



Discussion Bulletin

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AGAINST NARROW-MINDEDNESS

by Geb, San Francisco Branch

By the word "narrow-mindedness" I mean irrational fear or hostility to anything "foreign," whether foreign in the sense of coming-from-another-country or just foreign in the sense of being-different-from-what-we're-used-to. Narrow-minded people work under the theory that "anyone who is different from me must be bad."

There's even a technical word that psychologists use for this, which is "xenophobia." The psychologists understand that it's irrational and harmful and I guess it's pretty obvious where revolutionaries stand, too.

After all, narrow-minded prejudices are not just an example of how capitalism ruins people's minds; it's much worse than that. Prejudice is one of the basic *tools* of the ruling class. It is used to keep the oppressed divided amongst themselves, to divert the anger of the oppressed away from their actual enemy and onto whatever scapegoat is handy, and to put a taboo on rebellion against the system.

Whether it is racism, or sexism, or religious sectarianism, or national chauvinism, or prejudice against physical abnormalities or mental illness or whatever else, prejudice and narrow-mindedness are never good, and they are never neutral. They are always a tool of the worst reactionaries. Bigotry doesn't simply *exist*; it is *created*. It doesn't just *continue to exist*; it is *propped up* and *maintained*, kept from fading away, by the efforts of the ruling class. It isn't always done in the same conscious way that, for instance, an army is created and maintained. But bourgeois bigotry and the bourgeois army serve the same class, and both need to be completely replaced.

What I am saying may seem pretty simple. But there is an important argument in a report recently passed by the National Committee which makes me wonder.

I'm talking about Comrade Barry Sheppard's report to the past plenum, which opposed increasing our involvement with gay liberation. One part of this report was about the appearance of comrades, transvestists in particular, but others as well. The problem is Barry's theoretical justification for his position.

Are the Masses "Justifiably Suspicious of People that Are Obviously Extremely Eccentric"?

Barry's reasoning for saying we need to prohibit certain clothing among comrades was that it "would stand in the way of recruiting and influencing masses of people *justifiably* suspicious of people that are *obviously* extremely *eccentric*." I think there are three things wrong with saying that the masses are "*justifiably* suspicious of people that are *obviously* extremely *eccentric*," which correspond to the three words of Barry's that I have put into italics.

1) "OBVIOUSLY": To feel that someone else is "eccentric" is a bias; you measure it according to your own traditions. Those who *appear* "eccentric" here and now would appear perfectly ordinary in another place or at another time. There is no such thing as being "*obviously* extremely eccentric"—just "*apparently*." For the SWP to concede this notion that transvestists or anyone else is "*obviously* extremely eccentric," would mean that we have implicitly

endorsed existing bourgeois culture as being an objectively valid standard to measure from. It would be better to say "*seemingly*," "*apparently*," "*according to local standards*," or something like this.

2) "JUSTIFIABLY": This word really bothers me. Are the masses really "*justifiably*" suspicious of those they see as "eccentric"? Barry does his best to justify such suspicion, but his justification is one which could only be relevant to some political people, and certainly not to the masses: "a political person who deviates too far from the social norm in questions like that of dress, has lost or never had a sense of proportion about what is politically important and what is secondary, and this is immediately apparent to anyone she or he is trying to influence." (By the way, this sounds like it would apply to women who don't wear bras, who wear see-through tops, who have extremely short haircuts, etc., especially a couple of years ago—does Barry think such women have "lost or never had a sense of proportion"? How about Black nationalists who wear African styles?)

I don't think the masses are prejudiced against those with a nonconformist appearance, out of some "sense of proportion about what is politically important"—I think the prejudices of the masses are something more like plain narrow-mindedness. To whatever extent such prejudices exist among the masses, I think it's totally unjustifiable. I think it is a ruling-class prejudice which is instilled into the masses.

There are laws which forbid or limit transvestism; a male can actually go to *jail* for wearing a skirt! Lots of macho-minded men believe in beating up, even killing, transvestists, and they'll do it if they can get away with it. Organized religion would send transvestists to hell if it was possible. It seems funny to just call this suspicion; wouldn't "oppression" be more accurate? And how can any revolutionary call it justifiable?

I think the National Committee has made a real error in saying that the masses are "*justifiably*" suspicious of those who appear "eccentric."

3) "ECCENTRIC": I have had a hard time finding the classic literature which presents the basic Marxist concept of "eccentric." In fact, I always thought that "eccentric"—especially when used as a put-down as Barry uses it—was more of a bourgeois concept.

Literally, the word means "off-center." It's usually used about people who are not absolutely middle-of-the-road in some way. This includes health food purists, extreme tobacco haters, avid stamp collectors, etc.

Gay people are also often considered "eccentric" (also "exotic," etc.). True, gays in American capitalism in 1973 are far from middle-of-the-road in their lifestyles. If that justifies calling transvestists "eccentric" then it also justifies calling gays "eccentric."

To label people "eccentric" is to endorse the middle of the road. We should think twice before doing that. The category of "eccentric" includes (by present U.S. standards): vegetarians, Hare Krishna dancers, palm readers, gay people, feminists, nudists, and masochists, as well

as transvestists. But they really have little in common, except for one big thing: that narrow-minded people in the U.S. in 1973 are prejudiced against them for being "eccentric." The concept of "eccentric" is not scientific. It is meaningless.

The word "weirdo" seems to mean the same thing, and as far as I can tell, Barry might just as well have said "weirdo" instead of "eccentric," except for the politeness of it. The two words are both unscientific.

An Alternative to the "Justifiably Suspicious of People that are Obviously Extremely Eccentric" Approach

I think that the approach accepted by the National Committee on the question of the appearance of comrades goes wrong in its basic principles; instead, I think that the following principles would give us a better basis for the discussion:

(1) Narrow-minded prejudice is a deadly weapon in the hands of the ruling class. We can't endorse or accept these ideas; rather, we need to struggle against them. This includes setting a good example wherever we can by showing a tolerance for diversity.

(2) Objective conditions determine our limits, and they vary according to place and time. The only test is actual experience. The best judges will be those who have the actual experiences.

(3) It's hopeless to try to be just like everybody else except for our politics, because everybody else isn't the same. Bourgeois society is tremendously diverse, just as we are. Just as we are a multinational party, likewise *we're also a multilifestyle, multiculture party.*

(4) The diverse masses react in diverse ways; you can't please everyone. Radicalizing people tend to have the least prejudice about appearances, lifestyles, etc. To the extent that prejudices exist, if we present a single monolithic

image we will find ourselves recruiting to that single monolithic image, not recruiting those who don't themselves fit with that image, and not recruiting those who are suspicious of monolithic images in general.

(5) For revolutionaries, honesty to the masses is the best policy. At times we are forced by repression to compromise our honesty in order to hide things from the enemy. But we have nothing to hide from the masses of the oppressed. If these are transvestists and other "eccentrics" in the party, it would be dishonest to deny it or try to conceal it from the masses. That would be an attempt to trick the masses into accepting us under false pretenses. An attempt to find a shortcut to the masses. Our policy should be: "What you see is what you get."

* * *

I don't see how we can possibly have a worthwhile discussion about transvestism and other "image" questions until we first get clear on the basic principles involved.

At the beginning of last year's discussion of gay liberation, Comrade Studie and I wrote an article asking for a clarification of SWP policy on transvestism and similar "image" questions, and criticizing what we understood the policy to be (it had never been explained in print). The national office delayed its response, delayed it almost three months, until the day before the end of the discussion period.

I honestly have to conclude that the reason the national office delayed so long was to prevent us from being able to respond. It certainly worked.

Now that a written policy has been put forward by the national office, it's possible for us to move this discussion ahead. I really hope that the national office will not again delay its response to the day before the discussion is over.

May 15, 1973

THE GUERRILLA STRUGGLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, 1965-70: A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS A BALANCE SHEET

by Tom Bias, Upper West Side Branch, New York Local

The defeat of the Palestine resistance in the 1970 civil war in Jordan provides a clear verdict on the strategy of guerrilla warfare. Revolutionists should understand the reasons for this defeat: they point directly to the bankruptcy of the *strategy* of guerrillaism. The repressive forces of Hussein defeated the resistance despite the facts that: (1) the guerrilla organizations had thousands of militants under arms; (2) one major guerrilla organization (as-Sa'iqa) had the backing of a state power (Syria); (3) the national oppression of the Palestinian refugees is so harsh that the resistance enjoyed massive support among all the Arab masses from 1968 on; (4) the refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria are natural guerrilla recruiting grounds. The refugees, cut off from any source of livelihood, constantly aware of the military defeat by Zionism and the failure of the Arab states to destroy Israel, and concentrated together under harsh conditions in the camps, were easily won to an armed struggle perspective. In short, more so than in Bolivia, Argentina, Ireland, or Quebec, if there was any place an armed-struggle strategy could have been successful it was Palestine. The reasons for the defeat lie not in lack of arms or military training, nor in lack of understanding by the guerrilla leaders that Hussein is completely reactionary and proimperialist. No, one should see the reasons for the defeat in:

1. the isolation of the resistance organizations from the broad masses of Israeli Arabs (and Arab Jews), especially the urban workers. Our epoch has indeed seen military defeats inflicted by colonial nations on their imperialist masters, but in all cases these defeats were inflicted on governments which did not have the massive support of their own people on—consequently—demoralized and reluctant armies. The Israeli government, unfortunately, enjoys massive support in its aggression from its Jewish population. Until the oppressed Arabs of Israel and their allies within the Jewish population are mobilized against Zionist militarism and racism no guerrilla force can defeat the U. S.-backed Israeli army.

