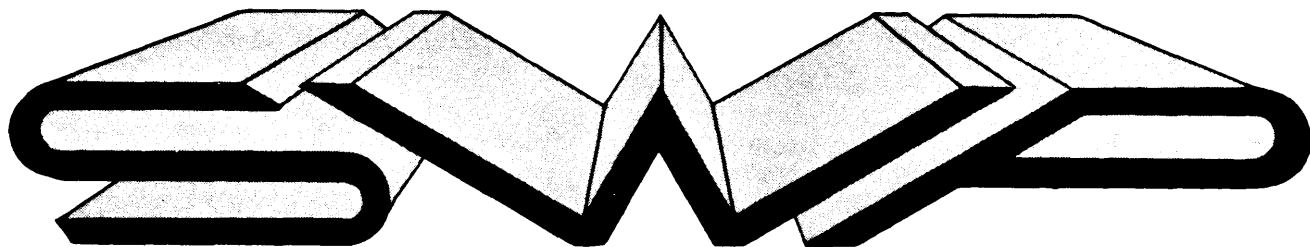


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CONTENTS

THE REAL MEANING OF THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY by Jack Barnes and Barry Sheppard	3
APPENDIX	17
THE MINORITY'S DEVIATION FROM THE SWP'S POSITION ON NATIONALISM by Gary Sommer, Oakland-Berkeley Branch	19
BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN THE CURRENT RADICALIZATION, SUMMARY by Bob Himmel, San Francisco Branch	20
HAS THE PARTY ADAPTED TO THE TRADE UNION BUREAUCRACY? And Related Questions by Jeff Mackler, Oakland-Berkeley Branch	24
ERNEST MANDEL'S THEORY OF NEOCAPITALISM — CORRECTING THE RECORD by Dick Roberts, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local	29

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THE REAL MEANING OF THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY

By Jack Barnes and Barry Sheppard

The draft Political Resolution, submitted by the National Committee to the party for discussion and decision at the convention develops further the analysis of the unfolding radicalization which the party began at the 1967 convention and outlines the party-building tasks before us. Adopted unanimously by the members of the National Committee present at the March plenum, the resolution comes out of a process of collective thinking by Trotskyist cadres and a period of testing the conclusions in the concrete struggles of the radicalization.

The central question dealt with in the resolution is: What are the next steps to take in constructing a Leninist party in the United States? What should be done next to maximize the recruitment, education, and assimilation of cadres necessary to build the nucleus of the future mass revolutionary workers party? The resolution presents an optimistic perspective—a situation with unprecedented opportunities for the party both because of the depth and extent of the current radicalization and our strength relative to our opponents. This perspective flows from an analysis of the radicalization and its roots in the evolution of the class struggle on a world scale.

Against the line of the National Committee draft Political Resolution, the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency have submitted a counter-resolution. Their document is not an amendment or criticism within the general line of the National Committee draft resolution but a line counter to it. If adopted, it would have to be the guide for the work of the party in the important period ahead.

The authors of *For A Proletarian Orientation* constituted themselves as an organized grouping from the time of the submission of their document and assigned spokespersons to report on their resolution to the branches. They have now declared themselves a tendency, striving to win a majority to their views.

However, the declaration of the formation of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency at a point near the close of the discussion period leaves less clear than at the beginning of the discussion just what the tendency really is and stands for. The evolution of this grouping, which is one of the more peculiar in the history of the SWP, has compounded the confusion.

After the August 1970 Oberlin Socialist Activists and Educational Conference, Comrade Gregorich informed the national office that she and five other comrades who agreed with her were collaborating in drafting a document which they believed would define a tendency in the upcoming preconvention period.

Before seeing the draft Political Resolution presented by the National Committee to open the discussion, Comrades Gregorich, Passen, Massey and McCann submitted *For A Proletarian Orientation*. Their document rejects the central features of the party's analysis of, orientation toward, perspective for, and party-building activity in the movements of struggle which are developing out of the current radicalization. At the same time it presents no clear analysis of the current radicalization, nor does it lay out a program of intervention by the party in the real social and political struggles occurring in the country. It begins with a version of the party's history which claims to demonstrate that the party has gone through a fifteen-year degeneration. Then comes a sociological

and psychological analysis of the "petty bourgeoisification" of the party and its leadership, a degeneration which they charge has led the party to abandon its proletarian orientation and revise Leninism.

After seeing the draft Political Resolution and report adopted by the National Committee, and participating in the initial branch pre-convention discussions, Comrades Gregorich, Passen, McCann and Massey submitted a second document to explain the "meaning" of their first document. Their views were further elaborated orally by the reporters assigned by the *For A Proletarian Orientation* grouping to represent their viewpoint in branch discussions.

They then declared themselves a tendency based on (1) their original document, *For A Proletarian Orientation*, (2) their second document explaining the meaning of the first document, and (3) a discussion article submitted by Comrade Lauren Charous of the Oakland/Berkeley branch. In their formal tendency declaration (*Discussion Bulletin [DB]* Vol. 29, No. 16) they reject the party-building strategy outlined in the draft resolution and the report on it adopted by the National Committee. They say it is counter to their own strategy.

They then turn around and state in the same declaration that their documents "clearly support" the positions established by the National Committee draft Political Resolution on the developing movements of the radicalization! This astonishing statement clearly contradicts the fact that they have just spent 62 pages establishing their vigorous rejection of the party's strategy, practice and recent history.

* * *

The *For A Proletarian Orientation* resolution opens by stating that its central point will be to prove that the Socialist Workers Party, despite what it may say, no longer has a proletarian orientation, and that the party leadership is developing anti-Leninist concepts of party building. Its concluding sentence states bluntly that the party has no hope at all of leading the working class to overthrow capitalism if it does not adopt the Gregorich strategy NOW!

The authors of *For A Proletarian Orientation* fail to prove this central charge. Furthermore, they fail to come to grips with the basic economic and political analysis of the roots, development, and perspectives of the current radicalization contained in the National Committee draft Political Resolution, an analysis which reaffirms our proletarian orientation and places it in the context of the concrete stage of development of the class struggle on an international scale.

In fact, the "central point" of their resolution has nothing to do with the real central question facing the party: What to do next in building the cadre, which is the indispensable nucleus of the future mass Leninist party.

THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY SCHOOL OF QUOTATIONS

The method used by the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency is barren and scholastic. It consists of

hunting for quotations and trimming them to buttress a conclusion that has been previously arrived at. (Comrade Louis Proyect asserts in *DB Vol. 29, No. 14* that they have 108 quotations in *For A Proletarian Orientation* alone.)

Regardless of original intent there is a deadly logic to such a method. Quotations become selective statements lifted out of the time, place and circumstance to which they refer. Those that run counter to the previously arrived at conclusions are left out. Thus, no consideration is given to the present relevance of the given quotation.

In contrast to these scholastics, critical Marxists employ the dialectical method of analyzing concrete and changing reality in order to project party tasks based on that analysis. Past theoretical acquisitions and experiences are indispensable tools—but only if they are understood in their proper context, rather than offered as Biblical texts, applicable to all times and places.

The relentless pursuit of this barren method soon exhausts "suitable" quotations, even torn from context, and special underlining has to be added to make sure the slow reader understands what the quotation "really" means—even if it means the exact opposite. The selective trimming of quotations can, regardless of intent, lead to falsification.

We do not propose to go through all their quotations, putting them in their proper context. That would require a book. A few examples will suffice.

Comrade Louis Proyect, in his article on the Cochran fight (*DB Vol. 29, No. 14*) outlines how in selecting and abstracting they arrive at complete distortion.

They quote statements by party leaders in the 1930s concerning trade-union tactics, but leave out of account the decisive fact that the burgeoning CIO was an ascending social movement, the center of a mass radicalization. The present situation in the unions is radically different. For one thing, they have become encrusted with a conservative, petty-bourgeois layer, which is the main reason the trade unions are presently lagging behind other sectors in the radicalization. This process has been thoroughly analyzed by the party over the years.

In Comrade Lauren Charous' document, and in the "meaning" document, the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency quote from Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* (*DB Vol. 29, No. 9, p. 13*; and *DB Vol. 29, No. 15, p.5*).

To show what Lenin "really" meant, they (not Lenin) underline a sentence that reads: "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." From this, the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency draw the fundamental conclusion that the SWP must begin to build a base in the working class *first*, through "colonizing key sectors of the proletariat," in the "tradition of Lenin rather than that of Barnes." We will come back to this point.

A careful reading of even this one sentence, however, discloses that Lenin approached this, the question of party-building "activities among the workers," in the concrete, not in abstract formulas good for all times and places. The sentence itself is taken from a section of *What Is To Be Done?* entitled "The Working Class as Vanguard Fighter for Democracy," one of the richest in all of Lenin's writings. Its central point is the opposite of the one made by our critics. It is the necessity of the revolutionary party engaging in rounded political activity, intervening as a

vanguard fighter in all progressive social and political struggles among all classes, as far as it is able, against the Economists' narrow conception of limiting the struggle to trade union issues.

In *For A Proletarian Orientation*, on pages 8 and 9, the authors quote from Lenin's *Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder*. This quotation comes from a section of that work which polemicizes against a tendency in the newly formed Communist International which was for building "revolutionary" trade unions, what Lenin called "brand-new immaculate little 'Workers' Unions,'" as opposed to working within the existing mass trade unions. It has nothing to do with the debate over the tactics of colonizing our members in the industrial trade unions at this time—unless the comrades of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency are charging that the SWP leadership is drifting towards building alternate "revolutionary" trade unions.

On page 7 of his discussion article (*DB Vol. 29, No. 9*) Comrade Lauren Charous quotes from a letter from James P. Cannon to Ray Dunne reproduced in *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, to buttress his contention that the party should be colonizing its members in "key plants" to prepare for explosions in the working class. Again there is underlining, not by Cannon but by Charous. Here is the quotation as Comrade Charous gives it.

Our trade unionist wing in Minnesota has floated in recent years on the stream of success made possible by the heroic struggles of 1934, which were in turn inspired — *it should not be forgotten*—by the patient and stubborn theoretical and political work carried out in isolation by the leading cadre in the six years which preceded the 1934 strikes.

Read it again, Comrade Charous. Read the words you did not underline, ". . . by the patient and stubborn theoretical and political work. . . ." Reread the *History of American Trotskyism* about the stubborn theoretical and political work we were doing in that period, oriented mainly towards Communist Party members, in the theoretical and political struggle against Stalinism.

Again, there is a selective quotation from the letter, which in its full text clearly makes the opposite point from what Comrade Charous claims it does. The full text of this letter is appended. There is much in it of relevance to this discussion.

An example of falsification of the party position is contained on page 7 of Comrade Charous' contribution. He quotes from Peter Seidman's local YSA tasks and perspectives report printed in the *Young Socialist Organizer*: "Every comrade must think out how he or she can get a job on campus or return to school. We must concretely figure out how non-campus comrades can be involved in the work of campus fractions. . . ." Comrade Charous concludes from this quotation: "The current orientation of the party is clear: to take comrades, including those in the unions, and to send them back onto the campus."

The following is an excerpt from the political report adopted by the 1969 convention of the SWP:

I won't go into much depth on the youth movement because you all read the resolution entitled *The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International*. There are some points to underscore, however. The explosion in American education has caused a qualitative change in the structure and social

weight of the American students that affects their importance to the struggle for socialism and the degree to which they will be a factor in all stages of this struggle. The resolution points to the possible role of students as detonators of larger struggles, as we have seen in examples around the world. The student arena has been a proving ground for our ideas and a tested area of recruitment. It is this basic analysis of the change in weight and structure of the American youth movement that establishes our concept of the independent character of the Young Socialist Alliance and the key role of the YSA in contending for leadership among the students in all stages of the radicalization.

We note, in this regard, that the party's basic orientation is not toward the student movement, and it will not be. The party intervenes, in whatever way possible, in all aspects of the mass movement. But the role of the YSA will become even more important as the class struggle deepens and the party moves forward. This is outlined completely in the resolution on the youth movement.

Will there be a contradiction in our orientation as the radicalization deepens? It is clear that the opportunities for recruitment and influence in the student milieu will also expand greatly. At that time, won't the party turn away from the student milieu? Or will we have to pass up other aspects of the struggle in the mass movement? It is here that the YSA's particular role is crucial in terms of what it can accomplish among the masses of youth. The party's role, its intervention in and orientation towards the openings that will occur in all areas of the mass movement, remains clear.

Comrade Seidman's quote refers to a concrete situation that the New York YSA faced, when it had a very small campus fraction. His projection was in line with the YSA's general campus orientation. The political report adopted by the 1969 convention re-emphasizes the SWP's orientation.

Our quote hunters are quite familiar with this report to the 1969 convention. Why did they not quote it to show the party's position and then polemicize against it? Because their charge that "The current orientation of the party is clear: to take comrades, including those in unions, and to send them back onto the campus. . . ." would be clearly shown up for the falsehood it is.

THEORETICAL ERRORS

To buttress their "central point," the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency begin with a theoretical discussion of being and consciousness. As was demonstrated in the contributions of Comrades Britton and Coontz (*DB* Vol. 29, No. 18) their position amounts to vulgar materialism, a debasement of Marxism.

Their next losing bout with theory takes place in the field of economics. Their hunt for the roots of the party's degeneration leads them to Comrade Ernest Mandel's works on "neo-capitalism," the evolution of the make-up of the working class, the sociology of the student movement, and the character of the developing crisis of world capitalism.

Our pundits assert that much that is evil in the party's present position can be traced to Mandel's revision of Marxian economics and definitions of social classes, with the SWP "following the logic of Mandel's position without

admitting it."

(Right here, let us clear up one point for our critics. We make no secret of the fact that we are in basic agreement with Comrade Mandel's contributions to the analysis of contemporary capitalism. The analysis of the evolution of the contradictions facing the world capitalist economy which is contained in the National Committee draft Political Resolution and in several previous resolutions and reports is heavily indebted to Comrade Mandel. We are in basic agreement with his analysis of the changing structure of the working class and the importance of the evolution of the student movement. It is difficult to imagine how this can be news to the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency.)

Against Mandel, our champions of theory bring forth —Marx. But as Comrades Coontz, Roberts and London have pointed out, they don't understand Marx, and their whole "theory" collapses at the slightest examination.

Clarity on these questions is important for the party, not only internally, but publicly and on an international scale. The Healy-Wohlforth gang have opened a propaganda campaign against the SWP on this question. In a recently issued 80-page book, titled "Ernest Mandel: The Fraud of Neo-Capitalism," Workers League spokesman Dennis O'Casey says, "At the time of the last international congress of the United Secretariat, the leadership of the SWP found itself at loggerheads with Mandel over the issue of the planned liquidation of the Latin American sections into OLAS. Today Ernest Mandel's theories are being brought full square into the American Pabloite movement. These theories are being used by the leadership of the SWP as a bludgeon against those in the SWP-YSA who are today echoing with much force the call issued at the time of the congress for a return to the road of Trotskyism."

REWRITING PARTY HISTORY

In the Proletarian Orientation Tendency school of party history, the fight with the Cochranites was the party's last stand in defense of a proletarian orientation. Afterward, they say, the party underwent a process of petty-bourgeoisification; which became an "orientation in and of itself" by 1964. This was all supposedly brought off by the leadership behind the backs of the party. Without "open acknowledgement," we had adopted the Bartell position on "greener pastures." (*DB* Vol 29, No. 2, p. 14)

Everything they say about the history of the party before, during and after the Cochran fight is wrong.

The leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency try to create the false impression that the issue in that fight was whether or not the unions are our main field of work at all times. They buttress this argument through the use of selective quotations interaced with their own explanations of what the quotations mean. In passing, they blur over the fact that the Cochran wing of the oppositional combination considered itself the finest fruit of the proletarian wing of the party, and was not at all opposed to an orientation towards the unions—with the small unstated amendment that by this they meant an orientation towards the more "advanced" wing of the CIO bureaucracy.

The Cochran-Bartell-Clark faction was an unprincipled combination which had as its common denominator *liquidationism*. Those around Cochran were moving in the direction of liquidating the party in favor of "work" inside the trade union bureaucracy. Those around Bartell were

moving in the direction of liquidating the party in capitulation to the Stalinists and Stalinist-influenced circles. What they had in common was opposition to building a revolutionary socialist party based on a clear revolutionary socialist program, acting as a propaganda nucleus that intended to become a party of mass action. The central issue in this fight was the preservation of the party cadre itself, and its perspective of becoming a mass Leninist party.

Neither Cochran's relatively privileged unionists and bureaucrats, nor Bartell's Stalinists were "greener pastures." And Bartell's independent Negro and student movements were developments of the future, not opportunities that the party was missing at that time. The trouble with all wings of the Cochranites was not that they sought "greener pastures," that is, new openings and opportunities for the party, but that their talk of "greener pastures" was actually a smoke-screen to hide their exit from revolutionary working-class politics and the hard long task of building the revolutionary working class party.

Less than one year after the Cochran fight, the sixteenth convention of the party noted the modest new openings on campus and defined more carefully what was possible to do in the unions at that time. It was noted at the convention that the character of the propaganda openings the party then saw bore a superficial resemblance to some of the things the Cochranites had said. The difference was that the party adjusted its propaganda work and seized upon new openings and developments—and there were many less than there are today—to build the party, not as an excuse to liquidate it.

At that convention, Comrade Cannon made a speech in which he outlined how rounded party activity including student work was the key to revolutionary trade union activity in the circumstances the party faced at that time (DB A-27).

That speech is recommended to all comrades who want to study party history. Comrades interested in the true history of the Cochran fight are urged to listen to the classes given by Harry Ring, who participated in the fight against Bartell in New York, and Al Hansen, who participated in the fight against Cochran in Detroit. They are available on tape from the National Tape Service. After listening to them, reread the *For A Proletarian Orientation* version of the Cochran fight.

In 1957, according to the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency, the process of petty-bourgeoisification set in. We made a tactical turn which "led the party deeper and deeper into a petty bourgeois milieu" and the "party moved further and further from the working class." (DB Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 14,15)

As an initial example of this process, they refer to our tactic of regroupment after the Hungarian revolution and the Khrushchev revelations led to a deep shakeup of the American Communist Party. "During these years [1957 to 1959] the party's main public activity was working with CPers and ex-CPers, and Bartell," they say. "This work centered around running a 'united socialist election campaign' to oppose the capitalist parties." (see pages 14 and 15 of *For A Proletarian Orientation*.)

While they admit this work had its "positive" side, they actually see this struggle to break up the Stalinists' domination of the American radical movement and recruit what was to be had from their membership and periphery—in other words, to deal some powerful blows against our main opponent in the working class movement—as moving "further and further from the working class."

One of the key points in this struggle was our participation in the United Socialist ticket in New York (for some reason the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency put quotation marks around "united socialist election campaign." Do they question whether it was united? Socialist? Or worthwhile?). This campaign enabled us to battle the class collaborationist line of the Stalinists in a most effective way. It was a significant opportunity to propagandize for principled working class politics against petty-bourgeois popular frontism with which the CP had contaminated a whole section of the radical and workers movement.

A very revealing omission is made by the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency in their evaluation of the regroupment period.

They fail to mention that the principal accomplishment of regroupment was the formation of the Young Socialist Alliance, one of the decisive instruments for the construction of the Leninist party of the American revolution! The YSA was built from then on in struggle, primarily against the Stalinists and the Social Democrats, for a revolutionary socialist program on the key class questions facing the radical movement, including independent working class politics, defense of the workers states, opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracies, support to the Black struggle, etc.

The next fatal step leading to the petty bourgeoisification of the party is chronicled by the Proletarian Orientation leaders: "Immediately after the Khrushchev revelations came the civil rights movement, the Cuban Revolution, the anti-HUAC demonstrations, the Student Peace Unions, and so on. All of these presented the party with opportunities to intervene, propagandize, and recruit.

"All of these social movements also, because they were mainly petty-bourgeois in composition, led the party deeper and deeper into a petty-bourgeois milieu." (DB Vol. 29, No. 2, p. 14)

The movement in defense of the first successful workers revolution in the Western hemisphere is passed off as just another petty-bourgeois swamp. In reality, the Cuban Revolution was the acid test of proletarian internationalism. Every other tendency in this country failed miserably to meet this challenge, including the Wohlforthites and Robertsonites in our own ranks, who didn't want us poisoned by the petty-bourgeois leadership of the Cuban Revolution.

The youth that we won as a result of this work were won to the perspective of the proletarian revolution. They were won over by the example of the Cuban workers, who demonstrated in action the capacity of the working class to radicalize, to revolutionize, to transform itself and embark upon the construction of a new society. Winning these youth was an important step forward in the construction of the YSA and the renewal of the SWP.

The characterization of the civil-rights movement as petty-bourgeois boggles the imagination. This movement was the beginning of the new upsurge of the Black masses, which saw tens of thousands of Afro-Americans demonstrating in the streets year after year and a growing consciousness among Black people of their oppression as a nationality. This upsurge marked the beginning of the current radicalization. To belittle this movement as petty-bourgeois almost surpasses the blindness of Healy, Wohlforth and Robertson—and speaks volumes about the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency.

In the Student Peace Union, we struggled as a minority against the dominant Shachtmanite Young Peoples Socialist League, for a line in defense of the workers states, including Cuba; that is, for an anti-imperialist line, for

proletarian internationalism. The "third-camp" SPU finally collapsed during the 1962 missile crisis, verifying, albeit negatively, our position.

Far from being contradictory to building a proletarian party, far from being contradictory to our proletarian orientation, our work in this period was essential to winning important new cadres to working-class politics (that is, revolutionary-socialist politics) and the revolutionary socialist party. Principled participation in the openings created by the class struggle on an international scale was then and remains now our central task in building the party.

