizes, will "look for" a leadership and will see what we have accomplished in the student movement, women's liberation movement, etc., and will join us. As we have already stated, we assume that the working class has been affected by the various social movements already in existence. But the question is not whether or not the workers will be affected by the radicalization. They will be. The question is whether or not the workers will become Bolsheviks by watching the radicalization.

We say that the workers must have Bolshevik politics brought to them. The NC resolution, however, as pointed out by Comrade Lauren Charous, advances the theory that since 22% of the work force is under 24 years of age, we will win the youth; since 28% of those between 25 and 34 years of age have been to college, we will win the college group; 40% of the work force are women and 11% are non-white, and we will win both of these groups. The implication is that we will win the working class by winning or absorbing them through other social movements. "These bare statistics alone," says the NC resolution, "indicate the potential these movements have in attracting and influencing the body of American workers." (p. 10)

Besides overlooking the fact that we do not have any major recruitment from Black, Chicano, or Puerto Rican workers, women workers, workers under 24 years of age or workers over 24 years of age, this theory is wrong; it is wrong because it implies that the vanguard party does not have to go into the working class. Equally wrong is the "look for" theory. This theory projects the idea that sooner or later the workers will begin to "look for" a party. They will cast an eye on the reality around them and they will spot the SWP leading other movements. Immediately the workers will join us, sensing that a party that can lead other movements is the party for them. However, as Trotsky said, *it is not enough to show the workers a "new address"—one must go to where the workers are and lead them.*

A basic lesson of Leninism is that the party must go *into* the working class (not nearby, tangential to, adjacent to, close to, or any other position that misses the mark). In order for the SWP to win the working class, these revised theories, the absorption theory and the "look for" theory, must be rejected and the proletarian orientation must once again be accepted as the correct orientation for the party.

THE STRUGGLES FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

The struggles for Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican self-determination are a prime arena for the implementa-

tion of a proletarian orientation. *In fact, it is our opinion that without a proletarian orientation it is impossible to do effective work in these areas.* In April of 1939 Trotsky stated:

The old organizations beginning with the AFL are the organizations of the workers aristocracy. *Our party is a part of the same milieu, not of the basic exploited masses of whom Negroes are the most exploited.* The fact that our party until now has not turned to the Negro question is a very disquieting symptom. If the workers' aristocracy is the basis of opportunism, one of the sources of adaptation to capitalist society, then *the most oppressed and discriminated are the most dynamic milieu of the working class.*

We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic developments to become a vanguard of the working class. What serves as the brake on the higher strata? It is the privileges, the comforts that hinder them from becoming revolutionists. It does not exist for the Negroes. What can transform a certain stratum, make it *more capable of courage and sacrifice?* *It is concentrated in the Negroes.* *If it happens that we in the SWP are not able to find the road to this stratum, then we are not worthy at all.* *The permanent revolution and all the rest would be only a lie.*

In the States now we have various contests. Competition to see who will sell the most papers, and so on. That is very good. *But we must also establish a more serious competition—the recruiting of workers and especially of Negro workers.* (Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination, p. 43 our emphasis)

What was true in 1939 is even more true today. The role of the Black masses is even more crucial. The concentration of Black and Brown workers in key industries, their strategic location in the urban centers, their heightened nationalist consciousness, make these workers potentially the most explosive sector of the working class. Overwhelmingly working class in composition, the Black as well as Chicano and Puerto Rican masses have all the qualities necessary for both the struggle for socialism and the party necessary to lead that struggle—strength, resolution, audacity, passion, and ruthlessness.

For us, the writers of this document, reaching and winning the Black and Brown working masses to our party is the decisive question of the coming socialist revolution. Our basic weapons are our Leninist understanding of the revolutionary implications of the nationalism of the oppressed and our socialist program. These are expressed not only in the *Transitional Program* but also in the "Transitional Program for Black Liberation." These are not historic documents but programs for action. They point the road for the vanguard role of the struggles for national liberation in the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. While our Black and Brown comrades occupy the major role in relating to these struggles, they demand the full support and participation of the entire party. It is crucial to these struggles that the party have a proletarian orientation; anything less would serve as a betrayal of our role in relationship to them.

When our sectarian and opportunist opponents charge that the nationalism of the oppressed is reactionary it

only shows how backward their own programs and understanding of Marxism-Leninism are. When they ask us if we wish to split the working class by our support to the national struggles of the oppressed, our answer is that we wish to *unite* the working class on *support of the unconditional right of Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, and all oppressed nationalities to self-determination*. Trotsky, when he was asked about the implementation of a campaign in some industry in behalf of the rights of Blacks, stated:

That is important. It will bring conflict with some white workers who will not want it. It is a shift from the most aristocratic workers' elements to the lowest elements. We attracted to ourselves some of the higher strata of the intellectuals when they felt that we needed protection: Dewey, LaFollete, etc. *Now that we are undertaking serious work, they are leaving us. I believe that we will lose two or three more strata and go more deeply into the masses. This will be the touchstone. (Leon Trotsky on Black Nationalism and Self-Determination, p. 46 our emphasis)*

Earlier he had stated:

The Negroes are not yet awakened and they are not yet united with the white workers. 99.9 percent of the American workers are chauvinists, in relation to the Negroes they are hangmen and they are so also towards the Chinese. It is necessary to teach the American beasts. It is necessary to make them understand that the American state is not their state and that they do not have to be the guardians of this state. Those American workers who say: "The Negroes should separate when they so desire and we will defend them against our American police"—those are revolutionists, I have confidence in them. (p. 17)

We want to draw those workers to us who can understand that the struggle for self-determination is in their interests and who will fight for it. We wish to split the white working class from its indoctrination in the bourgeois ideology of racism perpetrated by the bosses and bureaucrats in the same sense that we wish to split the male workers from the ideology of male chauvinism.

We must relate the party's activities directly to the struggles of the Black and Brown workers inside and outside the framework of organized labor. The traditions of our movement with relation to the working class, and the experience and lessons encompassed in those traditions, are not our private property—they belong to the working class and to "the most dynamic milieu of the working class." The emerging Black and Brown caucuses deserve more than just our literary support. The struggle for jobs on the part of these workers has revolutionary implications. Not only does it raise the demand for the sliding scale of hours and wages and the 30 hour week at 40 hours pay, but it also gives a material way to confront the racism of the white workers. How many of these workers prize their racism enough to keep it at the price of ten hours additional work a week? Not only would this provide an important gain for the Black and Brown workers, women and men, but for women workers in general and the working class as a whole.

The Black and Brown working class suffer the most from the growing unemployment. It is our job to intervene

in this combustible atmosphere to provide organization and leadership. These are issues that the Brown and Black communities can relate to and struggle around. In addition, of course, successful Black and Raza Unida parties *must* be based on Black and Chicano workers. The lessons will not go unnoticed by the white working class, either. Can anyone think that the Black and Brown masses are not radicalized?—do we have to wait till we have a massive cadre before we can attempt to provide leadership for their struggles? Do we have to wait until they "look for" us or can we "look for" them? The crying weakness of the Black liberation movement is that it is *devoid of political leadership and direction*. Our job is to inject that political direction into the nationalist movement. We must go to the masses, not wait for them to come to us.

A determined effort must be made to relate our student work toward the community colleges and junior colleges as well as the high schools and vocational schools. It is there that we will be able to relate to those sectors of the student movement who most clearly reflect the needs of the mass struggle for self-determination.

If we are serious about our program for self-determination and in winning recruits to our party, and if we seek to provide alternatives to both the petty bourgeois ultra-lefts and reformists in the Black and Brown movement, we must have a consistent program of intervention into the struggles of Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican communities. This is an integral part of a proletarian orientation and will aid us in *our top priority of recruitment of cadre*. Recruitment from these communities is primary if we are to change the class composition of the party and give it the stability to carry through its historic role.

While work in the plants offers us the best opportunity to allow our Black, Brown, and white cadre to be able to relate to the Black and Brown workers and their struggles, the entire party must be mobilized to push forward our program in all phases of these struggles. The words of the document "The SWP and Negro Work" are no less true today in relation to the national struggles for self-determination than they were in 1939:

The American Negroes, for centuries the most oppressed section of American society and the most discriminated against, are potentially the most revolutionary element of the population. They are designated by their whole historical past to be, under adequate leadership, *the very vanguard* of the proletarian revolution. The neglect of Negro work and of the Negro question by the party is therefore a very disquieting sign. The SWP must recognize that its attitude to the Negro question is crucial for its future development.

Hitherto the party has been based mainly on privileged workers and groups of isolated intellectuals. *Unless it can find its way to the great masses of the underprivileged, of whom the Negroes constitute so important a section, the broad perspectives of the permanent revolution will remain only a fiction and the party is bound to degenerate.* ("The SWP and Negro Work," July, 1939, p. 49 our emphasis)

If the party does not take the words of this 1939 resolution seriously and "find its way to the great masses of the underprivileged, of whom the Negroes are so important a section," we will lose our right to lead the American revolution and the working masses will look elsewhere for

their leadership. *This is the concrete reality of a full proletarian orientation.*

THE STRUGGLE FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION

It is not accidental that the present movement against the oppression of women grew up first among the students, professionals, and more materially privileged women—the first to sense and the freest to act against these contradictions. However, this movement has the potential to reach far beyond these layers and involve the large sector of working class women. While the struggle for women's liberation affects university women, and should receive the full support of our comrades working in that arena of society, neither the university nor those who attend it exist outside of the reality of class society. We should take the party's revolutionary socialist program into the women's liberation movement but at the same time we should direct that struggle toward the working class—and educate and build support for it there as part of the overall struggle against capitalist society. It is among the working women that socialist ideas will find their strongest defenders and the party will be provided with its leaders not only for the liberation of women but of humankind.

The party and its cadres must conduct an unremitting struggle against any adaptation on the part of the movement or ourselves to alien class propaganda or theories. It is important that we adopt an approach with the utmost clarity.

First it must be emphasized that the class divisions between women transcend their sex identity, especially in the epoch of the death agony of capitalism. Confusion on this score can only lead the party into a morass. Our ultimate objective must be to align the working class women and men and their allies in opposition to the men and women of the ruling class. We must educate the movement that there can be no lasting alliance between bourgeois women who want more freedom within class society and the working class women whose needs can only be fulfilled with the complete abolition of capitalism.

The demands for Free Abortion on Demand—No Forced Sterilization, Free 24-Hour Child Care Centers, Equal Opportunity and Equal Pay for Equal Work, with jobs for all and the sliding scale of hours and wages, equip us to relate to the needs and aspirations of the working class women, and in particular the most oppressed.

Free Abortion on Demand—No Forced Sterilization must be the party's demand within the struggle against all of the existing anti-abortion laws. We recognize women as the sole decision-makers as to whether they will bear children or not. Integral to this demand is the part which says No Forced Sterilization, for it attacks the barbarism and genocide committed against working people and in particular against the oppressed nationalities. This demand calling for Free Abortion on Demand—No Forced Sterilization is the one that can draw around it the most women because it is the only demand that meets the needs of most women. It is, more importantly, the most correct political demand because it is the only demand that places the responsibility for providing *all* women with the right to abortion squarely on the capitalist government. The sector of women that we should be most concerned with—working class women—have no problem relating to this demand in contrast to Repeal All Abortion Laws, which still forces them to pay for what is their human right.

If this is true of the working class in general, it is doubly true for Black, Chicana, and Puerto Rican women. It is also a more correct demand in relation to student youth, who would still be largely dependent on their parents for financial aid and therefore denied the right of choice.

While it would not be unprincipled for the party to work in coalitions that call for less than Free Abortion on Demand—No Forced Sterilization, we should fight to win the coalitions to the position that is the most meaningful in relation to the working class.

We see participation in single-demand abortion coalitions as a tactical question. That is, it should not be a substitute for propagandizing and building actions around our three major demands. We must intervene in and build the women's liberation movement around the three basic demands of August 26. Any elimination of the struggles for equal pay for equal work, equal opportunity, and free 24-hour child care centers would be a severe blow to the building of a mass movement for women's liberation. We see all three of the major demands as relevant to the working class and as demands that could raise the political consciousness of all women and bring them into action. Keeping two of them on the shelf, so to speak, would not only reflect an unserious attitude toward the building of a mass women's liberation movement, but would be politically wrong with relation to the mobilization and education of working class women.

If the party does not struggle for Free Abortion on Demand—No Forced Sterilization, if the party eliminates the other two demands from the mass actions it builds, and thus creates a single-demand women's liberation movement around Repeal All Abortion Laws, *it would be an accommodation to pressures and interests of classes outside the working class.* For those who say we are being unreasonable, we reply, "Unreasonable to whom?" *Certainly not to the masses of working women and in particular to those Black, Chicana, and Puerto Rican women who are the most oppressed sector of women.* The willingness of the party leadership to accommodate to pressures that can only come from an alien class illustrate the logic of a petty bourgeois orientation, not a proletarian one. This, comrades, is the time to be unreasonable!

The struggle to break down the structural atomization of women is being accelerated by the inner contradictions of the capitalist economy. More working class women are leaving the home for the workplace to offset the impact of the rising inflation. Increasingly more women are forced to work by being the sole support of their families. We must do everything possible to link up the struggle for free 24-hour child care centers, controlled by those who use them, to the deepening process of the incorporation of women on a mass basis into the work force. Where we have comrades in unions we should raise this demand as an issue for struggle (as opposed to an educational one on how the state can take care of children better than the sterile and barbaric home, as suggested by Comrade Feeley) so as to give immediate relief to the working women and those who wish to get out of the prison-like confinement of the home, if only for a few hours or days. Women such as those in the Communication Workers of America in New York are demanding free 24-hour child care centers to provide care for their children while they are at work. We assume that we can, in principle, support such a demand, even if these women don't yet think that the state can provide better care for the children

than the backward home can.

The child care centers financed by the state or the corporations, and run by the unions under the supervision of the women and men who use them, is a concept we should advance among male workers as well as women workers. The demand for free 24-hour child care centers and equal opportunity and equal pay immediately lead to the demand for jobs for all and the sliding scale of hours and wages necessary to achieve this. This natural progression of demands reveals the immense potential that a proletarian oriented women's movement can have in mobilizing the large layers of the working class, women and men.

The party should intervene in the already existing women's caucuses in the trade unions, as well as participate in initiating them in unions where they do not exist. The central focus of our demands in the trade union movement should be our three major demands of Free Abortion on Demand—No Forced Sterilization, Equal Opportunity, Training, and Education and Equal Pay, Free 24-hour Community Controlled Child Care Centers.

The fight to open up jobs for women in industry is a key area in breaking the barriers that keep women in largely marginal roles. The struggle against unemployment is related to the struggles for Equal Pay and Equal Opportunity and the sliding scale of hours and wages. Before there can be equal pay, there must be equal work, and the 30 hour week at 40 hours pay is the only way to provide that work. The women workers play a vanguard role in relation to the fight for the shorter work week.

The entry of women into the major areas of the working class will give tremendous additional power to the movement for full liberation and will strengthen the class as a whole. No field, particularly the vital occupations in industry, should be overlooked in the fight to break down the job discrimination barriers. It is in the interests of the working class that male workers be split away from the male chauvinist ideology of the ruling class.

In our high school and campus work we should fight for not only courses that will equip women with the necessary understanding of their past history, but courses that will prepare women to be able to enter the work force in a meaningful capacity, not just a peripheral manner. While the student sector of the women's liberation struggle should fight for demands related to its place in society, it should provide support to the struggles (which it has by developing the struggle to date) being carried out in the working class.

Male comrades, whether in unions, the national struggles or the student arena, must raise these demands of the women's liberation movement and build support for them. This of course is not meant to deny the primacy of leadership of the women in leading their own struggle, but as an important adjunct to the independent women's movement.

Another of our tasks is to direct the women's liberation movement away from the petty bourgeois introversion that inevitably affects every movement that lacks a working class perspective. The complete preoccupation with personal psychological oppression blocks the development of revolutionary consciousness that springs from the awareness of general economic and social oppression—and the manner in which this oppression can be done away with.