2. the isolation of the fedayeen from the masses in the Arab states, from radical workers and student youth, especially in Egypt and Lebanon. The Arab states no less than the Israeli state are defenders of the capitalist status quo. They acquiesce to the existence and aggression of the Zionist state. Only Israeli intransigence prevents a permanent settlement among all the Middle East states at the present time. However, the masses of non-Palestinian Arabs do not acquiesce to Zionist aggression nor to their governments' paralysis against it. Any independent mobilization against Israel is a threat to the capitalist Arab governments, and consequently they will do all they can—within the limits imposed by popular consciousness—to destroy any such mobilization. The Arab states are the enemies of the Arab revolution: at first the Palestinian resistance failed to confront this enemy at all. Subsequently it failed to confront the Arab states correctly.

Both of these historical failures resulted from the fact that the Arab workers and peasants could not and cannot at present be mobilized around an armed-struggle program. True, some individuals—mostly students and intellectuals—from outside the refugee camps joined the guerrilla organizations. But massive recruitment did not extend beyond the refugee camps—among people *excluded* from the economic life of the Middle East. In Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Libya there are still widespread illusions that the bourgeois "nationalist" regimes in those countries can advance the Arab revolution. Only a strategy of popular mobilization exposing the true role of the "revolutionary" Arab regimes can break those illusions down. That strategy is the strategy of the Transitional Program. That strategy is no less important in Lebanon or Jordan—the "reactionary" Arab states—or in Israel, where the Arab people support their governments less massively, or not at all, but nevertheless do not have a revolutionary consciousness. Only a strategy based on the Transitional Program can demonstrate in action that socialist revolution is necessary. The guerrilla strategy cannot.

The Roots of the Guerrilla Movement

For reasons which lie in the unique developments of Arab history the nationalist movement in the Arab East has developed without a strong Marxist tradition. The Palestine resistance itself arose during a period when Marxism was identified with—and discredited with—Stalinism. New colonial nationalist struggles developed in the 1950s outside the framework of Stalinism or Social Democracy: in Algeria, the Congo, Cuba, to name a few. The leaderships of the colonial revolutions have tended to be petty-bourgeois in composition and pragmatic in theoretical orientation. After the experience of the Chinese, Indochinese, Algerian, and Cuban revolutions the strategy of guerrilla warfare emerged as an attractive strategy to the petty-bourgeois leaders of colonial revolutions, including the leadership of the Palestine resistance.

The initial nucleus of the Palestine guerrilla movement took shape at a secret meeting in Cairo after the Suez defeat in 1956. The participants were Palestinian intellectuals influenced by the developing colonial revolutions—especially the Algerian revolution—and convinced that no Arab government could liberate occupied Palestine, that the people who had lost their homeland to Zionist Israel had to win it back themselves. The group established itself as the "Palestine National Liberation Movement," whose Arabic acronym is the Arabic word for "opening"—Fateh.

Fateh attempted to be non-political—to unite all Palestinians in armed struggle against Israel. It rejected—but did not analyze—Nasserism and Baathism, tendencies which were most prominent in Arab nationalism. It also rejected Stalinism; however, in 1956 Moscow was pro-Israel, so Stalinism could hardly have been a pole of attraction. Since 1948 Moscow has not opposed "Israel's right to exist."

To prevent any political tendency from gaining hegemony in Fateh, it wrote into its statutes that no political party could work within it.

Fateh also rejected clericalism and anti-Judaism. Its aim from the beginning was a "democratic, secular state in Palestine, free from domination by 'ulema, clergy, or rabbinate, with freedom of religion and equal rights for all, whether Muslims, Christians, or Jews." It made no analysis of the relations among classes in Palestine, nor did it take any stand for or against the bourgeois Arab regimes.

The Palestine Liberation Organization

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was set up under the auspices of the League of Arab states in 1964. Its character and perspectives differed dramatically from those of Fateh. In its rhetoric it presented itself in the tradition of the fedayeen (men of sacrifice) of 1936-48, of Fawzi al-Kaukji's Arab Liberation Army. To an extent it was: it was under the political control of the same bourgeois-feudal elements that had led earlier Arab revolutions to defeat. Its program was proclerical, anti-Jewish; it was a program of *jihād* (holy war) rather than of national revolution. However, its *jihād* was all on paper. It did not—and could not—make any attempt to organize the Palestinian refugees or anyone else for a fight against Israel.

The PLO was incapable of fighting Zionism because no united Arab struggle against Israel is possible under bourgeois leadership. The bourgeois Arab leaders are paralyzed by two fears: fear of the workers, peasants, and refugees, and fear of each other.

The first fear is overriding. There is no question that a resolute struggle for the liberation of Palestine would galvanize the Palestinian masses politically. But that is a danger: though masses of Palestinians are crowded into refugee camps, large numbers are not. They are not. They are found in all parts of the Arab world as workers, often skilled workers, professionals, and students. In no way are the Palestinian refugees physically isolated from the Arabs of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan or Iraq. The Arab East is a political tinderbox, and spark of political action is a serious threat to any capitalist interests in the Middle East. If arms were to be brought into the refugee camps they could not be kept out of Amman, Beirut, Damascus, or Cairo. Events have proved it. And the introduction of the idea of mass independent struggle into the textile mills, shipyards, and other industries is as dangerous to the ruling class as guns in the streets. The strictest "noninterference policy" on the part of an independent Palestinian movement cannot stop a movement against the Arab regimes within the Arab states themselves from developing.

The PLO was also paralyzed by the divisions within the Arab ruling classes. The partitioning of the Arab East into many small states is completely artificial. There are no Lebanese, Jordanian, Syrian or Palestinian nationalities—there is only an Arab nationality.

After the defeat of the 1916-20 Arab revolution, British and French imperialism partitioned the Arab East. They realized that Arab unity was dangerous to their interests and that local rule by petty monarchs friendly to them would be far less expensive than direct rule from Paris or London. (Palestine, of course, was an exception, di-

rectly ruled by London, and opened to colonization by the Zionists.) The imperialists attempted to set small nationalities and religious groups, such as the Jebel Druse and Kurds in Syria, the Maronites in Lebanon, against the Muslim Arabs and set up many small states and petty dynasties. Their idea was that the newly created Arab states would resist Arab unity because all of the local rulers would be jealous of their own power.

The balkanization scheme has been more or less successful. No attempt at Arab unification has as yet been successful. Today it has taken on an added dimension: class rivalry between the feudal *efendi* and the national bourgeoisie. Arab unity is most vigorously resisted by the representatives of the landowning efendi class—reactionary monarchs such as Hussein of Jordan and Faisal of Sa'udi Arabia because they realize that any unification of the Arab world will shut them out of power, as they have been shut out in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Libya (the so-called "revolutionary" Arab states) and in Lebanon, a pro-Western bourgeois parliamentary state. However, the Nasserists and Baathists likewise mistrust each other, for they are jealous of their own hegemony even today. Nasser's dream of a capitalist United Arab Republic encompassing the whole Arab world is just that—a dream. It is impossible. And so, therefore, is a united capitalist Arab struggle against Israel. Who will command it? What plan would be projected for liberated Palestine? The bourgeois Arab rulers do not trust each other; they are all fearful that Arab unity might come about under *someone else's* leadership than their own. So no Arab unity comes about at all. It cannot under bourgeois leadership.

The PLO was no more than an attempt to co-opt and defuse the anger of the refugees, an attempt to head off an independent struggle against Israel, which would be fatal to efendi and bourgeoisie alike.

One year after the formation of the PLO, al-Assifa (the storm), the military wing of al-Fateh, began military operations against Israel.

The Resistance Comes to the Foreground

The 1967 war demonstrated to the entire Arab world the inability of the Arab states to liberate Palestine. Before the war Ahmed Shuqeiry, president of PLO, predicted that no Jews would be left in Palestine. After the war a new wave of Palestinian refugees were looking for shelter in the refugee camps of Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. And a new wave of anti-Zionist militants among them was looking for an alternative leadership to fight Israel. What had been clear to a few Palestinian intellectuals in 1956 became clear to thousands of Palestinians in 1967: the liberation of Palestine had to be carried out by forces independent of the Arab states. On that basis the Palestine resistance was built, and on that basis alone.

The 1967 war had another effect: it shattered for all time the image of Israel as a small, beleaguered outpost of democracy in a sea of bloodthirsty Arab barbarians. It demonstrated that Israel is an able junior partner of American imperialism. The 1967 war brought the truth about Zionism to the radical youth of the imperialist countries, especially the United States. A process of interchange between the Palestinian resistance and youth radicalization was made possible.

North American, European, Cuban, Vietnamese and other militants (including members of the Trotskyist move-

ment) went to Lebanon and Jordan to visit the guerrilla camps. Palestinian students in the U. S. and Europe were affected by the youth radicalization going on in the Western countries, and at campuses in the Middle East, especially American University at Beirut, youth radicalism and Arab nationalism came together, each strengthening the other.

This interchange tremendously strengthened the Arab revolution. Arab militants began to see their struggle as an international revolution. They saw that their fight was inseparable from the national struggles in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and with the worker and national struggles in the imperialist countries. The young Arab revolutionaries rejected the anticommunism of the feudal gentry and politicians, the traditional subjugation of women, anti-Jewish chauvinism, the traditional Arab state based on Islamic law, and an economic order that allowed a very few to be very rich at the expense of many.

However, the crisis of leadership of world revolution has yet to be solved and the leaders of the Palestine resistance, like radicals in other continents, attempted to copy revolutions of earlier periods and different parts of the world without analyzing the factors that led to their success or the obstacles still in their path. Revolutions drove out imperialism in China, Cuba, and North Vietnam, and the strategy of guerrilla warfare seems to have been successful in those cases. It seemed to the militants of Fateh—as it does to many young and inexperienced militants—that guerrilla warfare is sufficient to carry out anti-imperialist revolution. So they concentrated all their efforts into the building of guerrilla warfare.