This section of the *For A Proletarian Orientation* resolution dealing with party history between 1957 and 1964 reveals the real "meaning" of the politics of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency. Their misleading analysis of regroupment, the defense of the Cuban Revolution, the civil-rights movement, and the student movement of that time puts in first place the fact that many of the people we recruited from our work in these movements came from the campus and makes this the criteria for judging them as essentially petty-bourgeois. This vulgar materialism has nothing in common with Marxism, which puts in first place the fact that these young revolutionaries had broken with the capitalist class and committed themselves to the revolutionary party on the central political issues of the day. It is not the social origin of individual cadres or their "mentality" but the question of political program and practice that is decisive if one is to prove the petty-bourgeoisification of the SWP.

Building the party and youth through our participation in these movements, which centered around a fight for a revolutionary-socialist line in them, did not take us "further and further from the working class," but helped further lay the foundations for reaching the American workers who will politicalize and radicalize.

The pre-Cochrane history of the party, according to the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency was a Gregorichian paradise, with colonization of unions the foremost feature of party activity. In reality, party activity has always been based on rounded political activity in all areas of the class struggle, not the union movement alone. We have adopted different tactics towards the union movement, including major colonizations, depending upon the objective political situation in the country, in the unions, and in our own party. (See Frank Lovell's remarks in *DB Vol. 29, No. 12*)

And the future will see many of these tactics repeated, including selective colonization as well as different tactics.

THE POLITICS OF THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY LEADERS

The political line of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency in regard to the existing radicalization appears confused and contradictory. In their tendency declaration they assert they "clearly support the positions taken by the SWP on the developing movements. . . ." Yet the thrust of their documents bears out just the opposite of this contention. While they are nowhere clear on their political positions, their dominant mood of recoiling from the current radicalization leads them to sectarian political positions.

Their documents give the impression that the developing movements of the radicalization are essentially petty-bourgeois. Comrade Charous, on page 6 of his discussion arti-

cle, lectures us on how to intervene in these "social movements against oppression among petty-bourgeois layers." He goes on to say that we must "concretely lay out [the party's] intervention into the working class: the unions, the anti-war G.I. movement, and the working class women's movement."

Apparently only one wing of the antiwar movement, the GI movement, is worthy in their eyes of being considered "working class." Comrade Matilde Zimmermann (*DB Vol. 29, No. 14*) has already answered the groundless assertion that the party neglects GI work. Apparently our critics believe that the antiwar movement is a petty-bourgeois movement because students have formed the most consistent and organized section of it. Again, we see the question of composition taking precedence over politics, program and action (we leave aside for the moment the class nature of students in the U. S. today).

This question was raised prior to the 1969 party convention by Comrade David Fender, and answered by Comrade Tom Kerry (*DB Vol. 26 No 12*). It is worth rereading today. The basic nature of the antiwar movement is determined by the fact that it is a movement of extra-parliamentary mass action in opposition to the imperialist war being waged against the Indochinese colonial revolution and the North Vietnamese workers state. Far from being alien to the working class this movement is objectively anti-imperialist, and in the interests of the world socialist revolution.

The Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders also charge the party leadership with capitulation to the union bureaucracy within the antiwar movement. In addition to belittling the rank-and-file unionists mobilized for the antiwar actions, they misunderstand why some union bureaucrats are now supporting the antiwar movement. Comrades Gurewitz and Mackler answered them in *DB Vol. 29 Nos. 14 and 19*, pointing out that by their arguments they call into question our conception of the united-front type coalitions to build the antiwar movement.

Comrade Charous, on page 13 of his article, outlines "how" to intervene in the antiwar movement: "For us, work in the proletarian milieu and among the workers in the factories is seen as the most important place to carry out our political work, such as antiwar, Black and Brown, and women's work."

If we had adopted this as a strategy in building the antiwar movement, neither would the mass actions have taken place on the scale they did nor would the antiwar movement have the present openings to reach increasing numbers of workers and involve them in the antiwar struggle. We would have defaulted on the decisive international class struggle issue. It would have been a proof of the degeneration of the SWP through the influence of alien class pressures on our political principles and activity.

We build the antiwar movement with whatever social forces are willing to engage in mass actions against the war. This has meant the students first and most of all, because they have formed the largest contingent of the antiwar movement and its left wing. From this base, the antiwar movement has reached out to involve other sectors of society, including the unionists who demonstrated on April 24. We can expect (and will work to that end, as we have been) that, as the war unfolds and the antiwar movement continues to broaden, we will see the active participation of more and more workers in it. That has

been our explicit public position from the beginning in our struggles within the antiwar movement against ultra-leftism and popular-frontism.

To have made "work in the proletarian milieu and among workers in the factories" the "most important place" to carry out our antiwar work would have meant abandoning the very methods by which we can hope to involve workers in the antiwar movement. Our "proletarian" critics wish to replace our antiwar strategy, based on an analysis of the real political situation today and tested in practice over a number of years, with another that is abstractly oriented to the "workers in the factories." Forced to explain the success of the antiwar movement in beginning to reach and mobilize workers, they attempt to deny that any such thing has happened at all.

"When the bureaucrats for their own reasons provide trains and/or buses and mobilize their rank and file for a march on Washington, this is not a rank and file action, it is an action of the tops," opine our critics. (*DB Vol. 29 No. 2, p. 30*).

Comrade Gurewitz is justifiably astounded by such a statement. "When thousands of hospital workers from local 1199 in New York boarded buses and trains to go to Washington April 24 that was not a rank and file action — it was an action of the tops — all 2,000 of them.

"Why? Because the bureaucrats rented the buses. You can really see how off-base the thinking is if you apply the same logic to the question of strikes. By their tortured logic most *strikes* today are not 'rank and file actions,' since, despite the increase in wildcats, most strikes today are still called by the union bureaucracy, albeit 'for their own reasons.'"

The same can be said for the approach of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency to Black, Chicano and women's work. They insist upon the supposed principle that our tactics in these movements must at all times revolve around work with "workers in the factories."

Their mechanical strategy is also indicated on page 24 of *For A Proletarian Orientation*: "The strategy of the Transitional Program is that the party talks directly to the workers, becomes part of the workers, and then, from its base in the working class, talks directly to other sectors of society."

The general law they draw from their quotation of Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?*, previously referred to, is indicated by Comrade Charous (page 13): "Lenin understood the necessity of basing the vanguard party *on and in* the working class *first*."

Of course, we would be much better off if we had entered this period of radicalization as a mass party with a mass base in the working class. Our participation in and effect on all social movements would thereby be qualitatively different. It would also have been much better if the trade unions had vigorously entered the struggles of the current radicalization from the beginning. Unfortunately, neither of these has been the case. And if we had applied the *For A Proletarian Orientation* schema, we would have been sitting on the sidelines waiting to establish a mass base among the workers before "talking" to the students who were ready for action. We would have ended up speaking to ourselves — while congratulating ourselves on our "pure proletarian" composition.

One of the party positions which is most repugnant to the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency is our analysis of the May 1970 events. We contended that those events — the greatest general strike of students the world

has ever seen, the beginnings of winning the antiwar university, the mass actions in the streets, the resulting deep rift in the ruling class which extended right up into Nixon's cabinet — plunged the country into a deep social crisis. This conclusion is seen as "pragmatic genuflection before the student movement." Why? Because we dared to talk of a "major social crisis," says Comrade Charous on p. 12, in the "absence of active struggle by the working class." He asks us if we weren't "irresponsible" and if we haven't miseducated by our analysis of these events. What Comrade Charous fails to see is that if the workers had massively joined the student political strike, it would have been more than a "major social crisis" — it would have ushered in a pre-revolutionary situation.

The entire discussion of the May events by the leadership of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency distorts the party's position. They charge that the party has illusions that the student movement will replace the working class as the vanguard of the socialist revolution, and imply that the party leadership doesn't understand that a prerequisite for a pre-revolutionary situation is the politicalization, radicalization and self-mobilization of a decisive section of the working class. This goes beyond distortion toward blatant dishonesty. The truth is that the draft Political Resolution and report adopted by the National Committee discuss these questions and reject the very positions ascribed to them by the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency.

According to our "proletarian" theoreticians, May 1970 proved nothing new about the "political weight and power of the students." On the contrary, they assert, "The strike merely reaffirmed the basic political powerlessness of the students. The students took over the universities and the capitalist machinery of production didn't even sputter." (*DB Vol. 29 No. 2, p. 25*)

The last sentence may be a powerful rebuttal to anyone who thinks the universities are the places where capitalist production is carried on. But it hardly proves the "basic political powerlessness" of students. The increased social weight and power of students has been evidenced not only in the unprecedented events of May 1970 in this country, but throughout the world. In the new rise of the world revolution, students have played a qualitatively more significant role than ever before in history. We need only mention France, Quebec, Ireland, Pakistan, Mexico, Ceylon, Czechoslovakia, Poland — to name just a few countries where student actions have triggered and inspired other layers, including the working class, into massive social struggle. The Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders pass off this undeniable phenomenon: ". . . the current student radicalization does not indicate any new social power on the part of students." (*DB Vol. 29 No. 2, p. 25*)

The leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency characterize the students as a petty-bourgeois layer (*DB Vol. 29 No. 2, p. 7*). The document *The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, gives a much more precise and accurate description of the class character of the students in today's world. Students are not a special class or part of a class, in the sense of participating in the process of production as workers, petty bourgeois, or capitalists. Students are in transition, coming from families in all classes, and going through a process of training before entering the process of production. Since World War II, especially in this country, the social background of students has steadily shifted to include a growing percentage of students from working class families.

Comrade Mark Friedman outlines (*DB Vol. 29 No. 14*) the technological and sociological changes that underly the changing role, social background, and perspectives of students and that help explain the worldwide radicalization of youth in neo-capitalism. These are developed in detail in *The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International*.

Comrades Passen and Gregorich have submitted their counterviews to the Political Committee draft resolution, *Towards a Mass Feminist Movement*. This is being answered by Comrade Stone. We will only note the general orientation of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency towards the women's movement: "work in the proletarian milieu and among workers in the factories is . . . the most important place to carry out our political work, such as anti-war, Black and Brown, and women's work." To this is tacked on the admonition that we must work in the "working class women's movement," and call a halt to our "petty bourgeois" orientation in this movement. Just what they are talking about is not clear, as Comrade Chris Hildebrand points out (*DB Vol. 29 No. 14*). Comrade Hildebrand also indicates that, just as in the case of the antiwar movement, the actual way the women's movement developed—and had to develop given the historical circumstances—was outside the unions and the factories. To have attempted to build it according to the schema of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders would have had the same sterile result we discussed in relation to the antiwar movement.

They make the same mistake with regard to the Black and Chicano movements, maintaining the Black and Brown work should center around the factories and trade unions *NOW!* We have a different line. To the best of our ability, we participate in and promote the organization of the Black and Chicano communities in united front-type actions around demands centering on Black or Brown control of their communities. This approach includes participation in the struggles for the Black and Chicano universities. It also includes work in Black and Brown trade-union caucuses where feasible and practical; but at this time our activity is not at all limited to or centered around the unions. By limiting themselves to union issues, our critics come dangerously close to making the same error that the sectarians, from Progressive Labor to the Wohlforthites make, that is *reducing* the national struggle to *merely* another aspect of the working class struggle rather than an independent form of the class struggle with its own laws. (see also the article by Gary Sommer, *DB Vol. 29 No. 19*)

The leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency have very little to say about independent Black and Chicano political parties. In *For A Proletarian Orientation*, they mention La Raza Unida parties only once (p. 28) — and then only to attack a concept outlined in *For A Black Political Party*, in the political report adopted at the 1970 National Committee plenum, and in the Political Committee draft resolution, *The Struggle for Chicano Liberation*. They do not see that the formation of a mass Black or Chicano party, in addition to being an indispensable instrument to advance the fight for Black and Chicano liberation, would also have a dynamic that would help break up the Democratic Party, provide an example to the labor movement of the power of independent political action, and thus could help spark the development of a labor party. They falsely claim that this concept implies that the party leadership thinks a labor party would

automatically flow from the formation of independent political parties by the oppressed nationalities.

Their belittling of this concept indicates they do not understand the power and weight of the oppressed nationalities and the profound impact they will have when they organize politically, in parties of their own, independent of the capitalist parties.

Comrade Charous (p. 11) quotes from a sentence in the National Committee draft Political Resolution: "In all stages of building the mass revolutionary-socialist party its cadres must be alert to, recognize and embrace the new forms of struggle and the demands of oppressed groupings that appear as the radicalization develops." He belabors this quotation to "prove" that the party leadership has abandoned a critical stance. But every party activist knows that this sentence should not be misconstrued to mean that the party supports any and every tactic or demand raised by any section of the current radicalization. The pages of *The Militant* are filled with polemics against all kinds of reformist, ultraleft and sectarian schemes. Indeed, the very next sentences in the National Committee draft Political Resolution state: "The Leninist party champions the fighting movements of all oppressed social layers and advances and develops their key democratic and transitional demands as part of its own. The revolutionary vanguard consciously uses its participation in these movements to draw the lessons necessary to bring revolutionary socialist consciousness to as broad a layer of militants as possible."

The Political Committee draft resolutions, *Towards A Mass Feminist Movement* and *The Struggle for Chicano Liberation*, as well as resolutions like *The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International* and the *Transitional Program for Black Liberation* explain in greater detail the process of developing democratic and transitional demands relating to specific social sectors.

Our participation and programmatic intervention in these various independent movements is part of the coordinated centralized activity of a single revolutionary political party with a single program.

* * *

Throughout their documents, the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency depreciate the analysis of the radicalization contained in the National Committee draft Political Resolution and report and the political resolutions and reports adopted by the party at its last several conventions and plenums. They do not directly and concisely challenge and refute this analysis, let alone provide a clear alternative one. Rather, they pick at this or that point, make snide comments, ask leading questions without providing answers, and place certain phrases, like "new radicalization," in quotation marks (apparently to call these concepts into question without directly saying so). In so doing, they distort the position contained in the resolutions.

Their precise political position is confused and unclear. We have already indicated that their dominant mood of recoiling from the current radicalization leads them in a sectarian direction on the political questions and central opportunities confronting our movement.

The one general political line that comes through their documents is the view that the major political work of the party in the antiwar, Black and Brown and women's movements, should be oriented towards and done primarily within the trade unions and factories, and that our

immediate primary organizational task is a large scale colonization of key plants. But this position is abstract and therefore false, because it leaves out of account the concrete development of the radicalization, the analysis of which must be the starting point of answering the central question of what to do *next* to recruit and assimilate cadres. By putting forward their concept as an abstract principle, good for all time and every place, and even calling it the Leninist strategy for party-building, they come close to rejecting one of the central lessons of Leninism: that the party must at all times be a party that strives to explain and intervene in, to the best of its ability, all the social and political struggles of the time.

In spite of repeated assertions, they have not proven that the party has given up its proletarian orientation. The National Committee draft Political Resolution specifically reaffirms the role of the working class, the decisive importance of the industrial proletariat, and the need to build a mass Leninist party that is proletarian in its overwhelming composition as well as in program. And, most important, the resolution outlines the next steps along the road to accomplishing this. This perspective is put in the context of the current stage of the radicalization and the party-building opportunities before us. Placed in their proper context, every quote from Lenin, Trotsky, Cannon, Hansen, Kerry, Dobbs, etc. boomerangs against the Proletarian Orientation Tendency.

Many of these quotations were aimed against the influence of tendencies that were actually deviating from Marxism as demonstrated by their political program. Comrade Charous charges (*DB* Vol. 29 No. 9, p. 7) that the party leadership desires to find a "short cut to the revolution over the head of the unions." But the Proletarian Orientation Tendency does not prove this charge—it cannot because it is utterly false as anyone can see by reading the National Committee draft Political Resolution. Do the Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders disagree with the National Committee resolution's explanations of the *necessity* to struggle to transform the unions into instruments of revolutionary struggle and the decisiveness of this struggle to the coming American revolution?

Do the comrades of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency believe that the party leadership, like Burnham in 1939-40, has rejected dialectical materialism? Do they charge us with failing to defend the workers states when our own government is at war with them, as Shachtman proposed? Do they believe that the party leadership is capitulating to the union bureaucracy, as Cochran was? Do they believe the leadership is capitulating to Stalinist pressure, as Bartell was? Where is their proof that we have abandoned the proletarian orientation, as reflected in our program? Surely they cannot be so ignorant of Marxism as to believe that the SWP could have turned its back on the proletariat and its face toward the petty bourgeoisie without this having a profound reflection in the party's program!

Leaving aside for the moment Comrade Ralph Levitt's charge of "Menshevism" concerning the resolution on Israel and the Arab Revolution, which we will deal with later, the other Proletarian Orientation Tendency spokespersons, to our knowledge, make no such charge about the party's program. They even state that they "clearly support the positions taken by the SWP on the developing movements." Including the alleged petty-bourgeois positions? What bill of goods are they trying to sell the party? Who are they kidding?

* * *

Two other important political areas should be discussed in relation to the meaning of the politics of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency: the trade unions and the fundamental international questions before our movement.

THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY AND THE TRADE UNIONS

One would assume that the leaders of a grouping whose central demand is that the party should begin to undertake the systematic colonization of the unions would at least present a concrete analysis of the situation in the unions, the opportunities we are missing, etc. But what they say about the unions is the most barren, abstract part of their document. Where they do discuss concrete problems, for example, the relationship between the union movement and the antiwar movement, or the guidelines of the tactics to be followed by our comrades in industry, they are completely wrong.

It is important to be clear about what the Proletarian Orientation Tendency is *not*. It is not a group of party union activists who see new openings for recruitment and political work and are making concrete proposals for activity based on their experience. Party activists in any sphere of mass work, including the unions, often see openings before the party as a whole. In such cases, it is a test of the national and local leadership to be alert and sensitive to any openings that party activists bring to the attention of the party and to consider the merits of any such suggestions objectively, in the light of overall party needs and objectives.

On the questions of realistic party work in the unions, among the workers and the unemployed, the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency have virtually nothing concrete to offer. The National Committee draft Political Resolution, taken together with political resolutions and trade-union memoranda, has a clear tactical orientation for our comrades in the union movement. Tom Kerry's report to the Oakland/Berkeley branch outlines this tactical approach in some of its richness in the light of the strike struggles of 1970 (*DB* Vol. 29 No. 8).

The section of the National Committee draft Political Resolution on the unions presents in outline form a concrete strategic analysis and tactical guidelines for what the party is to do. The leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency offer no alternative or criticisms of this section. Comrade Charous even says our analysis "sounds good."

Last year at Oberlin, party activists in the trade unions met and exchanged information and opinions on what is happening in the unions and in the growing antiwar activity around the unions and what the party could realistically expect to accomplish. This was printed and circulated for the education of the entire party and youth. The Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders ridicule and belittle this discussion of concrete problems. Proposals raised in the panels and by Comrade Lovell to attempt to reach and recruit young workers by increased *Militant* sales at the factories, selling subscriptions to young radicals in the shops, and involving them in party activities, such as forums and election campaigns, or in the antiwar and women's movement, are sneered at.

Whenever they do have a position on political work in the unions, they are wrong. We have already discussed their views on the connection between antiwar work and the labor movement. Concerning our tactical guidelines, they imply that at the present time *The Militant* and our comrades in industry should concentrate their fire on the bureaucrats. Page 29 of *For A Proletarian Orientation* rejects the tactical approach developed by the party over many years, that of aiming our fire primarily against the bosses to pose the key immediate questions facing workers in an industry or union local.

The authors say: "In fact, while we recognize that the employer is the main enemy, we must also recognize that to get to him, we must first knock over his agent, the union bureaucrat." This is mechanical and false. The mass of workers in the unions will organize to throw out the bureaucratic misleaders only through experience which will teach them that the bureaucracy will not fight for their interests in the struggle against the bosses. By first concentrating our main fire on the bosses, we are also laying the foundations for a struggle against the union bureaucracy based on a class struggle alternative.

The *For A Proletarian Orientation* resolution also states that the "struggle in the unions will begin with the question of union democracy" (page 28-29). They counterpose this to the concept that a radicalization of the working class will occur in part not only around attacks by the capitalist government on the living standards of the workers but on the right of the unions to exist. Struggles in the unions can break out on a series of questions—the National Committee draft resolution outlines a program of demands relating to these different questions which are aimed primarily at the capitalists but which also include demands aimed at the union bureaucracy's misleadership. Union democracy is only one of these questions.

Experience in the past decades has shown that power caucuses organized around the single issue of union democracy with no class struggle program have degenerated; when they have been successful in replacing the old leadership they have merely changed faces and names in the bureaucratic apparatus. This reinforces our conception that what we must project building is a left wing around a program of class struggle demands, as outlined in the National Committee draft Political Resolution.

Secondly, the struggle to transform the unions cannot be separated from the radicalization of the working class, which cannot occur mainly around the question of union democracy. It will occur as a result of the interaction between the political movements of the developing radicalization and attacks on the workers' wages, conditions, etc. by the capitalist class. As this happens the workers will discover that the fight for democracy is a *necessity* if they are to fight effectively in defense of their interests. But not before.

The leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency also have a mechanical conception of the union bureaucracy. A radicalization will cause a differentiation in the union bureaucracy, as some of them expediently see their future in making adaptations to the leftward moving forces in the unions. This is why we see today some union bureaucrats beginning to support the antiwar movement. In spite of their assurances to the contrary, the wrong emphasis on the primacy of the struggle against the bureaucracy can easily drift in practice toward prematurely organizing power caucuses against the union bureaucracy.

The conclusion that at least some leaders of the Prole-

tarian Orientation Tendency are confused on this question is reinforced by statements like the following by Comrade Charous (page 8): "We cannot wait until the bureaucracy 'as a whole' is under attack. We must help create that challenge. We must be there, as we are anywhere else, to give political leadership."