The illusion that personal oppression can be eliminated on a mass scale short of a revolutionary overturn of the system that generates oppression, and attempts to find individualistic panaceas within the bounds of class society, should not be encouraged. Only the assumption of state power by the revolutionary government of the working class can provide the means to solve the oppression of women, whether it be social, economic, political, or cultural oppression. The acceptance of the responsibility for solving these social problems by the women's movement when it organizes self-run day care centers, for example, is self-deceiving and a diversion of valuable individuals. The Panthers' "Serve the People" programs are vivid examples of the seriousness of this mistake.

By directing our movement toward the working class and the needs of the working class women, we will attract to our movement the most fierce and determined fighters both for the struggle for the complete emancipation of women and the socialist revolution necessary to accomplish that fact. It is out of the working class, and in particular the most oppressed sectors of that class, that the party will draw these revolutionary leaders.

The many gains of the bourgeois feminist movement were an essential prerequisite for the state of the struggle today, but that movement has run its course. The liberation of women today can only come about through the class struggle and the victory of the socialist revolution, of which we consider the struggle for women's liberation to be a major component part. Only with the victorious socialist revolution will the possibilities of the full integration, on a completely equal footing, of women into the forces of production and all other aspects of society become reality. With the socialist revolution, the stage for the socialization of child-rearing and the death knell of the patriarchal nuclear family with all of its vices will be set. If this goal is to be more than a hope, the struggle must be waged now among those who have the power and the interests to struggle for its completion—that is the most oppressed sector of society, the working class.

GAY LIBERATION

We should not allow the party or the women's liberation movement, at its present embryonic stage, to become bogged down in a peripheral part of that movement, and to transform that peripheral part into a major part or the major aspect of the entire movement. We see dangers of this occurring with the gay component of the movement.

Even within the confines of the student milieu, the gay women's movement is not a major factor with either the problems facing women today or with mobilizing forces for the solution of these problems. Still less does it relate directly to the needs of the vast multitude of working women. It is our opinion that most working class women see the gay women's movement as extraneous and unrelated to them and their problems. We agree. True, we should fight against any exclusion of gay women from the women's movement and we cannot make any accommodation to "lesbian baiting," but this does not mean that we fight to make the gay component of the movement a major focus of the movement or of our work.

While we as Marxists take no position as to the preferability of being heterosexual, homosexual, or bi-sexual, other than to defend that right of personal choice in op-

position to the state's interference, we do not see in any of these the solution to the oppressive nature of capitalist society. The removal of that oppression requires political and social actions, not personal ones.

With the gay liberation movement in general, both the male and female sections, we once more come to a question that demands clarity—the one thing that the party leadership has failed to give.

Let us first state that we support the removal of the restrictions on party membership to homosexuals. Our criteria for membership should be one that allows the participation of all who know and agree with our program and wish to build the party as the political vanguard of the working class for the socialist revolution.

As revolutionaries we fight all attacks on individual freedom in any area of society. However, we do take into account a number of factors when determining our priorities and the expenditure of our cadres: the social forces involved; their importance in relationship to the mobilization of the working class; the relation to other struggles; the composition of a particular movement; the demands that are raised; the social weight of a developing movement; the relationship of the movement to the means of production, etc. These are the things that must be evaluated *first*, before any decision to actively intervene or lead a movement.

With relationship to the gay liberation movement, our party has been completely lax in providing any analysis of the dynamics of the movement. Our entry into it was in the most confused manner. It seems that we are entering it to find out what it is all about, yet our press, public speakers, women's liberation work and antiwar work treat it as a major priority! Our adaptation to this movement and the manner in which it has been done is an *effect*, not the cause, of a problem in our present orientation. Of course, in addition to supporting any fight against attacks on individual freedom by the capitalist state, we also support the struggle against the repression of sexual freedom as well as the fight against the psychology that buttresses those laws, customs, and traditions; but we should not, however, declare *a priori* that such movements are therefore "mass" revolutionary movements, as the party has apparently done in regard to gay liberation.

The gay liberation movement is a relatively small movement with minimal social force and, as a movement, totally relegated to the petty bourgeois sector of society. We do not know how many workers or the percentage of the population that is homosexual, although we have heard various party spokespersons, with all the evidence that convinced Chicken Little that the sky was falling, estimate that 30% of the population is homosexual. Regardless, we should still give the gay liberation movement our support—but *it should not be equated with the Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican struggles, the women's liberation movement, and it should certainly not be given a higher priority than trade union work or the GI movement*. We cannot act toward intervention in this movement as if we had a mass cadre at our disposal. Our cadre should first be allocated toward intervening in the Black, Chicano, and Puerto Rican liberation movements, women's liberation, the antiwar movement, the student movement, *and most importantly*, and integrally connected with these other movements, *the trade unions*.

THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

This key arena of activity was substantially covered in our original document, so we will only elaborate on a few major points.

The struggle against the U.S. war on Southeast Asia is the focal point of the international class struggle. Defense of the Vietnamese revolution is the highest expression of proletarian internationalism. A proletarian orientation could only deepen and strengthen the mass movement against the war. *In fact, the most important work to be done in the antiwar movement is to be done inside the working class.*

Special attention *must* be given to the GI antiwar movement. Since the successful events of the Fort Jackson case, the party leadership's attention to and political appreciation for this movement has been diminishing. In many areas of the country our comrades have in the past carried out very successful work in orienting the antiwar movement to the GIs. This in turn provided significant help in bringing in masses of civilians to active participation in demonstrations against the war.

There are numerous indications that the objective situation and the subjective attitudes of the GIs make this a major field for political work. We have seen the development of the national struggle inside the armed services, particularly in West Germany, but in Vietnam and the U.S. as well. The letter of support for the April 24 demonstration, reprinted in *The Militant*, is an indication of the increasing potential the GI arena has.

Most of the youth drafted into the armed services come from the working class, and a very high proportion come from the most oppressed sectors of the working class. We see this as an important part of a proletarian orientation and feel that it should receive more attention at this time than even prior to the Fort Jackson events. There is a need for a thorough balance sheet and perspective drawn if we are to take advantage of the many new opportunities in this arena.

The work in relationship to GIs can only strengthen our work in the areas of the Student Mobilization Committee and the National Peace Action Coalition.

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

Our work in the student movement should and must continue. The radicalization of students is obviously important. Our participation in the student movement has paid off richly, especially in attracting large numbers to our program and in building the movement against the imperialist war in Vietnam. Given a thorough education in a proletarian orientation, many of these youth cadre will become a source of material for carrying out our tasks of intervening into the working class in a direct manner.

Although campus struggles and upsurges like the May 1970 events in response to the invasion of Cambodia are major factors in the developing radicalization, we must divest ourselves of any illusions that the student movement will replace the working class as the vanguard of the socialist revolution. Likewise, the mechanical assumption that the student movement *will necessarily be* the "detonator" of the working class, or of a social upheaval

that will bring the class into motion, must also be eliminated. Illusions reflected in such statements as "May 1970 is the 1905 of the student movement" and "New York is the Petrograd of the Revolution," made by party comrades, constitute political romanticism of a dangerous variety.

The students, like all middle layers of society, are deeply affected by what is occurring in the stronger sectors of society, and the party which leads the struggles of the oppressed working masses will have a tremendous influence upon the campuses. So while we *must* continue

playing a leadership role in campus movements, these tasks can in no way be seen as a substitute for our entry into the working class arena to fight there for our complete political program. Our work on campus should be supportive to the struggles of the proletariat both internationally and nationally. One of these struggles, and in our opinion the most important, is the struggle for the building of a proletarian party—proletarian both in program and in composition.

June 25, 1971

AN OPEN LETTER TO LEE SMITH
by Hedda Garza, Lower Manhattan Branch,
New York Local

I have never been one to lightly turn down a challenge or dare, but in the case of your contribution—"What Means This Words and Deeds?"—I will not do what you request and name names. There is, of course, a severe temptation to rise to the bait. When you say, "I suspect that these references are left vague and anonymous as a convenience. I suspect that each of them is a distortion, and specific references would place Comrade Garza in an uncomfortable position because the concrete details of these examples fully and openly stated would not support the argument she attempted to make. I challenge Comrade Garza to support her charge that there is a vast divergence between party policy and party practice in either the women's liberation movement or the gay liberation probe by providing the specifics of the incidents she lists in her article," I am of course tempted to do just that. In that case, I would then challenge you to fight at my side against this contradiction between words and deeds.

What you are saying, obviously, is that I am a liar, no ifs, ands or buts; that I have made up stories out of whole cloth and not named the comrades involved because they were fabricated characters.

Well, I will *not* name names. In the case of Ruth Ann Miller, I named her because her speech was part of an educational conference, available on tape. You had a specific there, but you dismissed it as inconsequential evidence. In the case of off-the-record conversations, I would be perfectly willing to substantiate the stories with names to any committee of the party—the gay liberation fraction, executive committees, etc. However, I do not feel it is correct to pin labels of errors on young comrades, who may, after all, change their minds at some future date. The whole point of my contribution is that the leadership should discuss these errors, also without naming names, so that the interpretation of the line can be corrected.

It would have been very easy, Comrade Smith, for you to approach me and ask me for substantiation of these stories. Since you suspect that I am anti-homosexual, perhaps I can then suspect that you dislike heterosexuals so much that you could not bring yourself to ask me these questions. I think it is more likely that you didn't because you are well aware of some of these incidents and did not care to have to comment on them. For example, you say that "it might be argued that the reference to 'kiting' in relation to the 'recent Albany abortion demonstration should be in the category of specific references.'" But what about kiting, comrade? How *do* you feel about that? Why does it happen?

Your answer to me came too late for transcripts of tapes, etc. But suppose the full transcript of Ruth Ann Miller's remarks were set down on paper, and fully substantiated my charge that man hatred has often been our line (as you know full well, this was the line of many of the comrades in the YSA during their preconvention discussion). Do you go along with this line? You say you don't, and you more or less accept my formulation on man hatred. Well, if you agree that man hatred is not our line, then why are you so upset that I wanted the leadership to address themselves to this question to clarify it in comrades' minds?

Your remarks on the April 24 gay contingent reflect

your own "prejudices against heterosexuals." Public *mass* promiscuity is not in our line anywhere. However, a mysterious "leading gay comrade" says it is correct and right and good for gay people to show off in this fashion. This same comrade has publicly and loudly stated that the purpose of the "probe" is to hammer out a line. He says that the party has *already decided* to intervene in the gay liberation movement. In my opinion, since he has been assigned to a leading position in the probe, this violates the letter of the PC directive, and I have communicated this to them. Do you want his name? Ask me for it, Comrade Lee, if you don't already know it. The matter has already been raised in the Lower Manhattan executive committee and on the branch floor.

The charge of "anti-homosexual" prejudice against me is a close cousin to red-baiting. I have definite prejudices against distortions of the party line, against our conforming to reformist pressures in the mass movements. I have definite opinions that the leadership of our day-to-day work should comment on these dangers. How I feel about individual homosexual or heterosexual comrades is not at all relevant. In fact, since the party has no "line" on homosexuality per se, and since scientists cannot agree either, it really doesn't matter much what my subjective opinion of homosexuality is or where I think research on the subject might lead. I don't think it's important whether I am more offended by sex circuses by homosexuals or heterosexuals. What is important is that the party should be sensitive to offending others. On the one hand you say that we could not interfere in this matter within the framework of the probe. But the "mysterious gay comrade" says that we are already in the movement, and he thinks exhibitionism is great. My fear is that our "line" may become that of that comrade: that these displays are good and should happen.

You are guilty of the same charges you make against me—unsubstantiating your conclusions. You claim that the Long Island YSA comrade who spoke on the question of the family was making an un-Marxist analysis. I say, on the other hand, that she was saying exactly what I say in my document, the line you almost agree with, and exactly what the PC resolution on women's liberation says—namely, that we should not simply call for "abolition of the nuclear family." Incidentally, I never said comrades called these YSAers Stalinists or Wohlforthites from the floor. Unfortunately, they are subtler than that.

Why didn't you transcribe from the tape exactly what the comrade said? Is it because you would have lost your own argument? If comrades have been using the right line, then why does the PC resolution on women's liberation specifically correct this slogan, calling it ultraleft? I'm very glad they did, but they weren't correcting a mistake that was never made, after all. I wish they would do the same thing with a number of other mistakes.

Once again, Comrade Smith, ask me who, and ask me what I think. Ask me how I feel about homosexuality, if you must. Personally, I'll be glad to expound on my theories and opinions. But then I must challenge you, if I can name the names and substantiate the events, to move swiftly to support me in this matter.

June 30, 1971

ON THE HIGH SCHOOLS AND TRADE SCHOOLS

Glenn Jenkins, At-large, Kenosha, Wisconsin

These two areas of youth work, the high schools and trade schools, are given too low of a priority at this time. In the former, work is episodic and seen as strictly secondary to work on the college campuses. The latter has rarely even been mentioned.

At present, the membership of the YSA stands around 1500. It is clear that the YSA is as far from being a mass revolutionary youth group as it was at its 1969 convention. Clearly, it is not that revolutionary minded young people are scarce, or that the radicalization, as exemplified by the developing mass movements, is declining. Rather, the problem may lie in the inherent limitations of the sector of youth we attempt to reach with our program at this time.

Growth of the party is dependent to a large degree on recruitment from the YSA. A stagnant YSA impairs the steady flow of cadre to the party. In addition, the sectors from which the YSA recruits has an effect on the class composition of the party.

It is for these reasons that the party must initiate a discussion on the youth in addition to the one on its own orientation. This contribution is only an outline and will need expansion as the discussion develops, especially from those comrades with experience in the high schools and trade schools.

Anti-war

The spectre of the draft looms over the high schools. It is they who face military service within a year of graduation. The lottery system, which makes a person draftable only between 18 and 20, increases the immediacy of the predicament. The elimination of student and most occupational deferments leaves no havens. High school students have the most to gain by demanding that U. S. imperialism withdraw *now* from Southeast Asia, and the least inclination to see the war as a "dead" issue. *They* could be dead within a year.

High school students are under immense pressure. Recruiters are permitted free reign to cajole and demagogically browbeat individuals into enlisting. Push-outs are frequently pushed into the military.

Two important developments are taking place. Despite the fact that they frequently cannot attend national conferences and national actions in large numbers, much of the necessary, day-to-day footwork to build actions is being done by high school activists. In addition, as articles in *The Militant* have pointed out, local actions are frequently composed largely of high school students.

An organized, expanded antiwar orientation to the high schools, in addition to geometrically increasing local antiwar expression, would have a profound effect on the imperialist army. A militant high school antiwar movement could provide hundreds of experienced activists yearly to the military. The ability of the imperialists to beat down the national liberation struggles would be severely curtailed. (I trust that such a projection does not collide head-on with our current policy of active discouragement of Trotskyist leadership of the G. I. movement; but that could be the topic of a full discussion itself.)

Women's Liberation

It is in the high schools and trade schools that a wom-

an's role as wage-earner, wife, and mother is finalized through the tracking system. For those who are pushed-out or fail to achieve academically is the counsel to marry. For those who graduate there is, besides or in addition to marriage, the low paying, dehumanizing, office or factory job, or further courses in office skills, home economics, nursing and so on in the trade schools, which delays their entry into the work force, but with the same ultimate results. Only a select minority go on to college.

High school and trade school aged women face the problems of the family, control over their bodies, and job and educational discrimination directly and all at once. It is our job to take to these women, who are the majority of young women, the Marxist view of the family, the transitional program for women's liberation, and an explanation of the class nature of capitalism.

Nationalism

Our inability to play a large role in the nationalist movements is not due to any deficiency in program. Our main problem is the lack of cadre to participate in the nationalist movements and provide leadership. Where are the vast majority of radicalizing Black and Spanish-speaking youth? They are in the military, in industry (I'm sure this point will be elaborated in further discussion), in the high schools, and tracked in the trade schools.