In March 1968 an Israeli border patrol attacked the refugee village of Karameh on the east bank of the Jordan River. A Fateh unit was camped near the village: it decided to stand and fight. After several hours' skirmish with heavy casualties on both sides the Israelis retreated. The impact of this small military victory was felt throughout the Arab world. Fateh became established as *the* organization of the Palestinian guerrillas and became synonymous with anti-Zionist struggle. With that political capital accumulated, Fateh entered PLO.

Fateh's entry into PLO was for the purpose of putting the resources supplied to PLO by the Arab League at the service of the liberation struggle. Fateh expelled Shuqeiry and the rest of the reactionary leaders, and Yassir Arafat, the leader of Fateh, became president of PLO.

The Arab League continued to finance PLO (it had never done so adequately). Even these meager funds made Fateh able to reach masses of Arabs and radicalizing people in other continents, and it gave the guerrilla struggle against Israel legitimacy and mass support of Arabs from Iraq to Morocco. Fateh had access to print and broadcast media, to offices in all major Arab cities, and it received tremendous coverage in both the bourgeois and the socialist press throughout the world. It made it much easier to recruit guerrillas to fight Israel because the financial support solicited through PLO made possible tremendously increased purchases of arms and other equipment.

In addition, Fateh gave valuable education to the Arab masses by expelling the anti-Jewish feudal elements like Shuqeiry. For decades bourgeois and feudal Arab politicians had been propagating the idea that the enemy of Arab nationalism was world Jewry. They borrowed

the most reactionary anti-Semitic texts from tsarist Russia (such as "Protocols of the Elders of Zion") to support their propaganda. Fateh made very clear its opposition to anti-Jewish chauvinism. Judaism is not the same as Zionism, they argued. The enemy of the Arab people was the Zionist state and its imperialist allies, not the Jewish people.

There was, however, a negative side of Fateh's work inside the PLO. Because through PLO Fateh received some support from the Arab states and because the "progressive" Arab regimes gave rhetorical support to the resistance, Fateh continued to do nothing to break down the illusions of the Arab masses in Nasserism and Baathism.

The relationship between the Arab states and PLO strengthened the tendencies in Fateh away from developing a class analysis of the Arab revolution. It led Fateh to think of Arab unity as unity of all classes. All Fateh asked of Arab regimes was to allow it a free hand in operations against Israel. It agreed not to interfere in the politics of the Arab states. It also made no demands for increased aid, nor for sanctions against economic interests of pro-Zionist powers on the Arab regimes.

Had Fateh understood the true role of the Arab regimes as an *obstacle* to anti-Zionist struggle it would still have been correct to enter and use the PLO apparatus. PLO could have been used as a wedge to split the pro-fedayeen Arab masses from the bourgeois regimes, as a means of exposing the real antinationalism of Arab capitalism. PLO could have exposed the economic relationships between Arab regimes and pro-Zionist powers, demanded complete support from the Arab regimes *and* the workers states. It could have organized more anti-Zionist demonstrations in Arab cities than it did. Fateh realized that the Arab regimes could not lead the struggle against Israel. It does not to this day understand that the Arab regimes are an *obstacle* to that struggle.

The Popular Front and Democratic Popular Front

The failure of the Fateh leadership to understand the true role of Arab capitalism led to the formation of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in 1968. It was more directly affected by the worldwide radicalization than Fateh—it originated on the cosmopolitan American University of Beirut campus, where its founder, Dr. George Habash, was a faculty member. In 1969, a split in PFLP occurred, leading to the formation of the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Both the PFLP and DPFLP claimed to be Marxist and to favor overthrow of the Arab capitalist regimes. Neither, however, developed a strategy for doing that. Habash, in what has to be considered an act of infantile self-righteousness, refused to accept funds from the Arab states, claiming that such funds "stink of American oil." In such a way he let the Arab states off the hook: by refusing to accept their aid he was in no position to *prove* to the Arab masses that the capitalist Arab regimes do not support the anti-Zionist struggle. Ultraleftism and sectarianism pervaded the PFLP's politics, causing many splits from it. PFLP also developed a policy of individual terrorism.

DPFLP attempted to do mass work in Jordan, in addition to armed struggle. It set up joint "Jordanian-Palestinian councils," mainly in Irbid (Jordan's second largest

city) to overcome hostility between the refugees and the natives of Jordan. However, these councils were not organizations of *mobilization* against the government. DPFLP, like PFLP, did not attempt to expose the capitalist Arab regimes' hostility to the struggle against Zionism. Rather, they *began* with the slogan of revolution throughout the Arab East based on the strategy of guerrilla warfare and attempted to rally the masses around it. The masses were not ready. DPFLP opposed individual terrorism, and lacked PFLP's sectarianism.

Because PFLP and DPFLP saw the Arab revolution only in terms of armed struggle and based themselves, therefore, on a guerrilla-war *strategy*, they were hampered from developing revolutionary mobilization of non-Palestinian Arabs, who did not and do not yet support picking up the gun against their own governments. The "Marxist" leaders did not make the distinction between a *tactic* of armed struggle to be used against Israel and a generalized *strategy* of armed struggle to be prepared throughout the Arab East. They did not see armed struggle as only one *part* of revolutionary political struggle. In fact, the PFLP and DPFLP propaganda tended to equate guerrilla war and revolution—hardly Marxist thinking. For that reason their opposition to "non-intervention" really amounted to no more than rhetoric. The Popular Fronts did not represent a real advance over the politics of al-Fateh.

Repression by the Bourgeois States

As one might have expected, the bourgeois regimes in Lebanon and Jordan were the first to pose the question in action of the relationship between the guerrillas and governments. In 1969 the Lebanese army began attacks on Palestinian guerrillas in the Mount Hermon area. They made no distinction between guerrillas of "non-interventionist" or "Marxist" tendency. Fateh, being by far the largest guerrilla group, bore the brunt of the attacks by the Lebanese army. Its response was to negotiate a peace agreement with the Beirut government. The agreement was fragile, but the confrontation proved not to be decisive.

The years 1969-70, leading up to the decisive confrontation in Jordan, were years of periodic confrontation between the resistance and the Lebanese and Jordanian governments, both pro-U.S. states, both conciliatory to the existence of Israel as a state. The guerrillas found themselves in a two-front war—with Israel on one front and Lebanon and Jordan on the other.

Lebanon and Jordan were under combined pressure. In addition to the fear by the ruling classes of a popular armed force operating on their territories, diplomatic pressure was exerted by Washington, and military pressure was exerted by Tel Aviv. Israel made it clear both to the Beirut and Amman governments that it considered *them* responsible for any attacks on Israel carried out from their territories and that it would retaliate against civilian villages. Israel carried out bombing raids and search-and-destroy missions in both Jordan and Lebanon. The effect of these raids on the population's consciousness was of course to provoke tremendous anger, directed against Israel. The government, needing to cool down this anger—the beginning of politicization—had to see to it that the Israeli raids ceased, either by resisting Israel militarily or by acceding to Tel Aviv's demand to curb

the fedayeen.

The former course could not have prevented politicization of the masses of Arabs who were the victims of Israeli aggression. The anti-Zionist sentiment would not have been diminished by military resistance; on the contrary, it would have been strengthened. The masses would not cease supporting the fedayeen if the government *defended* the fedayeen—the real effect of military resistance against Israel. The guerrillas would have been given legitimacy far beyond that which they already enjoyed. Any legitimacy in the eyes of the masses of an armed force independent of the bourgeois army is a tremendous danger, which no capitalist government can long allow.

Diplomatic pressure from Washington also worked against Jordanian and Lebanese resistance against the Israeli raids. Both Jordan and Lebanon are key to transportation of oil between the Iraqi oil fields and the Mediterranean. In addition, American business has extensive investments in the Lebanese economy, as well as in the Israeli and Jordanian economy. Washington wants to preserve peace and the status quo in the Middle East. War is not good for U.S. business in that particular part of the world, for its effect on the economy is disruptive. A balance of power in which Israel is the strongest and the other states respect that fact and do not attempt to challenge Israel's hegemony is ideal for Washington's interests. As long as Washington and its allies are the undisputed masters of the Middle East, the U.S. will do all it can to preserve peace. However, Washington was faced with two violent alternatives: full-scale regional war or localized repression against the Palestinian fedayeen. The U.S. State Department made it perfectly clear to Beirut and Amman that it wanted to see the latter. Lebanon and Jordan capitulated to Israel and attempted to repress the fedayeen.

The Decisive Confrontation

In the late summer of 1970 the Middle East crisis reached a breaking point. The Palestinian guerrillas were at the peak of their strength. Egypt was building up SAM missiles along the Suez Canal for defense against Israeli bombing raids. Israel made it clear that it was unwilling to give up the Arab territory it had seized in the 1967 war. Israel demanded dismantling of the Egyptian missiles and "secure borders"; the Arab states demanded that Israel pull back to its 1967 borders; the Palestinian resistance was fighting to regain its homeland, and Washington and Moscow wanted to avoid at any cost a repeat of June 1967.

In order to prevent a new Mid-East war, the U.S. State Department, in collaboration with the Kremlin, cooked up a "peace plan," which was presented to the Middle Eastern states by U.S. Secretary of State William Rogers. This plan called for a ninety-day cease-fire, reaffirmation of the UN resolution of November 22, 1967 (which called for Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories), and the establishment of "demilitarized zones" at or near the pre-war borders.

The Nixon administration made it perfectly clear that it was considering military intervention in the Middle East if the Rogers plan was not accepted—by the Arabs. (If Israel didn't accept it—well, the plan could be modified a little, or, if Israel was too intransigent it might not get all the Phantom jets it asked for.)