No, Comrade Charous, it is not possible for us to "help create that challenge" by direct intervention at this stage. For us to believe we could do so and attempt to act on that belief would be to act as if we thought we were a mass party with mass forces to be deployed to change the objective situation. No wonder Comrade Charous fails to understand when the National Committee draft Political Resolution points out that often our opponents tend to approach the problems of party building as if they were a mass party whose central problem is the disposition of mass forces that can change the objective situation (page 13 of Comrade Charous' article).

For the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency a proletarian orientation is not something related to concrete political tasks in the unions and in all sectors of the mass movement, designed to politically advance the proletarian party at its present stage of development. No, the central argument behind their proposal to colonize the unions in basic industry is that this is a necessary therapeutic step for the sociological health of the party through transforming the mentality of individual party comrades. They are to transform themselves into proletarians and thus have their "being" at the "point of production" determine their "proletarian" consciousness. This is more like soul-saving than Leninist politics.

The whole history of the SWP speaks against such a mechanical view. There is not a single chapter of party history in which the soul-saving approach espoused by the Proletarian Orientation Tendency was party policy. The test of party leadership over the years has been its ability to apply and defend Marxist principles in analyzing and intervening in the living political class struggle and its ability to instill in every member of the party a professional proletarian revolutionary attitude, whatever his or her class background might be. The test was being a 100 percenter. This also is one of the central themes of *What Is To Be Done?*

The Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders make a mockery of the concepts of Lenin which were explained and enriched by Cannon, the concepts of rounded, all-sided party activity in all aspects of the class struggle, and the utilization and development of the party's cadre in all areas of anticapitalist work.

The leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency concede that the party has made gains over the last period of its supposed petty-bourgeois degeneration. *None* of those gains would have been made if we had followed their prescription under the delusion that we would inoculate ourselves against petty-bourgeois influences by colonizing our members in the factories.

Our defense of the Cuban Revolution would have been weaker. We would have eaten up our campus cadres, sending them into the factories just at the time the campuses began to radicalize. We could not have penetrated new geographical areas if individual rooting of comrades in their jobs was our priority. Our apparatus would be much smaller and weaker out of consideration of "proletarianizing" younger party members, whom Comrade Levitt contemptuously defines as petty-bourgeois because they

work full time for the proletarian party. (See article by Nelson Blackstock, *DB* Vol. 29 No. 18) Our antiwar work would have seriously suffered. In short, we would be a shriveled sect of "unionists," outside of the mass movement, debating the "real" meaning of the selected quotations, if we had followed their current advice over the past 15 years.

The Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders take our proletarian orientation, a strategic concept explained and reaffirmed in the National Committee draft Political Resolution and report, reduce it to colonization of industry, then generalize this tactic into a principle good for all times and all places. They thus chart a course that cannot lead toward the construction of a mass revolutionary socialist party, nor even guide the party in its tactical decisions concerning the colonization of its forces in all sectors of the mass movement, including the union movement, as political openings develop.

THE WORLD MOVEMENT

The attack on Comrade Ernest Mandel's analysis of contemporary capitalism and the sociology and political potential of the student movement raises questions about the position of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency on the world Trotskyist movement. This analysis of neo-capitalism is contained in the fundamental documents of the 1963 reunification of the Fourth International. Does the Proletarian Orientation Tendency reject the conclusions of *Dynamics of World Revolution Today*, a document which outlines some of the contradictions of contemporary capitalism in the advanced countries? This document, based upon the economic analysis they reject, has been our main guide as we have seen these contradictions come to life in the past years in the rise of social struggles in the advanced countries.

They also attack *The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International* and our evaluation of the 1968 May-June revolutionary upsurge in France. They single out for attack Comrade Hansen's "Assessment of the Draft Resolution on Latin America," (*International Information Bulletin* No. 3 in 1969) which outlines the position of the SWP on the issues before the last World Congress of the Fourth International. Comrade Hansen's document centers on the central need to orient the world movement towards the radicalizing youth, primarily the student youth at this stage of its development, as the next key step in increasing the cadres of the world Trotskyist movement. We reject ultraleft shortcuts flowing from the inexperience of young cadres. This was especially noted in our position on Latin America. Apparently the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency disagree. If we understand them correctly in "The Meaning of a Proletarian Orientation," they stand for elevating colonization of unions from a tactic to a general strategy not only in the United States, but in every Trotskyist party in the world, and NOW!

Comrade Tom Cagle declares himself a supporter of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency. He takes his criticism of the Fourth International and the SWP to the point of open Healyism. He lifts pages from the scurrilous Wohlforthite press virtually intact and places them in the party's discussion bulletin without indicating their source. Comrades should compare pp. 4-5 of Tim Wohlforth's *Black Nationalism and Marxist Theory* to p. 16 of "On Trade

Union Work," by Comrade Cagle (*DB* Vol. 29 No. 8), and compare pp. 49-50 of Wohlforth's *The Struggle for Marxism in the United States* with pp. 5-8 of Comrade Cagle's "On Trade Union Work." The question Comrade Cagle ought to be asked is not on what points he agrees with Healy-Wohlforth, but if there is anything at all on which he disagrees with the Healyites?

The Healyites in this country and abroad are dead-end factional enemies of the Fourth International and the Socialist Workers Party. They go to the Stalinist lengths of justifying physical assaults on our members by reading us out of the world working class movement. The Healyites and Comrade Cagle consider one of the decisive proofs of the petty bourgeois degeneration of the SWP to be our support of the 1963 reunification of the world Trotskyist movement. Is the question of Healyism secondary to the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency? Can one be an open political supporter of Healyism and be part of their tendency? Does the Proletarian Orientation Tendency consider the reunification of the Fourth International eight years ago a principled reunification?

If the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency hold that these questions are irrelevant to their tendency they should state so and argue for that position. The party knows where the current National Committee stands on the international questions. It has a right to know what the position of the party would be if the Proletarian Orientation Tendency were to become a majority.

The importance of this question is made clear by the contribution of Nelson Blackstock to the discussion bulletin (*DB* Vol. 29 No. 18). Comrade Ralph Levitt, designated by the *For A Proletarian Orientation* grouping as their spokesman in the branch debates in Oakland/Berkeley and San Francisco, charges that the National Committee draft resolution on Israel and the Arab revolution has rejected the theory of permanent revolution and supports the Menshevik and Stalinist two-stage theory of the colonial revolution.

Comrade Levitt's accusation, taken at face value, is the most important political charge raised by any of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders. If it were true, and the convention were to adopt the National Committee draft resolution on Israel and the Arab revolution, then we would have to say that the SWP was plunging headlong into a complete revision of Trotskyism. So fundamental a revision of one of the cornerstones of Trotskyism could not stop at the Mideast but would rapidly have repercussions on the entire program of the party. It would be genuine evidence of the influence of alien class pressures on the party leadership. This would indeed be a rejection of Leninism; and a factional struggle would have to be launched by all those who opposed that course in order to rebuild a Trotskyist party.

Does Comrade Levitt put forward this charge when reporting for the Tendency in the Oakland/Berkeley branch and put it back in his briefcase at the Tendency meetings? Or does Comrade Levitt's statement represent the position of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency? If so, do the comrades who support this Tendency know it? Or is it the position of a Levitt current within the Tendency? The party as a whole and the supporters of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency should know the answer to this question. The party's position on Israel and the Arab revolution is before us for decision at the convention.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE PROLETARIAN ORIENTATION TENDENCY

There is an underlying attitude discernible in the documents and statements of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency.

It is an overriding mood of recoil from, discomfort with, denigration of, and forebodings about the objective development of the radicalization and the character of our party-building activity within it.

While an obvious tendency towards sectarian politics clothed in abstract verbal radicalism is evident in their documents, nowhere do the Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders provide a clear, consistent alternative analysis and line to those positions of the party which they reject. Among their declared supporters are comrades with widely differing views on the political questions facing the party. Thus, it is next to impossible at this stage to say precisely what they are for. What they have in common is what they are *against*: the party's activity in the radicalization and the democratically elected leadership responsible for leading that activity on the basis of the decisions of the party conventions.

This negativism contains a positive danger — it can lead, willy nilly, and regardless of intention, to personal groupings and unprincipled politics — that is, unprincipled combinationism.

If a grouping is convinced that the leadership of the party is degenerating, it is up to them to clearly spell out how this can be seen politically in the political positions of the leadership. For such a grouping to be principled, it must have a common alternative political line to that proposed by the elected leadership, clearly spelled out and presented to the membership.

It is *never* principled to base a grouping on mere opposition to the leadership. When opposition to the leadership becomes the glue holding a grouping together, it is bound to attract people with widely different political positions. This leads to the formation of an unprincipled combination of cliques and personal groupings. It will also attract the most inveterate decriers of the party within the party. The final result can only be the organization of a faction whose "program" is the overthrow of the "regime" without a clear alternative political line.

While it is wrong to hold a tendency responsible for the views of everyone who claims to support it, the party should know where it stands on those views. In the case of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency, we have seen how it has attracted Comrade Cagle, who openly espouses a Healyite line. Another group of supporters of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency is represented by Comrades Norman H., Mary-Jane H., Liz M. and Pepe M. Their contribution to the discussion is marked by an especially unbridled attack on the party. (*DB* Vol. 29 No. 15)

Comrades Liz M., Norman H., Mary-Jane H. and Pepe M. have done us a service, however, in presenting an initial scorecard of what they have observed of the different groupings among those whom they consider to be in opposition to the party's political line and leadership. This appears on page 34 of *DB* Vol. 29 No. 15.

The first grouping, they say, is composed of people who have been leaving the party, because they thought that "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." Comrades Pepe M., Mary-Jane H., Liz M. and Norman H. reject this first group's timing as a "cop out," because even if there are "only one hundred working class oriented militants left in the party it would be worth the struggle to reach them."

We have heard this view expressed before. Wohlforth said he was staying in the party to fight for the minds of "the proletarian kernel" of the cadre. But this kernel, as defined by Wohlforth, rapidly shrank. And with it shrank Wohlforth's loyalty. What if by your definition there were fewer than 100, Comrades Liz M., Norman H., Mary-Jane H. and Pepe M.? How close to the line are we?

The second grouping of which Comrade Cagle is presumably a representative, "overreact against the leadership's abandonment of a working class orientation" and "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 anti-war movement." Comrades Norman H., Pepe M., Mary-Jane H. and Liz M. then give tactical advice to the leaders of the opposition to "stay away" from anything that looks like that position because "the petty-bourgeois leadership would like nothing better than to slander the opposition with an ultraleftist label."

The third grouping are the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency, who together with Comrades Liz M., Mary-Jane H., Norman H. and Pepe M. presumably do not make the errors of the first two groupings.

Finally, they mention a mysterious fourth category of comrades who are against the national and local leaderships but are not an alternative, in their opinion.

The views expressed by Comrades Cagle and Norman H. et al, who are declared supporters of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency may well come as a surprise and be rejected by comrades who support that tendency but did not set out to build an unprincipled gang of party haters. This only serves to drive home the point of the need for principled political clarity as the only basis for a grouping in the SWP and of the need for a clear statement by the Proletarian Orientation Tendency on the views of declared supporters like Comrades Liz M., Norman H., Mary-Jane H., Pepe M. and Tom Cagle.

We must note that nowhere yet have the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency explicitly differentiated themselves from the characterizations of the party line and the party itself made by these supporters of theirs.

Comrade Ralph Levitt was assigned by the *For A Proletarian Orientation* grouping to be their spokesman in the debates on the political resolutions in the Oakland/Berkeley and San Francisco branches. A sociological characterization of the party, as is indicated in the article by Comrade Nelson Blackstock (*DB* Vol. 29 No. 18), gets first place in Comrade Levitt's analysis. It is worth quoting Comrade Levitt:

The Socialist Workers Party has entered upon a deep-going process of the petty-bourgeoisification of the party. That is, the overwhelming majority of our ranks are from petty bourgeois backgrounds. Their political day-to-day work is in the milieu of the campus, and most important, are in the process of adopting a petty-bourgeois orientation to the tasks of party building and making revolutionary social change.

This development is highlighted and underscored by an insight into the current party leadership, and many

of the leading cadres and much of the membership of the party as well. We are here, of course, when I say the leading, the leaders of the party, I'm discussing the young leadership, since they have become the directors of the national office and the National Committee, both in numbers and in actual role. But we don't lose sight of the fact that the older leaders of the Dobbs-Kerry generation, who themselves were steeled in union and labor struggles, are now decades removed from the plants; and that the middle generation of the party, a representative of which is Comrade DeBerry, has by and large, by and large, been graduated into skilled job categories or out of the class altogether.

The young leadership of the party is a petty-bourgeois grouping; petty-bourgeois in training and orientation — I want to discuss this for a moment, because it's a real fact of our party life. We don't raise this question in order to snipe or hurl accusations, we're discussing it because it's a real, an important fact of the life of the party. The young leaders are petty-bourgeois in background and origin, that's clear. These comrades — I have every intention of naming them, since they have names — comrades like Comrades Barnes, Sheppard, Camejo, Waters, Jones, Seigle, Horowitz, Britton, Jenness, Wulp, Stapleton, Benson, Myers, Stone, so on, a whole leading cadre of the party — these comrades are from privileged middle-class comfortable families trained at bourgeois academic institutions which you're familiar with. This is not decisive. We don't judge revolutionaries purely by their class background, although it is a factor of some significance and always has been so in the party.

Secondly and more importantly their lives since joining the movement have been outside the ranks of the labor movement. They have primarily worked as party functionaries and in the student radical milieu. A few, still in their early thirties, have spent the totality of their adult lives, the totality, on the payroll of the Socialist Workers Party for as long as a decade. No experience in the unions, no contact with the life and realities of the class, no time in any industrial job, no familiarity with the young workers, Black, white and Brown, of their own generation. Once again, this is not decisive. Other revolutionaries have had similar experiences.

However, these comrades breathe and live the air of the student perspective. They are opposed to the party participating in the struggles of any section of the class. They embrace, and they use the words often, and constantly, they embrace, those various social struggles of petty-bourgeois derivation. They believe in the students as the epicenter of the world revolution and radicalization. Petty-bourgeois in origin, in training and experience, and in their view of social struggle. This, this combination of factors, Comrades, is decisive. There are no other indicators in our party, in our party life, of their petty-bourgeois character. They will not announce themselves, as no sane political person would, as petty bourgeois, or put a label on their forehead. If politics were that easy and simple we would just hand out blueprints, and everything would be accounted for.

But this is no accident. The class derivation and perspective of the leadership closely approximates the general development of our party as a whole. Why, then, don't most comrades see it, as we the supporters of the minority document do? Because it is a process, and it is very difficult to see a process while in it and part of

it. This is the virtue, the leading virtue, of the authors and supporters of the Proletarian Orientation document. We can see the process for what it is, alert the party to the inevitable dangers of this process, and offer a concrete outline of the ways for the party to reorient and overcome the present danger of total petty-bourgeoisification which will effect our program. We will repeat this many times. It is a process which confronts us, and this is the key to it.

This position gets close to asking the party to place the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency in the leadership because they have the "virtue" of seeing the degeneration of the leadership. Something Comrade Levitt points out that the average comrade cannot see since he or she is "in it and part of" this process of degeneration.

He is asking the party to support the Proletarian Orientation Tendency because they understand that the "older leaders of the Dobbs-Kerry generation" is now "decades removed from the plants." In other words, the fact that these comrades devoted their lives to full time work building the proletarian party is additional proof of their petty-bourgeoisification. "The middle generation of the party, a representative of which is Comrade DeBerry, has by-and-large, by-and-large, been graduated into skilled job categories or out of the class altogether," and thus is written off.

The younger leaders, he charges, "and many of the ranks" constitute a "petty bourgeois grouping; petty bourgeois in training and orientation." His proof: they are from "privileged, middle class comfortable families, trained at bourgeois academic institutions." And, "more importantly their lives since joining the movement have been outside the ranks of the labor movement. They have primarily worked as party functionaries and in a student radical milieu. A few, still in their early thirties, have spent the totality of their adult lives, the totality, on the payroll of the Socialist Workers Party for as long as a decade." Full-time work to build the proletarian party is advanced as proof of a petty-bourgeois degeneration! This could only be so if not only the party leadership, but *the party as a whole*, had ceased to be the highest expression of proletarian consciousness and organization, qualitatively higher than any union, and had in fact politically degenerated.

How much room does this perspective really leave for reform of the party? The party has been degenerating politically since the Cochran fight. The Dobbs-Kerry generation of leaders has been slipping for over a decade. (We might add that Comrade Cannon has been "removed from the plants" for even more decades.) The middle generation has opted for the soft life. The younger leaders are really victims, aren't they Comrade Levitt? They weren't even members when the petty-bourgeoisification really got rolling.

Obviously the only solution is to replace all these categories of leaders with those who want to return to Leninism. This self-nominated replacement is the leadership of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency.

However this would only begin the solution of the problem. What about the membership? What kind of membership is it that has adopted and practiced such a political line, elected such a leadership for a decade and a half? How many of them should have the "label" of petty-bourgeois placed "on their forehead" by Comrade Levitt?

The Healyites explain that the "degeneration" of the SWP

finds its roots in Cannon's inability to develop dialectics, following the murder of Trotsky. Comrade Cagle sees fundamental errors in our union work in 1945-46 as early signs of "degeneration." Though we do not accuse the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency of evolving the same views as the Healyites or Comrade Cagle, Comrade Levitt's analysis of the degeneration of the party is clearly incomplete and contradictory. Are these the views of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency?

THE ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE PARTY

In contrast to the theory of original class taint advanced by the Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders, there is an alternative and much more fruitful method of studying party history and understanding the concrete implementation of our proletarian orientation at the present time.

In the early 1960s, in the period of ascending opportunities there were also internal challenges to the fundamental organizational concepts of the party. The December 1963 plenum of the National Committee designated a commission of Comrades Cannon, Dobbs, and Novack to draft a resolution reaffirming the party's organizational principles in the light of these challenges and apply them to the concrete situation the party was entering. This draft was discussed, and adopted for submission to the party by the 1965 National Committee plenum. This draft was then discussed by the membership and finally adopted at the 1965 party convention.

The section of the resolution entitled "Proletarianizing the Party" reads as follows:

Proletarianizing the Party

The working class is the only class in modern society that is progressive and truly revolutionary. Only the working class is capable of saving humanity from barbarism. Only a revolutionary party can lead the proletariat to the realization of this historic mission. To achieve power, the revolutionary party must be deeply rooted among the workers, it must be composed predominantly of workers and enjoy the respect and confidence of the workers.

Without such a composition it is impossible to build a programmatically firm and disciplined organization which can accomplish these grandiose tasks. A party of non-workers is necessarily subject to all the reactionary influences of skepticism, cynicism, soul-sickness and capitulatory despair transmitted to it through its petty-bourgeois environment.

To transform the SWP into a proletarian party of action, particularly in the present period of reaction, it is not enough to continue propagandistic activities in the hope that by an automatic process workers will flock to the banner of the party. It is necessary, on the contrary, to make a concerted, determined and systematic effort, consciously directed by the leading committees of the party, to spread out into all sectors of the mass movement—civil rights organizations which are becoming radicalized and in which workers predominate; labor organizations within industry and among the unemployed; campuses where an increasing number of students are turning toward socialist ideas.

Central to all mass work must be the sinking of party roots into mass organizations and the recruitment of workers and students, black and white, into the party. At the same time students must be taught that they can

transform the Trotskyist program from the pages of books and pamphlets into living reality for themselves and for the party only by integrating themselves in the workers' movement and breaking irrevocably from alien class influences. They must wholly and selflessly identify themselves with the working class through its vanguard party. Unless they follow this road they are in constant danger of slipping back into apathy and pessimism and thus being lost for the revolutionary movement.

Party activity must be organized on the basis of campaigns which are realistically adjusted to the demands and direction of the mass movement. These campaigns must not be sucked out of the thumb of some functionary in a party office, but must arise as a result of the connections of the party with the mass movement and the indicated direction of the masses in specific situations.

All party agitation campaigns, especially in the next period, must be directed primarily at those mass organizations in which we are attempting to gain a foothold and attract members. General agitation addressed to the working class as a whole or the public in general must be related to those specific aims.

The press must gear its agitation into the activity conducted among specific sectors of the mass movement so as to transform the party paper from a literary organ into a political organizer. The integration of the party into the mass movement, and the transformation of the party into a proletarian organization, are indispensable for the progress of the party.

This has guided our work in the half-decade since it was passed.

The Proletarian Orientation Tendency leaders imply that the party leadership has slipped something over on the membership. They charge the leadership with developing, without saying so, new anti-Leninist theories about how to build a proletarian party. But neither accusation is true. The 1965 Organizational Resolution applies our basic organizational principles, including our proletarian orientation, to the objective stage of the class struggle today. This necessitated changes in certain aspects of past organizational resolutions and amplifications of others while preserving the essence of the fundamental principles upon which the party has been built.

In his series of classes at the Oberlin educational conference last year, Comrade Dobbs explained *every single one of these changes* for the benefit of the new party and YSA members who had not taken part in the 1965 discussions. These lectures are very pertinent to this discussion. Comrades can reread those lectures and the 1965 Organizational Resolution, available in the *Education for Socialists* bulletin series from the National Education Department of the party, and compare them with the version of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency.

Thus the party carefully considered and weighed the organizational question, and then acted once again to codify its basic organizational concepts in the new situation. Do the leaders of the Tendency have a concrete proposal to replace the party's organizational principles?