Recently, the government admitted that the most segregated schools in the country exist in the northern industrial centers. Every major city has completely Black and Spanish-speaking high schools, junior highs, and trade schools. Also, a larger proportion of the Black and Spanish-speaking population, than white, is within this age bracket.

Ghetto and barrio schools have proven to be a focus of the communities' anger, and determination to control their own destiny. Ocean Hill-Brownsville and Crystal City are two examples of just such a dynamic. In addition, there are the frequent blow-outs and prolonged political strikes and boycotts.

Relation to the Work Force

Trade schools train a person for a place directly at the point of production. No theory of a proletarianized intelligentsia is needed to explain this fact. The trade schools serve capitalism by providing skilled and semi-skilled workers needed for the machinery of capitalist production. There is no question in the schools' minds what its job is, and no pretensions on the part of the students.

The most striking feature of the trade schools is the composition of the student body. It includes large numbers of Third World youth tracked to manual skills, large numbers of vets (probably more than are in the colleges), young women seeking a career, older divorced or disillusioned women seeking independence, and older workers trying to improve their skills to keep from being turned out.

Most graduates immediately move to the point of production. I'm sure that a comparison of the percentages of those who enter the work force soon after graduation, between college and the trade schools, would show a

large gap in favor of the trade schools.

* * *

The YSA has been directing most of its agitation, and recruiting from a sector of youth that can at best be de-

scribed as declassed. The vast majority of youth are not included in the college sector. Students in the high schools and trade schools are headed for the work force in the main; and, most importantly, consist of those sectors of youth we should want to recruit to the YSA and ultimately the party—women, Third World people, and young workers.

June 28, 1971

ON OUR TASKS IN THE WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT

by Barbara Gregorich and Phil Passen, Cleveland Branch

The purpose of this contribution is to discuss the party's recent decision, as outlined in "Towards a Mass Feminist Movement," to make the building of coalitions based on the demand for repeal of abortion laws our central task in the women's liberation movement. We feel that this is an incorrect tactical decision for two reasons: (1) by concentrating its agitating and organizing around only the abortion demand instead of the three basic demands of August 26, the women's liberation movement will narrow its base and miss opportunities to reach the broadest layers of women, and (2) within the abortion movement itself the party has given in to the pressures of the reformist wing of the movement and dropped the fight for free abortion on demand—no forced sterilization.

We see the central task of the party in the women's liberation movement to be the conscious and constant attempt to educate and mobilize masses of women, especially working class women, around the three basic demands of JOBS FOR ALL—EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN JOBS, TRAINING, AND EDUCATION, AND EQUAL PAY; FREE 24-HOUR COMMUNITY CONTROLLED CHILD CARE CENTERS; and FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND—NO FORCED STERILIZATION. We must push for mass actions around these three central demands.

PC'S POSITION

The PC says that we will intervene in the women's liberation movement by building single-demand coalitions, one at a time. "Our central goal is to build broad coalitions based on agreement to struggle around specific issues, like abortion or child care. . . ." (*SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 29, No. 4, p. 12) For the PC, "It has become clear that at this time the abortion fight is the issue which is attracting the largest number of women and the greatest enthusiasm." (p. 17) From these two points, the document draws the following conclusion:

If women are going to continue to win victories in the struggle to gain control over their own bodies, much less prevent the ruling class from taking away those gains already made, the women's liberation movement must make the abortion fight the central focus of activity in the coming period. *The feminist movement must . . . focus its energies on mobilizing hundreds of thousands of women to fight for repeal of all laws restricting the right of abortion along with the demand for no forced sterilization. The broadest possible coalitions should be built to carry out the struggle, so that the real feelings and power of the masses of women can be brought to bear. Within this broad mobilization there is a necessity to educate on the importance of winning free abortion on demand. . . .*

Abortion is an issue that affects millions of women in the most immediate way. Victories around this issue will be very important in showing the growing power of the women's liberation movement, in proving to masses of women that the feminist movement is serious, fighting around issues of concern to all women. . . .

Our central task in the period ahead will be working

with other women to inspire and educate about the central political importance of the abortion fight, and building a nationwide abortion movement which can have a real impact and win significant victories for women. (pp. 17-18 our emphasis)

Even on a purely empirical level these conclusions can be easily criticized. Not only is there no material evidence given to support the conclusions, but the euphemistic quality of the conclusions can be seen by substituting any of the three demands wherever the word "abortion" appears. For example, we could just as well say that "if women are going to continue to win victories in the struggle to gain control over their own bodies," women must fight for free 24-hour child care centers or equal job opportunities. After all, controlling one's body includes *much more* than deciding whether or not to bear a child. If, for example, a woman already has a child or children, then controlling one's body also includes having freedom for that body (and mind) to have a decent job at decent pay and have a life outside the house. In other words, if a woman's body is tied down to minding children or to a stultifying job, her body is not under her control but is the unwilling servant of a social system that makes slaves out of women. Therefore, if women are to continue to win victories to control their own bodies, they must focus not only on abortion, but also on child care centers and equal job opportunities.

Likewise, all the demands (free abortion—no forced sterilization, child care, equal job opportunities and equal pay) affect millions of women, victories around any of them would show that the women's liberation movement is serious, etc. But according to the PC we must concentrate on abortion because it is "attracting the largest number of women." However, just last August the party leadership said that mass actions around the three previously mentioned central demands of Free Abortion—No Forced Sterilization, Equal Pay and Equal Opportunities, and Free Child Care Centers had the possibility of mobilizing the most women.

PREVIOUS PARTY POSITION

After the women's liberation demonstrations of August 26, 1970, *The Militant* carried several articles by Comrade Caroline Lund which analyzed the events of August 26. The essence of the analysis given at that time was that we must continue to build mass actions around the three demands of Free Abortion—No Forced Sterilization, Free Child Care Centers, and Equal Pay and Equal Opportunity. In *The Militant* of September 11, 1970, Comrade Lund said:

These three demands came across loud and clear in the voluminous publicity preceding the strike all across the country. They provided a central focus for the demonstrations, *a concise but powerful program which could relate to the needs of millions of women and draw them into action.* (our emphasis)

In *The Militant* of the next week, September 18, Comrade Lund said:

The strike [August 26] proved that masses of women can be mobilized around the three demands of the strike: free abortion on demand; free 24-hour child care facilities; and equal educational and job opportunities.

In *The Militant* of one week later, September 25, Comrade Lund asked this question: "What went into making Aug. 26 such a powerful action?" She answered her question by saying that in addition to fighting for democracy within the coalition that called the actions in New York, the SWP fought for specific demands. A result of the three central demands was:

I think that what inspired us most on the New York march was the fact that *all kinds of women* were there in large numbers: Black and Puerto Rican women, old women, young women, working women. *All agreed that the three demands spoke to their needs.* (second emphasis is ours)

Comrade Lund concluded her third analysis of August 26 by stating that organizations would probably be built around the three central demands of August 26: "An organization united around these three demands could carry out an uncompromising struggle on many fronts."

WHAT CAUSED THE CHANGE IN TACTICS

When we ask ourselves what caused the party leadership to change its approach to work in the women's liberation movement—what caused it to abandon working for mass actions around the three central demands and concentrate instead on mass actions around abortion law repeal, and what caused it to drop the demand for Free Abortion on Demand—No Forced Sterilization—we must piece together arguments from the PC's document and from a PC report sent out by Comrade Betsey Stone. In doing so we find that the arguments fall into the following categories: (1) the abortion repeal demand can mobilize the "largest number of women"—it can mobilize more women than all three demands put together can mobilize, (2) it is difficult to build coalitions or organizations around the three demands—it is easier to build a coalition around the abortion repeal demand, (3) it is easier to win a victory around the abortion repeal demand.

SOME STATISTICS

On the PC's first argument, we feel that the PC owes it to the party membership to come up with some *facts* to illustrate that the abortion repeal demand is the one that will mobilize the largest number of women. Even more, we feel that the PC should explain why the two demands of EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK, EQUAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES and FREE 24-HOUR CHILD CARE CENTERS will *not* mobilize large numbers of women.

According to the U. S. Department of Labor, each year since the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act has seen an *increase* in the number of suits filed by women for equal pay and equal job opportunities. In fiscal year 1967, there were 2,003 suits recommended for investigation. (In all figures given the number of suits recommended for investigation was about 60% of the number of suits filed.) In fiscal year 1968 there were 2,410 suits recommended for investigation. In fiscal year 1969 it was 2,689. In fiscal year 1970 it was 3,597, and in fiscal year 1971 it was about 7,000. Moreover, 90% of all suits filed by

women are *for equal job opportunity*—the other 10% are for equal pay. As the Labor Department itself stated: "It's easier [for women] to get equal pay for equal work than to get the equal work in the first place."

We cite these statistics to illustrate that there is certainly sentiment among working class women for equal job opportunities and equal pay. Moreover, the working women themselves know that it is the *equal job opportunities* that they are denied and that they must direct their main fight for. Further, the number of suits filed by women for equal opportunity and equal pay has *doubled* in the last twelve months (fiscal year 1971).

In addition to the above, the UAW, the AFT, and the American Newspaper Guild, as the PC resolution stated, have passed resolutions demanding day care centers and equal job opportunities. Again, this is a reflection of sentiment for these rights within the working class.

But the PC document does not give us these statistics, not even to compare them to abortion repeal statistics. To begin with, instead of constantly asserting that abortion is "attracting the largest number of women," the PC should come up with some material evidence of this (and some material evidence why the other two demands will not attract the largest number of women). And we should keep in mind in discussing statistics that the 7,000 law suits recommended for investigation in fiscal year 1971 represent *much more than 7,000 individual women*. In fact, so far over 79,000 women have been affected by victories won in equal pay suits—and equal pay suits, as we mentioned previously, represent only 10% of the suits filed by women.

It seems to us that the single demand that would have the most support within the women's movement, that is, that would draw in the largest number of women, is the demand for equal pay for equal work and equal job opportunities. However, we do not propose that the party center its work around organizing single-demand coalitions based on that demand or any other demand. We propose that the party intervene in the women's liberation movement with the three basic demands of FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND—NO FORCED STERILIZATION; FREE CHILD CARE CENTERS; and EQUAL PAY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY.

THE DIFFICULTY OF BUILDING COALITIONS

The report adopted by the PC on May 11, sent out under a May 22 cover letter by Comrade Stone, said:

In three different cities we have helped to build coalitions which have been based on more than one demand. In New York and Chicago these coalitions are based on the three demands of August 26. The Boston-centered New England Coalition is based on these three plus several more. In all three of these coalitions, there have been recent splits and divisions, where some of the reformist forces have pulled out of the coalitions both because they became nervous over what they considered were very radical stands being taken by these coalitions, and because they wanted to focus their attention on work within the Democratic Party. In Boston, they objected to the fact that the coalition was based on such "socialist" demands as "free abortion on demand," and "free, 24-hour child care."

A national campaign around abortion should be able,

through the fact of its concentration on the fight to legalize abortion, and through its sheer size, to bring groups such as NOW back into participating in mass action. (PC Report, p. 3)

The "difficulty" in building coalitions based on the three demands, then, is that the reformists are offended by our demands. So instead of carrying on an open political fight with these reformists, educating women on the tremendous possibilities and importance of building mass actions and campaigns around the three demands of August 26, the party merely pushes these demands aside and accommodates to the reformists. In turning toward the reformists, the party is turning away from the demands of most immediate and daily interest to working class women. As we will illustrate later, while working class women certainly have the greatest stake in winning free abortion on demand—no forced sterilization, these same women also have the greatest stake in free child care centers and equal pay and equal opportunities. Moreover, these working women are more likely to be reached by the women's liberation movement around the issues of equal opportunity and equal pay and free 24-hour child care centers.

But by concentrating on the abortion repeal demand and coalitions with the ever-sensitive petty bourgeois groups, the SWP is making it harder for both the party and the women's liberation movement to reach working class women.

The proper way to deal with the "difficulty" of building coalitions around the three central demands is to carry on a prolonged public campaign around building actions based on the three demands—a campaign at least as systematic as the one now being carried on around abortion. This the party has not done.

VICTORY

The third argument used by the PC is that "By concentrating on the abortion issue . . . actual concessions and victories can be won. . . ." (PC Report, p. 5) This argument, again, is not valid. As reported by the U. S. Department of Labor, actual victories *are being won* around the equal pay demand. Moreover, if we, the SWP, get into the unions and industries where women are concentrated and help fight for equal job opportunities, *actual concessions and victories can be won*. Likewise, although free 24-hour child care centers for all will not be realized under capitalism, we can help fight for them anyway and will no doubt win "*actual concessions*." Thus we can again see that the logic of the PC's argument does not hold water.

To summarize thus far: (1) evidence points to the probability of drawing in the broadest number of women by building mass actions around the three central demands of August 26, (2) any coalition will be difficult to build because the reformists and petty bourgeois groups will be horrified at any demands for "free abortion" and "free 24-hour child care for all." Only if we *abandon* the correct demands will the coalitions become "easier" to build, (3) "actual concessions and victories" can be won around all of the three demands.

DANGERS OF SINGLE-DEMAND

It should be noted that there are certain historic dangers in organizing the women's liberation movement

around a single demand. The suffrage movement is an example of this. While we are certainly better off to struggle for greater demands because of the victory of the suffrage movement, the suffrage movement caused not only victory, but also defeat for women's liberation. By virtue of the fact that the more conservative wing of the movement won the movement as a whole to their perspective of organizing women around the single demand of suffrage, the movement more-or-less abandoned other issues such as institutionalized house care, equal pay for equal work, equal job opportunities, etc. In the sense that the suffragists concentrated women's time and energy around this one issue for a period of fifty years, the movement was a set-back. The suffragists abandoned the other issues and the movement collapsed when suffrage was granted.

We think that one of the lessons of the suffrage movement is that suffrage was won *at the expense of* other issues. However, it did not have to be that way. That is, the women fighting for suffrage *did not have to drop the other demands*. Had they not dropped the other demands (such as equal pay for equal work), and had they fought for several issues at once, they would have been better off once they won suffrage. We do not think that they would have lost suffrage had they kept the other issues alive. Likewise, today we see *no reason to concentrate on one demand*. We think that the last two years have illustrated that women can be organized in mass around the three central demands of August 26.

The PC, however, has adopted a one-at-a-time coalition strategy for the women's liberation movement. Comrade Dianne Feeley, in her article "Building Women's Coalitions," even attempts to transform this projection of the PC into objective fact when she says, "In the course of the struggle towards liberation, women will develop coalitions around one or another feminist demand." (Vol. 29, No. 6, p. 8) There is absolutely no evidence that the women's movement has to progress in this manner. Why can't it be said that in the course of the struggle towards liberation women will develop coalitions around one *or more* feminist demands?

The reasoning that *first* we must win the abortion demand, *then* we will organize to fight for other demands, is fundamentally wrong and should be rejected by the party. It sets for the women's liberation movement the "one-at-a-time" strategy. This is the same thing that Elizabeth Cady Stanton inveighed against after the Civil War when she said that Wendell Phillips wanted "one idea for a generation, to come up in the order of their importance." He wanted to win first one fight, then another, then after that another—he did not want to fight for more than one thing at a time.

The PC is obviously trying to transfer the "single issue coalition" tactic of the antiwar movement to the women's liberation movement. This is a false and sterile application of a tactic. The antiwar movement is a single-issue movement around the issue of the war in Vietnam. In arguing for single-issue coalitions, we are in fact arguing for the continuation of the antiwar movement as a movement. To add other issues like Black liberation or the abolition of poverty to the program of the antiwar coalitions would be to dissolve the antiwar movement into a broad, amorphous movement for general social change.

Within the single-issue antiwar movement, we have built coalitions around four basic demands: BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW; END THE DRAFT; END CAM-

PUS COMPLICITY; FREE SPEECH FOR GI'S. We do not propose building a coalition around just one demand because we see it as important to educate and organize around all four. BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW is the central demand because it is the only solution to the *issue* of the war.