Israel reluctantly accepted the plan. Foreign Minister Abba Eban persuaded the Israeli cabinet to accept the plan on the basis that:

(1) if the Arab states accepted and Israel did not, Israel would appear as the aggressive power, making it much more difficult for the United States both to arm the Zionist regime and to force the USSR to cut down on arms shipments to the Arab states; and

(2) even if some Arab states accepted the plan not *all* were likely to accept it, and certainly the fedayeen would never accept it: the plan could never be implemented, and Israel would never have to give up the occupied territories.

Before Tel Aviv had given its answer, the Nasser regime in Egypt accepted the Rogers plan. So did Jordan and Lebanon, the pro-U.S. Arab regimes. The Baathist regimes in Syria and Iraq did not, and, of course, neither did the Palestine resistance. On August 7, 1970, a cease-fire between Israel and Egypt went into effect, but to this day Israel has not returned the territory it seized in June 1967.

Writing in the September 21, 1970, *Intercontinental Press*, Comrade Les Evans said of the Rogers plan:

"The essence of the Rogers plan is a settlement of the Middle East crisis that would deny the Palestinian refugees any claim to exist as a national entity. When the Soviet Union agreed to the plan and succeeded in pressuring the Nasser regime into accepting the August 7 cease-fire, it became plain that unless the negotiations were scuttled the big powers would enforce a 'solution' at the expense of the Palestinian people.

"Washington's 'peace plan,' which to date has been accepted in principle by the Soviet Union, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, the Sudan, Lebanon, and Israel, calls for implementation of the November 1967 United Nations resolution on the Middle East. This calls for an Israeli pullback to the borders existing before the June war. In exchange, the Arab governments are to recognize the right of the Zionist regime to hold the land it seized from the Palestinian people prior to 1967. For the Palestinians there is nothing in this agreement but defeat. They are to be paid a lump sum for land confiscated by the Israeli regime or be allowed to return to settle in Israel.

"Tel Aviv has made it plain that it will never permit the 2,000,000 Palestinians to return. Those who did return would become second-class citizens of the Zionist state."

The stage was set. The Palestinian resistance, which operated in part from Jordanian territory, refused to accept the Rogers plan, which the government of Jordan has accepted. Hussein was in a position to claim that the fedayeen were preventing the return of the occupied territories and provoking Israeli attacks on Jordan, as well as making it impossible for the Jordanian government to carry out its foreign policy. The Jordanian army began small-scale attacks on both guerrilla bases and on guerrillas in the city of Amman. All of the guerrilla groups fought back, including non-interventionist Fateh, which warned "if the governments wants a showdown our revolution will be obliged to take action." (*New York Times*, September 1, 1970.)

Arafat negotiated a truce with Hussein, and on September 5 the Jordanian army was withdrawn from Amman. On September 6 the ultraleft PFLP hijacked three airliners,

one Israeli, one U.S., and one Swiss, and on September 9, they hijacked a British plane. The passengers were taken as hostages. Hussein was under intense pressure: the United States was preparing a military intervention if the Jordanian government could not, in the words of the *New York Times*, "bring the criminals to heel."

Hussein attempted to attack the PFLP alone, to isolate it from the other guerrilla organizations. He could not. Though the other major formations—Fateh, Sa'iqa, and DPFLP—expressed disagreement with the hijacking tactic, they pledged to—and did—defend PFLP against the Jordanian army's attacks. PLO took responsibility for the lives of the hostages and for the negotiations over their release.

Heavy fighting between guerrillas and army troops broke out in Amman on September 9. A cease-fire was again negotiated between the PLO and Hussein. PFLP refused to abide by the cease-fire.

During this period the Jordanian army was surrounding the guerrilla strongholds in and around Irbid in northern Jordan. In this area Hussein was a paper monarch. The resistance ruled and had influence in all areas of social life. Irbid, one should remember, is the second largest city in Jordan. The situation was one of real dual power. Hussein realized before the PLO leadership did that the situation had to be resolved.

On September 16 Hussein purged his government of anyone even remotely sympathetic to the fedayeen. He established martial law, with the notorious Abes Majali as military governor. Majali pledged, "In ten days there will be no more Palestine resistance."

The army launched an attack that was nothing short of genocidal. In Amman the soldiers went house to house in their search-and-destroy operation against the Palestinians. Heavy artillery was fired into the refugee camps. Tanks and heavy artillery attacked Irbid.

After ten days the resistance was still fighting, but nearly 10,000 Palestinians were already dead, and it was clear that Hussein would reestablish his control. The Palestinian guerrillas of all tendencies fought heroically, but against the tanks, mortars, and rockets of the repressive forces they were no match. Had they been, Israel and possibly the United States would have invaded.

The response throughout the Arab world was appalling. Syria, Iraq, and the other "revolutionary" Arab states, who had pledged time and time again their full support of the fedayeen, did nothing in their defense. Even the tank columns of the Palestine Liberation Army (a bourgeois-style army equipped by the Arab League and kept under wraps in various Arab states) were withdrawn shortly after they had crossed from Syria into Lebanon. They never engaged Hussein's troops in battle.

More appalling was the lack of militant response by the stunned Arab masses. Only one mass demonstration of any size took place—50,000 in Damascus. In Beirut, where demonstrations of over a hundred thousand had occurred in the past, only 10,000 demonstrated, and the organizers agreed to raise no anti-Nasser or anti-Hussein slogans. September 1970 was a crushing, demoralizing defeat for the Arab revolution.

Betrayal

The immediate cause of the massacre of the Palestinians was, of course, the betrayal by the "revolutionary" Arab

states—the bourgeois nationalist, or better, national bourgeois Nasserist and Baathist regimes. The Soviet bureaucracy, which provides arms and other aid to the Nasserists and Baathists, agreed completely with the betrayal and encouraged it. *The Soviet bureaucrats have never denied Israel's "right to exist"* and in fact have in the past supported Israel against the Arabs. The Stalinist bureaucrats were collaborators in the working out of the Rogers plan. Moscow shares full responsibility for the massacre of 10,000 Palestinian Arabs by Hussein.

Peking's role was less direct than Moscow's. Peking supplied some small arms to the guerrillas (the greatest amount was supplied by Algeria) and paid lip service to the Palestinian cause.

Though the Peking government did not play a direct role in the 1970 betrayal, it played no role in direct defense of the Palestinians. The Chinese bureaucrats could have provided much more military aid than they did; they could have established some kind of presence in the Middle East and exerted some kind of political pressure on the Arab regimes in favor of the fedayeen. They did not, for the Peking bureaucrats, like their counterparts in Moscow, are in no way interested in seeing the Arab revolution come to victory.

Stalinism's role was not decisive, however. It acquiesced in, rather than led, the crushing of the revolutionary upsurge. Though the central leaders of the Palestinian resistance were influenced by Mao in making many of their errors, they were not orthodox Maoists and did not have a great deal of direct contact with the Peking government. Most of the fedayeen leaders considered Mao a great anti-imperialist revolutionary, but not the source of all wisdom. No, the decisive elements of the defeat are elsewhere—in the lack of the leadership in the Arab revolution which could advance the tremendous nationalism and anti-Zionism of the Arab workers, peasants, refugees, and students towards making socialist revolution in all the Arab states—the only sure victory against imperialism and the native capitalism which depends on it. Because of their class nature the bourgeois Arab states could not tolerate the struggle against Israel. The question facing Arab revolutionaries is *how* to remove the obstacle—how to overthrow the bourgeois Arab states. How can the working class and its allies in the Arab world be won to socialist revolution? What role does armed struggle against Israel play in that process?

Zionism, Imperialism, and Arab Nationalism

The central question of Middle Eastern politics today is Zionism. In the midst of the Arab East exists a European, expansionist state, which oppresses Arabs within its borders and launches military attacks on Arabs outside its borders. It bombs villages, carries out raids into major cities, and seeks to bring more and more territory under its rule. The Palestinian refugees, who were driven from their homeland, are dispersed throughout the Arab East (and beyond), and are present in all walks of life, as well as being concentrated into dismal camps.

The struggle for an independent Arab Palestine has been going on since 1916. It has been at the heart of the Arab revolution, against all of its imperialist enemies, including Israel. In Palestine was once a center of Arab culture, with great human and economic resources. Within Palestine were once concentrated a large portion of the

inhabitants of Greater Syria (today balkanized into Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel), and this land was ripped by force from its people, a crime which is branded on the consciousness of every Arab. Branded as well on Arab consciousness are the crushing defeats of 1948, 1956, and 1967.

When the Palestinian fedayeen won the victory of al-Karamah a tremendous wave of hope spread through the Arab masses. Here were the fighters who would free Palestine from its occupation. No Arab statesman could denounce the fedayeen and maintain any popular support. Yet here is the contradiction: no Arab state could tolerate the existence of the fedayeen, as we have shown. They represent a threat—as an example of mass, independent struggle, a potential ally of potentially insurgent masses within the Arab states, an armed force which could upset any peace which imperialism might impose on the Middle East.

A Transitional Approach

What is required, then, is to expose this contradiction to the masses—to prove in action that the bourgeois Arab states must be overthrown in order to win the fight against Israel. To begin with, mobilizations in the streets around demands for more support to the guerrillas, or for an end to repression against them, should be organized. Street demonstrations in support of the fedayeen took place throughout the 1968-70 period, but they were not organized around demands on the Arab governments, the kind of demands which could expose the fact that the Arab bourgeois statesmen oppose Zionism in words but defend Zionism in action. Some of the fault rests with leaders of the resistance: Habash's sectarian refusal to accept any aid from Arab governments and Arafat's quickness to negotiate truces with the Arab governments—rather than to appeal to the masses against their governments—in times of repression, contributed to this political weakness of the Arab revolution. In neither the Palestinian resistance nor in the mass movement which supported it was there a leadership which understood the contradiction between the Arab states' nationalist rhetoric and class basis and the reasons for the existence of that contradiction.