There was another organizational question the party has faced and come to grips with, which could not be answered solely by reading the books and past resolutions. This was the question of relations between the party and the revolutionary-socialist youth organization. The development of the YSA opened a new chapter in the history of American Trotskyism. We were confronted with a

new problem. For the first time there was an extended period of radicalization developing on the campuses and then in the high schools, in advance of other sectors. Many novel questions had to be answered. Over time, in the light of experience, we came to the conclusions presented in the political reports adopted by recent plenums and conventions referred to earlier in this article.

The orientation the YSA has adopted, which is supported by the SWP, is to concentrate on winning leadership in the radical youth movement, above all in the student movement, and to win younger and younger layers as they come into struggle, primarily in the high schools. This goes apace with the gradual but steady lowering of the average age of the YSA. Today there are over 200 high-school members of the YSA.

The political counterpart of this orientation was summed up, based on a great deal of experience and observation of the burgeoning student and youth radicalization on a world scale, in *The Worldwide Youth Radicalization and the Tasks of the Fourth International*. It has been further developed by the resolutions of the YSA, in the light of its own experiences. Understanding this question on a national and international scale remains central to our movement and indispensable to its continued viability. Does the Proletarian Orientation Tendency have an alternative political line to that document? Do they have an alternative to the strategy of the Red University? To the transitional program for the students and youth?

In the political-organizational report adopted by the 1969 plenum of the National Committee, the party projected an organizational program of expansion (*Internal Information Bulletin* No. 2 in 1969). This included geographical expansion, and more rapid development of young comrades into positions of branch and national leadership and the national party apparatus. Does the Proletarian Orientation Tendency reject this course in favor of sending our cadres into the industrial unions at this time? Apparently so. At that plenum it was also projected that the party itself, relative to the YSA, would take more direct initiative in the mass movements our critics falsely label as petty-bourgeois. Do they see this as further evidence of the petty-bourgeoisification? What do they project as an alternative?

The 1965 Organizational Resolution emphasizes a key concept of Leninism that Comrade Levitt denigrates, that is, the concept of professionalism. Our party is imbued with the fundamental idea that *every single member* of this party, including its full time national, local and branch staff in every capacity, is a professional revolutionist. A comrade is someone who considers the proletarian party the central aspect of his or her life. Whether or not they work full time for the party, the party is their first profession. That is part and parcel of our proletarian orientation. The SWP's application of this Leninist concept of professionalism, which includes the necessity to construct a professional party staff, is given the back of the hand by Comrade Levitt in his contemptuous assertion that working for the party is, ipso facto, proof of petty-bourgeois degeneration. This leader of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency understands nothing about building a proletarian combat party.

The question of professionalism was one of the issues in the 1940 fight which the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency so often refer to without understanding its lessons. Burnham's refusal to turn his back decisively on alien class pressures was indicated not by his refusal of an industrial colonization assignment, but by his re-

usal to make the party first in his life, to become a professional revolutionary no matter what his manner of making a livelihood. In Burnham's case, this was expressed by his refusal to become national secretary of the party—he didn't want to give up his job as a professor, and all that went with it.

The leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency often use the word "petty-bourgeois" as an epithet, not an analytical concept. They ignore lessons we have learned from past struggles about real petty-bourgeois attitudes. Lessons on this question from the 1940 fight with the petty-bourgeois opposition, for example, are plentiful.

In addition to the question of party professionalism which we have already discussed, there were other petty-bourgeois attitudes apparent in the opposition. One of these was the subordination by the Burnham-Shachtman-Abern grouping of their political differences on the defense of the Soviet Union on the eve of World War II, to an organizational combination against the party leadership.

In their view, it was a *tactical* decision whether or not to present their real and divergent positions on the Soviet Union and the coming war—a decision to be made on the basis of how this would affect their organizational bloc against the Cannon "regime."

Another attitude of the petty-bourgeois opposition in 1939-1940 was its inability to break out of the discussion-club atmosphere of the intellectual circles it traveled in. They recoiled from the real mass movements where the party had openings, including the still ascending CIO movement.

Another was their snide and light-minded attitude towards the party. Cannon called them the "giggling caucus," because of their behavior.

Part and parcel of their denigration of professionalism was their refusal to identify with the working class through its party, a party they no longer believed could become a Leninist party of mass action and lead the coming American revolution.

Finally, the most important lesson, which the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency have failed to grasp at all, is that the test of whether any grouping in the party reflects alien class pressures is its political line. The chief characteristic of the petty bourgeois opposition of 1939-1940 was its capitulation to bourgeois public opinion on the eve of the coming imperialist war. Our present-day critics assert, however, that the party today is genuflecting before the petty bourgeoisie because of its wholehearted participation in a movement *against* an imperialist war.

After World War II the SWP tested the Shachtman group again, not on the basis of its composition, but on its political line. The Shachtmanites had carried out a large-scale policy of colonization of their members into basic industry during World War II. But the test we applied was not their colonization progress. We tested their political line and practice. It was clear from their political line and perspective that they were moving further down the road toward Social Democracy.

* * *

In their second document, explaining the "meaning" of their first document, the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency begin with a long quotation from an article written two and a half years ago by Comrade Peng as a contribution to the pre-World Congress discus-

sion (*International Information Bulletin*, March 1969, No. 5). The implication, whether intentional or not, is that they regard their prescriptions as the application of Comrade Peng's political views to party building in the United States. We reject this implication. The proposals of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency lead away from, not toward constructing a revolutionary mass party based on and rooted in the working class.

From our long association with Comrade Peng, we know him to be a comrade who deals directly and openly with important political questions. If he had any political criticisms of the SWP he would begin by stating his opinions openly and directly to the party. He is also an experienced comrade who does not presume to have hardened views on disputed problems of party-building in a country 3,000 miles away at the beginning of a discussion of these questions.

The leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency raise their point about Comrade Peng to explain to the uninitiated who the National Committee's draft Political Resolution is "really" polemicizing against in its section on our opponents. There is no mystery about this. The answer is simple: with our opponents. Not with Comrade Peng.

Comrade Charous, in his impassioned defense of our opponents' desire to "go to the workers," says that the National Committee draft resolution does not criticize our opponents politically. It is true that this resolution does not repeat our basic political analysis of the Stalinists, Social Democrats, and ultraleft sectlets of all varieties. It does, however, criticize their false political analyses of the radicalization which lead them to project phony colonization schemes in industry as a substitute for principled participation in the independent movements of the radicalization. Each of these groups has its own reasons for opposing the current radicalization. Some, like the Communist Party, who ultimately reflect the interests of the *petty-bourgeois* Soviet bureaucracy, are conscious class-collaborationists. Some, like the Socialist Party, reflect the *petty-bourgeois* labor bureaucracy. Others recoil from the struggles of various oppressed layers out of an ultraleft sectarian viewpoint, reflecting the impatience of inexperienced radicals. The approach to the current radicalization's power and potential for growth is basically conservative. All are dogmatic and mechanistic when it comes to applying Marxism to the new radicalization.

This concept of "going to the workers" as a substitute for an effective strategy toward the new rise of the world revolution does not merely infect our organized opponents. It is a phenomenon of the youth radicalization internationally and is held by many young radicals whom we can hope to win to a Leninist perspective. This desire to "go to the workers" as a substitute for party building in the real mass movements (including those of the workers) is a *petty bourgeois* short-cut scheme. It is attractive to layers of youth who reject the reformist parties but do not find mass revolutionary socialist parties they can respect and adhere to.

Thus we see all kinds of small groups passing out leaflets at factories, colonizing their members into the unions to "transform" themselves or the workers, or "picking up the gun" as a substitute for party building. One of our jobs is to counter this petty-bourgeois tendency with the perspective of Leninism and the conscious identification with the working class through its vanguard Trotskyist party.

* * *

We cannot offer any iron-clad guarantees for the future. Alien class pressures will be reflected in all sectors of the mass movement, including the workers movement, even for a period of time after the establishment of a workers state. We will have to resist these pressures by identifying with the historic tasks of the working class through its vanguard party and program. New openings will develop in the mass movement. We will recruit large numbers of young workers. It will be a challenge to educate and assimilate these workers, and to integrate them in all levels of leadership. Other tests include our ability to integrate revolutionists from the oppressed nationalities, women, and youth into all levels of our party's leadership. These tasks are necessary to build a mass Leninist party capable of leading the coming American revolution.

We can say, however, that we have to pass one test — or the others will never be posed to us. That is the need to correctly answer the question of what to do *next* in order to continue to build, recruit and assimilate the cadres that are necessary for the formation of the future mass Leninist party. This the National Committee and Political Committee draft political resolutions do.

July 16, 1971

APPENDIX

A LETTER TO VINCENT R. DUNNE

New York, October 25, 1939

Dear Vincent,

I judge that you have received a copy of a letter addressed to Joe Hansen, which was mailed to you yesterday. Since dictating it we received a copy of Crux's [Trotsky's] reply to a letter from Comrade Stanley on the internal party situation. This reply of Crux was enclosed with the copy of my letter to Comrade Hansen.

You are perfectly at liberty to show my letter to interested comrades so they will know my point of view. The same applies to the letter of Crux, as it will very likely be published in the internal bulletin.

From all indications we are in for a serious struggle. The struggle for the Fourth International is concentrated right now in the struggle for programmatic intransigence

within the American section. Only in this way will we be able to preserve a firm unity and really prepare our ranks to meet the war and go through the war without encountering explosive crises at every difficult moment.

In such a moment each man must stand at the post where he can best serve the cause. In the opinion of comrades here this signifies that for the next period I must be relieved to the greatest extent possible of administrative routine and freed for political work, externally as well as internally. For my part I am ready to accept such a rearrangement of duties and to carry my full share of the responsibility in the struggle.

This raises in the sharpest form the future work of Comrade Dobbs. In a recent letter he states that the big work which occupied his attention in the recent months is com-

pleted through the signing of the union contract with the employers. He adds: "I am in the midst of the mopping up operations. I expect to be able to discuss with you soon the question of future work." It would greatly facilitate matters if we could now carry through our original program of bringing him to the Center for party administrative and organizational work.

I know that the new difficulties of the Minneapolis comrades in connection with the prosecutions makes this a somewhat risky shift. As I see it, the difficult situation in Minneapolis precludes for the time being the demonstrative transfer of Comrade Dobbs from trade union to party work. That might bring unfavorable repercussions for you. At the same time, the party in its present struggle—which if we want to call it by its right name is nothing less than a struggle to vindicate eleven solid years of programmatic preparation to stand up under a crisis—has the right and the duty to summon every individual to the post where he can be most useful.

I think we can reach a transitional solution of the question of Dobbs' work without infringing too deeply on the requirements of the Minneapolis sector, in the following way: Dobbs should arrange, in the shortest time possible, for a leave of absence from his trade union post without any announcement of his intentions with regard to the party and without cutting himself off from the possibility of reentering the trade union situation, insofar as Minneapolis is concerned, at a critical moment. The party purposes can be very well served in the transition period by his activity under a suitable party name without any public fanfare.

Naturally, we cannot very easily carry through such a decisive step without the agreement of the Minneapolis comrades. But we have reason to believe that when the party necessities are placed before us in such categorical form as at present, you will be ready on your part to make the necessary local sacrifices.

Aside from the immediate requirements of the party there is another aspect to this question which deserves consideration. I refer to the preparation of Comrade Dobbs for all-sided political work in the future, as distinct from the limited field of trade unionism. By entering the direct service of the party now, at a difficult moment of internal crisis, in an unobtrusive and even anonymous manner, he will be put sharply before a salutary experience in the vicissitudes of revolutionary political activity. He will face a point-blank test of his ability to adjust himself promptly to a radical transformation in the nature of his activity and the conditions under which it is conducted.

To be the leader of a workers' mass movement and show an ability to meet and solve the comparatively simple and broadly-outlined problems of an ascending trade union—that is one thing. I don't need to tell you that I fully appreciate the personal qualities of a militant who is capable of distinguishing himself in this field. But to be able to lead the organization work of a small political party which is still further restricted in its activities by a paralyzing internal crisis, and at the same time to take a resolute part in the struggle for a programmatic solution of that crisis—that is another thing.

A leader of the proletarian revolution must be able to shift his activity from one field to the other as the circumstances require it. It should be added that experience is indispensable for the efficient execution of each of these

assignments. We have often had occasion to say that one can't learn how to lead a trade union out of a book. From books he can learn the history and theory of the trade union movement, but its actual leadership he must learn in practice. The same thing holds true in regard to the party. One cannot learn how to lead a party out of a book either. If that were so there would not be such a poverty of political-party leadership everywhere.

The test of experience is decisive in this field above all others. By coming to the party service now, at a moment of acute crisis in a chauvinistic encirclement, the experience of Comrade Dobbs will be one hundred times more concentrated and will advance his political education one hundred times faster than if he came in normal times. His merits or demerits as a political-party leader will be established far more precisely and in an incomparably shorter time by this test.

Needless to say we all share the same optimistic opinions in regard to Comrade Dobbs' potentialities as a party leader. But six months after he begins party work under these conditions, we, as well as he, will know more about it and know more definitely.

* * *

The internal crisis of the party, which at bottom reflects the pressure of its encirclement, is already beginning to have a crippling effect on the working out of the ambitious program of expansion elaborated at the party convention. The financial difficulties which are besetting us are a barometer.

We must strive by all means to see that the internal struggle does not drive the party in upon itself to the neglect of its external agitation and organization work. That would only prolong the crisis which can find a real solution only on the road of an expansive public activity and a recruitment of new proletarian elements of stabilization.

We will most likely have to call on the Minnesota comrades for unexampled financial support to sustain our program of public activity during the internal struggle. I think the party is entitled to turn to the Twin Cities comrades once again with this demand.

To no small extent our trade unionist wing in Minnesota has floated in recent years on the stream of success made possible by the heroic struggles of 1934, which were in turn inspired—it should not be forgotten—by the patient and stubborn theoretical and political work carried out in isolation by the leading cadre in the six years which preceded the 1934 strikes. This fairly comfortable situation could exert negative influences on the mentality of our trade unionist comrades if they do not keep in mind the instability of their present situation; if they begin to imagine that their improved circumstances and standards of living are permanently assured and begin, unknown to themselves, to develop petty-bourgeois habits of life and illusions of security in a world situation which is exploding at every seam.

It will not be bad for them to begin even now to shake themselves loose from these possible illusions. The whole trade union upper stratum of the Second International could remain secure and grow fat and complacent and satisfied with things as they were only in the period of the stabilization and ascending progress of the capitalist world

order. Such possibilities do not exist in these days. The sooner all our comrades face this question to the end and adjust themselves to the prospect of new and violent shocks and displacements the better.

A modest beginning in preparation to swim once more against the stream can be made by the voluntary agree-

ment of the affected comrades to double their assessments for the material support of the party in its present critical test. The same holds good for all serious comrades in the party.

Fraternally yours,
J. P. Cannon

THE MINORITY'S DEVIATION FROM THE SWP'S
POSITION ON NATIONALISM
By Gary Sommer, Oakland/Berkeley Branch

(The following presentation was given to the branch during the pre-convention discussion on the National Committee draft Political Resolution and the counter-resolution)

What I want to focus on tonight is the minority's understanding and attitude of the struggles of the national minorities for self-determination — or to put it another way their incorrect concept of "nationalism." Notice that I did not say they oppose "nationalism" *per se*, only that they seem to have a narrow and rigid idea of what Black or Brown "nationalism" is or is not. (I might add here, too, that they take the same attitude toward the concept of feminism, which I'll take up under the women's liberation document.)

As I read the two documents (For A Proletarian Orientation, and The Meaning Of A Proletarian Orientation) I could tell something was not quite right about their formulations concerning nationalism. The one thing that becomes clear when you take away all the choice trimmings of selected quotes, is that the minority looks at Blacks and Browns as *workers first* and as *oppressed national minorities second*. That is, they look at Blacks and say, "There is a worker (or potential worker) who happens to be Black." It seems inconceivable for the minority to look at a Black or a Chicano and say "There is a *Black* or a *Chicano* who also happens to be a worker." To their mind being Black is *secondary* to being a worker. And that attitude is what leads some of the supporters of the minority to make such statements like the one Comrade Ralph Levitt said, "we share a common oppression" and the statement that the minority document makes which is "Black and Raza Unida parties *must* be based on Black and Chicano workers" — not on the basis of their national oppression as Blacks and Chicanos but based on their relationship to the means of production. This is not only a vulgar interpretation of nationalism but has no relationship to a dialectical materialist approach to this question, and it also flies in the face of

the reality that exists today. That reality is that Blacks and Chicanos are radicalizing as *Blacks* and *Chicanos*. That is they are more concerned about how they are being treated as *Blacks* and *Chicanos* than how they are being treated as workers. In fact they see the way they are being treated as workers is due more to the fact that they are Black or Chicano than it is the fact they are workers, even though the two are dialectically connected.

What then is the minority calling for when they say that Black and Raza Unida parties must be based on those same workers — it only becomes too clear — what they are calling for are *Black and Raza Unida Labor* parties, that's their logic.

Comrades, it may be well to agitate and propogandize for a labor party in general, but to say or imply it is needed for the national minorities is quite *another* thing altogether. You see, this worker "fetish" you have gets into a *bind* when it comes to the nationalism of Blacks and Chicanos because the logic of your document means that you *oppose* the La Raza Unida Party *right now!* Why? Because that party is not based on Chicano *workers* — it's based on the fact that if you are a Chicano and are willing to oppose the Republican and Democratic parties you can become a member. In other words it is based on Chicanos as a *national minority*.

The document of the minority lacks any analysis of the dynamics of the nationalist struggles but leads us to believe that the character of the nationalist struggles should or will be *proletarian-socialist* in its demands and *national-democratic* in tendency. This is totally backward! The combined character of the struggle of the national minorities is and will be *national-democratic* in its demands and *proletarian-socialist* in tendency — that is what endows it with doubly explosive force. I think that it is of utmost importance that the supporters of the minority clarify themselves on their position that you take toward the formation of independent political parties of the national minorities based on workers.

July 19, 1971

BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY IN THE
CURRENT RADICALIZATION, SUMMARY

By Bob Himmel, San Francisco Branch

The San Francisco branch invited a representative of the authors of *For A Proletarian Orientation* to participate in a debate June 20, 1971 with a supporter of the National Committee's draft political resolution. They chose comrade Ralph Levitt of Oakland-Berkeley to present their views. Since comrade Levitt was unavailable to give the summary, it was given by comrade Bill Massey, also of Oakland-Berkeley.

It seemed to me that many of the points raised in the course of the debate would be of interest to the entire membership. I therefore proposed to comrade Levitt that both of our presentations be submitted for publication in the *Discussion Bulletin*. Comrade Levitt refused to do this.

I have, therefore, sent in an edited version of my presentation (See *SWP Discussion Bulletin* No. 20) and summary in this debate. Since comrade Levitt's presentation included some comments on the party's democratically elected leadership that throw a somewhat different light on the discussion in the party, I have quoted them at greater length than I did in my original summary.

A number of comrades have made the point about how criticism and differences within the party help to sharpen our analytic tools. I think that's true as has been shown in the course of this discussion.

But comrades should consider carefully some of the implications of the document by the minority. This is a line resolution being presented to the party, for the determination of delegates to the national convention and for the policy of the party for the whole next period. What would the party look like, what would it be doing in the next period if this line were adopted?

We must make the distinction between a counter-line document and criticisms of particular areas of work or suggestions for improving different areas of work. Criticism of this type becomes a part of the general sharpening up within the framework of our present orientation and line. But the minority is raising questions of a different order.

They are saying that the party is petty bourgeois in composition and mentality. That the party leadership has abandoned a proletarian orientation and it is developing new concepts about the relationship between the vanguard party and the working class. That the party has a record in recent years of abstention from the class struggle especially in relation to the Black and Brown movements and the antiwar GIs. In regard to women's liberation, the party's orientation, they say, is almost totally confined to the petty bourgeois milieu. The only thing that can correct this is a policy of systematic colonization of both party and the YSA members into basic industry where their main assignment will be trade union work.

If the characterization of the party presented by the minority were only half true, there would not be much chance of saving it at this stage of the game by going into the unions. When Trotsky posed the proletarian turn at the conclusion of the faction fight with the Shachtmanites, he was talking about a relatively small layer of youth in the party. Not the party leadership, and certainly not the membership as a whole. In any case, the accusations made

by the minority are false to the core.

Let me take up a few of these questions. For instance, the charge of abstention from the class struggle in the Black liberation and Chicano movements.

We pointed out that in the recent period the Black liberation movement has been in a period of relative quiescence, that there is a general crisis of leadership that exists in the Black movement that has yet to be overcome. But our party has participated in every important struggle in the current period from the Montgomery bus boycott in 1956, through the Freedom Now Party and the break from the Black Muslims by Malcolm X in 1964, and into the current struggles in Cairo, Illinois and in other parts of the country.

In the course of these struggles we've recruited and developed a small but growing and highly capable cadre of Black Trotskyists. Equally important, we've made significant theoretical contributions to the struggles for Black liberation on such questions as Black nationalism, the proposal for a Black political party, and in general the program that was published as the *Transitional Program for Black Liberation*.

Now in the Chicano movement. This struck me as somewhat strange because in the most recent period where there has been a significant upheaval in the Chicano liberation movement and our comrades have played an active leadership role. This is true in the Chicano antiwar movement, and also in the formation and development of an independent Chicano political party.

The charge has also been made that we are not paying attention to antiwar GIs. I, for one, couldn't believe my ears. As the discussion has pointed out, we were the ones, and the only ones, in the antiwar movement from the very beginning that called for the antiwar movement to pay careful attention to the antiwar GIs. Through the SMC and the coalitions we have inspired the movement to solidarize with and support the antiwar GIs.

When our comrades have been in the army itself they have played a key organizing role. We even see a certain reluctance on the part of the government to draft members of our movement. I'm anxiously waiting to hear what the minority's proposals are to change the objective situation so that we can do *more* work within the army. They're not, at least at this point, proposing that we colonize the army, since our main purpose now is to colonize the unions.