NO SINGLE DEMAND FOR WOMEN

There is, however, no one demand that can solve the issue of the oppression of women. As women begin to think about their position in society, it is our job to raise and educate around demands which help expose the basis of women's oppression. We could be faced with a tremendous problem if women were unconcerned with anything but one aspect of their oppression. But that problem does not exist. Tens of thousands of women have demonstrated around three basic demands.

Both the opportunity and necessity exist for the party to make its central task to intervene in and to organize the women's liberation movement around the three demands of FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND — NO FORCED STERILIZATION; JOBS FOR ALL — EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK, AND EQUAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES; FREE 24-HOUR CHILD CARE CENTERS. Comrade Feeley says, "Abstaining on the issue of abortion would be a politically incorrect decision for the feminist movement." (p. 11) We says that abstaining on the issues of free child care and job opportunities would be a politically incorrect decision for the women's liberation movement and the SWP.

When we say that the party must set as its central task the building of mass actions around all three demands, *we do not mean that where single-demand organizations exist* (such as abortion projects, perhaps a demand for child-care raised by women in a particular industry, etc.) we must intervene to turn these organizations into organizations based on all three demands. No, where single-demand organizations already exist, the party should intervene in them to help win the demand being raised. However, there is a difference between intervening in a single-demand organization and making our central task the building of a single-demand organization. We are for intervention in groups that focus on a single-demand. However, we feel that the party must set as its central task propagandizing and mobilizing women around the three demands of August 26.

FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND—NO FORCED STERILIZATION

Not only does the PC document indicate that the party leadership has changed its evaluation of August 26, but it also seems to have changed its evaluation of the necessity of struggling for free abortion on demand—no forced sterilization. In *The Militant* of August 7, 1970, Comrade Betsey Stone stated: "One of the most important struggles waged by the women's liberation movement during the past year has been the fight for free abortion on demand." She continued: "But just when we are on the threshold of making big gains in the struggle for free abortion on demand, we have seen the development of a small wing of the women's liberation movement that is opposed to continuing the fight [for abortion]." In concluding her article, Comrade Stone discussed the high cost of legal abortion in the state of New York. She said:

The movement is fighting this [high cost of legal abortion] in New York by exposing the treachery involved by counterposing the demand for free abortion clinics controlled by the community. The goal of the New York movement is to force the city to use its facilities to make abortion free and available to *all* women, on demand. To the extent that we are successful in this, we will be able to lay the groundwork for the future struggles around the demand that the entire medical facilities of New York be overhauled and made available to all, free of charge.

This correct argument of 1970, however, which indicates the necessity of fighting for free abortion on demand, is replaced in 1971 by the argument that fighting for free abortion on demand in the abortion coalitions we are supposed to build will "split the movement." Comrade Stone sent out a cover letter to the branches on May 22, 1971. Included with this letter was a report adopted by the PC on May 11, 1971, concerning abortion coalitions. On page three of the PC's report we are told:

In the past months, though, concrete experience in the women's liberation movement has made it clear that there are many more women who support a move to repeal abortion laws than support the demand "free abortion on demand." We have reports from a whole series of areas where it is clear that if we insisted on the "free" as the basis for organizing abortion actions we would split existing coalitions for abortion repeal, and would not be able to draw in some of the broader forces which are needed to give the necessary breadth to the struggle.

Likewise, the PC document says that the demand of the women's liberation movement must be for "repeal of all laws restricting the right of abortion," while pointing out the "necessity to educate on the importance of winning *free* abortion on demand." But our position must be that the movement as a whole should adopt the demand for free abortion on demand—no forced sterilization, and we must fight and educate until that demand is adopted, just as we did in the antiwar movement around immediate withdrawal.

The SWP certainly will not "split" if Free Abortion on Demand—No Forced Sterilization is *not* adopted, just as we did not split from the antiwar groups whose central demand was END THE WAR NOW rather than BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW. On the other hand, various reformists will certainly split from coalitions which demand Free Abortion on Demand—No Forced Sterilization, just as various reformists split from our antiwar coalitions. But we must not cater to these reformists on the grounds that they are "needed to give the necessary breadth to the struggle." *What is needed to give that breadth to the struggle is the correct demand, the demand that best meets the needs of the masses of women. That demand, which will mobilize the largest number of women, is FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND—NO FORCED STERILIZATION.*

We know that until free abortion on demand is won, working class women will have won practically nothing. Until that demand is won, the majority of working class women, especially Black, Latino, and Chicana women, will have to resort to the lower-than-legal-cost back alley

butchers for abortions. (A *Militant* article by Comrade Maxine Williams pointed out that over 80% of abortion deaths occur among non-white women. These same women, the most oppressed of the oppressed, will have to resort to self-induced abortion or back alley abortionists unless free abortion on demand is won.) The PC document criticizes the Communist Party for opposing "unreasonable demands," yet the PC appears willing to acquiesce to those who say that free abortion on demand is "unreasonable." We must not be content to merely "educate" around free abortion on demand—no forced sterilization: we must fight for that demand to become the central demand of abortion coalitions.

FREE 24-HOUR CHILD CARE CENTERS

The PC document itself explained the educational and propagandistic importance of the demands for free 24-hour child care centers. It said:

The demands being raised by the feminist movement today represent the sharpest challenge yet to the concept that the individual family must take full economic responsibility for each of its members. Demands like free 24-hour child care centers begin to place responsibility for rearing of children on society as a whole and point in the direction of a redivision of social wealth so fundamental that it begins to bring into question the whole capitalist system. (p. 6)

Marxists are the only ones who can fully understand the ramifications of the demand for free 24-hour community controlled child care centers. *Especially since large numbers of women have shown that they are responsive to such a demand*, we have an *obligation* to energetically propagandize around it and utilize it to expose the capitalist system.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND EQUAL PAY

In regard to the demands for equal pay for equal work and for equal education and job opportunities, the PC document says:

In putting forward and fighting for these and other demands of the women's liberation movement, working women will be forming their own organizations, as well as working through the organized labor movement, insisting that the unions adopt these demands as their own. This will be an integral part of the fight to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle fighting in the interest of the working class as a whole. (p. 9)

Of course, the task of the SWP is to get into those unions are to take part in those struggles. In addition, the SWP can draw working class women into the women's liberation movement by fighting for equal pay and equal opportunity, child care centers, and free abortion on demand—no forced sterilization.

DRAWING IN THE BROADEST MASSES OF WOMEN

If it our contention that the task the party sets itself in "Towards a Mass Feminist Movement" ignores the opportunities for reaching masses of women. The party should set itself the task of educating and mobilizing women around the three central demands of women's liberation:

FREE ABORTION ON DEMAND—NO FORCED STERILIZATION; FREE 24-HOUR COMMUNITY CONTROLLED CHILD CARE CENTERS; JOBS FOR ALL—EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK, EQUAL EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND OPPORTUNITY.

If the PC is interested in drawing in the masses of women to women's liberation, then these three demands are the slogans for doing so. The PC says that abortion is the issue that the most women can be united around. We say that the most women can be united around the three central demands. First of all, let us take the question of the most oppressed women—Black, Chicana, and Latino women. If we are interested in drawing these women in, we must raise all three demands in the actions we build.

Just as Black and Chicana and Latino women are hurt most by the existing abortion laws, so they are hurt most by the lack of child care and lack of jobs for all, lack of equal pay and equal opportunity. Of those children who are entirely uncared for when their mothers go to work, Black, Latino, and Chicano children probably make up the vast majority. And it is Black, Latino, and Chicana women who suffer the most from lack of jobs and from lack of equal education, training, and opportunity. It is Black women, for example, who are shoved into being maids, cleaning women, and doing laundry work. It is Chicana women who are forced into agricultural work which is exempt from the hours laws, wage laws, etc. Thus raising these demands for free 24-hour child care centers and equal pay and equal opportunities can only serve to *broaden* the women's liberation movement, *for it will help us reach the most oppressed section of women.*

In addition to the Black, Chicana, and Latino women, there are other working class women who are white. While they do not face the same oppression that Black, Latino, and Chicana women suffer, they are more oppressed than petty bourgeois women. The reasons for this are that working class women are in jobs that are, by and large, non-unionized, and they are forced into menial and peripheral jobs. A demand for equal opportunity and equal pay would benefit these women. Moreover, as we pointed out earlier, working class women are already filing suits for equal opportunity. Likewise, the white working class can afford baby sitters, day care centers, etc., far less than the petty bourgeoisie can, and on the issue of child care, again, we can draw in working class women.

It is not true to state, as Comrade Feeley does, that there is more education to be done on child care than on abortion because most women still feel that they must be with their children all the time. The fact is that women must also be educated around the abortion question—many women, especially those from the working class, still believe that abortion is murder, still believe that if a woman gets pregnant she must "pay for it" by having a child. In some respects, it will be easier to draw working class women into coalitions that make demands relevant to their *daily* lives—child care centers, working conditions and opportunities.

This is not to say that working class women are not interested in or affected by the abortion laws. Quite the contrary. It is the working class women who can least afford to go to New York and get a legal but expensive abortion. It is working class women who can least afford to find a doctor who will declare them "mentally disturbed" enough to be granted an abortion in states

that provide a few legal abortions each year. It is working class women who can least afford to miss work or be fired from work due to an expected child. And it is working class women who can least afford unwanted children. *However, working class women stand the most to gain from the other demands, too, and the party should intervene around all three demands in order to draw in the largest number of women.*

The building of a movement that raises these three demands might prove "too radical" for some petty bourgeois reformist women and we might not be able to draw them into it. However, while we want to draw petty bourgeois women into mass actions, we do not want to sacrifice the demands that are in the interests of and will draw in the working class women. What we lose in the numbers of petty bourgeois women who might be offended by these "radical" demands we will more than make up for by drawing working class women into the movement. And working class women are far more likely to join a movement that is fighting for all three of these demands than they are to join a coalition that is fighting just for abortion. Certainly most women can agree with at least one of these demands and thereby join to fight for the demand. On the other hand, there are many women who may not agree with the abortion repeal demand and thereby will not join the coalition—either because they disagree with abortion or because they are concerned with daily things such as job conditions and child care.

As we have said before in this document, the question of women's oppression is most severe in the working class. It is the working class that suffers most from the family structure, from having to bear the burden of raising children. It is the working class which suffers most from the abortion laws and it is the working class which suffers because it is divided not only along racist lines, but also along chauvinist lines. It is working class women who suffer most from the crass chauvinism of their husbands, fathers, and brothers—a chauvinism which condemns women to trivial household labor, to an endless monotony of endless chores, to work in peripheral jobs, to double oppression as worker and as woman, to passivity and submissiveness.

CONCLUSION

In order to help women win their liberation, the vanguard party must forge bonds between the women's move-

ment and the working class movement. The party must do this in two ways: (1) within the mass actions we build, we must teach women that only the working class has the power to destroy capitalism and build a socialist society, and *only* under socialism can women achieve liberation. It is therefore important for women to support the working class struggles such as strikes, boycotts, unemployment leagues which fight for jobs, etc.; (2) within the working class, both that section of it organized into trade unions and that section as yet unorganized, the vanguard party must build support for the demands of women's liberation. Within the existing trade unions we must build women's caucuses that will fight for the correct demands, that will fight within the unions to get the unions to fight for free day care centers, free abortion, and equal pay and equal job opportunities. We must also draw the unions into the demonstrations staged by the women's liberation movement—demonstrations such as August 26. Within that section of the working class which is not organized into trade unions, we must fight again for the issues such as equal pay and equal job opportunities, free abortion, and child care centers. In both cases, we must recruit to the party. Most of all, we must build up the party from the working class—in this case, working class women.

In "For a Proletarian Orientation," which we helped to write, we proposed that the party adopt a proletarian orientation and apply this orientation to all areas of our work. In the women's liberation movement this means many things. First, it means sending comrades into industry who can raise and fight for the demands of the women's liberation movement inside the trade unions and inside the working class as a whole. Working class women, as part of the only revolutionary class in society, are the most politically important women, and the party must make every effort to reach them with our propaganda. A proletarian orientation means directing the activities of the women's liberation movement to educate and draw into action the masses of working class women. It means propagandizing around demands that expose the class nature of capitalism and constantly attempting to raise the consciousness of the masses. In this contribution we did not attempt to discuss the full application of the proletarian orientation to the party's work in the women's liberation movement. Instead, we have pointed out how the lack of a proletarian orientation has led the party to a serious tactical error.

June 29, 1971

ON THE METHOD OF MARXISM
AND THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION
by Liz M., Mary-Jane H., Norman H., Pepe M.
Brooklyn Branch, New York Local

The document written by Barbara Gregorich, Bill Massey, John McCann and Phil Passen provides an exceptional critique of the conduct and analysis which has come forth from the Socialist Workers Party in the past ten years. Its importance in this regard is enough to make a major contribution to discussion, but the program of intervention into working class development put forth by these four comrades gives it the added importance of being an alternative to the political resolution of the SWP National Committee. In both regards, we applaud its arrival.

The tremendous amount of documentation necessary to analyze the degeneration of the Socialist Workers Party leadership's politics and the tremendous centralization which was necessary to the clarity of a document of such size, however, precludes the treatment of specific areas of strategy and tactics in the present period. It is the purpose of this document to treat these questions in three of our areas of work and to review the party's conduct in them.

It must be understood that this is not a statement of opposition to the Gregorich, Massey, McCann and Passen document, nor is it an addition or amendment. We look at it as an informational document which takes the threads of the theory of their contribution to their logical extension. This statement might also be taken as an expression of complete support and active endorsement of "*For a Proletarian Orientation.*"

Reaching the working class is not impossible, as long as it is considered on the practical and active rather than mystical level. All the theory in the world will not make a working class revolution, although theory is indispensable. What is needed is a conscious decision to develop an orientation to the proletarian elements of the American population; this must be the central purpose of all our work. That is step one; it is the most important step and the subject of the Gregorich, Massey, McCann and Passen document.

THE OBJECTIVE CONDITIONS AND THE FORMULATION OF A STRATEGY

The position of the industrial working class in the United States of America is the position which Marx envisioned for any working class of an advanced industrial society. But the complexity and advanced development of world capitalism makes the application of Marxist theory a complicated task.

Today the revolutionary who seeks to involve the industrial working class in the tasks of building socialism in America, must answer the precise question: How do we politically reach the working class and how will the working class move?

There are certain concepts which are staples of radical strategy, refined and put into practice by the Bolshevik party, which must be examined in the construction of a correct strategy for revolution.

1) The theory of uneven and combined development plus the permanent revolution makes inevitable a transitional perspective in political strategy. Many different sections of a population feel oppression in many different

ways in a society as complex as this one. It is quite certain that these people will be attracted into revolutionary activity if they are appealed to from different angles around a correct program. The theory of the permanent revolution tells us that with proper leadership it is inevitable that these sections will eventually see the transitional nature of struggles over various questions . . . that they will achieve a level of consciousness (at least in the vanguard layers) which will make inevitable their movement toward the struggle for a world socialist order. The fact that Marxist strategy bases itself on such developments assures its effectiveness.

2) The task of any revolutionary, therefore, is to carry out work based on a program which projects the eradication of the most obvious day to day oppressions of all people (centrally the various elements of the American working class), attempting to link these struggles with each other and the struggle for socialism. Of course, this presupposes combating various obstacles to proletarian radicalism.

Every beginner to Marxism can repeat these two formulas. How do we put them into practice?

It is obvious that our strategy depends on the analysis of certain conditions, particularly the obstacles to the development of revolutionary working class politics. There are three basic obstacles.

1) the racism and sexism of American society (which manifests itself in the workers' relations) linked with the socio-psychological barriers encountered in building radical politics (anti-communism, prejudices, etc.)

2) the bureaucracy in the trade unions, which prohibits the use of unions as vehicles toward the building of militant challenges to capitalist domination of the work-place.

3) the absence of a proletarian revolutionary party rooted in the working class.