The Permanent Revolution in the Arab East

The Arab struggle against Zionism is an integral part of the Arab national revolution against imperialism, for Israel is the reliable policeman for imperialist interests—British and U.S. mainly—in the Middle East. The state of Israel was set up with that role in mind, and it has not let its Western sponsors down. The fight against Israel is the continuation of the Arab fight for national self-determination, which began in 1916 against Ottoman Turkey, continued through the second world war against Britain and France, and today fights against Israel and the U.S. A revolutionary policy in the Arab world is always to connect the U.S. with Israel in all agitation and propaganda—to protest U.S. selling of military hardware to Tel Aviv, to protest U.S. economic domination of the Middle East. In Lebanon demonstrations could protest the presence of the U.S. Sixth Fleet in coastal waters. American embassies must be focal points of mass protest. Militant demonstrations were held at U.S. embassies in the 1968-70 period; they must be renewed.

The capitalist economies of the Arab states depend on imperialism: the exploitation of Arab labor is done mainly by Western capital. The national struggle in the Middle East is inseparable from the class struggle. The Arab bourgeoisie is tied completely to Western imperialist interests. The struggle for national independence can only be carried out, therefore, by the working class and its allies, the peasants, students, refugees, and sections of the middle class, led, of course, by the workers. In order to struggle resolutely *against* the national bourgeoisie and imperialism the working class must mobilize itself *as a class*, opposing its class interests to those of the bourgeoisie. The working class is defined by its relationship to the means of production, and if the national struggle is to be led by the working class it must be connected with the proletariat's historic struggle to win for itself the ownership of the means of production. The Arab revolution is a *combined* revolution—a nationalist revolution and a socialist revolution. To advance the nationalist revolution is to advance the socialist revolution. Every militant workers' strike advances the struggle for independence. Every battle against the Israeli army by Palestinian guerrillas advances the socialist revolution.

The Revolutionary Party

The Arab revolution needs a leadership which understands the inseparability of the social and national revolution and is organized to build the mass actions—from demonstrations to strikes to armed struggle—necessary to raise the consciousness of the working class and its allies in action until they overthrow capitalism throughout the Middle East. This leadership is the Leninist party. The building of the revolutionary Leninist party, through the method of the Transitional Program of the Fourth International, is the central task for revolutionary Arabs as it is for revolutionaries of all nationalities.

The building of this party must begin with the struggle for a democratic, secular Palestine. Around this and related slogans, revolutionists can best advance the Arab national revolution, both in the Arab countries and within occupied Palestine itself. This slogan relates directly to the central issue of Middle Eastern politics: the occupation of Palestine by Zionism. It is a demand for those democratic rights for which Arabs have been fighting for decades. It is a demand based on the present consciousness of masses of Arabs; it also points the way to future struggles, which must culminate in socialist revolution.

The democracy called for in this slogan has nothing to do with bourgeois democracy. It is rather a demand for the democratic rights won in Western countries in the bourgeois revolutions: the freedom of speech, assembly, press, travel, association, equality of opportunity in education and employment, the political rights to vote, to hold office, to organize political parties. It is not a demand for a bourgeois-parliamentary government nor for the "freedom to exploit," which is the freedom for which the bourgeoisie fought most resolutely in its revolution against feudalism. Democratic rights are denied Arabs within Israel, as is known throughout the Arab world.

The state of Israel, on which imperialism relies to defend its interests in the Middle East, cannot concede democratic rights to the Arabs within its borders without undermining its very foundations. Israel was founded on

the principle of an exclusive Jewish state, "as Jewish as England is English." By allowing the thirty percent Arab minority full rights, Israel would cease to be a "Jewish state" as such. And then how could it fulfill its obligation to hold back the Arab national revolution? If the Arabs were given full rights, they could not be excluded from the army. How reliable would an army partially composed of Arabs be in a fight against the Arab revolution? Imperialism is unwilling even to depend on Hussein's army to defend its interests in the long run. Israel whips up anti-Arab racism within its population to win support for its aggression against its Arab neighbors. How could it continue to do so when faced with a civil rights struggle of the Arabs *against* that racism? It could not unless it were to remove completely its "democratic" mask and become completely isolated from progressive world opinion, an alternative which Tel Aviv would like to avoid.

The struggle for democratic rights for the Arabs within Israel, so dangerous to imperialism's number one Middle Eastern cop, could not be confined to Israel. Only in Lebanon do Arabs enjoy even the minimum of democratic rights, and in Lebanon democratic rights are tenuous at best. The struggle for democracy is no less dangerous to the bourgeois Arab regimes than it is to Israel.

The demand that religion be separated from the state also threatens the very foundation of the state of Israel. No common language, racial features, or geographical territory unites world Jewry. The only thing that Jews of all countries share is religion. How can a "Jewish state" therefore be secular? How could a "secular state" deny equal rights to the Arabs except in the openly racist South African manner?

The demand for a secular state would extend to the Arab countries as would the demand for democratic rights. The backward traditions upheld by Islamic law (the *shari'a*) are backed to an extent by all the Arab states except Lebanon. And Lebanon is hardly a secular state: it is based on a principle of bicomunalism, in which representation is determined on the basis of religion—Christianity or Islam. The concept of a secular Palestine contradicts the anti-Judaism of the Arab capitalist politicians, and it educates the Arab masses to the fact that Zionism and imperialism are their enemies, rather than the Jewish people.

Palestine has been at the heart of the Arab revolution from the very beginning. The struggle for a free, Arab Palestine has been going on ever since imperialism separated Palestine from the greater Arab nation (for there is only one Arab nation) and opened it to Zionist colonization. A free Arab Palestine could and would be economically and culturally reintegrated into the Arab Middle East. Fundamental to the struggle for an Arab Palestine is language. The language of the Arab world is Arabic, and central to the struggle within Israel will be the demand for equality of the Arabic language with Hebrew. This is a transitional step towards making the Arabic language the central language of business and education in Palestine, a necessity for the reintegration into the Middle East of what had been the center of Arab society between the Nile and Euphrates valleys, that is, Palestine.

Armed Struggle

Armed struggle must grow out of the mass political struggle for a democratic, secular Palestine—to defend it

and to advance it. The problem has been that the armed organizations of the Palestine resistance have separated themselves physically and politically from the masses of Arabs in the Middle East. They have concentrated on guerrilla warfare to the exclusion of the mass political struggle necessary to make the Arab revolution. A revolutionary party cannot be built in a training camp; it cannot be built in isolation from the factories, the schools, the poor neighborhoods and villages. Armed struggle must be a *tactic* used to advance mass political and social struggle. If it does *not* do that then revolutionaries have to question either the way in which it is used or its use at all. Armed struggle in the Middle East has advanced the Arab revolution to a certain point. But armed struggle alone cannot make the Arab revolution. This lesson has yet to be assimilated by the majority of Arab revolutionaries.

Armed struggle by the Palestinian fedayeen against Israel was supported by Arabs throughout the Middle East and beyond. But those masses of Arabs did not see that armed struggle was necessary against their own governments, and the Palestinian guerrilla movement did not, and does not today, have a program for the struggle against the Arab bourgeois regimes. That, however, cannot be the role of the guerrilla movement—no guerrilla movement can be a substitute for a revolutionary party rooted in the Arab masses, organized in each country of the Middle East, organized to overthrow capitalism and its state apparatus.

In addition, the severely oppressed, demoralized Arabs within Israel are not ready politically to fight the Israeli government with arms, and the Palestine resistance could not develop a program to advance the Arab struggle within Israel. Any armed-struggle movement within Israel must function under the most severe conditions of illegality. The consciousness of the Israeli Arab population is not such that it could sustain an underground resistance. *But* the Arab minority within Israel is key to the struggle against Zionism. Of highest priority is bringing the Arabs of Israel into political action. Legal mass action around the slogan of a democratic, secular Palestine can begin to do that. Mass actions simply for democracy or simply for secularism can be a step forward also. The guerrilla movement cannot by itself bring the Arabs within occupied Palestine into political action. Armed struggle has an important role to play—at the present time—in the Arab revolution. But it cannot be equated with the Arab revolution.

In the armed struggle for a democratic, secular Palestine all militants willing to fight should be united in order to have the greatest military advantage against the enemy. The armed organization cannot attempt to do the work of a revolutionary party. The *leadership* of the revolution must be a party based on adherence to a democratically worked-out *program*. The *armed forces* of the revolution must be based on the broadest representative organizations of the masses of people—excluding no militant who is willing to fight resolutely on the field of battle for a democratic, secular Palestine. The guerrilla organizations of 1968-70 tried both to lead the Arab revolution politically and to unite the broadest numbers in armed combat. They did neither.

In Response to an Incorrect Perspective

In the current discussion in the Socialist Workers Party, Comrades Shaffer, Massey, and Smith have proposed as the central slogan for the Arab nationalist movement at the present time "For a United Socialist Arab East." (See *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, Vol. 31, No. 1.) This is a sectarian slogan.

Revolutionary socialists have no disagreement that a united socialist Arab East is desirable and a goal of the Arab revolution. That's not the point. We don't raise slogans which conform to the desires of revolutionary socialists, but rather we raise slogans around which masses of people will struggle, and in the process begin to see the need for socialist revolution. We raise demands and proposals which: (1) point to the central issues facing the masses; (2) expose the bourgeois state as the agent of oppression of the workers and their allies; (3) are thought of by the masses of people as *just*, as rights which they deserve but which are denied them; and (4) are *clear* and uncooptable: revolutionary socialists recognize, of course, the difference between concession and cooperation—that the former undermines the ability of the bourgeoisie to rule and the latter does not.

The slogan proposed by Comrades Shaffer, Massey, and Smith does not directly address the central issue of Middle Eastern politics—the Zionist occupation of Palestine. It skirts the issue—what is meant by "united"? Does it include self-determination for the Israeli Jews, that is, the existence of the state of Israel?