In dealing with the campaign for the repeal of abortion laws, our participation in coalitions for the *repeal* of abortion laws, with no forced sterilization was cited as an example of adaptation to petty-bourgeois influences, since we have not insisted on the slogan *free* abortion on demand as the central demand. That demand embodies two things—first of all, we are for elimination of all and any legal restrictions on the right of women to control their bodies, and secondly, we're for socialized medicine. Once you achieve the first, what are you talking about? You're talking about free medical care. Now, we don't insist on socialized medicine being a necessary prerequisite for any coalition we're involved in—unless it be one for socialized medicine.

Also a counterposition was posed by one comrade in the discussion between transitional demands versus reforms. That's not the correct counterposition. If you want to make it precise you can pose the difference between a transitional demand and a *democratic* demand, and it's true that the demand for repeal of abortion laws is a democratic demand, which we support and struggle for.

Whether or not the movement for a particular demand becomes reformist is determined in large part by how the struggle for it is carried on. Reformism—if I may oversimplify—is characterized by bowing to the temptation to subordinate and derail the independent mass *struggles* to the promise of sections of the ruling class to grant various concessions. This is not the approach of the coalition that's being built around the demand to repeal abortion laws. And this is not the dominant approach of any of the movements that are in the process of struggle today.

I thought about the characterization made in the discussion of the minority as anti-nationalist and anti-feminist. Until they spell out their positions it's far from clear. I can see where comrades could very easily get that impression.

In the document presented by the minority, there is no attention paid whatever, not one mention is made of Black and Chicano nationalism as expressed in the form of the living independent movements. Comrade Massey, in his summary tonight attempted somewhat to correct this, but within the framework of the basic thrust that its only within the unions that the nationalist expressions of Blacks and Chicanos and other oppressed nationalities, really assume any significance.

They criticized comrade Lovell in their document for suggesting that a labor party could be sparked by a mass Black or Chicano party. But no mention of their attitude in their document toward these developments, not a *word* about the significance and our relationship to La Raza Unida Party. In comrade Massey's comments tonight one would get the impression that our role there would be identical to the role of the minority within the SWP—we would want to propose that La Raza Unida Party conduct a trade union colonization campaign, so that they too could do significant proletarian work.

Likewise on women's liberation. The only point in their document is on women's caucuses in the unions. This is an important development, as yet small, but with great potential. But it was explained in the discussion that these caucuses, which are in the formative stage now, are themselves an extension of the general rise of the women's liberation movement. They are a reflection inside the unions of feminist consciousness. And the minority's document contains not one word, except in derision, about the mass feminist movement, and what our attitude toward it should be.

The minority comrades will have an opportunity to clear up any mistaken impressions they might give—they can do this by defining their attitude towards the significance of these movements. By defining what the potential of these movements are and how we must allocate our forces to best build them. By stating whether they represent a basic component of the American revolution or whether we can expect them to disappear when the working class as a whole radicalizes.

The attitude we have towards these movements is very important in light of the proposal to colonize the unions. You can't just say that we'll do both. You can, but you're

not going to be very convincing. You've got to spell it out. You've got to be concrete.

If we're going to send most of our members into the unions, where their main assignment will be trade union work, then presumably they'll have to stop doing something they're doing now in order to devote their primary attention to trade union work. You have not explained what it is we're not going to do. Are we going to take cadres from the antiwar movement, from the women's liberation movement, off the campus, out of the party apparatus? Where and how many?

Moreover, and this is important, you haven't spelled out yet once we get these comrades into the unions what are they going to do. How do you view the class in the unions and what line we are going to carry out there?

Do the minority comrades believe, as their supporter comrade Cagle does in Oakland-Berkeley, that the trade union movement is seething with a fantastic ferment and we have to hurry to get in and participate in it? Or do they believe, as seems to be indicated in their document, that workers are not yet radicalized as workers and we should go into the class mainly in order to have "roots" at the point that radicalization occurs?

Comrades who are active in the trade union movement, and we have quite a number of those in the party—several of them in this branch spoke in the course of the discussion—have pointed out there is *not* now a radicalization in the trade union movement of the workers moving in a political sense, in a politically class conscious manner. Strikes, which occur from time to time over fundamental economic questions, that arise during the course of contract negotiations are an important index of the combativity of the class and this combativity is an essential prerequisite for a political radicalization. But a strike is not the same thing as a political radicalization.

Lenin, going back to the oft-quoted works, in this case *What Is To Be Done?*, made a very sharp differentiation between the limitations of economic action and political consciousness on the part of the workers.

Now we're not unconcerned with what's going on in the union movement, and we're not unaware of what's going on in the union movement. We follow it closely and when the comrades who are in a position to know don't see the basis for such a turn this carries a lot of weight. For an example of how our party follows the developing trends in the trade union movement I would recommend that comrades read comrade Tom Kerry's report on the GM strike printed in *Discussion Bulletin* number 8.

Now just a few words on the students. We recognize that the students will not make the American revolution. And if the minority comrades feel it's important to remind us of that, fine. But is it untrue that students now possess qualitatively greater social weight than they did during the previous radicalizations? Isn't it obvious that this is the case? There are 8 million students in college right now. And that's not counting the students who are in high school. Is it not a significant social layer? Has this not been demonstrated in the leading role of students, college and high school, in the antiwar movement, and in the entire radicalization of the 60s?

In terms of recruitment, students have always, from the distant past of the revolutionary socialist movement, provided important cadres for leadership of the revolutionary movement. Comrades who come from student backgrounds

are in pretty good company, including Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. What is decisive to the development of a revolutionary party, as comrade Farrell Dobbs put it during his talks at the Oberlin conference, is not where members come from, but to what degree they become "one hundred percent" revolutionaries.

That's the whole thrust of Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin's chief concern was building a combat party of *professional revolutionaries*, based on 100% loyalty to the party and even "*obliterating distinctions of social origin*" between workers and students. This is part of our organization tradition; it was also a subject of discussion in the 1939-40 fight where the Shachtman tendency called into question the basic norms of democratic centralism and party building.

In this regard I was seriously disturbed by Comrade Levitt's statements about the party leadership, as well as by his false characterization of our membership composition. It's necessary here to quote him at some length, so there is no question about any distinction or quoting out of context.

"The Socialist Workers Party has been subjected to a process of petty-bourgeoisification of its ranks, and to some degree of its program. That is, the overwhelming majority of our ranks are from petty-bourgeois backgrounds, their political day-to-day work is in the milieu of the campus, and most important are in the process of adopting a petty-bourgeois orientation to the tasks of party building and making revolutionary social change.

"This development is highlighted and underscored with an insight into the current leadership of the party. We are here, of course, discussing the young leadership, since they have become the directors of the national office and the National Committee, both in numbers and actual role. But we don't lose sight of the fact that among the older leadership of the Dobbs-Kerry generation, many are now decades removed from the plants and factories; and the middle generation of the party has by and large been graduated, I say by and large, into skilled job categories or out of the class altogether. The young leadership of the party, and many of the ranks, constitute a petty-bourgeois grouping, petty-bourgeois in training and orientation.

"We want to discuss this because it is a real fact of our party life and an undeniable one. The young leaders of the party are petty-bourgeois in background and origin. This is clear. These comrades, and they have names, so I'll state who they are, the principle architects of our party policy, Comrades Barnes, Sheppard, Camejo, Waters, Jones, Seigle, Horowitz, Britton, Jenness, Styron, Wulp, Stapleton, Benson, Myers, Stone, it's a long list. These comrades are from privileged, middle class families by and large, trained at comfortable bourgeois academic institutions, which you're familiar with. This is not decisive. We don't judge revolutionaries purely by their class backgrounds, although this is a factor of some significance.

"Secondly and more importantly, their lives since joining the movement have been outside the ranks of labor. They have primarily worked as party functionaries and in a student radical milieu. A few, still in their early thirties, have spent the totality of their adult lives on the payroll of the Socialist Workers Party for as long as a decade. No experience in the unions, no contact with

the life and realities of the class, no time in any industrial jobs, no familiarity with the young workers, Black, Brown and white, of their generation. Once again, this is not decisive. Other revolutionaries have had similar experiences.

"However, these comrades live, as do many of our comrades, in the air of the student perspective. They are opposed to the party participating in the struggles of *any* section of the class. They embrace, in their own words, embrace, only the various social struggles of petty-bourgeois derivation. They believe in the students as the epicenter of the world radicalization, they are petty-bourgeois in origin, training and experience, and in their view of social struggle. *This is decisive*, in our view. This is decisive. There now are no other indicators in our party of their petty-bourgeois character. They will not announce, as no sane political person would, announce themselves as petty-bourgeois, or put a sign on their forehead. If politics were that easy we would just hand out blueprints, and everything would be accounted for.

"Now this is no accident. The class derivation and perspective of the leadership closely approximates the general development of the party as a whole. Why, then, don't most comrades see it the way we the supporters of the minority do? Because it is a process, and it is difficult to see a process while in it and a part of it. This is the virtue of the authors and supporters of the proletarian orientation document. We can see this process for what it is, alert the party to the inevitable dangers of the process, and offer a concrete outline of the ways for the party to reorient and overcome the present danger of total petty-bourgeoisification of the party. We will repeat this many times. It is a process which confronts us, and this is the key to it."

Later on, Comrade Levitt felt obliged to remind us that the Transitional Program pointed out that "There is not, and there will not be, any place for careerism, the ulcer of the old internationals, in the Fourth International. Only those who wish to live for the movement and not at the expense of the movement will find access to it."

Not only is the implication about "careerism" in the SWP clear, but Comrade Levitt's remarks on the question of leadership reveal he either doesn't understand, or doesn't agree with, the most fundamental Leninist conception of party building.

Just imagine someone saying the following about the Bolshevik Party. "The current leadership of the party are petty-bourgeois in background and origin. These comrades have names, so I'll state who they are, the principle architects of party policy, Comrades Lenin, Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bucharin—it's a long list. These comrades are from privileged, middle class families and, more important, their lives since joining the movement have been outside the ranks of labor. A few, still in their early thirties have spent the totality of their adult lives on the payroll of the party . . ."

Just so my analogy won't be misunderstood or distorted, let me state very clearly that I am *not* comparing the present party leadership with the Bolshevik leadership of 1917. We are now at work *building* such a leadership through recruitment and development of cadres from the mass movements.

Comrade Cannon had some sharp comments about

a similar attitude towards party leaders and full time party workers contained in *The Struggle For A Proletarian Party*. It's worth quoting at some length.

"The full time functionaries of the party are those comrades who are distinguished either by exceptional ability, which propels them into professional party work by the universal consent and approval of the party membership, or by the capacity for self sacrifice, or both—those comrades who are willing to undertake functions as party workers for less compensation than even the most poorly paid worker as a rule can secure in private employment.

"The rank and file of the party knows this very well and doesn't want to hear any more denigration of the professional party workers, especially from people who shrink from the sacrifices and duties of professional party work. Our party is not a party like the social democracy. We will not permit our movement to be led by sparetime heroes while the coolie work is done by the professional functionaries, who in addition have to stand the abuse of the 'lords' who come around to visit the party once a week. The party honors and respects its professional staff. It considers the occupation of a professional revolutionist to be the most honorable of all occupations. The highest aspiration and ambition of every young party member should be to qualify himself for such a profession in life.

"Our party 'apparatus' is neither a bureaucracy, nor a faction, nor a clique. It is a selection of people who fulfill different functions according to their merits and capacities and experience and their readiness to serve the party at the cost of severe economic penalties."

In the absence of a revolutionary situation, when all political questions are tested and resolved in the streets, the measure of a revolutionary party and its leadership lies in its consistent adherence to, and application of revolutionary principles—that is, its program.

The present minority undertakes a struggle inside the SWP, which Comrade Levitt says will continue beyond the convention and "will become the most critical in the party's history, and for the biggest stakes," not, because they can point to any basic revision of our program, but because,

again in Comrade Levitt's words, there is a "threat to the program." Aside from the distorted view he presents about the party leadership's estimate of the role of the student movement, he states that "there are now no other indicators in our party of their (the leadership's) petit-bourgeois character" (other than, of course, what he calls their "origin, training, experience and their view of social struggle.")

Contrast this with Trotsky's approach to the Shachtman-Burnham opposition in 1939. Trotsky began with the basic political questions—the revision of our position on the Soviet Union and Burnham's challenge to Marxist dialectics. His class characterization of the petit-bourgeois minority was developed within a struggle over clearly defined programmatic principles, not because he was worried about a threat at some unspecified time in the future.

Comrade Levitt made an analogy between the party and someone who had left a blanket on the beach while going for a swim. Once in the water, the swimmer found himself being carried away by an unexpected tide, finding it more and more difficult to return to his "point of entry." My first thought was that comrade Levitt had found himself in some deep water and couldn't find his blanket. But the astounding moral was that the party must get back on its proper course by, and these are comrade Levitt's words, "*swimming against the tide of the current radicalization.*" The most obvious answer is, if the tide is moving in the direction you want to go, the smartest thing you can do is to swim *with* it, not against it.

We are now at the beginning of what promises to be a very valuable pre-convention discussion and convention. Never before has the Socialist Workers Party faced as promising an objective situation as it does today. Through recruitment from the developing mass movements and the construction of cadres steeped in the program and traditions of our movement we can lay the basis of the future mass revolutionary party. This development of cadre is taking place on a broader and more rapid basis today than in many years. It is through coming to a thorough understanding of the nature of the current radicalization and our tasks, as projected in the National Committee political resolution, that the party can best prepare for the next period of its growth.

HAS THE PARTY ADAPTED TO THE TRADE UNION BUREAUCRACY?

And Related Questions

By Jeff Mackler, Oakland/Berkeley Branch

The authors of *For A Proletarian Orientation* have charged that the party has substantially changed its attitude toward the trade union bureaucracy. They accuse the party leadership of adapting to the trade union bureaucrats in the antiwar movement, of revising our estimate of the importance of struggling to democratize the unions, and of doing almost nothing to involve the labor movement in the antiwar movement. This contribution will deal with these charges as well as several related accusations raised by Comrade Gregorich and her associates.

I will begin by citing three full paragraphs from the *Proletarian Orientation* document. I have found that this selection contains so many misquotes, half-quotes, out of context quotes, distortions, unsubstantiated comments and political mistakes that it is impossible to discuss its meaning without having the full text in front you. I hope comrades will refer back to this section where necessary. It reads as follows:

A final example of the effect of the composition of the party on our trade union work can be seen in the party's attitude toward the union bureaucrats. In the past, the party has considered that the struggle in the unions will begin with the question of union democracy. In their desire to confront the bosses more squarely and directly, the workers will have to break the restraining power of the bureaucrats. Today, however, Comrade Breitman maintains ". . . the radicalization of the working class" is "more likely to occur around efforts by the employers to break the unions." (*ISR*, Oct., 1970, p. 28) Comrade Lovell, in his summary of the Oberlin Trade Union workshop, says:

The reports emphasized that we do not regard *this* [my emphasis] as a big campaign against the bureaucracy. We try to avoid fights of this kind at this time. We do not consider the bureaucracy the main danger. The bureaucrats are not our first enemy. The enemy is the boss. And if you operate in the unions, this is what you must remember at all times. If issues are properly raised, very often we find that some of the bureaucrats without in any way identifying themselves with us and our broader aims will support particular issues. This is happening today with the increasing support of unions for the antiwar movement and the mass demonstrations, (1970 Socialist Activists and Educational Conference Reports, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 22).

It is certainly important to warn comrades against forming internal power blocs in the unions, like the United National Caucus in the UAW. It is entirely wrong, however, to imply that the "proper" way to raise issues is so that the bureaucrats will support them, or to equate the bureaucrats with the unions, as Comrade Lovell does in his last sentence. (It is the *bureaucrats*, not the *unions*, who are supporting the antiwar movement.) [emphasis in original, Jeff M.] In fact, while we recognize that the employer is the main enemy, we must also recognize that to get to him, we must first knock over his agent, the union bureaucrat. Comrade Cannon put it this way: (*For A Proletarian Orientation*, pp 28-29)

The first of the three paragraphs cited begins with the charge that the party's attitude toward the union bureaucrats has changed. As proof, they state what they consider the old position was and what they claim to be the position now held by party leaders. The old position was that ". . . the struggle in the unions will begin with the question of union democracy. In their desire to confront the bosses more squarely and directly, the workers will have to break the restraining power of the bureaucrats."

The new position, according to their argument, is stated in a broken quote from George Breitman found in the Oct. 1970 *ISR* on page 28. They quote Breitman in the following manner. ". . . the radicalization of the working class" is "more likely to occur around efforts by the employers to break the unions."

There are at least two fatal flaws in the counterposition presented by the authors of *For A Proletarian Orientation*. (Heretofore referred to as the *authors*.) Comrade Breitman's remark is ripped out of context and given a meaning totally alien to the original statement. Parts of two separate sentences are combined and then counterposed to a position Breitman never mentioned. Second, despite the distortions, the two positions are still not contradictory but rather, complimentary.

Breitman's *ISR* quote in the original reads as follows: What does seem certain is that the radicalization of the working class in the present decade will not be a simple repetition of the process in the 1930's. For one thing, the basic industries are already unionized and the radicalization will not revolve around their unionization; it is more likely to occur around efforts by the employer to break the unions—which would be a very grave step indeed and sure to sharpen the class struggle beyond anything seen in the 1930's.

Note here Breitman's *actual* counterposition. He says the radicalization will not revolve around unionization as in the 1930's, but in efforts of the employer to break the unions. This is a far cry from what the authors would have Breitman say.

According to their juggled reconstruction Breitman is saying that the radicalization is more likely to occur around efforts to break the unions as opposed to the struggle for union democracy. Breitman never counterposed the two. In fact, he never mentioned the latter. Apparently the need of the authors to prove the party has scrapped its position on the necessity to struggle for union democracy against the labor fakers, outweighed their ability to accurately represent the views of a party leader.

But despite their strenuous efforts the authors still come up short for the positions they claim are contradictory are in reality two aspects of the same process. As pressure from the capitalist class on the unions mounts, and as the bureaucracy proves incapable of meeting the challenge, it is expected that the rank and file will see more clearly the necessity of dealing with their misleaders. It is difficult to imagine these processes, i.e., the struggle against the bureaucracy and the struggle against the employers, taking place in immaculate isolation. In fact when the authors say "In their desire to confront the bosses more

squarely and directly, the workers will have to break the restraining power of the bureaucrats." (p. 29), they are admitting a close interpenetration in the two struggles despite their efforts to counterpose them.

Thus, the attempt to use Breitman to prove that we have developed a new slant on the bureaucracy, that we have placed a kind of minor or secondary importance on struggle against them, fails completely.

But in the very next line the authors attempt to make the same point, this time quoting Comrade Frank Lovell as proof. (See the extensive Lovell quote at the beginning of my contribution and the remarks of the authors.) Comrade Lovell is making the point, very clearly in my opinion, that "at this time" in the unions, oppositional tendencies cannot challenge the bureaucracy head on. The times necessitate the use of flanking tactics. I will dwell on this question momentarily before taking up the twisting of Lovell's remarks on the method we employ to deal with the bureaucrats on certain questions.

Flanking Tactics

Our tactics in the unions or anywhere else must always flow from and relate to real developments. Flanking tactics, that is, the avoidance of head-on confrontations with the bureaucracy, are employed out of necessity and not because of any change in our attitude toward the labor fakers.

We employ the flanking tactic by raising principled demands around actions which seek to involve significant sections of the ranks in struggle. We formulate these demands in such a manner that participation is *not* contingent on agreement to take on the union misleaders who have failed to raise these same demands.

We propose that the union move around issues which appear reasonable to the ranks rather than trying to lead by directing our fire at the bureaucracy with the expectation that direct exposure of their crimes, spinelessness, collaboration with the bosses etc., will be the fact which mobilizes the mass.

In the event that the bureaucracy is compelled to move, for whatever reason, around the issues we raise, we have advanced the struggle. In the event they refuse, we have contributed to the process of further exposing their misleadership and inability to fight for the rank and file. The demands we raise depend on a combination of several factors. We are not under any obligation to raise the full transitional program at all times, although a number of our opponents appear to regard this as a matter of principle. In all cases we aim to move the ranks in the direction of class struggle politics. In every instance we must judge what formulations, tactics, slogans etc. are best suited to this aim.

If we felt a situation was developing where we could take on the bureaucracy more directly we would not hesitate to do so. In the New York Teachers' Union, the UFT, we played a key role in an opposition caucus which ran some eighty candidates on a broad radical program including several transitional demands, against the Shanker leadership of the union. At other times in the UFT we were compelled to approach the situation more cautiously.

On the Vietnam issue for example, the caucus initiated and later co-sponsored a referendum which required some 7,000 signatures to be placed on the ballot. It was the first rank and file initiated referendum in the history of

the UFT. At the time we felt the ranks were not clear on the Shanker bureaucracy's position on the war. There were many who sincerely felt Shanker was opposed to the war. They imagined he favored the union's taking "no position" on the question in order to maintain unity in the organization. We concentrated our efforts on the referendum calling for immediate withdrawal rather than Shanker's history of pro-war activity in the UFT, the national AFT and the AFL-CIO. We were more concerned with clarifying the war issue than with demonstrating that Shanker's politics were no different than George Meany and Co. Eventually we got to Shanker also, but the job is far from done.

In the Chicago Teachers' Union I believe our comrades had a similar experience one year later. The Desmond leadership of the Chicago local has been among the most conservative in the AFT, but a referendum for immediate withdrawal recently passed by a vote of 9,760 to 3,543. That vote, representing 25,000 Chicago teachers, will be an important factor at the upcoming National Convention of the AFT where an action proposal will be presented calling on the AFT to contribute \$10,000 to NPAC and to organize a massive labor contingent on November 6. It has an excellent chance of passing if it is *not* proposed as an antileadership maneuver.