For the Marxist, who understands that the revolution will be culminated by the movement of the greatest force in history, the industrial working class, there is only one course. It cannot be followed four different ways. There is only one road to revolutionary socialism . . . the one which leads to the industrial working class.

This document will attempt to construct a strategy for reaching this industrial working class by a principled intervention into social struggles. Our task as a party is to reach the industrial working class through every social struggle going on at the present time. It is only logical given the perspective of permanent revolution, that this tie-up will be made. All struggles which are social in orientation will achieve their goals only through socialism and socialism will come only through the leadership of the industrial working class.

The writers of this document feel that the document is an answer to the leadership of the SWP. When we say that there is no revolutionary party rooted in the working class in this country we are not excluding the present Socialist Workers Party. Throughout this document, then, we will counterpose our politics to those expressed by the party's leadership and show that the goal of reaching the industrial working class is not the central theme of their political thought.

WHAT IS THE PARTY'S PROBLEM?

Jerry Rubin once told a comrade that he thought the SWP was "a secretary for someone else's revolution." We are sure that Rubin would find our politics no more palatable, but we feel his analysis is quite incisive. The leadership of the SWP would like to see socialism and they would like to see a revolution. When it comes, they will invite speakers from the new government to the Militant Labor Forum, begin wearing cover-alls, have their campaign speakers talk about defending the labor militants and they will devote a couple of issues of *The Militant* to the struggle (which they will sell at picket lines).

The SWP leadership has allowed struggle after struggle to initiate, to proceed, build and degenerate before getting involved. (The most serious errors have been in the Third World struggles.) It has often contributed by its political apathy to the crippling of such struggles. The leadership's conduct, its perspective, and its organizational directives, disgraceful and un-Marxist, have been a constant embarrassment to many of the numbers of militant and revolutionary minded rank and filers who have involved themselves in the Black, Chicano and women's movements. Most of all, *it doesn't seem to care about labor!!!*

The problem has been analyzed and approached incorrectly on many fronts. Tim Wohlforth analyzes the problem as one of too many students and a petty-bourgeois orientation. The Black Panthers analyze it as being a fascist front. The CP doesn't talk too much about it. PL analyzes it by attacking meetings. The Young Lords don't know what it is. Most militants are a little confused that a party that claims to have a set of Trotskyist politics could do some of the things it does.

And of course, the party has been right on single-issue and mass united front defense, on self-determination internationally and nationally and on the importance of a student movement . . . in principle . . . but there is a failure some place because these movements become helpless, ultraleftist or liberal. They die from lack of sound leadership, the leadership a revolutionary party should provide.

The problem is none other than the problem of method. The concept which separated Trotsky from the party in 1928 . . . method. The ability to proceed from a set of analytical principles to a strategic program, to a set of tactics . . . the one thing which makes Marxist politics distinct from any other.

If one agrees with the analysis, which the SWP holds (or held at one time) that the industrial working class has the most potential of all sections of the working class, and the one with which Marxists must stand, then one attempts to reach that section. If one decides that the thing to do is proceed to root the party in that industrial class, one has a strategy. All tactical questions are resolved by the simple desire to draw links between whatever is happening in the country (i.e. the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, women's and antiwar struggles) and the industrial working class . . . between the radicalizing elements and the elements which will make the revolution decisive.

Somewhere in the analytical problem the SWP leadership got lost. It has failed to put its political principles into strategic and tactical practice. The SWP leadership has moved only when movements were large, sheepishly adapting to these elements with non-working class formulations. This approach is pragmatic . . . not Marxist. The SWP

leadership has abandoned the central concept of the permanent revolution in its whole political analysis and in its activities. We will illustrate this in the following studies of various struggles and the problems they present.

THIRD WORLD STRUGGLES

Most Third World workers are not like other workers. They are predominantly employed in unskilled or semi-skilled positions whose salaries and future potentials indicate a cheap labor force status.

Recent statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that Third World people "continue to be significantly concentrated in low-paid, low-skill and low-status jobs. Three-fifths of the employed adults worked as semi-skilled operatives, laborers, domestics or were in other service jobs." Add to this the third of the population which is underemployed (including the unemployed and the partially employed) and an increasing employment concentration of Black workers in certain basic mass industries like auto and steel.

It is obvious that the conditions are here for a truly revolutionary struggle. But there is more.

Racism is the most obvious oppression which Third World people feel. They are made to feel this racism in their daily lives, in the objective and subjective oppressions. Particular groups of people have been oppressed together as a national grouping. Some, like the Puerto Ricans, have been systematically extracted from their island and brought here to work the light industrial machinery left by Eastern European immigrants who were "moving up." (It is important to point out that the fact that the island is a colony of the United States makes a profound difference between the status of Puerto Ricans and Italians, for example.) Some groups, like Blacks, have been in this country hundreds of years without ever having been allowed to join its national working class, either socially, economically or culturally. Some, like the nation of Aztlan, have already begun asserting this fact in massive ways, frightening all the ruling class and its functionaries.

Objectively, this difference is manifested in the relationships between Third World people and the repressive state apparatus. While the state is repressive toward white people when it is threatened, it is always repressive toward national minorities. Any person who has ever lived in a ghetto understands the tremendous ignoring of the common civil rights of Third World people in this country. There is no surprise in the fact that ghettos periodically burn, that the nationalist groupings scream (even if incorrectly) of fascism and genocide, that there arises a profound hatred of everything and anything white. These are in no way reactionary . . . they are simply a reaction.

It is obvious to national minorities, if not to white people, that they are treated much worse by the state than are whites in this country.

Given the above facts, is it any wonder that national minorities first lash out at the white power structure from a nationalist point of view?

NATIONALISM

The tremendous rise in radicalism and militancy in the national minorities as well as the viability and potential of national struggles, makes the fight by Blacks,

Chicanos and Puerto Ricans for self-determination the singular most important development of the present period.

The question for the Marxist is not whether to support the struggle by national minorities for their self-determination. Self-determination is a right, and since capitalism has a vested interest in depriving some people of their self-determination, struggles over the question are potentially revolutionary. As a principle Marxists have always respected the right of self-determination of all oppressed peoples and as a strategy, Marxists have educated building such movements, always injecting a class point of view.

The question is, what is the reaction of Marxists to the struggles which are emerging in the present period over the question of self-determination? This depends on several things: namely the potential of the struggle and its limitations in relation to the struggle for socialism (i.e. to reaching the industrial working class).

The greatest potential is the one which we see by the application of the theory of the permanent revolution. The self-determination struggle is nothing more than the struggle for democratic rights. As such, in the present epoch, such a struggle invariably ends in questioning the whole capitalist structure.

Soon after the struggle begins to flower, people see that it will get them nowhere. It is obviously impossible to attain self-determination under capitalism. Something as elementary as control of schools is thoroughly impossible given the present structure. As well, the elimination of the particular oppression of Third World people is impossible because part of the oppression is directly related to the production process, in other words to the class struggle. Even with unconscious masses, the struggle is *objectively* anticapitalist.

This is true, of course, of any nation. Take Puerto Rico. The creation of an independent capitalist-democratic state on the island is completely impossible. It is impossible if only because the tendency of the rate of profit to equalize makes capitalism an economic system where small, underdeveloped systems cannot thrive without complete dependence on the more advanced industrial societies. A national struggle automatically opposes American imperialism and, because independent capitalism—free of American imperialism—is impossible, it naturally moves toward socialism.

So a struggle over control of schools (for example) is germinally a struggle for a socialist order. Still, there are limitations. It is obvious that Third World people will not create a Socialist America alone . . . not even if all of them support such a concept and are willing to militantly fight for it. Again we come to our analysis . . . the core of our orientation must be the industrial working class.

Another reason (perhaps the most important to the Marxist) why nationalism is crucially important becomes clear.

1) It opposes the social order in such a way as to sharpen the contradictions of American society. The obviously repressive nature of capitalist society is bared in the repression of self-determination struggles. Masses of people see this; they are radicalized. As well, the chaos which is brought to bear during the rise of a national struggle like that of the Chicano struggles augments problems for the capitalists.

2) Third World workers will be directly affected by nationalism. They will translate the demand for control of schools to the demand for voice in the union. In unions

where they are the majority, they will transform the unions into mechanisms for fighting for their rights, as a nation *and* as workers. In those where they are the majority, they will bring out a basic contradiction for all union members to see: the lack of democracy inside the union.

In other words, the national minorities can serve as a definite developer of union class struggle in this country. Acting solely on national questions, they will challenge the union bureaucracy and affect other, less militant workers (i.e. postal and transit strikes).

At the same time, racism is clearly confronted on all levels, including personal. There is nothing like struggling together to create a real, if grudging, respect.

These struggles might in turn incite struggles within the industrial working class. Certainly there is a possibility of creating a climate of struggle (a social crisis) which would clearly shake some minds loose.

A steelworker who is having trouble making ends meet and who cannot understand why his union will not go out on strike, picks up the paper one day and reads how some union has fought a struggle against its bureaucracy during a union election. This is bound to set him thinking.

It is also bound to strike some familiar notes when the Blacks or Puerto Ricans in their union begin to initiate a struggle in their own union over the racism of the bureaucracy . . . his consciousness will certainly be affected.

This is in no way schematic; only a possibility.

The question of the national struggle might never be seen from this point of view by either the national minority or the white worker. But it is the role of the Marxist to see things most cannot. Only the Marxist can maturely make this link . . . only the Marxist can make the revolution a reality.

STRATEGY

Given the fact that Third World people are a large minority of the industrial working class, given the fact that these minorities will undoubtedly radicalize around the questions of self-determination, a deep-rooted and progressive struggle which throws the American society into radical question, given the fact that the Third World worker will be thoroughly nationalist but that his attempts to combat racism in unions will deeply affect the white workers, the correct strategy for a Marxist party is simple:

To become completely active in the building of nationalist struggles on an issue basis as well as a principled basis.

a) Taking immediate, principled positions of support of struggles of all national minorities for self-determination.

b) Active organization and building of all nationalist demonstrations which are initiated by the national minority around local questions as well as wider issues (Vietnam, Independence of Puerto Rico).

c) Conscious reaching out, by educational material and by educational meetings (forums, etc.) to the national struggle. Participating in nationalist conferences, etc.

d) Helping to build broad united-front defense committees to support any and all national political prisoners, at the risk of any gains by opponents.

e) Setting up of committees for the fraternal defense of national struggles (such as a "hands off" committee when a grouping takes over a building, or a "hands off the Panthers" committee) or strike support committees.

f) Intervening, when at all possible, with assistance,

suggestions and political defense in any national formation (La Raza Unida Party, community control organizations, etc.) and pushing for the building of vehicles of national political expression independent of the two major parties.

g) An immediate projection of a strategy of building nationalist union caucuses to fight for democratic representation and antibureaucratic behavior and the carrying out of this concept and the educating of white workers in the unions on the necessity of support to national self-determination.

h) The consistent attempt to recruit nationalist militants to the party on the basis of our "national" program and the over all Marxist perspective.

WHERE IS THE SWP?

Some might say, "But we've been doing that." But, in reality, we haven't.

The SWP since 1966 (the year following the assassination of Malcolm X) has not intervened into any national struggle at a point where it could either build or positively affect that struggle. For six years, it has tail-ended them all and where it has managed to become involved has not effectively built the movement.

The Black struggle was written about to some extent and Malcolm X spoke twice, years ago, before Militant Labor Forums, but that was then. In the hundreds of opportunities for an intervention into national Black movements, the SWP remained paralyzed by its own inability to relate. While the Black Panther Party, before its tremendous degeneration, was being attacked, the SWP failed to set up or help build a campaign, other than in the pages of *The Militant*, for the party's defense. Such a national committee of "Hands Off the Panthers" might have saved the party organization. Certainly it would have exposed well-meaning Black militants to a program which was healthier in its orientation than the one which eventually became the Black Panther Party's. At least, it would have exposed the Panthers to correct defense formulations which the Panthers might well have seen the sanity of. Defense formulations, which follows from political analysis, are the first steps toward political persuasion.

The same is true for the Puerto Rican struggle, which the SWP has not even taken a line on yet. The Young Lords Party which was ridiculed by the sectarians of the party and well meaning youth went down the drain through lack of exposure to correct politics. Certainly, the SWP could have participated in the initial demonstrations of the Puerto Rican movement, carrying our banner and allowing the Puerto Rican people to see that we *really did* support their struggle. Certainly the party could have set up at least nominal committees to defend the Lords at both New York City church incidents. Certainly Young Lords could have been approached to set up, with the help of the gigantic apparatus of the SWP, a committee of inquiry into the tragic murder of Julio Roldan, a Young Lords Party member, in a New York City prison. Certainly at least an article could have been printed in *The Militant*. Instead three or four New York comrades walked on the sidewalk while 10,000 walked in the street. Haven't these comrades and the party leadership that sent them to the action learned what a demonstration is?

Did the party ask that one of our Puerto Rican comrades be allowed to give a message of solidarity at any rally? Did we have speakers at the Puerto Rican student conference of 3,000 at Columbia University? Did we participate

in the committee to fight around the Culebra question? Does anyone in the Puerto Rican community know who we are?

No, how could they? The SWP has laughed at their struggle by calling it "ultraleftist." No beginning struggle is Marxist; to ask for struggles to be "healthy" is to misunderstand dialectics. A struggle does not have to be correct to be healthy.

And with the Chicano nation. . . . The abandonment of a Marxist method can also be clearly seen. Not only did the SWP refuse to intervene in the struggle, but until 1969 it didn't even recognize that the Chicano people were a nation. Such a mistake is more than un-Marxist, it is stupid. The Chicano people are also partially a continuation of the oldest nation in the United States, the Native American.

By 1970, the Chicano nation had already arrived at the concept of mass independent political action. It had fielded statewide candidates in Colorado and a local candidate for mayor in Denver. Mass movements were on the rise in the agricultural fields and in the communities across the Southwest. Several comrades in the SWP were denouncing the leadership of the party internally for a failure to consider this nation in its program. Pressured and goaded both by the objective situation (the Chicano movement and party members), the party finally organized an intervention into the Chicano conference in Denver, Colorado, which issued the call for an independent Chicano party in the Spring of 1970. This action, while positive in character, was to replace any long run significant intervention in the Chicano movement.

The poor record of the party to support the Chicano struggle carried over into the antiwar movement. An agreement was reached between the Student Mobilization Committee and the Chicano Moratorium leaders to support and build the 1970 Moratorium. Part of the agreement was that Chicano Moratorium activities would be built and publicized in the Eastern area by that section of the antiwar movement. The party failed in every way to give the necessary support. At the last moment, in desperation, to escape the criticism given by the Chicano movement leaders and the Chicano comrades (presented to the party leadership in a national Third World fraction meeting at the 1970 Oberlin conference) the party leadership organized the comrades in the antiwar movement to hold a token film showing and public meeting and a few comrades were assigned to aid building the West Coast action. This assistance, of course, was helpful, but nowhere near what should have been provided or expected.

The party press, after this poor showing, gave the appearance of grand-standing in the pages of *The Militant*. Chicano militants felt that the SWP was saying that through its participation and line the Chicano Moratorium was made a success. The end result has been an almost complete loss of respect for the SWP in sizeable West Coast sections of the Chicano movement and was a contributing factor to the resignation of a leading Chicano comrade from the party.

But its tail-ending, grand-standing and its ignorance are not enough. The party leadership has also taken to rewriting history. On page 9 of the National Committee Draft Political Resolution, 1971, we read: "The first Raza Unida parties developed in Texas out of a series of mass struggles centering on Chicano control of Chicano schools. Some of the key initiators and leaders gained their initial experience in the student movement. . . ." The La Raza

Unida parties real history is much to the contrary. The La Raza Unida parties, the independent Colorado New Hispano Party of 1966, the Crusade for Justice independent mayoralty campaign in Denver (1967-68) all had their base in the communities, especially among working people including many active trade unionists. The most advanced political center from 1965 to 1969 was Denver, Colorado, not Texas. Many comrades in the Denver branch from 1964-1967 were deeply involved in encouraging the movement for mass political organization independent of the capitalist parties. At the 1970 YSA youth convention, the lie was even stated more clearly, it was students only that were recognized as building the movement. Without question, in later stages of the movement, the Mexican-American Youth Organization, along with many non-student youth, played an important role in aiding the development of the movement. But the key fact is that they were never cut loose from and always based themselves on the struggle of communities and working people. The organizations of political struggle are led by non-students and workers.