The slogan is not clear. What is meant by "socialist"? Sadat, the Baathists, the Stalinists, and the Israeli government all claim to be socialist. What does this say about democratic rights? Surely the Arabs in "socialist" Israel do not enjoy democratic rights. About separation of religion and state? Sadat says his "socialism" is based on the *shari'a*; surely that is not secular. The central slogan of Nasserism has been that of a socialist United Arab Republic, which would encompass the entire Arab East. Baathism also maintains this perspective. One duty of revolutionists is to differentiate revolutionary socialism from bourgeois demagoguery in the eyes of the masses. The slogan proposed by Comrades Shaffer, Massey, and Smith does not do that.

Agitation around that slogan might *say* that the bourgeois Arab states are complicit in the oppression of the Arab masses by Zionism and imperialism. But it cannot *expose* the bourgeois Arab states in living reality. The Arab workers and their allies will not come to the realization that socialist revolution is necessary simply because revolutionaries tell them so. Rather, they will see for themselves in the course of political struggle around transitional and democratic demands that the bourgeois state must be overthrown. The job of revolutionists is to organize them to overthrow capitalism and its state, and to build those mass struggles which can lead to that. What those struggles will be is determined by the present level of consciousness of the masses and by the objective situation in world politics.

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There are a number of aspects of the Arab revolution which were beyond the scope of this contribution. I did not discuss women's liberation, which has begun to have

a profound effect on the Arab revolution. I did not discuss the role of Israeli Jewish revolutionists, nor did I take up a detailed analysis of the politics of the many different guerrilla groups in the Palestine resistance. I also did not cover the development of the Arab revolution since the 1970 civil war: the Black September terror-

ism, the student and worker strikes and repression against them in Egypt, the current attacks by the Lebanese government of the fedayeen, for example. I hope that other comrades will write contributions covering these and other subjects.

May 20, 1973

THE PART PLAYED BY MILITARISM IN THE RISE OF PATRIARCHAL CULTURE

by Jan Garrett, Twin Cities Branch

The problem of the transition to the patriarchy forms the great unanswered question of the Engelsian tradition. While I do not think that one should be required to defend any particular interpretation of ancient history as part of one's Marxist duty, I do have at least a tentative answer to this question, which I will present here. This article should be seen as a sort of sequel to "Towards a Critique of 'Political' Anthropology."

1. *Gentile and Postgentile Society*

The Roman Empire and the conquest of Europe by Christianity represent a fundamental dividing line between the two major phases of human history. Prior to that time, virtually all of humankind was organized into gentes (the plural of gens). The gens is an extended kinship group, familiar to non-Marxists under the name of "clan." The gentile system was the predominant mode of social organization in the ancient world. Where it survives today, it may also go under the name of "tribalism." Tribes are groups of related gentes.

Although there are different kinds of gentes, one characteristic is common to all: It is a system of particular relations between people based on kinship. Each relation has its rights and duties, and these relations fit into an elaborate network. In a sense, it is like the kinship we know today: you can define every person's relative place by some sort of term. But it was a far more effective determinant of social behavior. And it tended, up to a point at least, to be open-ended, a network involving dozens and sometimes hundreds and rarely tens of thousands of people. It was not focused around one or a few nuclear families.

2. *Gentile-Class Society*

The transition to patriarchy occurs first of all in a period of human history characterized by the coexistence of gentile structures and incipient class relations. The social structure was a hybrid class and gentile system. It lasted in Europe up till the time of the Greeks and Romans and in Asia up till capitalist colonization.

The Asian and North African formations combined the rule of a gentile elite of a particular tribe or related tribes over peoples whose gentile structure was not com-

pletely shattered, as well as a quantity of large urban centers, which served as military-administrative centers and secondarily as commercial ones. (In these urban centers, gentile structures were partially broken down.)

The Greek and Roman elites, on the other hand, shattered the gentile structure of the conquered by transforming them into chattel slaves, while retaining their own in modified form.

3. *The Conic Clan and Lewis Morgan's Method*

Engel's *Origin of the Family, etc.* was based on Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society*. Morgan's personal experience with the Iroquois had left a strong impression on him which he rapidly generalized to a universal theory of social evolution. The Iroquois were matrilineal and matrilineal. The males lived with their wives and their wives' clans, rather than vice-versa, and the offspring of the union belonged to the wives' clan.

From the fact that more recently these relations are reversed but the clan or gens is no longer operative, Morgan was influenced to look for an intermediate stage, i.e., one in which the clan formation still existed but was organized in a patrilocal, patrilineal way, the mirror image of the matrilineal gens.

He thought he had found such societies among the early Greeks, Romans and Germans. (Although his model for the gens was the Iroquois clan, the word itself originally applied to the Roman clan.)

Morgan's method here was clever, yet not sufficiently dialectical. First he cut social evolution into periods; then he fit them together in such a way that the formal aspect of a society could be claimed to be inherited from the content of the immediately preceding one. The chief error in this is that coexistence of contradictory institutions is possible only when both elements are rooted in the social tensions of the given social totality. Thus it is impossible for one major cultural element to change without that change being simultaneously expressed in other structures of the whole.

Thus Morgan was in error—and Engels did not entirely escape from the consequences—in his view of the socially stratified Greek and Roman gentes as essentially the structural mirror image of the matrilineal clan of

the Iroquois.

The form of the gens which is generally found in societies on the way to social differentiation is not patrilineal as a rule but bilateral. Unlike matrilineal or patrilineal clans, which trace descent in one sex-line only, bilateral clans trace authority and inheritance through either the female or male lines.

The bilateral clan is found, incidentally, in all parts of the world, among the Reindeer Lapps, the Arabians and the Igorots of Luzon. Many anthropologists think that the original Roman gens as well as the clan of the Greeks and Germans was of this type.

The bilateral clan is also called "conic" because it is usually a status-centered institution. One's status is determined by the nearness of one's relation to the clan founder. Nearness of relation, in turn, is calculated in two dimensions: by generation and sequence of birth within generation. Thus, a first son or daughter of the clan founder might have approximately the same status as the brother or sister of the clan founder, whereas the second son or daughter would have less than either of them.

The bilateral clan lends itself to hierarchical stratification much more than the unilateral, exogamous clan. Often, intermarriage is practiced within the bilateral clan, especially among the "notables," that is, the clan members nearest in kin to the direct descendents of the clan founders. This is the reason why, in ancient Egypt, Homeric Greece and ancient Germany, brother-sister marriage was even expected in some circumstances—so as to leave no doubt as to who would get the big inheritance. This is not a survival of some supposed primeval promiscuous stage, as Engels thought, but a product of a relatively advanced social development.

Along with status, greater or lesser amounts of property are inherited. The bilateral clan is thus flexible with regard to economic differentiation. Rich and poor layers may develop within the same clan.

The "conic" or bilateral clan is not sufficient for the development of patriarchy. The very powerful women of ancient Egypt and Crete probably exercised their influence through just such a clan structure. But, because social stratification leads in the long run to patriarchy, as I will show, the existence of a kinship structure which allows differentiations in wealth was a prerequisite for the appearance of male dominance.

What a more dialectical method than the one used by Morgan shows, then, is that the form does not hold constant while the content changes. The "clan" does not remain the same sort of relationship between persons when it shifts to allow room for differences in wealth. It too changes in shape and function. Inheritance of knowledge, of technique, and of magical rites was the function of the descent of the unilateral clan. The unequal inheritance of externalized human energy, of property, was the function of the bilateral clan. What the two had in common was that they both belonged to the kinship-network phase of social development.

4. *The Pastoral Theory of the Rise of Patriarchy*

Robert Briffault and Engels, Evelyn Reed's main mentors, credit the rise of domestication and herding of animals with the "transfer of power" to the males.

Briffault says:

"It was domestication of animals which first placed economic power in the hands of men, since animals pertain to the hunter. (Sic!) This power was commonly used to buy off the claims of women, and of their families, to the services of husbands; thus patriarchal society with patrilocal marriage became established among pastoral peoples."

Engels' explanation is even more suspect:

"Procuring the means of existence had always been the man's business. The tools of production were manufactured and owned by him. The herds were the new tools of production and their taming and tending was his work."

Although I have criticized Comrade Reed quite strongly in these articles, one can certainly find in her work a refutation of this notion. Engels is wrong here, even if the opposite cannot be proven.

But how true is it that pastoral societies are patriarchal, as both Engels and Briffault assume? The pastoral Tibetans are famous for the independence of their women. Thousands of miles away, the Reindeer Chuckchi and North Lapp reindeer nomads inherit reindeer in both the male and female lines. And in these societies both sexes tend the reindeer.

Robert Lowie, writing in *Social Organization*, says that it is quite common for women to tend sheep among nomad peoples.

Could the males have somehow stumbled onto the secrets of being shepherds while the women were busy with other things, thus allowing the males to build themselves a technical monopoly? This argument doesn't hold up either. There is so little skill involved in tending sheep that children often tend sheep in pastoral society. In hunting society, on the other hand, males will sometimes regard a sixteen-year-old youth as a drag on them and leave him at camp.

5. *Militarism and Patriarchy*

Pastoralism does not appear to give rise to patriarchy in and of itself. But when pastoral society made its appearance in the ancient Near East, it helped to give rise to conditions which were conducive to greater militarism, perhaps also in connection with an ecological development which I will mention.

Pastoral peoples must be more mobile, often having to fight their way into new lands, as the Hebrews did in Palestine. Also, pastoral peoples are often traders; this adds to their needed mobility.

The greater division of social labor, that is, between the animal-raisers and agricultural peoples, leads to increases in productivity and population density and thus to greater possibility of friction between peoples.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, cattle, sheep, goats, camels, etc., represent movable property of considerable value and are thus greater temptation as items of conquest, theft, tribute and so on.