Thus, flanking tactics are not an accommodation to the bureaucracy, but rather a recognition that the forces necessary for a head on confrontation have not yet matured, do not yet see the real role of the labor fakers and consequently are not prepared to engage in direct struggle against them. Not understanding this fact of life, our opponents continue to raise demands in such a manner that they are effectively isolated from the ranks and relegated to the status of mindless slogan-mongers. Not understanding, or refusing to recognize the necessity of employing this tactic, Gregorich and associates accuse the party leadership of accommodating to the bureaucracy.

Returning to the twisting of Lovell's remarks quoted at the beginning of this contribution, we find once again the quote is taken out of context and used to demonstrate the *exact opposite* of the actual complete text. The first sentence of Lovell's quote reads: "The reports emphasized that we do not regard *this* (my emphasis) as a big campaign against the bureaucracy." The word "this" in the context presented by the authors can only be taken to refer to *the fight for union democracy*. That is, the authors construct the quotes to give the impression that Lovell is saying that we do not regard the fight for union democracy as a big campaign against the bureaucracy. But reference to the complete selection from Lovell proves the opposite. The paragraph before the one cited by the authors reads as follows:

We are working here on a campaign to democratize the union, and it is being conducted on a strictly union basis, independent at this time of our broad political campaigns and other party-building activities.

The reason Lovell's next sentence, the one quoted by the authors, says that the party doesn't regard this union democracy struggle we are engaged in as a campaign against the bureaucracy is because Lovell is referring to the bureaucracy of the *local Chicago union* not the national bureaucracy, against which the Chicago local has organized a Right-To-Vote-Committee as part of the union apparatus. Comrade Elmer Hendrix described the com-

mittee in his remarks at the 1970 activist and educational conference. Here is the way Hendrix characterized the situation:

Within the union a very broad sentiment for the right of the membership to vote on contracts is encouraged by the existence of a Right-To-Vote-Committee. It is an official committee in one of the Chicago locals, a standing committee. The right to vote is a very simple, democratic demand.

This demand does not in and of itself, at this time, challenge the material privileges of the union bureaucrats.

We believe that the formation of this Right-To-Vote-Committee is a useful tactic at this time. It is presently confined to the single issue, is uniting thousands of railroad workers for an action, seems to be splitting off some sections of the union leadership, and promises to open the way for greater membership participation in the affairs of the union. This is something new in the railroad industry. (*1970 Socialist Activists and Educational Conference Reports*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 16)

The material above, including the section omitted by the authors, seems to demonstrate that the party is quite concerned with the issue of union democracy. The particular tactics employed by the comrades seem to square quite well with the developments they describe in the union. Plans are underway to expand the work of the committee, including putting it on a nationwide basis. Hendrix also indicates the comrades are aware of the possibilities of the committee later taking up other issues such as inflation, unemployment and the war in Vietnam.

But the authors intended the Lovell quote to demonstrate the opposite. It seems that the methodology of the *For A Proletarian Orientation* document is again more than lacking in its concern for accuracy.

The final paragraph from the selection quoted at length at the outset of this presentation contains several additional serious errors in quoting. The authors say "It is entirely wrong, however, to imply that the *"proper"* (my emphasis, Jeff M.) way to raise issues is so that the bureaucrats will support them, or to equate the bureaucrats with the unions, as Comrade Lovell does in his last sentence. In the Lovell quote they are referring to, Frank did *not* state or imply that the proper way issues are raised is so that the bureaucrats will support them. He did say the following: "If issues are properly raised, very often we find that some of the bureaucrats without in any way identifying themselves with us and our broader aims will support particular issues." Our party has applied this particular lesson time and again. We have won broad support on a principled basis on a wide range of issues from many groups and individuals on the other side of the class line or otherwise hostile to our broader program. But when we raised the issues properly, we compelled support from sections outside our own ranks. Our ultraleft opponents have a knack for raising issues in such a way that no one can support them. I hope this is not the intention of Comrade Gregorich and her co-writers.

Thus the authors charge that we raise issues to suit the needs of the bureaucrats (this is what they're really saying) stands refuted by a simple analysis of the actual text. However, there still remains time for them to present a political explanation of how we pander to the trade

union bureaucracy. A few facts would also help to prove their case.

The second unsubstantiated charge in the final paragraph is that Comrade Lovell equates the bureaucrats with the unions. Reference to the actual quote indicates that Lovell is merely saying that as the ranks come to oppose the war and as sentiment to end it grows, certain sections of the bureaucracy, for their own reasons, will follow. No equation is made between the bureaucracy and the ranks either here or anywhere else in the history of the SWP.

The next sentence, offered parenthetically, states that "(It is the *bureaucrats*, *not* the *unions*, who are supporting the antiwar movement.)" [emphasis in original] This is a rather bold assertion to say the least. There are so many examples which could be given to refute it that one hardly knows where to begin.

In the California Bay Area, we had several cases where the rank and file overruled their local leadership and voted to endorse and support the April 24 mass demonstration against the war. The Transportation Workers Union, Local 250A overruled their president and Executive Board at a rank and file meeting. When the union officer at this meeting read a communication from the NPAC Labor Support Committee requesting endorsement for April 24, he followed with a recommendation to refuse endorsement. He was outvoted decisively by the ranks. A similar incident took place at the meeting of the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks. Rank and file pressure forced the bureaucracy to remain silent and go along with support for April 24 at meetings of the Machinists and International Typographical Workers Union. Similar situations were repeated throughout the Bay Area and I'm sure, throughout the country. At a dramatic meeting of the San Francisco Labor Council, the delegates, mostly rank and file leaders or minor officials, overruled the head of the council, Secretary Treasurer, George Johns. The vote was roughly 60 to 30. On the same night, after a one hour heated debate, a motion to support April 24 was defeated by two votes at the Alameda Labor Council. Once again, it was the ranks who fought the bureaucracy on the question of the war.

In some ten unions in the Bay Area, it was one of our comrades who introduced the question of April 24 into the union. In another ten our work in the NPAC Labor Support Committee, played a key role in raising the issue. Rank and file unionists in AFT locals throughout California put their organization on record against the war, contributed money to the California Federation of Teachers NPAC Fund, organized car and bus transportation to the demonstration and participated in the Labor Contingent. There were a number of other unions which took similar steps.

This is not to say that the labor movement has entered the antiwar struggle with the numbers and program which can be decisive. We are just now beginning to see organized expressions of rank and file opposition to the war. We expect the process to deepen and are constantly searching for new opportunities to intervene effectively. But it is certainly improper to argue that the bureaucrats are supporting the movement and not the ranks.

The concluding sentence of this thoroughly confused paragraph exposes the authors to the charge that they do not understand the difference between strategy and tactics. It reads: "In fact, while we recognize that the em-

ployer is the main enemy, we must also recognize that to get to him, we must first knock over his agent, the union bureaucrat. Comrade Cannon put it this way: "The authors then proceed with a long quote from Cannon on the strategic necessity of struggle against the labor lieutenants of capitalism.

There is no disagreement with this strategic view. But we are not prepared to "knock over" the bureaucrats today. While this certainly remains the long run perspective of the SWP, raising it to the level of a slogan does not contribute to the development of tactics, flanking tactics, geared to the day to day fight to build a class struggle leadership in the workers organizations.

The authors in this instance, and in innumerable others, confuse strategy with tactics. Such an error can prove fatal to the revolutionary party.

Antiwar Work — Further Adaption?

Comrade Gregorich and her associates open their section on antiwar work with a string of charges which defy substantiation. Their section reads as follows:

An adaptation to the union bureaucrats is most apparent in our work in the antiwar movement. Practically the entire effort of the party to involve the labor movement in the antiwar movement has been in securing the endorsement of union bureaucrats for various actions. Solicitation of support from these bureaucrats is valuable only if it is used to open the door for a massive campaign directed at involving the rank and file. Otherwise, such solicitation will only serve to identify us with the bureaucrats in the eyes of the rank and file. The party must publicly demand that these bureaucrats utilize the union apparatus to aid the rank and file in the organization of contingents to antiwar actions. (*For A Proletarian Orientation*, p. 29)

The party is accused of spending practically its entire effort in relation to the labor movement in the collection of endorsements from labor bureaucrats. The building of mass demonstrations involving many thousands of unionists apparently has nothing to do with the labor movement in the eyes of the authors. The initiation of union referenda as well as citywide referenda are also divorced from the labor movement if we follow the logic of the writers of *For a Proletarian Orientation*. The organization of labor contingents and in the process, the mass leafletting at plant gates, the organization of a labor-Vietnam teach-in as we did on the Berkeley campus, the support by SMC for the General Electric strike, etc., are also placed in the category of non-working class activity. There is no doubt a listing of such activity could fill volumes.

But let's take up the question of solicitation of endorsement and support from the labor bureaucracy. The authors argue that such solicitation ". . . is valuable *only* if it is used to open the door for a massive campaign directed at involving the rank and file." Otherwise, they contend, ". . . such solicitation will only serve to identify us with the bureaucrats in the eyes of the rank and file." But what are the authors really saying here? It seems that we should only seek endorsements from bureaucrats if *we* plan to massively organize the ranks or if the "party demands" (my emphasis) that the bureaucrats use the union apparatus to organize labor contingents.

The latter is cheap talk at best. The SWP does not strut about making empty demands of the labor bureaucracy. We don't need to *cover* the fact that a bureaucrat endorses an action with a disclaimer that we publicly demanded he do more than put his name down. We don't fear we will be "identified" with the bureaucracy if we ask them to oppose an imperialist war in progress.

It also goes without saying that we use such endorsements as a lever to better reach the rank and file but we have no illusions that *at this time* we will be able to mobilize the ranks through their own organizations in numbers anywhere near the real potential. This is not because of our lack of desire to do so but rather because of the current level of political consciousness of the unions, a factor we cannot jump over.

Our opponents in the Worker's League and Progressive Labor consider that the endorsement of labor bureaucrats and/or capitalist politicians puts the antiwar movement on an unprincipled basis. For the Worker's League it's a Popular Front, for PL its character changes from week to week. The Worker's League had the distinction of casting the only vote *against* April 24 when the question came before the ranks of a union local in the Bay Area. Apparently the rank and file didn't feel any *identity* with the bureaucracy when they overruled the Worker's League. Nevertheless, this didn't prevent them from organizing their own, separate, anti-imperialist demonstration on April 24. No one came.

You Can't Have It Both Ways

The authors charge that the SWP has now developed a strategic orientation toward what they call petty bourgeois layers. This they contend is a complete reversal of the entire history of our party. To remind us of our old position they cite Comrade Dobbs as follows:

Our strategic orientation is to build an independent mass revolutionary party. All our tactical maneuvers must be subordinated to and co-ordinated around this strategic aim. To build a mass party our primary tactical orientation must at all times be toward the mainstream of the organized working class. (p. 12)

But on page 15 the authors contradict this position with their own statement:

It is our contention that in the period from 1957-64, *a period which necessitated a tactical turn toward petty bourgeois layers*, the SWP, influenced by the petty bourgeois milieu it was working in and recruiting from, began to see work in that layer as the party's primary and permanent orientation. (p. 15)

These two selections, from the same document, indicate a certain confusion. On the one hand Dobbs is quoted favorably to the effect that our primary tactical orientation must *at all times* be toward the working class but on the other, Gregorich and associates say that from 1957-64, it was a *necessity* to turn toward petty bourgeois layers. (I leave aside for the purposes of this argument what the authors mean by petty bourgeois layers since I often get the impression that every movement we are engaged in is characterized as petty bourgeois.)

The authors of *For A Proletarian Orientation* can't

have it both ways. Are they going to stick with their quotes from Dobbs, Cannon, Breitman, Trotsky etc., or are they going to stand behind their own stated position that necessity sometimes requires a tactical orientation to arenas other than the unions?

While they apparently recognize the necessity of analyzing and adjusting to a changing situation during the 1957-64 period, they cannot accomplish the same feat in the current situation. They *select* quotes which imply that our current orientation is tantamount to betrayal of the working class but in their entire document they never once present so much as a phrase analyzing what is happening in the unions today, much less anywhere else. Their document, according to this logic, would suffice as a programmatic statement for all the revolutionary parties and groupings throughout the world for the past 100 years. But perhaps I am overstating the case somewhat!

In describing the current motion in the working class they managed to come up with but two words, "molecular" and "stirrings." In the absence of a more substantial analysis of the unions, we can only conclude that they consider it a principle to enter the unions at all times, despite their admission to the contrary.

In presenting the *For a Proletarian Orientation* document to the Berkeley/Oakland branch, Comrade Ralph Levitt argued that the call for entering the unions was *not* based on any particular developments in the unions but rather on mounting evidence that the party was adapting to petty bourgeois layers and suffering an erosion of program. He continued with criticisms of our work in the various anticapitalist movements (although he doesn't refer to them in this manner) which parallel those found in the document under discussion. Levitt's argument was essentially that the party needs a thorough plunge in the proletarian ocean to cleanse itself of accumulated petty bourgeois impurities acquired during our stay with alien class forces.

The SWP is not opposed to sending comrades into unions or to participating in union caucuses and other formations. We have a significant number of comrades throughout the country doing this work now. We *are* opposed to sending comrades into unions or anywhere else where the opportunity to build the party or the mass movement are severely restricted. We don't enter the unions to make the record.

The Basic Industry Argument

The authors tell us that we should concentrate our forces in those basic industries which employ what they define as productive labor. (I refer comrades here to a contribution to be submitted by Comrade Sue Smith of the Berkeley/Oakland branch. Comrade Smith effectively challenges the definition of productive labor employed by the authors of *For A Proletarian Orientation*.) The decisive industries are defined and enumerated by the authors. Nothing else is required except massive colonization. We

are not told what is happening in these industries, what developments have occurred in the unions, what oppositional forces have emerged etc. Just go in now before it's too late.

It is interesting here that the developments in the public employee unions are not mentioned. This is perhaps the only section of the trade union movement which has experienced growth over the past few decades. It is the sector which has participated in the most frequent and militant strikes against local, state and federal governments. But it is not a decisive sector according to the definition so I imagine it was excluded from consideration. The authors appear to hold the position that developments in one section of the class bear no relation to the state of other sections. If we're in the decisive sector, we have nothing to do but wait!

The Miss the Boat Theory of Politics

We are continually reminded by the authors that it is imperative to sink our roots in the unions now; otherwise we will be no more than spectators when the explosion comes. We will miss the boat of the revolution. It goes without saying that if we had followed this admonition during the period of the 50's and early 60's, we would not be here today. That is, if we had dug deeper into the unions and ignored the struggles around civil liberties, civil rights, peace, free speech, Hungary, regroupment, etc., we would have effectively put ourselves out of business.

But the SWP saw those struggles as a means to build our movement and influence broader layers of society. We sought to build every anticapitalist social movement, even those outside the organized working class. Like today, we saw those struggles dialectically related to a deeper crisis in capitalism. Like today, we sought to broaden and extend them, to help them reach out to working people, to help create a climate in which a relatively quiescent working class could engage in action, however limited.

As a result of this activity our party has emerged as the largest and most influential socialist organization in the United States. We are still gathering forces for the massive class struggles to come. We are recruiting them from the existing anticapitalist movements. We don't intend to leave these movements to our opponents and others who would derail them into the ultraleft swamp or into the established channels of bourgeois protest. We don't intend to bury ourselves in the unions at *this* moment and pretend we are doing revolutionary work. The current radicalization described in the NC draft is intimately linked to the larger class struggles which will develop despite the formal separation of the two by the authors. Our capacity to intervene in these decisive battles is directly related to our ability to win the leadership of the current struggles.

The colonization advised by *For A Proletarian Orientation* takes us in the opposite direction.

July 16, 1971

ERNEST MANDEL'S THEORY OF NEOCAPITALISM—
CORRECTING THE RECORD

By Dick Roberts, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

The authors of "For a Proletarian Orientation" assert that "The basic division in the working class is between productive and nonproductive workers. . . . It is productive workers that Marxists have always considered the key sector of the working class. . . . Marxists have always sought to build revolutionary parties based on the workers involved in basic production and distribution. . . . However, in the last several years Comrade Ernest Mandel has developed a theory which challenges these basic Marxist definitions."

Comrade Gregorich and her associates then zero in on what they consider to be the main feature of Mandel's "challenge": "It is Mandel's opinion that ' . . . starting either with the great depression of 1929-32 or with the second world war, capitalism entered into a third stage in its development. . . .' Mandel calls this new period neocapitalism and says that it has been characterized by 'The massive reintroduction of intellectual labor into the process of production. . . .'"

A number of quotations from Mandel's articles are then cited to prove that he discussed the "reintroduction of intellectual labor into the process of production." Comrade Mandel even discussed what role the "technical intelligentsia" can play in building the revolutionary party. The authors of the minority document jump to the conclusion: "To Comrade Mandel, don't you see, the technical intelligentsia is not only part of the working class, but that part which plays an 'indispensable' role in the overthrow of capitalism. . . . *The inevitable logic of Mandel's position is that the party today must orient toward this layer of intelligentsia.*" (Emphasis added.)

Since Mandel went so far as to say that ". . . the student revolt can become a real vanguard revolt of the working class as a whole, triggering a powerful revolutionary upsurge as it did [in] May [1968] in France," Gregorich *et al* say they are convinced that "*The unmentioned conclusion here is that a party composed of students is a party composed of workers, so a student orientation is a proletarian orientation.*" (Emphasis added.)

This presentation of Mandel's views is so dishonest and incorrect one is forced to conclude that the members of the "Proletarian Orientation Tendency" who composed it are unserious about Marxist economic theory. They haven't gone beyond citing a few quotations out of context. They say they object to Comrade Mandel's theory of neocapitalism. But neither in this document nor in the other two documents which constitute the Proletarian Orientation Tendency's counterposition to the [N. C. resolution] is there even the slightest attempt to offer an analysis of the present conjuncture of the world economy, let alone a critique of Mandel's theory of neocapitalism.

[In contrast,] the articles of Comrade Mandel's that are quoted in "For a Proletarian Orientation" do contain an analysis of postwar imperialism. This was their primary objective. Far from substituting the students for workers in the revolutionary process, Mandel has been the foremost European polemicist against such "New Left" conceptions. The theory of neocapitalism was an essential part of this polemic. It is a defense of Marxist economics and the political conclusions flowing from it against both bourgeois and New Left detractors.

In connection with this Mandel has analyzed new social layers that have been drawn into revolutionary struggles the last decade. He began sketching a materialist theory of the youth radicalization while the barricades were up in Parisian streets in May 1968. Mandel's writings on this question are a valuable amplification of his comprehensive analysis of neocapitalism. It is necessary to set the record straight.

"An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory"

The long postwar boom of world capitalism and the relative class peace that prevailed in the advanced capitalist countries to the beginning of the sixties produced a massive flight from Marxist economic theory, even among radicals. They asked:

Had capitalism overcome its main contradictions?

Could workers be relied on to wage a revolutionary struggle against capitalism?

The New Left in American and Europe was vague about the answer to the first question but it was certain about the answer to the second. Typical was C. Wright Mills' categorical assertion in *The Marxists* (1962): "There is now no substantial reason to believe that Marxist revolutions will come about in the foreseeable future in any major advanced capitalist society. In fact, the revolutionary potential—whatever the phrase may reasonably mean—of wagersworkers, labor unions and political parties, is feeble."

Ernest Mandel's *Marxist Economic Theory*, which was completed in 1960, provided a comprehensive reaffirmation of Marxist economics. It supplied new proofs of the main laws of the capitalist economy that Marx had discovered. Where Marx had presented these laws in a logical order in *Capital*, Mandel showed their historical genesis and then their application to all sectors of world economics today. Drawing on the Left Opposition's analysis of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, Mandel extended his historic study to postcapitalist societies and concluded it with a discussion of socialist economy. The two volumes are an outstanding contribution to revolutionary literature and unquestionably the most important work in Marxist economic theory to appear in the postwar period. They leave no doubt about his answer to the main question: Capitalism had not overcome its central contradictions.

Mandel showed in *Marxist Economic Theory* that in crucial respects the Keynesian policies followed by the imperialist powers after World War II could only end up exacerbating these contradictions. Moreover he singled out the economic arena in which these contradictions would first manifest themselves: the international monetary system.

The basic ideas are summarized in the three classes Mandel gave at an educational weekend in Paris in 1963 reproduced in the pamphlet: "An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory." The classes were entitled, "The Theory of Value and Surplus-Value;" "Capital and Capitalism" and "Neocapitalism."

Here Mandel shows that the motor force of the contemporary economy remains what it was in Marx's analy-

sis: the competition between giant accumulations of capital for the surplus value produced by labor. This competition is itself the spur to further accumulation and concentration of capital, all the more intensifying competition, as the costs of technology become ever greater. The big fish eat the little fish: "The competitive struggle," Mandel said, "is therefore accompanied by a continuous concentration of capital, by the displacement of a large number of businessmen by a smaller number, and by the transformation of a certain number of independent business people into technicians, managers, foremen, and even simple subordinate office personnel and workers." Concentration of capital leads to monopoly. As monopolies engulf domestic markets they must export capital in order to find new arenas for profit; the conditions of capitalist production and competition are reproduced throughout the world.

"There is a *progressive socialization of all economic life*, which is becoming a single assemblage, a single fabric. But this whole movement of interdependence is simply centered in an insane way around private property, private appropriation, by a smaller number of capitalists whose private interests, moreover, collide more and more with the interests of the billions of human beings included in this assemblage."