It seems that the adaptationist party leadership has been unable to approach Third World struggles with any firm position. Strategy-less, paralyzed by a confusion and a blindness, the party leadership has waited until nationalist movements have grown to astounding proportions, then desired to jump in. This can be of no service to the movement.

Instead of a cogent, Marxist approach which sees the national struggle in its place and produces a theoretical security which allows the party to use its full resources in *building* a struggle rather than controlling it or ignoring it, the SWP leadership has approached national struggles with an absence of Marxist method, of correct analysis. The party has failed miserably to see the importance of Third World struggles because it has failed to see the relationship they have with the struggle for socialism . . . with the industrial working class.

Instead, the leadership has followed a position like the one stated in the YSA document of 1970: That the struggle in this country will be carried on by Black and other Third World people, alongside the white working class. This romantic, intercommunalist notion of revolution is the root of the SWP's problem in its relationship with nationalist struggle. It does not know how to relate to these struggles because it has never defined their role . . . it cannot know because it has not bothered to discuss the question from a Marxist point of view.

The problem is again one of method. Somehow, the SWP leadership envisions that the revolution will be made, but it never has been clear how Third World people will fit into this scheme or how it is projected that they fit.

WOMEN'S STRUGGLE

Women are more than half the population and, in reality, no woman can say she is not socially oppressed. Every woman is a potential feminist. The emerging women's movement will prove to be one of the most important movements in the country's history.

The oppression of women can be seen in three basic areas:

1) Women are, for the most part, a cheap labor force. In many instances they face unemployment or subemployment. When there is employment it is usually doing jobs which are harder of just as hard as those of men, but for much lower pay.

2) As well, women are the most important components of the family structure. The family is still a very relevant institution in capitalist society and the central role played by women in keeping the family "together" is one of her most oppressive and most important social roles.

3) There is also the personal oppression which women suffer at the hands of the sexist society and sexist males in general. In myriad ways, women are exposed to prejudice and out and out chauvinism which is insulting, degrading and indicative of oppression.

As workers and functionaries of the family women are extremely important to the continuation of bourgeois society. A movement of women throws this society into radical question and has the potential of actually crippling it.

RADICALIZATION

In the ability of the women's movement to hurt capitalist society and its ability, by virtue of the fact that many women actually work in factories, etc., to move masses of workers, we see the movement's further importance to the working class struggle. But how will it happen? The sexual oppression of women, which overlaps their oppression as workers, is the thing around which women are radicalizing first and foremost. There is no need to go into heavy explanation of this or to defend it . . . it has already begun to happen on a massive scale.

Any Marxist should have been able to predict this phenomenon. People move first around the issues and oppressions which hurt them most deeply on a day to day basis. The woman is the victim of sexism in the factory or office, on the street and at home. Is it any wonder that, figuring on a strictly time basis alone, women react to sexism first?

The most stable and most politically viable reaction to the women's struggle is simply to build the women's liberation movement around issues which affect all women, including *free abortion on demand, free child care, equal pay for equal work*, etc. Marxists must support and build this movement. Again the question is simply a matter of orientation.

The place for the women's liberation movement is wherever women are. A Marxist in the women's liberation movement should intervene in the women's movement with radical and transitional demands which will put pressure on the capitalist state and link this movement up with the masses of women who do the work which underpins much of the urban economy.

Like in the case of nationalism, the SWP has had the healthiest stand, at least among organized parties of the left, on the question of a women's movement. The call for a broadly based, even multi-class, movement is necessary for a Marxist program on the question. But, as we said before, this is not enough.

The recent move of the SWP leadership to single-demand the women's liberation movement by concentrating all its efforts on the demand for the repeal of all abortion laws is a denial of the many struggles presently raging. The women's movement embraces many demands. We should make every attempt to support a broad program on women's liberation. While the right of women to control their own bodies is an important democratic right, presently being denied to women and a united front around this issue should be built, in addition we should support and build united front struggles around other women's liberation issues also.

One example is the demand on the government to provide free community controlled childcare centers. This demand has already proved to be an important mobilizing one around which women are struggling. First, it works toward freeing women from the oppression of the family in that it allows them to achieve some economic independence by entering the work force and it diminishes the oppression of their role in the family structure. Secondly, it puts great economic pressure on the state to provide services critically needed by the people. And ultimately, it brings into question who should provide childcare—the family or the state.

In addition to work in the women's liberation movement, a Marxist must carry women's liberation issues into their work in unions. For example, women's liberation work among Bell Telephone workers (fighting for child-care centers, the right to take leave of absence while pregnant, the right to full medical benefits, etc.) could very well build a movement inside the utility which could cripple the national economy. Wall Street would be crippled without phone service.

This is not to mention that tremendous numbers of women who carry the light industry in New York on their shoulders in the numberless sweatshops in New York. Taking into consideration the tremendous numbers of women who work in these areas, one wonders why they have not been worked in. As well, the obvious question: Why has there been no support for the building of unions in these shops where none exists and support the building of women's caucuses in the ones which do exist?

The women's movement must project a set of demands with action components, demands around which people can viably struggle and around which a movement can be built. These demands will have to be geared in the main to the interests of working class women. NOW or the Radical Feminists find it understandably hard relating to these demands or even conceiving of them. That is the job of Marxists.

At the same time the strategy of trade-union struggle in the women's movement is one of great potential. There is no doubt that working class women have strong grievances against their employer, their union bureaucracy and their male fellow workers.

STUDENT STRUGGLE

Any document written about the political situation in this country, and attempting to formulate a strategy for revolution, must consider the student struggle. For seven years, following the crushing of McCarthyite reaction, the campus radical movement has been an important part of the radical politics of this country.

First with the civil rights movement, then the rise of SDS (and its subsequent demise) and then the rise of the YSA (not insignificant as a development), the student struggle has gone through convulsions and turns.

Students have taken part in many social struggles: struggles over strictly academic demands, in the antiwar struggle (a tremendous contribution), in some cases in other political areas (including defense cases such as the Black Panther defense). The rise of significant struggles over the Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican questions, although centered in their respective communities, have found significant bases of support on the campuses of this country. No Marxist can ignore the campus. But what do we do there? Again, that depends on how we analyze

the situation.

Students are not members of the American working class . . . neo-capitalism or not.

That is point number one.

An important point for the Marxist might be that more and more students are coming out of working class families and might very well move into work positions where they will be forced to sell their labor.

THE INTELLECTUALIZATION OF THE PROLETARIAT OR THE PROLETARIANIZATION OF THE INTELLECTUAL?

Ernest Mandel's position that the intellectual forms of labor, such as technicians and engineers, are becoming members of the working class has been debated in radical circles with a vehemence. In reality, the question is of secondary importance. Intellectuals, even though they are selling their labor in increasing numbers, are not that section of the proletariat which will make a revolution. In fact, despite Mandel's assertions, they constitute in the most a reactionary element of the working class today.

The question is, however, that the proletariat is becoming more and more skilled. Many workers, tied by their positions to the very means of production, are people who have had at least some college education. Media, advanced technology and the fact that college is becoming a requirement for more and more jobs, have resulted in a profound intellectualization of the proletariat. Even this is only partially important.

STUDENT ROLE

The question phrases itself as this: Should work be done among students? What should be our orientation?

Given the fact that students are that section of the American population which has not yet taken a role in the process of production, there should be no stigma about "crossing class lines," etc.

As well, some important facts must be kept in mind. Students in struggle have raised the whole level of struggle in this country by furthering an atmosphere of radicalization which has been responsible for the combatting of repression, for getting out simple educational facts on what is going on in this country and in this country's foreign policy, and by creating an interreaction between administration and student bodies which raised itself to a radical questioning of social relationships. We cannot forget that it was the student struggle which opened the atmosphere for free speech, helped in the building of the Black and Chicano struggles and has practically carried the antiwar struggle up to the present time.

There is one more fact. Social conditions and political actions have resulted in the radicalization of hundreds of thousands of Americans, some of whom might someday be workers. Marxists should never ignore a radicalization.

A PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS

However, this still leaves our principle question unanswered. How do we go about approaching this radicalization?

The question of whether there should be a transitional program for students is almost not necessary. Indeed, one such program was fought for, under the name of

"student control of the university," and it did result in massive radicalization. The question of student control is a crucial one for the revolutionary. It is a demand which is an action demand, one around which students can be mobilized, and one which allows for the orientation to the working class. Using the campus as a social lever, as an organizing center, as a place where officials can be forced to make radical or liberal statements (for instance, the President of Yale's statement about revolutionaries being unable to get a fair trial in this country), a place where some form of cadre building can go on is viable from the viewpoint of the building of a revolutionary party . . . and the reaching of the working class. Red University demands are the keys to this control.

THE WAR

As well, students should be mobilized to continue in their historic task of the building of the antiwar movement. Students should also be led to the building of various struggles such as the defense of political prisoners, the fighting of repressive measures and the leadership in the fight for free speech.

But there is one joker in the deck. All these struggles are of no use unless they are related to the working class.

One ideal example is the fight at a private school in the Eastern area. For the first time in its history, the school was shut down during the May events. The strike leadership set up a strike headquarters in the student lounge and was besieged by offers of people who wished to build an antiwar university. Instead of a strictly antiwar university, strike leadership started what was called an open university which was built on a central demand . . . the question of tuition. There had been an early campus conflict over a raise in tuition. The radicals seized on this to gain community support which came in many areas from otherwise reactionary sectors . . . the tuition question was a working class demand.

In some other area, student struggles for control can carry on a reaching out by including demands for the campus laborers, and fighting university complicity in exploitation (in whatever concerns the university owns). This would change with each particular situation.

The question of the war is a separate one and we will deal with this whole question shortly. It is obvious that the changes we will propose in Marxist conduct in the antiwar struggle will have to be carried out mainly by students.

But the students of a particular college must become involved in the community around them, not only in sections where ghettos surround the community but in sections where there are likely to be labor strikes. The question revolves around what to do with the *cadre* which is built out of the student power fights.

As sad as we are to say it, the thing to do is try to orient it away from the campus. This does not mean leave the campus and go to the doors of the factories (or, as the YSA *would* have it, expect the factories to come to the campus). It only means that using the campus as a base, the Marxist must make a conscious effort to relate campus activities to the labor struggle, whether it is in the area of women, national minorities, or trade union issues. Independent committees should be built on campuses supporting strikes like the GE strike, or strikes which are more local but hit harder home. Information should be gathered, meetings built, and even the attempts should be made to get academics to support these strikes.

Certainly in the area of the women's struggle, a more conscious effort should be made by campus women to relate to areas of work which would involve the millions of working women who suffer triple oppression.

As well, there is tremendous work which is possible in the building of support for Third World struggles. If the Black Panther case had been built in this way, it would have saved the Black struggle from the increasing demoralization which it is undergoing now.

The Marxist approach to students, then, is to actively intervene to build the struggle for a Red University which should include demands aimed at reaching the working class. We seek to recruit the most conscious of students and develop them as Trotskyists.

ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

Every organization, from the Progressive Labor Party to the Republican Party, has come to understand the potential in the antiwar movement. At the same time, it is the defense of a revolution, a blow to American imperialism, a means of radicalization around a day to day contradiction, and an opportunity to reach the working class. Its massive numbers and the startlingly volatile nature of its activities (e.g. May) make it a priority for any revolutionary.

But that is not the question. There can be no doubt of the potential; the fact of reality, however, is very different.

At this point the antiwar movement is stagnating. Its numbers are growing but they remain in the same areas of society, the petty-bourgeois oriented layers. The masses of workers, those who are most affected by the war, remain untouched by the educational and agitational material of the movement . . . they remain alienated from its force.

WHAT SHOULD THE MOVEMENT DO?

Only with the entrance of masses of workers in the antiwar movement can it begin to say that the movement will end the war in Vietnam. This is the objective truth. And such a statement is not ultraleftist. It is not necessary that socialism come for the war to end but it is necessary that the working class act to end the war before the end is clearly possible. The antiwar movement must be made to understand this.

There is another, more crucial, reason why the Marxist should push this point in all antiwar activities: the working class is the objective of all our work. A principled aim of Marxists in the antiwar movement should be to reach the working class.

It must be understood that this strategy for the movement is not sectarian in any way. In fact, it is consistent with every other Marxist position.

Take the matter of mass action, for example. It is obvious that mass action benefits our purposes of recruitment, building of a movement, stirring radicalization, etc. But this is not our only objective. We understand that mass action is the most effective means of getting an objective, so we advocate this tactic in many movements.

By the same token, our strategy of reaching the working class is not founded on sectarian objectives. It develops out of a clear view as to what will end the war. Will it be a movement of the "masses" (which is the SWP's way of saying the students), or will it be a movement

of non-exclusion which is aimed at the working class, both in uniform and out? Only a fool would answer this question incorrectly!

The antiwar movement should reach out to layers which it has nearly disregarded up to now: the rank and file worker, the Third World person, the GI. Although some might say this is being done, it has never been done as a principle. Instead, each of these social sectors have been treated only peripherally. If the antiwar movement is to succeed, these sectors must become one of its central objectives.

MULTI-ISSUE OR MULTI-PROGRAM

The debate between single and multi-issue opponents have been a red-herring. It is really not going on at all. Those who advocate multi-issue comprise a wide range of leanings from the so-called People's Coalition (CP oriented) to the International Socialists. The question is basically one of orientation.

The antiwar movement must have one basic demand around which to organize mass actions. This demand is, and should remain, the demand for the immediate withdrawal of American forces from Southeast Asia. No one would disagree with this.

However, the "single-issue" movement has more than one demand. At this time, the other two deal with ROTC and the draft. As such they are designed to reach out to student populations. A Ford factory worker couldn't care less about ROTC, neither could a GI, for that matter.

Still and all, their demands should be kept and a number of additions and corrections should be made.

There are other sections of the population besides students. Where are the side demands to reach them? Where is the development of demands for workers, for Blacks, for Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, for women, and for GIs? Must a movement become a party to project and organize around a few minor demands to relate the war to a people's oppression? The answer is not at all. What is to be done?

The antiwar movement must maintain its three principles:

1. The demand for immediate withdrawal.
2. Strategy of mass action and reaching out.
3. Non-exclusion.

However, the movement must also develop a program . . . a program for the antiwar movement which would afford the antiwar activities a tool with which to relate to various people. In other words, the antiwar movement must have demands for every section which it hopes to reach.

One possible formulation follows:

First demand: Immediate withdrawal of troops from Southeast Asia.

Second demands:

Labor

- 1). 100% tax on all war profits
- 2). End to the draft
- 3). Using the tax money for social programs
- 4). Using war expenditures to supplement price controls without wage controls.

Blacks:

1. Separate Black referendum on the war, to be binding even if national referendum decides differently.
2. No drafting of Black people
3. Use of war profits to set up community controlled and

other social programs.

4. Community control of selective service stations in the Black communities and withdrawal of all recruitment offices.

Chicanos

1. End the draft of all Chicanos
2. Community control of selective service stations in the Chicano communities and withdrawal of all recruitment offices.
3. Use of war profits to set up community controlled schools and other social programs.

Puerto Ricans:

1. All troops out of Puerto Rico, now
2. End to the draft on the island and of all Puerto Ricans
3. Community control of selective service stations in Puerto Rican communities and withdrawal of all recruitment offices.

And so on, utilizing the basic contradictions which are linked to the war where each segments lives. In some cases, these demands would be minimized, in some cases they would be augmented. The point is that the antiwar movement, in publishing its separate material to each segment of the population, will have something to say to everyone, while not coopting its central demand.