Because of these factors, the military organization of a people came to play a greater role than it had formerly. Under the new conditions, the military specialization of the males increased in social weight.

Speaking of the period after 2600 B.C., V. Gordon Childe writes (in *Man Makes Himself*, p. 186):

"The period after the urban revolution is certainly one

in which organized warfare is repeatedly attested both by written records and by the prominent place henceforth assumed by armaments in the archaeological record. Before the revolution unmistakable weapons of war were . . . far from conspicuous."

This period reaches its climax among the Greeks and Romans, as Marx noted in his writings of 1857-58. He speaks of a type of archaic community in which "the basis here is not the land, but the city as already created seat (centre) of the rural population (landowners)."

Note especially Marx's choice of the term "labor" to apply to warfare in the following passage.

"The difficulties encountered by the organized community can arise only from other communities who have either already occupied the land or disturb the community in its occupation of it. War is therefore the great all-embracing task, the great communal labor, and it is required either for the occupation of the objective conditions for living existence or for the protection and perpetuation of such occupation. The community, consisting of kinship groups, is therefore in the first instance organized on military lines, as a warlike, military force, and this is one of the conditions of its existence as a proprietor. Concentration of settlement in the city is the foundation of this warlike organization."

The militarism of this period provides much of the explanation why it was the male sex, rather than the female, which established supremacy when the rise of class society dictated inequality at all levels, including the relations between the sexes.

The male sphere of warfare became the crucial one for those tribes which were to come out on top. And, to paraphrase the *Communist Manifesto*, the dominant ideas are ever the ideas of the dominant group.

Certainly women have proven themselves in the past as warriors. Robert Briffault, in *The Mothers*, and Elizabeth G. Davis, in *The First Sex*, have established that. What does seem to be the case, however, is that when militarism becomes a permanent occupation, as it must be for a large portion of the population in the historical period we are now discussing, women are too busy with other concerns (agriculture, domestic industry, child-rearing and perhaps even herding) to be soldiers.

It is also true that in general, even in most real or alleged matriarchies, males get the military function as part of the sexual division of social labor.

But now the military science requires more time and training. It requires more teamwork than earlier forms of warfare, considerably more in fact than animal-raising or domestic production. It required, among other things, the training of the young men by the same older men at whose side they would be fighting.

This meant a tendency toward the type of social structure in which the male youth would not marry out of their own clans. As marrying out was still the general mechanism of establishing alliances between clans, this meant that the other sex, the women, had to leave the clan of their birth.

Such out-marriage weakened the social cohesion of the female sex, by separating daughters from mothers and sisters from each other. The male sex thus tended to become the axis around which life revolved.

It is important *not* to overstate the degree of patriarchy

brought about by this new requirement. Long after this step had been taken, the influence of the mother-line in general and the mother in particular was by no means lacking. The only places where there was a clean break with Mother-Right was where a developed patriarchal people conquered a more matriarchal one.

The shift towards male-centered society is traceable in the successive cultures of the Tigris-Euphrates valley. Sumeria, the oldest, is considered by several sources studied by E.G. Davis to have been an outright matriarchy.

Davis attributes the downfall of this original matriarchy to some sort of natural catastrophe. And, in fact, the ancient civilizations of this area successively lost their literal material base through over-irrigation of the soil. With modern technique we cannot grow as much per acre in Iraq as the Sumerians did before the natural fertility of the soil was undermined. Perhaps this narrowing material base encouraged infighting amongst the inhabitants of the area.

At any rate, Semitic nomads swept over the valley and later constructed the Babylonian civilization, which had its center farther upstream than Sumeria. Women continued to play a dominant role in Babylonian society, but they were less influential than their Egyptian contemporaries and certainly less than the Sumerian matriarchs.

With its base more precarious, less protected than Egypt by natural boundaries, Babylon upgraded militarism to a more prominent place in her culture.

Assyria, in its turn, arose to power in competition with the already powerful Babylon to the south. There women's role is much demoted in comparison with Babylon. They were rarely included in the dominant priesthood.

6. *Society and the State Among the Greeks*

E.G. Davis challenges the idea that the classic Greeks were the strict patriarchalists that the writers of the Victorian era thought. (This would include Engels although Davis doesn't mention him by name.) She says that the Victorians could not find any other explanation for the prevalence of homosexuality among the Greek males than their supposed dislike of women. Engels does appear to partly share this view.

How do we explain the presence of women with men at the Greek theatre (I am told that Greek actors, however, were all male) or at the dinner parties where the major source of intellectual stimulation was provided by the hetairai (female companions, not wives, of the leading men). How can we account for the very strong personalities of women in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* or Euripides' *Trojan Women*?

We must at least put a question mark over Morgan-Engels on the question of the intensity of patriarchy among the Greeks. If we do not, we also have the problem of explaining why open homosexuality abounded in Greece and yet patriarchy is so entrenched, if the connection some of the party writers have made between male supremacy and antigay prejudice is to make any sense for ancient history.

Another probable error of Morgan and Engels concerns the evaluation of the Reforms of Solon and Cleisthenes. With a very un-Marxian attitude towards reforms, Engels argues that these wrought a virtual revolution in the so-

cial structure of Athens. He leads us to believe that Athenian social structure was thereafter that of a pure class society which had said goodbye to its gentile past.

Evelyn Reed preserves Engels' error when she dates the first state from Athens, presumedly from the same time.

Even from Engels' information one must doubt that the Athenian state represents a complete break with gentilism. First of all, the Attic tribes who were reorganized into the Athenian people were all related, in much the same way as the Iroquois tribes. Secondly, the territorial units established as the political basis of the Athenian city-state approximated the gentes in number, size and function. There were 90 gentes and then 100 "territorial units." Finally, the constitutional reform did not touch the basis on which the nation (city-state) armed and defended itself.

The similarity of the Greek city-state to the earlier gentile system is obvious from this quote from Aristotle's *Politics*, written hundreds of years after this supposed revolution took place.

"The state is intended to enable all, in their households and kinships, to live well, meaning by that a full and satisfying life. This will not be attained unless these family groups occupy one and the same territory and can intermarry. It is indeed on that account that we find in various cities associations formed of relatives by marriage, brother-

hoods, family reunions for sacrifices to the gods and other ways of social intercourse."

Engels is of course right that there are drastic differences between the system of the Greek city-state and that of, say, the gentile Germans, the major one being the existence of a noncitizen slave class of greater number than the free men (and their wives, children, etc.).

But what Engels obscures is that this class society has been formed through the conquest of gentile peoples by another gentile people; that although the gentile organization of the conquered, now slaves, has been torn asunder, that of the conqueror retains much of its force in its reformed half-gentile, half-class condition.

Thus the qualitative leap for the Greeks comes only when as a people their ancestral heritage and ancient "freedom" are brought to an end, when at the hand of the Roman conquerors, they too are transformed into chattel slaves.

Postscript

Another, perhaps more drastic step in the direction of today's patriarchal culture occurs at the end of the Roman Empire, when Christian ideology sets out to establish the cultural basis of private property unlimited by tribal communism, starting with Europe's unique form of feudalism.

May 10, 1973

THE EVOLUTION OF A TENDENCY

by David Keil, Lower Manhattan Branch,
New York Local

In their "Letter to the Political Committee," dated January 19, 1973, Comrades Bill Massey, John Shaffer, and Don Smith have given us a concise and fairly general picture of their political position. Undoubtedly they will elaborate their alternative to the party's program soon, at greater length. Especially now that, according to them, "no tactical turn . . . can correct the problem by itself." Possibly I can help them clarify their position. I hope that I can, at least, help to show how they have arrived at some of the stands they are now taking, since I have been acquainted with two of them personally during my sojourn in and out of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency in 1971.

Two of these three comrades, Massey and Smith, spoke for the P. O. T. at the party's last convention. This tendency insisted that it had no differences with the party's program, despite what many other comrades were loudly saying at the time, and the P. O. T. dissolved itself after the convention.

Some of the ex-P. O. T.ers left our movement after forming a short-lived "Leninist Faction," and subsequently founded the Class Struggle League, which is now trying to reach the masses via fusion with the Vanguard Newsletter of which some comrades may have heard. The comrades who have just formed this new tendency in our party have escaped such a fate. But they are following the same logic, and have been following it for a long time.

By this logic, I mean the inevitable results which follow from forming a tendency around tactical differences or organizational gripes. A tendency, like a political party, is a tool. For some jobs, such as changing the basic orientation or the program of an organization, or challenging its basic characterization of a period or a state, a tendency can be useful. For other jobs, such as beginning a discussion about tactics, a tendency is not so useful at all—because its *organizational nature*, its internal dynamic, pushes it more toward challenging the basic orientation or program. If you just want to propose an organizational measure, and you form a tendency, the question will always come up: are we just going to propose a few changes here and there with this powerful tool, a tendency? If you use a hammer to kill flies, you're going to do more than you had planned with that hammer!

The P. O. T. began by making one proposal: send most of our members into the factories. David Fender and his sectarian "Communist Tendency" were welcomed into the P. O. T. for this single-issue purpose. But much to the surprise of some of us, the P. O. T. ended up with a whole swarm of proposals, most of them much worse than the original one. This is the danger of putting organizational questions before political ones: you end up being taken where you weren't planning to go at all.

The leaders of the new tendency will, of course, protest that they arrived at their new positions by political discussion. There is no doubt about that. There must have been a good deal of political discussion during the past

two years, since the comrades have developed a whole new political line in that time.