The private accumulation of capital by a tiny number of immensely powerful families and the competition of their national and multinational industrial and financial empires are not immediately and obviously visible to the masses of humankind. Nor is the mechanism of their exploitation whereby the value produced in every single portion of the working day, every hour, minute and second, is divided between the laborers and the distant entrepreneurs. But no matter how obscurely they are perceived by workers or bosses, these contradictory realities of capitalist society inevitably lead to a deepgoing social crisis.

Mandel describes the development of economic crises under capitalism: "Goods which do not find buyers not only do not realize their surplus-value but they do not even return their invested capital. The slump in sales therefore forces businessmen to suspend their operations. They are therefore forced to lay off their workers. And since the laid-off workers have no reserves, since they can subsist only when they are selling their labor-power, unemployment obviously condemns them to the starkest poverty and precisely because the relative abundance of goods has resulted in a slump in sales.

"The factor of periodic economic crises is inherent in the capitalist system and remains unsurmountable. We shall see further on that this remains equally true in the neocapitalist regime in which we are now living, even if these crises are now called 'recessions.' Crises are the clearest manifestation of the fundamental contradiction in the system and a periodic reminder that it is condemned to die sooner or later."

Neocapitalism

It should calm the apprehensions of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency to learn from Mandel that the fundamental character of capitalism had by no means changed in the aftermath of the world war. Mandel himself was later to remark, in "Workers Under Neocapitalism," "I do not care very much for the term 'neocapitalism' which is ambiguous, to say the least. . . . Some European politicians and sociologists speak about 'neocapitalism'

in the sense that society has shed some of the basic characteristics of capitalism. I deny this most categorically, and therefore attach to the term 'neocapitalism' the opposite connotation: *a society which has all the basic elements of classical capitalism.*" (Emphasis added.)

Nevertheless, epochal events like the great depression, which swept the capitalist world in the 1930s, and the second world war itself must leave their imprints on society. They made a deep impression on the consciousness of the class enemy. Surely it is in order for revolutionaries to ask what their effects were, not only on the consciousness of the imperialist decision makers, but on the relationship of class forces and on the economy itself. This is what Mandel set out to do as he developed the theory of neocapitalism.

Six of the central aspects of neocapitalism are discussed in "An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory."

1) *The world war had brought to a close the long-term cycle of stagnation in capitalist production which had begun in 1913.*

The economic aftermath of the first world war was quite different from the capitalist prosperity that was to develop beginning in the 1950s. The European nations were wracked by continuous economic crises and after the short boom of the second half of the 1920s, mainly in the United States, 1929 inaugurated a worldwide capitalist depression. (A brilliant prior analysis of the post-World War I capitalist economies was made by Leon Trotsky in his report to the Third World Congress of the Communist International in 1921 entitled "The World Economic Crisis and the New Tasks of the Communist International," in *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, Vol. I.)

But the second world war cleared the path for a big expansion of capital. "The possibility had thus been created," Mandel remarks, "for strengthening the system on the basis of granting economic concessions to the workers, a policy which is being practiced on an international scale in Western Europe and North America . . ."

2) *The monopolists of the advanced industrial nations, above all of the United States, had to rely more and more on state intervention into the economy.*

"In all the decisive layers of the bourgeoisie, the deepest conviction reigns that the automatism of the economy of and by itself, the 'market mechanism' cannot insure the survival of the system, that it is no longer possible to rely on the automatic internal functioning of capitalist economy, and that a conscious and expanding intervention, more and more regular and systematic in character, is necessary to save this system . . . *Neocapitalism is a capitalism whose preeminent characteristic is the growth of intervention by the state into economic life.*" (emphasis added.)

3) *The big postwar expansion of capital was rooted in technological revolution.*

There was "an almost uninterrupted transformation of the techniques of production." This was a byproduct of the research financed for war purposes. So rapid is the "computerization" of industry under the impact of international competition that there is a shortening of the "life of a machine," as one "generation" is made obsolete by the next. This leads to a more rapid rate of the renewal of capital invested in machinery: "To the extent that this fixed capital is now renewed at a more rapid rate, the length of the cycle is also narrowed. We no longer

have crises every ten years but instead have recessions every four to five years."

4) *State intervention in the economy can only ameliorate crises, it cannot end them.*

"Aggregate demand can be divided into two categories: the demand for consumer goods and the demand for producer goods (machines and equipment). The expansion in social security funds makes it possible to avoid an extreme drop in expenditures (in demands) for consumer goods after the outbreak of a crisis. The expansion in public expenditures (especially in military expenditures) makes it possible to avoid an extreme drop in expenditures (in demand) for producer goods. Thus, these distinctive traits of neocapitalism operate in both sectors, not in suppressing the contradictions of capitalism—crises break out just as they did before, capitalism has not found a means of insuring a more or less harmonious and uninterrupted growth—but in reducing their amplitude and seriousness, at least temporarily."

5) *But these countercyclical interventions in the economy can only end up by substituting inflation for recession.*

This exceptionally important insight of Mandel's into the main internal obstacle to Keynesian "solutions" of economic crises is perhaps not so easy to grasp at first. Mandel explains: "The production of armaments has this special characteristic: it creates purchasing power in exactly the same way that production of consumer goods does—wages are paid in plants making tanks or rockets, just as they are paid in plants manufacturing machines or textiles . . . but in exchange for this supplementary buying power, there is no corresponding supplementary merchandise placed on the market . . . The creation of purchasing power in the armaments sector has no compensatory increase in the mass of merchandise."

Thus there is an influx of funds into the pocketbooks of consumers but no corresponding increase of consumer goods to purchase. The monopolists can artificially stimulate a shortage in consumer goods and jack up prices. (I have given a more detailed description of this process, which erupted dramatically in the United States with the escalation of Vietnam-war spending in 1965, in "A 'Wage-Price Spiral' Inflation?," *ISR*, Jan.-Feb. 1967.)

6) *In attempting to control inflations the capitalists will more and more resort to "incomes policies."*

In this 1963 pamphlet Mandel provides key arguments for workers against the line of attack by the bourgeoisie on their living standards. He points out that in the upturn of the economy, when there is a scarcity of labor, workers are in the best position to fight for and get higher wages. "But every capitalist technician of conjunctures will tell you that it is precisely during this phase, from the point of view of 'stability,' of *remaining within the limits required by the capitalist rate of profit* . . . that it is most 'dangerous' to call strikes and get wage increases. . . . In other words the entire logic of a managed economy is precisely to avoid strikes and attempted improvements *during the only phase of the cycle which the relationship of class forces favor the working class.*"

Furthermore Mandel anticipates transitional slogans that might arise in the struggle against wage controls: "How can an 'incomes policy' be practiced with the slightest effectiveness if income from wages are the only incomes which are really known? Does not every 'incomes policy' demand as a prerequisite *workers' control of production, opening up of company books, and the abolition of bank-*

ing secrets, if for no other reason than to establish the exact income of the capitalists and the exact increases in productivity?"

As we shall see, Mandel adds to this list in other articles. But it should be emphasized here that the theory of neocapitalism began by searching for the *material basis* of the relative quiescence of labor in the fifties and early sixties. Having uncovered this basis—mainly in the triumph of U. S. imperialism in World War II and the global expansion of capitalist production that this made possible—Mandel sought to reveal the *contradictions* in the new situation; and perceiving these contradictions, he proceeded to ask, *how will they manifest themselves in the class struggle?*

To reveal the power of this application of Marxist methodology, one has only to note that in 1963 we had not yet seen: the inflation of the U. S. economy unleashed by the escalation of the Vietnam war; the severe shakeups in the world monetary system which this was to cause; the dramatic rise in strike actions by American workers as they attempted to keep their wages abreast of inflation; and the catapulting in 1970-71 of the issue of "wage and price controls" into the political center of labor-capital relations in the United States.

Mandel's Polemic Against 'Monopoly Capital'

The American New Left's retreat from Marxism and pessimism about the revolutionary potential of American workers found its most extended theoretical elaboration in Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital* which was published in 1966.

Baran and Sweezy abandoned many essentials of Marxist theory. For the central contradictions of capitalism explained by Marx, Baran and Sweezy substituted a new and *subjective* contradiction which they called "economic surplus."

They argued in essence that the giant U. S. monopolies had so overcome the classical contradictions of capitalism resulting from competition, that these monopolies would now pile up huge "surpluses" so that the main problem remaining was how to dispose of these surpluses. Baran and Sweezy placed their emphasis on the "irrationality" flowing from this situation—the exorbitant manufacture of really unnecessary consumer goods, wasteful sales expenditures, lavishing of billions of dollars on armaments, massive spread of government bureaucracy, etc.

Instead of the contradictions in the social relations of production, they turned toward another sort of flaw in monopoly capitalism that would provide the basis of struggle against it. They thought they located this in "economic wastefulness." But the concept did not lead Baran and Sweezy to revolutionary conclusions for the United States. They wrote:

"The answer of traditional Marxian orthodoxy—that the industrial proletariat must eventually rise in revolution against its capitalist oppressors—no longer carries conviction. Industrial workers are a diminishing minority of the American working class, and their organized cores in the basic industries have to a large extent been integrated into the system as consumers and ideologically conditioned members of the society. They are not, as the industrial workers were in Marx's day, the system's special victims, though they suffer from its elementality and irrationality along with all other classes and strata—more than some, less than others."

Mandel answered Baran and Sweezy in the July-August 1967 *ISR* in a comprehensive rebuttal of *Monopoly Capital*. First of all, Mandel showed that the category of "economic surplus" was self-contradictory because it included *products* that are the result of productive labor (that is, their production produces surplus value) along with something quite different—the *redistribution* of this surplus value by the state to unproductive workers (payments to armed forces, veterans or state functionaries, etc.). Mandel's criticism of Baran and Sweezy rests upon the distinction that Marxists actually make between productive and unproductive labor. Contrary to the confused position of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation tendency, the gist of this distinction is: Where is surplus value produced? And where is it simply redistributed?

Baran and Sweezy don't grasp the importance of this distinction because they have abandoned the labor theory of value to begin with. But Mandel argues, "All the 'laws of motion' of the capitalist mode of production arise out of the process of capital accumulation, based upon and explained by the labor theory of value as perfected by Marx. This is especially true for the law on centralization and concentration of capital and the law of increasing organic composition of capital. . . . Indeed, the attempt to divorce the activities of capital accumulation from these two rational explanations offered by Marx . . . must lead to the discovery of some mystic 'accumulation urge' beyond the realm of scientific investigation."

The necessity of accumulating capital and the intensification of competition nationally and internationally which flows from this, pits capital against labor, no matter whether labor perceives capitalism to be "irrational" or not: "The crucial weakness of Monopoly Capital," stated Mandel, "is the authors' failure to deal with the exploitation of labor by capital and their consequent omission of the capitalists' need to increase relative surplus value. . . . By leaving out of their analysis of monopoly capital the continuing struggle of the capitalist class to maintain and increase the rate of exploitation of the working class, Baran and Sweezy put their whole economic concept of the present functioning of the capitalist system outside the realm of contending social forces, i.e. outside the realm of the class struggle. It is not surprising, therefore, that they end by denying any validity to the anti-capitalist potential of the American working class. . ."

The same issue of the *ISR* which contained this article by Mandel carried an article by Comrade Joseph Hansen also polemicizing against New Left conceptions. Hansen's target was Herbert Marcuse. Hansen wrote, "The possibility of the youth and the intelligentsia substituting for the proletariat appears particularly attractive to Marcuse. . . . To put it in class terms—which Marcuse does not do—the hope for the future in the industrially advanced countries lies with the petty bourgeois intellectuals and student youth."

Hansen continued, "In essence [Marcuse] stands on factual grounds. The working-class has not yet carried out a socialist revolution in the industrially advanced countries. . . . A sector of the intellectuals and student youth have recently displayed encouraging signs of radicalization. From this, however, it is hazardous on the part of Marcuse to *substitute* the intellectuals and youth for the working class. Another interpretation would appear at least equally valid; i.e., that the radicalization of the

intellectuals and youth *foreshadows* the radicalization of the working class. . . .

"The first great new upsurge in any major city in the world will put a finish to [Marcuse's] fundamentally anti-Marxist view by confronting an old and outworn empirical fact with a new and opposing one. A faint indication of the potential can be gained from careful study of the opening days of the uprising in Santo Domingo in April 1965. . . . It was precisely because of the revolutionary capacities of the working class that the Johnson administration immediately ordered an armed invasion and occupation of the country." (Hansen's article, "Is Marxism-Leninism Obsolete?," can be found in *Fifty Years of World Revolution* for which it was originally written.)

These polemics against the views of the disqualifiers of the revolutionary potential of the working class constitute a refutation in advance of the unfounded charges of the Gregorich grouping.

World Trade and Monetary Crises

To the list of six aspects of neocapitalism discussed above, two more must now be added:

7) *Expanded world trade, the export of both goods and capital, and the sales of multinational corporations play an ever more central role in sustaining the post-war expansion of the imperialist economies.*

8) *But this process is ever more jeopardized by the contradictions of the international monetary system, themselves the product of the tendency toward permanent inflation.*

Mandel wrote in the introduction to *Fifty Years of World Revolution* (February, 1968): "The *sine qua non* for neocapitalism's relative stability is constant, rapid, economic expansion, making it possible to maintain both a high level of employment and a high rate of increase in productivity. In these conditions, and in these conditions only, real wages can increase regularly without threatening the rate of profit. . . . The trade of the imperialist countries among themselves, their national incomes, and their industrial product underwent a sensational and unprecedented boom in countries like Japan, Italy, and West Germany, and a notable rise in France, in the small Western European countries, in Canada, and in the United States. . . . [Nevertheless] the real dilemma confronting neocapitalism is a choice between inflation and stagnation. The inflation in the United States is undermining the dollar's function as an international reserve currency, thereby shaking the whole money system; it threatens in the long run to provoke an extremely acute financial crisis which would have profound repercussions on international trade."

The crisis of the international monetary system is itself the result of neocapitalism's permanent tendency toward inflation. This is bound up with the effects on the economy of productive and unproductive labor. The shift of more and more investment funds towards the unproductive expenditures of the state is the prime source of the inflationary trend. Currency itself distinguishes between "real products" that are the result of expanding productive investment and "fictitious products" that are simply the result of the redistribution of surplus value by the state, leading to inflation.

If the price of a car, for example, is raised from \$2,000 to \$2,400—20 percent—simply because of inflation, this is reflected in the fact that a dollar can buy 20 percent

less car! The currency thus becomes the bellwether of the changing proportions of productive and unproductive labor in the economy and the inflation this caused. Mandel predicted the results of this process in *Marxist Economic Theory* (pp. 532-33).

"At first sight," he wrote, "the 'moderate' inflation caused in the capitalist countries of the west by the increase in unproductive public expenditures does not appear to threaten the future of the capitalist economy. . . . This is, however, a short-sighted view. The tendency to more or less permanent inflation causes many hindrances to the normal functioning of capitalist economy. . . . Already during the recession of 1957-58, the governments of the United States and Britain hesitated to apply the familiar remedies for quickly liquidating the crisis, for fear of fostering a rise in prices even before recovery had begun . . ."

The dilemma confronting the neocapitalist state increasingly becomes the choice between more inflation, more instability in the international monetary sphere and weakening of its competitive position in world trade, or more recession, growing unemployment (with the consequent overhead political costs to the administration in power) and the chance of the recession internationalizing.

Mandel predicted in *Marxist Economic Theory* that, over the long run, neocapitalism must tend to rule out the second option because of the potential of recession to provoke a world crisis. "Such a crisis would bring about the collapse in short order of capitalism in a number of countries. . . . Capitalism will thus choose to employ the 'anti-cyclical' techniques. But it will do this hesitatingly, with many misgivings, and, finally, it will not prevent inflation from getting worse. The capacity of the currency to resist [the inflation] thus appears as the insurmountable barrier against which, in the long run, the moderating intervention of the state in the economic cycle is brought up short. *The contradiction between the dollar as an anti-cyclical device in the United States and the dollar as money of account on the world market has already become insurmountable.*"

The economic policies of the present occupant of the White House underline the relevance of these aspects of neocapitalism: The National Committee Draft Political Resolution calls attention to two fundamental problems that a steep inflationary policy create for Nixon. "One is the recognition by the workers of what inflation is doing to their pay checks and living conditions, and the consequent resistance evidenced in the 1970 wave of strikes in which a major issue was wage increases to catch up with the rising cost of living. The second and longer term problem is the deterioration of the relative competitive advantage of U.S. imperialism in the world market and the increasing shakiness that spiraling inflation introduces into the stability of the capitalist world monetary system. . . ."

"[However] a policy of fostering a recession of sufficient scope to increase unemployment enough to put effective pressure on wages contains two dangers. First, it could precipitate or coincide with recessions in the other major capitalist countries. These could then snowball into an uncontrolled world recession. Secondly, it could provoke a sharp political reaction by the working class against the threat of massive unemployment."

Nixon's policy of allowing the economy to enter a recession, and then, when the unemployment levels reached 6 per cent, resorting to sudden pump-priming, with its necessary consequences of more inflation, in an attempt

to turn the economy around, show how he is grappling with these recurring contradictions of neocapitalism. What *alternative analysis* do the supporters of the "Proletarian Orientation Tendency" offer to Mandel's examination?

The May 1968 general strike in France

A completely fraudulent section of the "For a Proletarian Orientation" document is the description of the party's analysis of the May-June 1968 general strike in France. In their attempt to "prove" that the party has adopted an orientation towards students and intellectuals as a substitute for workers it is necessary for them to misrepresent the party's analysis of the French general strike. They state, "the party leadership concentrates on the 'vanguard role' of the *students*" and they throw in a few quotations. Even a cursory examination of the facts, however, shows that the SWP along with the leaders of the Trotskyist movement in Europe saw in the French events precisely *a confirmation of the fundamental program of Marxism regarding the role of the working class*. A collection of what was actually said about the French general strike can be found in the large paperback, *Revolt in France: May-June 1968*, by Les Evans. It is available from Pathfinder Press. This is an invaluable record of these momentous events. We shall make a few references to it.

First there is the question of fact: Does the minority deny that students played a "vanguard role" in detonating the French general strike? This was the judgment made by all the major press of the bourgeoisie, French and international alike; of all the radical press; and of all the participants, including the French workers themselves. Comrade Mary-Alice Waters interviewed two young workers from the giant Renault plant at Boulogne-Billancourt. They told her: "The students started the train rolling and we thank them for that. Once we saw the train was off and running we climbed aboard."

Comrade George Novack draws the *main strategic lessons* of the French events in an article entitled "Lessons of the French Events." "For all its mystique, concessions and repressions, ten years of Gaullism did not succeed in reconciling the working class to capitalism let alone breaking its will to resist. Once the opening presented itself, the antagonism of the toilers to the rule of the rich burst out with irresistible vigor.

"Their display of strength ought to dispel much of the skepticism so rife these past years in radical circles like the American Students for a Democratic Society regarding the revolutionary potential of the workers in highly industrialized countries. . . . The prolonged, steadfast general strike of the French workers attended by the takeover of factories, shops and offices should indicate where the new social power and political rulership must come from. . . . What the shortsighted academicians failed to understand was that the passivity of the proletariat over the past two decades was not a permanent but a passing phase."

Mandel himself seized the occasion to refute the subjectivist New Left conceptions that rule out working-class struggle because of the supposed "consumer consciousness" of workers in advanced capitalist countries:

"Here we find the same events [as the Belgian general strike of 1960-61] repeated in France, that very France with a large nationalized sector, whose 'strong state' represented, until a little while ago, a model of stability, the country that typified enlightened and rational

neocapitalism. And, irony of ironies, the revolt did not burst forth from some underdeveloped region, some mining area where unemployment is rampant, from the most poorly paid or peasant levels, but precisely from the very towns around Paris that had become the prototype of the 'consumer society,' from the top-wage Renault plants, the Renault plants of skilled toolmakers and machinists—hardly 'prisoners of starvation.'

"This time it will be absolutely necessary to bow to the logic of events—or else stand guilty of deliberate distortion. It has now been proved that a neocapitalist regime, which eliminates starvation and the most abject poverty of the proletariat—at least in the imperialist metropolis—and which succeeds in avoiding the most catastrophic economic crises (at the cost of constant deterioration of its monetary system), cannot in any way eliminate the basic sources of proletarian revolutions."

Can any reader seriously entertain the assertions by the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency about Mandel substituting students for workers, and departing from the classical program of Marxism, after reading these lines?

New social forces in motion

Nevertheless—a fact that seems almost entirely to have escaped the notice of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency—the French general strike went far beyond the factories in bringing differing layers of society into motion against the capitalist regime. It began with the student struggles. "After them came the workers," Novack said in the article already mentioned. "Then the state employees and small farmers fell into line behind them . . ." "This mobilization has drawn broad petty-bourgeois strata into the vortex of the movement," Comrade Livio Maitan wrote. "And they resolutely arrayed themselves against the regime and its repressive forces." Are we supposed to ignore these facts about the scope of a social crisis which posed the question of state power in an advanced capitalist country?

Mandel began to analyze the new forces on May 9, in Paris itself, the eve of the night of the barricades, before an audience of six thousand young people. This is the famous speech "From a Student Revolt to a Revolt Against Capitalism," which first set forth the concepts the minority comrades object to so strongly. Mandel opened the speech as follows:

"Any analysis of the student revolt must start from one basic consideration. A new social grouping has emerged from the very vitals of neocapitalism, from all that it considers its essential 'achievement': the higher standard of living, the advances in technology and mass media, and the requirements of automation. There are six million university students in the United States, two and a half in West Europe, and over a million in Japan. And it proved impossible to integrate this grouping into the neocapitalist system as it functions in West Europe, the United States, or Japan."

Well, is this true or is it not? We believe so and said so at the time. Will the minority now tell us step-by-step where Mandel goes wrong?