STRATEGY

But there is one more question. That is over the mass action tactic. Although this tactic is correct, it cannot always be translated as demonstration. In fact, from the Marxist point of view, it has a much more powerful translation . . . "strike." This is not to say that the movement should call for a strike; such a call is premature.

Rather, the antiwar movement should expand any efforts to reach the working class on two strategic levels: relating to the industrial worker and the GI.

A number of mechanisms should be set up to ready the nation's working class for struggle against the war. Among these are the following:

1) the building of specifically labor rallies in the large industrial cities, aiming for support among rank and file groupings including radical and nationalist caucuses. However, part of this is the beginning efforts to get into the unions ourselves.

2) the building of labor committees against the war in shops and union locals. These committees would carry on work much like that of an SMC chapter, orienting the antiwar movement to the working class, inflation, etc.

3) the calling for and building of one day actions, during which marches will be held, going through the industrial sectors of cities, calling for strikes.

4) the immediate orientation toward rank and file labor speakers, rather than bureaucrats and liberal politicians (although non-exclusion should be maintained).

GI

There is, of course, another area where work should be done, where the most obvious greatest potential lies, and where nothing has been done in an organized way. This is the GI movement.

GIs are part of the state apparatus, they are in revolt. The revolt of the army is the most telling blow to the state, and the Marxist movement sits by and does nothing.

We propose:

- 1) the immediate building of a national organization,

organized by civilians and GIs and run and led by active duty GIs with the responsibility of having two functions. The first would be the building of a civil liberties campaign and an antiwar movement. The second would be the defense of GIs who are politically involved. The first function would be the responsibility of the GIs themselves, who should be helped and encouraged (as well as boosted financially, etc.) by the civilian wing. The second should be the responsibility of the civilian wing, which would be supported on the base by the GIs but would mostly reach out to other sections of the populations in its defense efforts.

2) A widening of the coverage of GI events and the establishment of offices of the above organization at every major base and military installation in the country. A national paper should be forthcoming.

3) A conscious, organized intervention into the Vietnam Vets Against the War, to help in the building of this crucial organization, the orientation toward antiwar efforts and helping it to fight such things as inadequate compensation for injuries, job finding, etc.

4) The inclusion of two sets of demands in the antiwar program for active duty GI:

1. the right to civil liberties accorded any citizen
2. the right to unionization
3. the right to appeal assignments and orders before a court made up of GIs.

5) For the Vet:

1. the right to a job paying \$10,000 a year.
2. that the government find adequate housing for the returning GI
3. that any GI, with a family, who has been made unable to work be paid \$15,000 a year, and up, depending on children.
4. the right to free social services for all GIs, including free education, free hospitalization, etc. whether honorably or dishonorably discharged.

ORIENTATION AND CONDUCT

The Socialist Workers Party has not walked a course in the antiwar movement which is designed to end the war.

1) The SWP is unbelievably heavy-handed in the antiwar movement. Those comrades who firmly believe this is not true should think again.

But this is not the worst of the situation. The fact is that party comrades functioning in the antiwar movement have consistently brought forth proposals, not to keep the antiwar movement from degenerating but to keep it from falling into the hands of the people. Then the SWP leadership wouldn't know what to do.

2) The SWP leadership is often sectarian, fighting every "opponent" and finding them when they don't exist. A sectarian leadership cannot really function without fighting against something (other than capitalism) and the harm is done when it fights against people who are nothing more than sincere militants just coming around.

3) But the worst is the adaptation. For the SWP has really crippled the antiwar movement by adapting to the liberals. Liberals take over the platform of every rally, protesting that the way to end the war is to go to the polls. Is the SWP relinquishing this basic line as well? It would seem that way.

The party's trend toward the campus and away from the working class in this movement, as well as its pushing for mass rallies (like that in Bryant Park of New York

City) to the exclusion of a part of the focus of strikes (even on campuses) gives the liberal politicians the focus on the platform. As well, the avoidance of such issues as war profits and Puerto Rico makes a rather comfortable situation for the bourgeoisie.

Most of all, the party fails to answer the class enemies when they speak. Vance Hartke, Mayor Lindsay, even Edmund Muskie endorse NPAC (National Peace Action Coalition) with the knowledge that if they come to speak, their obscene position on where the antiwar movement should go . . . to the polls . . . will not be answered either by NPAC or party spokespeople. Both these groups have a principle on independent action, both should fight for the principle. It is the role of a revolutionary party to make sure this fight is carried on.

In 1972 a lot of Americans will vote, hoping that their vote will bring American troops home. They did it in 1960, 1964, 1968 and they were wrong each time. They will be wrong again. The place for the movement is the streets not the polls. Although this is the paper position of the SWP, it has consistently failed to push for demands and tactics which would ensure that it will remain on the streets. This is the party leadership's greatest crime in the antiwar movement.

SOCIOLOGY OF THE DEGENERATION

For Marxists both inside and outside the Socialist Workers Party, it is increasingly obvious that the SWP leadership has departed from working class politics. The present Socialist Workers Party strategy takes the form of impressionistic statement of belief by a petty-bourgeois leadership. Being blown around like a dried leaf in the winds of change, the Barnes "leadership" in increasingly embattled by both the growing class struggle and the internal opposition in the party.

The way in which the Socialist Workers Party has degenerated has left its mark on the opposition. Until the central opposition document was written all previous opposition showed little political insight into the problem.

The first sign noticed by many dedicated militants that something was wrong in the party was that it was becoming increasingly difficult to get an assignment. New comrades who obviously lacked political insight and organizational ability were given major political assignments. Of course, one thing that these new comrades *were not* lacking in was a ferocious personal dedication to a growing number of younger comrades on the National Committee.

A second manifestation was an increasing number of comrades being sent into branches from other areas, especially New York. They would come by the ones and twos, into Denver, Berkeley, Boston etc. They always seemed to carry some "special authority" with them, beyond membership and branch transfer. The relationship between these incoming comrades began with and continued to be between New York national office and themselves. Certain local comrades were encouraged to adopt this stance also. The problem became so great in the Bay Area that Comrade Asher Harer on the 1969 party convention floor commented that he deeply resented that every time there was an important internal dispute in the branch, certain comrades would phone New York and come back with a pre-packaged answer without going through the local discussion or branch. This left comrades without the benefit of national office answers in writing.

A third manifestation noticed by many was that criticism from below was no longer encouraged. A new suggested approach coming from a rank and file member of the party is always dismissed by an executive board member who is part of the clique. This way the ranks are turned into automatons who act. Only the clique leaders are expected to think. It is a disgusting division of labor.

Another way this process is reinforced is when the leadership decides to intervene in an area that a number of comrades have pioneered, the comrades who initially or consistently helped to build the struggle are not seriously involved. Certain favorite comrades are brought in to head up the new project. This is true of the Chicano struggle. The national leadership of this intervention was Joel Britton and Lew Jones with Antonio Camejo carrying out their direction, when the analysis in early intervention had been done by Froben Lozada, Antonio Rios, Howard Wallace, Marianne Hernandez and Norman Hodgett.

Still another sign: the party reflected the process of degeneration by engaging in orgies of literary debate. New organizations of national liberation were viewed as opponent organizations. The party took the position of analyzing their written words and publicly polemizing through the pages of *The Militant* rather than internally building the struggle and unifying with the essence of the struggle. This position has been complimented with excess coverage of the party's real opposition and their views on this or that struggle rather than doing it through real constructive work in the struggle.

The party leadership analyzes carefully the written word and misses the essence.

It is the duty of a Marxist to continually find a way to intervene in a struggle and to carry out its program. A party must continually attempt to find links to the movement of the people against oppression. It is also the duty of the party to keep a number of comrades assigned to the major areas of work to be building these struggles and relating these to a proletarian orientation. When the SWP does involve itself with the poor of the working class, and the Third World, it seems never to get into the water, preferring to play in the wading pool of verbal literary debate, trying to debate with movements that concern themselves with the struggle and who could care less about replying to the efforts of *The Militant* to conjure up a polemic.

The leadership's theoretical formulation for work in issue committees is that only the tendencies have a reality. Therefore, only the tendencies can be entrusted with authority. Individuals are nothing in themselves; they are only becoming something (in the process of moving toward a tendency). They are becoming Stalinists, Social Democrats, Pacifists or Trotskyists. When they join a tendency they will then have representation by the tendency leadership. This is pragmatism at its best: viewing history through organizational forces. History disproves this approach.

The thing wrong with this theoretical formulation is that it denies the class struggle. It pushes aside those new fresh militants who arise naturally out of the struggle and tells them they have no reality because they are not in a tendency.

An important consideration is that the pragmatic and organizational politics of the SWP leadership acts to objectively aid the Communist Party. It will assure the CP's unchallenged growth in the working class and, by extension, will assure the continued legacy of the bourgeoisie

in the wider social situation.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE DEGENERATION

The decades of the 30's, 40's and 50's were not easy years for a small revolutionary party in the expanding citadel of imperialism. The years of ideological struggle against Stalinism took its toll. The fact is that with a few very notable exceptions the Trotskyist movement in North America could not relate itself to most of the mass struggles in a prolonged manner because of the domination over the left by the Communist Party.

The cold war witch-hunt atmosphere of the 50's took its toll on the composition and number of workers in the party.

Given the low level of political consciousness that prevailed in the Socialist Workers Party by 1960 because of its absence from much of the class struggle, the coup de grace on the proletarian orientation was finally performed. It was performed through events that should have been a tremendous opening but, given the state of the SWP, were the beginning of its downfall.

The vast influx of students into the party and YSA and the accompanying student orientation brought with it a virtually unopposed petty-bourgeois clique that waged a vigorous campaign for leadership before an old guard that was aging, small, weak and tired.

The tragedy of a party not having roots in the working class was finally theoretically glamorized through the analyses of the 1968 events in France. What is a common weakness of both the SWP and the French comrades (no base in the unions) was interpreted as a desirable situation by the SWP leadership. From now on the students will lead the way! If the workers are lucky the students will pound on the factory gates and proclaim "follow us to the White House." If the workers are not lucky they will have to go to the campus to meet Comrade Harry Ring.

In *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, Comrade James P. Cannon correctly sums up the problem and the direction out of the swamp (p. 9).

"1. It is not sufficient for the party to have a proletarian program; it also requires a proletarian composition. Otherwise the program can be turned into a scrap of paper over night.

"2. This crisis cannot be resolved simply by taking a vote at the convention and reaffirming the program by majority vote. The party must proceed from there to a real proletarianization of its ranks. It must become obligatory for the petty-bourgeois members of the party to connect themselves in one way or another with the workers' movement, and to reshape their activities even their lives accordingly. Those who are incapable of doing this in a definite and limited period of time must be transferred to the rank of sympathizers."

Comrade Cannon's remarks are more applaudable today, if that is possible, than they were in 1943 (following the 1940 expulsion of Burnham-Shachtman-Abern group.) One important internal difference between the past and present fight against the petty-bourgeois elements in the party is that we do not have a sizeable working class composition in the party's ranks today. Most of all we certainly do not have a group of comrades on the Political Committee with a proletarian orientation and neither do we have a James P. Cannon among them.

Besides the opposition's working class orientation and

a few dozen comrades scattered across the country with some intestinal fortitude, we do have something on our side, a developing militancy among the ranks of trade unionist: a very active struggle for self-determination in the Third World nation, a growing feminist movement and even students who are moving theoretically to the left of the Barnes grouping.

We might ask how this degeneration has happened with the old guard in the party still around. How could comrades like Tom Kerry, Farrell Dobbs, Joe Hansen allow the party to arrive in its present state of affairs.

One explanation is that the times mentioned above took their toll on these comrades. The party being faced with a tired and aging leadership welcomed in haste the new and untested comrades coming in and intrusted the party into talented arms that were decidedly more vigorous and at the time sounded good but turned out to be the waiting arms of the petty-bourgeoisie. Another factor is that while the old guard when it was at the helm and certainly having a proletarian orientation, because of the many objective factors itself, never completely gathered the tools of analyses and experience to ward off what has happened.

A LOGICAL REACTION: THE OPPOSITION

The internal opposition to the petty-bourgeois direction has taken four discernible trends.

1. Most undesirable, an increasing number of comrades have been voting with their feet, they have been walking out of the party and the YSA. A few go so far as to express "the party had degenerated beyond rebuilding. The ranks of the party having been so thoroughly infected by petty-bourgeois politics and recruiting policies of the leadership that few revolutionaries were left."

We vehemently oppose this cop out, if there were only one hundred working class oriented militants left in the party it would be worth the struggle to reach them. The tendency to quit the party by some militants must be discouraged. In fact an opposite policy must be pursued finding a way to recruit working class militants to the party.

2. Another error among a few oppositionists has been to overreact against the leadership's abandonment of a working class orientation and to counterpose an oversimplified romantic and undialectical line calling only for working in the unions and abandoning and even rejecting the struggles of the Third World for self-determination, the women's movement and the antiwar movement. Many of these comrades may be straightened out now that a correct center of working class politics has emerged in the Gregorich, Massey, McCann and Passen document. It is essential that those comrades who are leading the opposition struggle stay far away from anything that even remotely is a rejection of the Black, Chicano and Puerto Rican struggles for self-determination. The same applies to the women's movement and the antiwar movement. The petty-bourgeois leadership would like nothing better than to slander the opposition with an ultraleftist label.

3. The most pathetic opposition has been those whose response is, "now is not the time" stating that "we must wait until the petty-bourgeois Barnes clique make some political mistakes." We are sorry to say that most of these mistakes were made at least three to five years ago. The

leadership has simply pulled these comrades down with it.

4. The only fully supportable opposition that has emerged has been those comrades that have surfaced in the call "For a Proletarian Orientation" document. We note that none of the mentioned errors appears to be present here.

Until the presentation of the recent opposition document comrades sought out organizational methods of opposition. With each additional failure consciousness became lower and more comrades would drop away especially from the youth.

House tragedies are beginning to occur among the leadership. The New York branch has spun off a number of individual comrades from time to time whom the leadership feels are no longer needed or because they managed to take a weak stand toward this or that error the high command is making. These comrades should not be mistaken in any way for an alternative. Their chief characteristic is that they are careerists that have been alienated from their careers.

SUMMARY

We charge the leadership with failing to have a proletarian orientation and for conducting a series of tragedies that follow from this.

A. failure to intervene in the developing trade union struggles.

B. failure to intervene and build the Chicano struggle for self-determination.

C. failure to develop a program and intervene and build the Puerto Rican struggle for self-determination.

D. slowness and sectarianism in building the women's struggle and failure to project a strategy that would also relate to the oppression of working class women.

E. failure to implement the existing program in the Black struggle.

We charge the regime with holding no political analysis as to how the party should relate to a proletarian revolution.

At the beginning of this document we outlined various obstacles to the development to the working class strategy: 1. racism and sexism of American society. 2. the sell-out trade union bureaucracies 3. the lack of a revolutionary party rooted in the working class.

In reality, the movements of the various segments of the population have long begun this struggle by directly confronting racism and sexism and actively fighting them. It is the role of a Marxist to defend and build these struggles and point up the link between them and the struggle for socialism. If we are successful, though racism in the working class will still exist, it will have been sufficiently stifled to open the door for revolutionary working-class politics.

The second problem is the very problem which the Gregorich, Massey, McCann and Passen document explored and to which it found adequate solutions.

It is up to those elements with a proletarian orientation in the Socialist Workers Party to build the revolutionary party with a correct strategy. No document can do this without these comrades, we do not need endless analysis: it is ripe for the doing.

June 29, 1971

LESSONS AND PERSPECTIVES
A TURN TO THE RIGHT
Alfredo Perez, Lower Manhattan Branch,
New York Local

In order to begin re-implementing the Transitional Program the party must begin with a theoretical refutation of capitalism and its agents: pragmatism, empiricism and Stalinism. Only using dialectical materialism and fighting for that theory in the everyday life of the party will lead to a proletarian composition, leadership and correct program.