But that is not to say that the P. O. T. as a whole, was anxious to hammer out its political positions. Many of its members wanted to do that, but not the tendency as a whole. At a tendency meeting in Boston in June 1971, the P. O. T. leadership avoided any discussion at all of the differences raised by the Communist Tendency, differences which involved the very program of the party. At that time, the P. O. T. leaders saw the tendency as a single-issue coalition with plenty of room for everyone. It didn't work out, and Fender and his little group left, calling the P. O. T. an unprincipled bloc.

Fender was right on that score: in order to continue its all-out struggle for the party members' allegiance, the P. O. T. had to submerge the political differences within it. Yet the differences were there, and by the very fact that the P. O. T. was a *tendency*, with a mission to fulfill, it was inevitable that those in the tendency who wanted to challenge the party's program and leadership would win out over those who agreed with the program, thought the leadership was not so bad as all that, and wanted to stick to the question of tactics.

I, who had made the error of joining the P. O. T. over a question of tactics, found this out at the tendency's first national meeting in Ohio at the 1971 convention. On this occasion it seemed to me that the most important question to decide was whether the P. O. T. agreed with the general line of the NC's Mideast resolution or not. Bill Massey, after much silence, had written a document at the last minute attacking the resolution's line.

But the tendency was divided over the Mideast. Some people agreed with the NC resolution's support for the demand for a democratic, secular Palestine; others rejected it; some even agreed with the Langston-Langston-Rothschild programmatic position of maybe-some-day supporting Jewish self-determination in the Mideast. There were all kinds of positions and formulations.

So it might have been a good idea to discuss it fully at the tendency meeting, and come to a conclusion, since the Mideast question was coming up for a vote at the convention. What those of us who wanted to do that forgot, however, was that the task which the tendency had set itself was not to get involved in hammering out a line among ourselves on the Mideast. Rather it was to fight for a "Proletarian Orientation, NOW," in the party, against the leadership. (Even if no one agreed on what a "proletarian orientation" was, either!)

So discussion on the Mideast was kept to a minimum and the P. O. T. decided to take no position but to allow the tendency spokesperson to put forth his own, personal position, which happened to be in opposition to the NC's resolution. (He told the assembled delegates that the NC Mideast position was the most important example of the party's degeneration.) The tendency thus definitively voted to become a bloc, a coalition that was not based on a

principled political program. That was the logic of forming a tendency around the tactical question of colonizing factories.

From the very beginning, in fact, the fundamental basis of the Proletarian Orientation Tendency was not political but organizational. It was united by the principle "against the regime," just as the Burnham-Shachtman-Abern coalition was in 1939-40, if not so openly and intensely. I myself had evidence to this effect inadvertently presented to me in the summer of 1970, by some leading future P. O. T.ers (not Massey, Smith or Shaffer) during an informal discussion. These comrades wanted to have a document proposing mass colonization of factories, and I thought that propaganda work outside plants would be a better idea. The problem with my proposal, they said, was that "the leadership" would pick this idea up and accept it, and what would we dissidents be left with? I just couldn't understand their point at the time. But if that wasn't an ignorant, factional, unprincipled method of proceeding, then it was about the best try yet made at one in the party's history! Comrades who may be thinking of joining the Massey-Smith-Shaffer tendency on the basis of a down-with-the-regime recruitment pitch should let the mistakes of others be a useful lesson.

Does all this have anything to do with the new tendency which has been announced? Very possibly. After all, the principled character of the new tendency's origin is questionable. One wonders how a whole new political program can be worked out by three people in three different cities who have nothing but informal discussions together. What sort of a democratic discussion does this tendency result from, based on nothing but informal get-togethers? (Or *was* there perhaps a structure of some kind, which functioned behind the backs of those who are now enlisted in the tendency, and behind the back of the party?)

In any case, there is certainly one issue on which the new tendency is still not clear, and that is the same old question of the Mideast. Carrying their disdain for a "strong emphasis on democratic demands in the imperialist countries" into the colonial world, the comrades assert that "the correct slogan" is "For a Unified Socialist Mid-East." (What happened, one wonders, to their insistence on the Transitional Program as "a *system* of demands"?) They reject the "democratic secular *staté*" slogan. Very good. But they assert that this formula, which is in reality a sketch of a non-proletarian government in Palestine, a non-Zionist bourgeois state, is "the position adopted at the last convention of the SWP." It is far from splitting hairs to point out that the SWP did not adopt such a position. In fact, Gus Horowitz, the reporter for the majority, rejected it. The position the delegates adopted was to support the democratic demand of the Palestinian liberation movement, "for a democratic, secular *Palestine*." That position is not, of course, a sufficient program for the Palestinian fighters, as we have seen in the past few years. But nor is it a formula for a capitalist state. It is nothing but the goal of all the Palestinian people, expressed in the most general way. And the SWP rightly supports it.

Does the new tendency support it? They don't say. They will have to decide, in order to minimize their own embarrassment when it is pointed out to them in the course of the discussion that the "SWP position" against which they polemicize is not the SWP position at all.

Unlike simon-pure sectarian tendencies, with which the party has had some experience, the comrades who are forming this new tendency seem very unsure of their positions. Among the questions they will have to answer are:

1. Is it fair to criticize fraternal collaboration with a "centrist PSA" in Argentina when this party was in the process of one of the quickest bolshevizations yet seen in history? What does the tendency think of the PST of Argentina, and the serious charges (e.g., reformism) made against it by the proponents of guerrilla warfare whose positions Massey, Shaffer and Smith claim to reject?

2. Where did the party manifest its "lack of solidarity with the Argentine section"? In differentiating itself publicly from small-group terrorism? In publicizing the revolutionary socialist election campaign in Argentina which the PRT (Combatiente) did not support? Or was it in helping launch a campaign to defend the Argentine section and others without insisting on support for urban guerrillism as a condition of defense of political prisoners?

3. What about China? Is the tendency neutral about the Cultural Revolution or does it favor Mao in retrospect (as did most supporters of guerrillism and others), or does it agree with Comrade Peng's position of critical support for the Liu Shao-chi faction in the Cultural Revolution as a de-Stalinizing force? In other words, was the Cultural Revolution a step forward or backward for China? This question is not dead, and it will be an important one for the strategy of political revolution in China.

4. What about Stalinism? If the SWP's position on it really is "substantially more correct," is it more correct than which other positions—the PRT (Combatiente), Ernest Germain, Henri Weber? Are these latter positions *some-what* correct?

5. Where do you stand on popular frontism? Are you in favor of a principled break with this policy as practiced by the Bolivian POR (Moscoso) in December 1971 when it supported the "Frente Revolucionario Anti-imperialista"? What do you think of the Argentine ERP's offer of conditional support to the bourgeois Peronist government of Campora? And how about the policy of the French Ligue Communiste, supporting the Union of the Left in the last elections despite the presence of the bourgeois Left Radicals in this coalition? How does this square with your evolving conception of the Transitional Program?

6. Will the new tendency join in support of the international Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency in order to defend the Leninist strategy of building combat parties? Or is this a "sterile and mechanical" way to describe the debate, and does the discussion involve something less significant than the question of the Leninist party?

7. How has the SWP "demonstrated an unwillingness to build a movement of solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution and defense of the workers state of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam"? Does your tendency have an alternative method of solidarity, better than building a mass antiwar movement?

8. How can you call the party's activity "an exclusive and self-perpetuating student orientation" when the orientation of the party's work toward working people not only exists, but has *increased*, as we can see by looking at the letter from Barry Sheppard and Frank Lovell, in November 1971, urging consistent *Militant* sales to workers (Education for Socialists: "Selected Documents on SWP Trade

Union Policy") and by looking at the sizable information bulletin on trade-union work (Internal Information Bulletin, November 1972)? Is this work not important to you?

9. When did the SWP interfere in the IMG's internal affairs? Was it, as Bill Massey charged at one time, by inviting an IMG member, a veteran Trotskyist who sat on the International Control Commission, to speak at an educational conference in this country? Or was it something else? (This particular charge is especially interesting, because we all know what some comrades in the IMG majority are saying about the minority tendency there: that it's a "tool" of the SWP. Is this the source of the charge made by Massey-Smith-Shaffer?) Does the tendency agree with the IMG minority's positions, such as for giving unconditional critical support to the Labour Party in the elections? Or does it agree with the majority and call slogans of the tendency "counterrevolutionary" calling for "agitation against the Labour Party"? Do Massey, Smith and Shaffer insist, with the IMG majority, on a Transitional Program which does not mobilize the masses and raise consciousness but does nothing less than "smash capitalism" (presumably as soon as it is written!) Or do the comrades proclaim a benevolent neutrality on Britain for the moment?

These are some of the questions which the comrades of the new tendency will have to discuss. I wish them the best of luck. Good luck especially to those who will want to take a clear position, because, in a grouping with such a history of unprincipled combinationism, the

going is rough on that score. I can assure you of that from my P. O. T. experience. One wonders, in fact, how much rougher the going will get if the international discussion heats up and the new tendency is forced to finally take sides. Will the "pox on all your houses" line win out, or will the tendency head straight for the political position of Germain-Maitan-Frank, hoping to find a home there?

One last hint, comrades: watch to see what positions your tendency takes on the organizational questions as they crop up in the international discussion. I can tell you that those are the kinds of questions that were always most significant, at least for the P. O. T. That was the best way to tell in what direction things were moving, and that might be a good way to tell in what direction the Massey-Smith-Shaffer group is moving.

But this old method of deciding your political alignment from organizational and factional considerations has political ramifications. If you follow the logic, it will take you where you may not have been planning to go, as happened with the P. O. T. and the Leninist Faction. In this case, it seems that the only direction open to the comrades is a sectarian one. They do have a long tradition of sectarianism in regard to Palestine. Comrades who see this logic should take a careful look and detach themselves from it by steering clear of the Massey-Smith-Shaffer tendency. They should have some confidence in their own ideas, at the same time, and if they have criticisms, express them through the discussion bulletin.

May 20, 1973