Mandel, in the same speech, develops these concepts:

"What the student revolt represents on a much broader social and historic scale is the colossal transformation of the productive forces which Marx foresaw in his *Grundrisse* [Outlines of a Critique of Political Econ-

omy]: the reintegration of intellectual labor into productive labor, men's intellectual capacities becoming the prime productive force in society. This is still embryonic and is unrealizable [sic] within the framework of capitalist society . . .

"When we hear pseudo-Marxists talking disdainfully about the students as 'bourgeois youth' and 'future bourgeois' we see a threefold error.

"First of all, they fail to understand the university explosion which has made these 'bourgeois youth' a small minority today in the student world (as the children of workers are also still a tiny minority today). Next, they do not understand that as a result of profound changes in intellectual employment the majority of university graduates will no longer be bosses, or professionals, or even direct agents of the bosses with strictly supervisory functions, but white-collar employees of the state or industry, and thus part of the mass of salaried workers. Finally, they do not understand the specific character of the student milieu as a special social stratum, into which students from bourgeois backgrounds often assimilate, breaking their ties with their family environment without yet being integrated into the social environment of their professions-to-be."

Is the "obvious" implication of this the "inclusion of the students as part of the working class?" This is what Gregorich and her associates assert. But the lines above talk only about *the direction students are headed in today's society and not at all about the relations of students to the means of production*. Mandel makes it clear that students compose a special interim social layer that does not *yet* either own or produce. They are no more members of the working class than they are of the bourgeoisie or the petty-bourgeoisie.

Mandel apparently did not feel that it was necessary to make this explicit to the audience he was addressing, but then he was not speaking to quotation hunters and misinterpreters.

Mandel did pursue one crucial question for revolutionaries, *how to link the student struggle with the struggles of the working class*. He said, "if we fight for this reunion—if we fight for this alliance and this convergence between the student revolt and the struggle for the proletarian revolution in Western Europe, it is because we know very well that neither by virtue of their numbers nor by virtue of the place they occupy in society, can students alone overthrow bourgeois society in the West." This should be plain enough for anyone inclined to take the distortions of the "For A Proletarian Orientation" document for good coin.

The French events opened the way for adding new items to the analysis of neocapitalism:

9) *The technological revolution of neocapitalism incorporates more and more layers into the process of production and exacerbates to the extreme the fundamental contradiction of capitalism between the socialization of production and private appropriation.*

10) *Relative class peace is only a passing phenomenon of postwar imperialism. The deepening crises of neocapitalism will more and more impel workers in the advanced countries into revolutionary struggles against it.*

11) *The anticapitalist struggle will not be conducted by industrial workers alone. It will be engaged in and even initiated by other dissident layers of society, from*

students, state employees and white-collar workers to oppressed nationalities and women.

This is one of the main themes of the National Committee resolution.

The Gregorich et al Analysis

What analysis does the Gregorich grouping put forth to explain the new social layers that are in motion in capitalist society? Only a very narrow and confused discussion of the difference between productive and unproductive workers.

They first attempt to separate into different categories government workers and other unproductive workers: "Except for government workers, who are paid from the wages of the working class as a whole, the non-productive workers are paid out of the surplus value created by the productive workers."

This separation is made not on objective grounds but because the Proletarian Orientation Tendency approves of the first category of unproductive workers but not the second.

"Certain groups of workers," they say, "such as postal, sanitation, communications, and urban transit workers, have become more and more important to the daily functioning of the economy. They have the ability to seriously hamper the functioning of capitalist production. . . ."

But the second category of unproductive workers, "commercial workers, administrative workers, clerical workers, technicians, etc." "/depend/ on the amount of surplus value available to the capitalists [and thus] are basically economically competitive with the productive workers." The second category of unproductive workers "constitute a socially unstable layer."

The error of the "For A Proletarian Orientation" grouping begins with the first assumption, that government workers are paid out of wages rather than surplus value. Marxists do not consider the money that workers pay in taxes as part of their wages, but rather as part of the surplus value that is appropriated by the ruling class and used by the ruling class to finance the state.

Wages refer to the necessary subsistence of the workers—their food, clothing, rent, etc. But tax money goes to support the state apparatus of the ruling class. On one side is the "necessary product"; on the other is part of the "surplus product." The one goes to what is necessary to support workers and their families; the other goes to the ruling class to support its state.

Thus the tax funding of the state is a deduction from social surplus value. Money that could be invested productively is channelled into unproductive arenas. We have already seen how important this fact is from the standpoint of the permanent inflationary tendency of neocapitalism.

The main error of the Gregorich grouping on this question, however, is their attempt to hinge class consciousness on whether a worker produces surplus value or not. Their departure from Marxism on the source of taxes is one example of how far they are willing to bend theory to support incorrect positions.

In fact, the increasing militancy of government workers can be traced precisely to the fact that they are *unproductive workers*. For state income, to repeat what has just been said, is a deduction from social surplus value. It siphons off funds that might otherwise be invested productively. There is a certain extent to which the capitalists willingly tolerate this: the state finances the necessary apparatus of repression, it finances research, which in

the last analysis can be profitable to industry, it finances military expenditures, which are certainly profitable to given sectors of industry. But as dearly as they need the state for an ever-increasing number of reasons, *the ruling class must resist unlimited state financing*. As Mandel observed in "Where is America Going?" (1970):

"There is an inevitable institutionalized resistance of the corporations and of the capitalist class to increasing taxes up to the point where they would make possible a functional public service capable of satisfying the needs of the entire population. For this reason, *it is probable that the gap between the wages of public employees and those of private workers in the United States will remain, and that the trend toward radicalization of public employees—both increased unionization and even possibly political radicalization—will continue.*" (Emphasis added.)

A correct approach to the distinction between productive and unproductive labor consequently reveals an important trend in American politics concerning *the most rapidly growing sector of the labor force, employees of the state.*

"Workers Under Neocapitalism"

At the 1968 Socialist Scholars Conference, Mandel attempted to bring the lessons of the French events to the attention of the SDS, Sweezyite-Maoist and other New Left student radicals who were still trying to assert that workers had no revolutionary potential. This was the subject of his speech, "Workers Under Neocapitalism."

"The question has been posed," Mandel stated, "Hasn't the role of the working class been fundamentally changed in this changed environment [neocapitalism]? Hasn't the long-term high level of unemployment and the rising real wage undercut any revolutionary potential of the working class? Isn't it changing in composition, and more and more divorced from the productive process, as a result of growing automation? Doesn't its relations with other social layers, such as white-collar workers, technicians, intellectuals, students, undergo basic modifications?"

Mandel then lists varieties of New Left opinions on this. One is the Maoist conception that "/neocapitalist/ stability could be shaken only from outside: first of all, from the non-industrialized regions of the world—the so-called villages, to repeat Lin Piao's formula—which will be revolutionized before revolts could be envisioned in the imperialist countries. . . ." Another variant are those who believe that "neocapitalism raises its gravediggers from within its bosom but see these gravediggers coming from the groups of outcasts: national and racial minorities, superexploited sectors of the population, revolutionary students, the new youth vanguard. *All these conclusions share in common the elimination of the proletariat of metropolitan countries from the central role in the worldwide struggle against imperialism and capitalism.*" (Emphasis added.)

"But what stands out," Mandel emphasizes, "is the fact that industrial labor in the broadest sense of the word—men forced to sell their labor-power to the manufacturing, cotton-growing, data-processing or dream-producing factory!—more than ever occupies the central place in the economy's structure." Mandel argues that with the new stage of accumulation of capital, with the new concentration of monopoly and spread of technology, more and more human beings are involved in the central process of the capitalist economy: production of surplus value

for the ever tinier ruling class.

"The distinctions," says Mandel, "between the 'purely' productive manual production worker, the 'purely' unproductive clerical white-collar worker, and the 'semi-productive' repairman become more and more effaced as a result of technological change and innovation itself, and that the productive process of today tends more and more to *integrate* manual and non-manual workers, conveyor-belt semi-skilled and data-processing semi-skilled, highly skilled repair and maintenance squads and highly skilled electronics experts. Both in the laboratories and research departments, before 'actual' production starts, and in the dispatching and inventory departments, when 'actual' production is over, productive labor is created, if one accepts the definition of such labor given in Marx's *Capital*. For all this labor is indispensable for final consumption and is not simply waste induced by the special social structure of the economy (as for instance sales costs)."

According to the Gregorich grouping, the points Mandel makes in this paragraph are incorrect. It is impossible, they say, for these new layers of intelligentsia—"laboratory assistants, scientific researchers, inventors, technologists, planners, project engineers, draftsmen, etc."—to produce surplus value. Why? "Surplus value is produced at the point of production." "Furthermore, much of the work of these members of the 'technical intelligentsia' is never reflected in any way in actual commodities. In fact, as we have shown, they aid the capitalists in the extraction of surplus value."

The argument is a combination of circular reasoning and failure to come to grips with a basic tendency of capitalism that was already foreseen and emphasized by Marx. The question the Gregorich tendency never answers is: *Where is the "the point of production?"*

Do they think it is a given lathe in a given plant?

Mandel supplies us with an extremely interesting quotation on this question in footnote 60 to "The Leninist Theory of Organization" (*ISR*, December, 1970). It comes from an unincorporated section of the first volume of *Capital*. Marx wrote: "With the development of a real subsuming labor under capital . . . the real functionary in the overall labor process is not the individual worker, but increasingly a combined social capacity for work, and the various capacities for work, which are in competition with one another and constitute the entire productive machine, participate in very different ways in the direct process of creating commodities . . . (one works more with his hands, another more with his head, one as a manager, an engineer, a technician, etc., another as a supervisor, and a third as a simple manual laborer, or even as a helper.) As a result of this, the functions of labor capacity will increasingly tend to be classified by the direct concept of productive labor . . ."

What the authors of the Gregorich document do not seem to understand is the fundamental fact that productive production is not the production of *particular use-values*. It is the production of *surplus value*. This distinction is so important to Marx's critique of political economy that he begins discussing it in the third sentence of *Capital*! The Gregorich grouping reveals its confusion on this point in the sentence quoted above where they state: "much of the work of these members of the 'technical intelligentsia' is never reflected in any way in actual commodities." But Marx's point is precisely that *"actual*

commodities" are not surplus value.

For example, Marx explains in *Theories of Surplus Value*: "The result of the capitalist production process is neither a mere product (use-value) or a *commodity*, that is a use-value which has certain exchange-value. Its result, its product, is the creation of *surplus value* for capital, and consequently the actual *transformation* of money or commodity into capital . . ." (Emphasis in the original.)

Thus the Gregorich tendency ends up by not comprehending the central overall tendency of capitalism, *towards the increased socialization of production*. Marx and Engels stressed it over and over again: More and more labor is bent to the production of surplus value for the tiny few. This is *the main* contradiction of capitalism!

"The Role of Universities in the West"

It is Mandel's extension of this fundamental concept of Marxism to neocapitalist society that provides the theoretical framework for an analysis of the youth revolt. Mandel writes in "The Leninist Theory of Organization":

"The massive reintroduction of intellectual labor into the process of production brought about by the third industrial revolution, which was foreseen by Marx and whose foundations were already laid in the second industrial revolution, has created the prerequisite for a much broader layer of the scientific intelligentsia to regain the awareness of alienation which it had lost through its removal from the process of direct production of surplus value and its transformation into a direct or indirect consumer of surplus value. For it, too, is overcome by alienation in bourgeois society. This is the material basis not only for the student revolt in the imperialist countries but also for the possibility of involving increasing numbers of scientists and technicians into the revolutionary movement."

These concepts are further developed and form an important part of *The Worldwide Youth Radicalization And the Tasks of the Fourth International*. That document states: "The enhanced social weight and political impact of the student movement derive from the fundamental changes that have taken place in the sphere of education under pressure from the scientific, technological and industrial advances involved in the 'third industrial revolution.' These developments call for a more highly educated and technically qualified type of personnel which is capable of innovating, developing, and operating the most complex, up-to-date means of production and destruction. . . ."

"Higher educational and cultural standards flow from higher levels of productivity and greater 'capital intensity.' The steady rise in the norms of qualification all along the line has greatly altered the character and structure of higher education, particularly in the more advanced countries over the past twenty years.

"It has also resulted in the increasing proletarianization of white-collar workers as intellectual labor is introduced into the productive process on a larger and larger scale and the relative weight of the unskilled manual labor is reduced in the productive process."

All of these ideas point to the "Red university," a key transitional concept in our revolutionary program. Mandel's article, "The Role of the Universities in the West," in the November 2, 1970, *Intercontinental Press*, developed the logic of this concept: "Thus," he argues, "it seems

that today's universities are caught between two conflicting pressures. On the one hand technocratic reform is being driven through from the outside in the interest of the ruling class. On the other, a radical challenge is emerging from within the universities but, in the absence of support from other sectors of society, it gets bogged down in utopianism and impotence.

"Is there any way out of this dilemma? . . . An answer to this question presupposes an opinion on the capacity of neocapitalist society to overcome its most important inner contradictions. In opposition to Marcuse and others, we start from the position that the most important contradiction in capitalist society—its neocapitalist as well as its preceding stages—is the contradiction between capital and labor in the production process . . .

"There exists a way out of this dilemma because a force still exists which has the potential to bring about a radical transformation of society. . .

"The university can be the cradle of a real revolution . . . The role of students as a driving and initiating force for the renewal of societies is not new. Marx, Lenin, and Fidel Castro after all must be rated as intellectual and not manual workers.

"To begin once more like the pioneers of the modern workers movement, spreading anticapitalist revolutionary socialist consciousness in the working class, is as possible today for students and intellectuals as it was three quarters of a century ago. . . .

"As a permanent institution, the university remains subject to the control of the ruling class. But wherever the struggle of the university collective for self-management assumes such a scope that a temporary breakthrough in this area occurs, then for a short period the university becomes a 'school of self-management' for the entire population. This was what happened in the Sorbonne in Paris in May 1968; this is what happened, among other places, in Chicago in May 1970. These examples were extremely limited in scope and duration. But under favorable circumstances the attraction of such examples for the broadest masses can be very promising"!!!

Since the Proletarian Orientation Tendency underrates the significance of what the French students did in May 1968 and the American students in May 1970, and attracts those who want to beat a headlong retreat from the student movement, it is easy to understand why they seek to discard Mandel's thesis. But for them to state that this thesis paves the way for *substituting students for workers*, after reading the lines just quoted, is sheer fabrication.

The Wage Differential Between U.S. and Foreign Workers

The National Committee Draft Political Resolution states: "Regardless of their timing or their scope, which are unpredictable, the intensification of interimperialist competition on the world market means that the American monopolists must find a way to narrow [the] wage differential. This can be done only by attacks on the wage gains, standard of living, organizations and rights of the American workers. In the current turbulent political atmosphere such attacks can result in immense struggles and rapid radicalization of a decisive section of the American workers."

12) *The main obstacle to U.S. imperialism in the intensified competition of world neocapitalism is the wage differential between U.S. and foreign workers. This will be the source of a prolonged offensive by the capitalists*

against the wages of American workers.

This contradiction of neocapitalism brings to a head all of the tendencies we have discussed: the global expansion of capital, founded on continuous technological revolution and interpenetration of world markets, cannot proceed indefinitely. There comes a point when the markets have been saturated; when the arenas for productive investment are quantitatively lessened. We have already seen how the inflation of the U.S. economy tends more and more to undermine the position of the dollar as the main monetary instrument of imperialist overseas investment. Side-by-side with this, the reduction in the value of the dollar tends to weaken the competitive position of U.S. monopoly in world trade—U.S. goods carry higher prices than the goods of the imperialist competitors.

Mandel extrapolated these tendencies in the article "Where is America Going?" which was printed in the *Young Socialist* in September 1969: "The American ruling class is becoming increasingly aware that the huge wage differentials which it still grants its workers is a handicap in international competition. . . . If the historic moment arrives when the productivity gap between American and West European workers is closed, American capitalism will have absolutely no choice but to launch a far more ruthless attack on the real wage levels of American workers than has occurred hitherto in Western Europe, in the various countries where a small wage differential existed (Italy, France, West Germany, England and Belgium, at different moments during the sixties.)

"Since the wage differential between Europe and America is not a matter of 5, 10, or 15 percent, as it is between different Western European countries, but is of the order of 200-300 percent, it is easy to imagine what an enormous handicap this will become when productivity becomes comparable, and how massive the reactions of American capitalism will be.

"It is necessary to stress these facts in order to adopt a Marxist, in other words, a materialist and not an idealist approach to the question of the attitudes of the American working class towards American society."

This article was originally published in the British magazine, *New Left Review*—and new left theorists rose to the bait! The most extended answer to Mandel came from Martin Nicolaus. Nicolaus' reply appeared in the January-February 1970 *New Left Review* as well as in the now defunct American magazine *Leviathan*. Nicolaus asserted, "Messengers of revolution are always welcome. Ernest Mandel's thesis . . . that a socialist revolution within the United States is on the agenda of the next decade or two is an important corrective to the more gloomy theses being advanced from other quarters. Nevertheless, false hope is as wrong as false despair. The grounds for confidence which Mandel outlines are not tenable."

Nicolaus then presented an elaborate scheme to show that U.S. imperialism had mainly overcome its internal contradictions, at least so far as they reflected on the class struggle in the United States. On the other hand, these contradictions have become "generalized." This was a rehashed version of the Maoist theory about revolutions coming from outside.

Mandel's reply, entitled "The Laws of Uneven Development," appeared in the same issue of *New Left Review*. He first asked, "What was the political purpose of my speech? It was, obviously, to oppose the fallacies of that

'Third Worldism' which, from Franz Fanon and Lin Piao to Baran and Sweezy's *Monopoly Capital* and Herbert Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, writes the American working class off any medium-term revolutionary perspective."

Mandel answered the "global encirclement" theory of Maoism by declaring, "Revolutionary Marxists do not believe that the loss of an important or even a decisive part of foreign colonial domains will *automatically* create a revolutionary situation inside the imperialist countries; they believe that these losses will only have revolutionary effects if they first trigger off internal material changes inside imperialist society itself. . . .

"Only if we understand that imperialism brings to its widest possible application the universal *law of uneven and combined development* can we understand world history in the 20th century. Only if we understand this law . . . can we understand why, *because of* an integrated world market, the first victorious socialist revolutions could break out in three underdeveloped backward countries, Russia, Yugoslavia and China. Only if we understand how this same law continues to operate today can we understand that the decisive battles for world socialism can only be fought by the German, Japanese, French, Italian and American workers."

Mandel once again tried to draw attention to the fundamental contradictions of capitalism, the main categories of scientific socialism, which alone reveal the innerspring of the class struggle: "There is only one basic driving force which compels capital in general to step up capital accumulation, extraction of surplus value and exploitation of labor, and feverishly to look for profits, over and above average profit: this is competition. . . .

"Imperialist competition continues, and will continue, including some very ruthless developments indeed; but it will unfurl *within the framework* of the collective solidarity [against the Sino-Soviet bloc nations]. Yet within that framework, the law of uneven development continues to operate inexorably, causing the relative decline of previously supreme powers and the emergence of newly strengthened imperialist forces. The fate of U.S. imperialism's supremacy will be decided neither on the battlefield nor in the [economies of] the 'Third World'—at least in the coming years. It will be decided by the capacity of Western European imperialists and Japanese imperialists to set up colossal corporations, equivalent in financial power and industrial strength to that of their U.S. competitors. I do not say that this development has already taken place on a sufficient scale or that it is inevitable . . . I only state that, if it takes place, it will force U.S. imperialism greatly to intensify the exploitation of the American working class, under the pressure of competition. . . .

"The main cause [of a new mass radicalization of the American working class] can only be found in a change of material conditions. *The growing crisis of American imperialism can only transform itself into a decisive crisis of American society through the mediation of a growing instability of the American economy.* This is our key thesis. In this growing instability of the American economy, the loss of U.S. suzerainty over the whole imperialist world, the relative decline of U.S. economic superiority *vis-a-vis* its imperialist competitors, and the sharpening competition and redivision of the international capitalist market—

of which the internal market of the U.S.A. is the most important single sector—will play an important role." (Emphasis in the original.)

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The postwar curve of neocapitalist expansion thus points for American Marxists towards an inexorable deepening of the class struggle and the emergence of revolutionary prospects on a scale that have been closed off for three decades. It clarifies and confirms our role: to build a revolutionary party that can lead the American workers to victory against the imperialist offensive that is on the horizon. Our analysis of neocapitalism, which we share with Mandel, is consequently inseparably linked with the practical orientation of our party. This is why we take the conclusions of this analysis seriously and reject the light-minded representations of the leaders of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency.

July 15, 1971

Works by Ernest Mandel

Marxist Economic Theory (completed in 1960), available from Pathfinder in two paperback volumes.

"An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory," written in 1963, Pathfinder pamphlet.

"The Labor Theory of Value," (answer to Baran and Sweezy), July-August 1967, *ISR*.

"Introduction" to *Fifty Years of World Revolution*, written in 1968. Pathfinder book and paperback.

"Workers Under Neocapitalism," speech delivered in 1968, available in Pathfinder pamphlet, "On the Revolutionary Potential of the Working Class," including an article by George Novack.

"Where Is America Going?" September 1969 *Young Socialist*.

"The Laws of Uneven Development," (answer to Nicolaus), January-February 1970 *New Left Review*.

"The Marxist Theory of Alienation," written in 1970, available in Pathfinder pamphlet under same title, with an article by George Novack.

"The Leninist Theory of Organization," December 1970 *ISR*.

"The Role of Universities in the West," *Intercontinental Press*, Nov. 2, 1970.

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See also: *The Revolt in France: May-June 1968*, available from Pathfinder.

The Worldwide Youth Radicalization And the Tasks of the Fourth International, a Pathfinder pamphlet.