The history of our party illustrates an organization with a correct program, a proletarian leadership and composition in the period of the 1930s and '40s. Yet, today, the party displays a tendency toward class-collaboration. The Transitional Program has been twisted and mutilated to support exotic perversions that have grown outside the working class.

The period of the '40s was the aftermath for the defeat of the working class by the Stalinists. For Italy, France, Greece and many of the backward countries the proletarian revolution was on order but through the betrayals of Stalin and the Communist Parties, capitalism was spared and given enough time to restructure the system. After 1944 through the Bretton Woods Agreements and subsequent Marshall Plan the United States was the foundation for the rebuilding of European industry through the issuance of currency and armament expenditures.

The present conditions illustrate the long period of the growth of profit and the stabilization of the system is over. The bankruptcy of Rolls Royce, Lockheed and Penn-Central demonstrates that capitalism is in the last stage of its death agony. The majority document has taken Mandel's position that economic problems in the United States are due to European competition. The party leadership and the majority resolution, "Lessons and Perspectives of the New Radicalization" base themselves on Mandel's theory of neo-capitalism. The party leadership, its resolution, Mandel and the United Secretariat don't feel that capitalism is in crisis but in one of the breaks inside the recession. However, beneath the surface the working class on a world scale is in a wage offensive—for wages the capitalist class can no longer provide. The rate of profit has fallen as the wages have gone higher. The militant wage demands by the industrial proletariat constitute the driving force behind the May-June events in France in 1968, the British general strikes, the strike wave in the U.S. as well as the bloody civil wars in Indo-China, the Middle East, Ceylon and Pakistan.

Under Mandel's theory capitalism is still too powerful to be driven into a crisis since it has lessened its dependency upon the industrial proletariat by building up other sections of the system. Thus, to Mandel, the secretaries, the technicians and other sections of the new middle-class are a revolutionary force as powerful as the industrial proletariat. Mandel doesn't take into account that the wage victories of industrial workers have been chewing away at the profits of the capitalist. This compels the bosses to smash the gains of the proletariat back to a point where huge profits can be restored.

The current crisis in capitalism in the United States has driven the working class into a strike wave. The inability of capitalism in its death agony to provide higher wages, more benefits, less speedups and more free time

spontaneously generates general strikes and "job actions" even without political leadership. But in such crucial period where is the proletarian party being built which will be prepared to provide the leadership to these already aroused workers? The party portrays itself as the defender of nationalism, feminism, the student movement, and gay liberation. Nothing could be farther from Trotskyism and its program than the National Committee Resolution to the 1971 Convention.

The document begins on the assumption that the present unrest in the United States is being generated by the war in Indo-China. This is not Marxism and it is not correct. The present unrest is being generated by the disintegration of the capitalist system and the various ways it has come to fail various groups of people. If the war itself were the cause of the present struggles then why didn't the Korean war cause a similar wave of radicalization?

The beginning takes in Mandel's position that Europe and Japan are in positions to compete with American capitalism. On the contrary, European and Japanese capitalism are in their own last stages of death agony. Surely the devaluation of the Sterling Pound, the French Revolution of May-June 1968, the existing prerevolutionary conditions in Italy, the bankruptcy of Rolls-Royce in England, and the severe transportation strike in Japan should illustrate that not only is foreign capital in no position to challenge American capital but is itself farther down the road to destruction.

The document continues in the morass of petty-bourgeois politics:

"The central feature of the May 1970 antiwar upsurge was the most massive nationwide mobilization of students in history. This response to the Cambodian invasion demonstrated in action the unprecedented social weight and power of the American student movement seen elsewhere in the world to act as detonator of larger forces by sparking the mobilization of thousands."

In the leadership's perspective the student movement still has "unprecedented social weight." Without an assessment of this critical period, when masses of industrial workers are being driven by the contradictory forces in class society into waves of strikes, the leadership continues to place its emphasis on the student movement as a vanguard for the masses of workers. Only one force can turn the system upside-down and that is the force of mass production. The student rebellions are but one manifestation of currents of struggle between these masses and the industrial barons. The student radicals are a subordinate force behind the main force, the industrial proletariat. Now that the contradictions in capitalism have sharpened, the revolutionary class is arising to fulfill its destiny. The detonator of that class is the failure of the system to continue to provide what the workers have become accustomed to. The death agony of capitalism is no slow process but is accelerated by the rise of the working class in waves of strikes. As capitalism fails so does its capacity to stabilize the proletariat. Trotsky once stated that the very conservatism of the workers will bring on the socialist rev-

olution. What is sparking these "larger forces" is not the students but a corroding system which can no longer feed the conservatism of the workers. Or, can it be, the majority document is not speaking of the working class when it speaks of "larger forces" ?

The next stop on the Odyssey is the feminist movement. The document does not talk of recruitment to a class program. There is no mention of fighting feminism and the reformists who lead the women's movement. It doesn't even take into account the masses of working class women who will not be moved by the petty-bourgeois character of feminism but who can be moved around a class program. The party's perspective toward feminism is to ". . . embrace it as our own, to participate in it and *learn from it!*" (My emphasis.)

The co-opting of the previous position of the party on the "need for Black political action," by the ruling class has compelled the leadership to look elsewhere for its Black revolutionaries:

"Our central task in relation to the Black movement remains that of educating and propagandizing for the need to organize around a transitional program centered on the fight to win Black control of the Black community. The struggles of the Cairo, Illinois, Black United Front have been the main positive experience in the Black movement since 1969. Its leadership in the course of struggle has advanced important aspects of such a transitional program."

When the majority of the working class is in upsurge, nationalism can be only a reactionary force. Nationalism calls for separation within the working class on a racial basis. Today the majority of Black workers in the unions are the most exploited section of the class and are the most likely leaders of the socialist revolution. Black workers are listening more to demands for a general strike and the need to build a labor party than they are to nationalism. The leadership resolution is a betrayal of Black workers. It calls the slaughter and race war in Cairo "positive" and openly intends to take the whole Black question no farther than the "Black Control of Black Communities" issue. The leadership resolution not only fails, but refuses, to put the Black question into its true perspective and that is its capacity to become the vanguard for the class revolution. The Black proletariat is breeding the potential leaders of a socialist revolution on a spontaneous basis. That's to be seen in the numerous instances in the last two years in which Black workers have played an active and leading role during strikes.

As for the GI struggle that has shaken the army, the National Committee Resolution refrains from even discussing the possibilities of doing cadre work in the army. The document skims over the whole situation in the service very lightly. It does not even talk of the coming struggles of GI veterans which are already developing with the return of veterans, many handicapped, from Vietnam. The majority of GIs are young workers who are compelled by class pressures to either accept the draft or volunteer. A Marxist party must look at the GI rebellion as part of the revolt of the working class and must relate to it from a class program. Instead of consciously sending people into the army with the perspective of recruiting GIs to Trotskyism, the party has lately been encouraging comrades to fight the draft.

The second half of the "Perspectives and Lessons of the New Radicalization" is an analysis of the characteristics of the radicalization. According to the document it was various nationalist movements which "sparked" this new radicalization in the early 1960's. The document reads as if the conditions of capitalism have no bearing whatsoever; "General Characteristics of the New Radicalization" addresses itself to every surface current now on the scene, but goes no deeper.

International capital could not of course be able to maintain its hegemony long after the postwar Stalinist period. The first break occurred in 1959 with the Belgian miners' strike. From that point, the decay in world capitalism spread to the most powerful industrialized country, the United States. Here the class struggle first took the form of independent middle-class movements for reforms. But how, as Marxists, can we ignore the underlying forces setting these masses into action? The characteristics of these struggles flow from a certain international process. That process was the erosion of finance capital which forced sections of the American petty-bourgeoisie into motion. The peace movement, gay liberation, the renaissance of feminism, and nationalism are but linking events between the stable period of capital and the profound crisis of today. The workers' reaction to the worsening conditions has not yet been demonstrated because of the Stalinist and bureaucratic hegemony over the trade unions. Now that the crisis deepens has the proletariat begun to emerge to take its role as the vanguard of the socialist revolution.

The Majority Resolution doesn't say that. It considers each of the movements independent from any process. The second half is an exercise in pragmatism. It lays out the leadership's impressions of the characteristics of each movement and then it lays out how the party should work with each movement for the coming period. After discussing all the other movements occurring on the national scene the leadership's resolution finally gets to the working class:

"The same attitude [independence and self-reliance] will tend to mark the radicalization of the working class when the struggle unfolds to break the political dependence of the union movement on conservative misleaders and capitalist two-party system."

The struggle to break the political dependence is already unfolding. That was seen with the postal strikes, the taxi drivers strike and even the police strike in New York City. Each trade union has had fights in defiance of its leadership.

The Resolution makes the observation,

"As was the case in the early 1930's the process of radicalization began in other areas prior to an extensive upsurge and politicalization of the working class. But the issues raised by the social struggles of the 1960's have begun affecting the thinking of the entire country. And the radicalization has certain characteristics—the size and weight of the student movement; the extent of antiwar sentiment; the degree of nationalist consciousness; the challenge to the class, racist and sexist assumptions which were not present to anywhere the same degree during the radicalization of the 1930's."

What occurred in the 1930's was an upheaval of the

workers against their slave masters. It was a life and death fight between the proletariat and capital. What the above paragraph tries to imply is that if all the middle class manifestations had existed then as they exist today the workers would have won the struggle. What mutilation of history! First of all, what area was radicalized before the working class in the early '30's? Are the leaders of our party denying the IWW existed? That the Minneapolis strike of 1934 never happened? Are they denying the riots of the unemployed? When the workers went to war against the bosses in the plants and the factories they were to be betrayed by the Stalinists and the Social Democrats. The fact is that there was a petty-bourgeoisie and that it was on the other side. Only the most minimal numbers were with the workers, something the authors don't want to admit. This is the crux of the matter historically and for the future. In a period of crisis the petty-bourgeoisie is split apart and the critical task is to bring a section of it behind the working class and not the other way around. Only a strong working class movement can do this.

The second part of the Political Resolution refuses to assess the growth of Stalinism as an important crisis within the working class. The authors reassure us that the Communist Party doesn't have as many forces as it did in the 1930's and that our party has taken away the leadership role of the CP inside the antiwar movement and prevented them from assuming any such role in other petty-bourgeois movements.

The Stalinists don't have to lead or be involved in any of the petty-bourgeois movements the party is either leading, "embracing" or "learning from." All the Stalinists need is the trade unions. With the Stalinists playing a leading role inside the trade unions the defeat of the working class becomes more of a possibility now than in the 1930's. The deterioration of capitalism is followed by either a proletariat dictatorship or fascism. The capitalist crisis has reached its last stages; the only way the ruling class can continue to master the world is to force humanity back to barbarism. The only force powerful enough to lead a socialist revolution is the working class. If the proletariat falls into the hands of the Stalinists, as they have done so far, the struggle will end in defeat. The only force powerful enough to smash capitalism can be diverted to apathy, demoralization or back to illusions of capitalism if our party continues to underestimate the strength and theoretical danger of Stalinism.

Stalinism is the political ideology of an international organization self-exiled from Marxism. It has bred the most corrupt and treacherous elements. Stalinism is the death of the Bolshevik Party in Russia, the betrayals of the Chinese workers, the barriers against the Spanish workers, the major cause of fascism in Germany, the derailment of the CIO into the Democratic Party. The theoretical character of Stalinism is to tie up the momentum of the proletariat with the liberal section of the capitalist class. In periods when workers are moving toward revolution the Communist Party functions as an agent for the bosses. For our party, with traditions rooted in 40 years of fighting Stalinism in the United States, to present such an innocuous treatment of the CP characterizes the political bankruptcy of this document.

The failure of the document to analyze the present danger of Stalinism—even to mention it at all—stems from the leadership's failure to understand the methodological character of capitalism. The international rulers are at a

point where the only handle they have left before their downfall is the potential betrayal of the working class by the Stalinists and the social democrats. Stalinism serves the capitalist class by diverting the momentum of the revolutionary class away from a head-on clash. Its perspective is to win political positions in the labor bureaucracy and the capitalist camp by using the working class. Now, more than ever, the capitalist class needs its agents to beat back the strike offensives for higher wages. Stalinists have already blocked with Woodcock of the UAW against any real gains by the ranks. The Communist Party's continuous and stated opposition to a general strike and the construction of a labor party reflect in but the smallest way the capability of the Communist Party and its fellow travelers to exert a reactionary force in the near future.

The final section of the Resolution attempts to identify any opposition to the leadership's policies with opponent organizations. "Perspective and Lessons of the New Radicalization" contradicts the Transitional Program and the principles of Trotskyism. The Stalinists exploit the revisionism that the party is falling into; they point out to their new recruits the petty-bourgeois orientation of the party and attempt to discredit Trotskyism. The authors have gall to associate all opposition to non-Marxist policies as coming from outside the party. The enemies of Trotskyism are ideologies which are alien to historical materialism. Because the leadership has fallen prey to one of these enemies doesn't mean the whole party should agree. On the contrary, it means that the party has to take up the fight to shake loose of such entrapment.

The program proposed by the leadership hides behind a left-cover. It claims to call for a fight inside the trade unions, for building a labor party and working with the unemployed. Then it turns around:

"Because of the continued power and grip of the bureaucracy, we still have to use flanking tactics in the unions, which makes the immediate target of our demands the class enemy, and which avoid the *premature precipitations of power struggles in the unions*. Our basic task remains one of propaganda and education. . . ." (My emphasis.)

The authors refuse to fight against the hacks who run the unions. According to the leadership the party is not yet a party but a "small nucleus of cadres" formed around a program calling for the building of a party. Therefore it would do better recruiting petty-bourgeois elements, involve the party around their struggles and attempt to recruit "politicized" workers on the basis of the movements. In short, the program which this document proposes is not only to continue abstaining from the class struggle but to turn further to the right by deliberately orienting our party to the most petty-bourgeois elements and to begin redefining the party into an organization of cadres.

"Lessons and Perspectives of the New Radicalization" demonstrates how far the party leadership has gone over to Pabloism. The new radicalization that the authors speak of is no different than the concepts of Pablo's "New World Reality." Pablo saw the revolutionary struggle as one in which petty-bourgeois elements, especially those in colonial countries would be the leaders of the world revolution. The working class, according to his theories, was a subordinate force behind the struggle between the petty-bourgeoisie and the ruling class. Pablo could not con-

ceive of a proletarian party as a vanguard but proposed the liquidation of Trotskyist organizations into various nationalist movements throughout the world. The nuclei concept of "Lessons and Perspectives" is not new. It was the logic of Shachtman's reverse transition, the demands of the Cochranites and the theory of Michel Pablo. Although the party fought empirically against Pablo's "new realities" members of the leadership weren't immune to the same pressures acting on Pablo. Between the call to "embrace this movement [of feminism] as our own" and the explanation of our role among the trade unions as one of "propaganda and education" there is more than one echo of liquidationism in the leadership document. The 1971 Majority Resolution stands in contrast to past resolutions in the absence of a working class orientation and an open avowal of a petty-bourgeois program.

The leadership resolution implies many transitional programs, one for every movement, when in reality there is only one transitional program and each movement should be related to from *the* Transitional Program. Each of the

movements that are taking place have no material roots but in the class struggle. It may appear on the surface of things that each of these movements has a perspective and a history of its very own but in fact they are all a result of the deflation of the boom. Now with the rise of the working class to its destiny as the major combatant against capitalism, the petty-bourgeoisie is refusing to take sides and attempting to get itself out of the way of the final war between the past and the future. It would seem that the majority document sees these two roles as reversed.

It must be emphasized that a tactical turn to the working class is insufficient. What is required is a theoretical re-orientation toward a truly proletarian party.

The abandonment of the Transitional Program, by neither fighting for it nor following from it, only illustrates how far the party has absconded from the class struggle. Changing the class character of the organization and directing it into a struggle between the petty-bourgeoisie and the capitalist class has already been completed.

July 1, 1971